EDUCATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

IN SRI LANKA

KUNASEKARAM NESIAH, M. A.
(FORMERLY SENIOR LECTURER IN EDUCATION,
UNIVERSITY OF CEYLON)

CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY
OF RELIGION AND SOCIETY

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SELECTIONS FROM WRITINGS
AND ADDRESSES, 1930 — 1983

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DEDICATED

to

My beloved wife Pushpam

who has loyally supported me in all my work

these 50 years

and to

The Memory of

My beloved Mother

who did her utmost to promote my education

INTRODUCTION

By Rt Rev S. Kulandran

To write an introduction to a book by Mr. Nesiah is to be in a curious position; because the duty of the writer of an introduction is to introduce the author to his readers. But to attempt to introduce Mr. Nesiah to Jaffna readers is sheer impertinence, since it is he who usually introduces speakers at public meetings to their audience. As for those who do not know him it is doubtful if they will know me either; so my introduction will not make a difference.

I wonder whether Mr. Nesiah's purpose in asking me to perform this task was to find out to what extent I agree with him; because it is common for people to disagree on many points with those with whom they agree on others. And often it is exactly those agreements which also cause the disagreements; anyone who disagrees completely on every point from somebody else simply leaves the other alone and has nothing to do with him.

Such is not the case with Mr. Nesiah and me. We have known each other for more than sixty years, and though we have spent our lives in different fields, we have been pretty close to each other always and have had many opportunities for agreeing and disagreeing. Whatever be the reason that prompted Mr. Nesiah to make the request, I feel highly honoured by it.

It may cause surprise to many that Mr. Nesiah should have collected within the compass of a book of some 300 pages, articles written and lectures delivered over a period of 50 years;

because during 50 years time changes, circumstances change and views must change; and what looked appropriate at one time may become entirely out of date later and totally inappropriate. But the articles and addresses here are held together not merely by a common authorship but by a consistent philosophy from which the author never deviates. And I think Mr. Nesiah's purpose is exactly to show how changing circum. stances have affected him, holding the philosophy that he does.

I trust that Mr. Nesiah's views will be read with respect by everybody, because they are not merely views that he has professed but which he has lived out, inspite of everything to the contrary.

What gives "punch" to everything that Mr. Nesiah says in his absolute command of the relevant facts and figures concerned with every statement he makes. He has at his finger-tips the statements of this authority and that and the conclusion of this Commission or Conference and that. So whether people agree or disagree with him they cannot question his accuracy. My one grievance with him in this respect is that he might have occasionaly told us who these authorities were or when (and where) these Commissions and Conferences were held.

Mr. Nesiah has divided his book into various parts. On the particular subjects treated in many of the chapters only those well versed in them can pronounce opinions. On Education he writes with the cool detachment of the expert, who does not expect any contradiction. With the Co-operative Movement on which he has much to say, there may be many who can commeut; but I am not one of them since my contact with it consists in merely knowing certain officials of the Department, seeing certain of its shops and on rare occasions even buying a few things from them. On his impressions of foreign countries he probably expects no comment from anybody, since each person forms his own impressions which

need not tally with any one elses'. On Mahatma Gandhi's contribution to India few will gainsay what he says, though I am afraid that many have shelved the Mahatma and his contribution.

In my opinion, it is part IV of the book that forms its central strand and more than anything else will make this book a memorable achievement. It deals with the policies of Sri Lanka after Independence. Here I have a right to comment; because Mr. Nesiah and I belong to the same generation; have walked the same path, been attached to the same ideals in our youth, encountered the same events on the way and have seen the final *denouement*.

It was a master-stroke on the part of Mr. Nesiah to have printed his Youth Congress address of 1931. It expresses the ideals of most of our generation at that time. In part IV he relates what happened to our dreams and ideals. The totally unexpected series of events between 1948 and now has led those of our own generation into a situation too deep for tears. In dealing with the situation Mr. Nesiah almost rises to the stature of a prophet.

Mr. Nesiah has shown how the aims and ideals not merely held by our youth before 1948 but were also professed by the politicians at that day were out-manuovered out of politics, torn to shreds and thrown to the winds. The axioms of that day have become unimaginable concepts now. The poetic conclusion of that address which would have been listened to in hushed silence then, as embodying the impassioned longings of all thinking people of that day, would be received now with a laugh, as embodying a bizzare flight of fancy. This section holds up the mirror to an eventful period in the history of the country. We must be grateful to Mr. Nesiah for documenting his account of this period and showing how by an occasional manipulation deliberately carried out the country has been overtaken by a state of stark tragedy.

Mr. Nesiah has given an autobiographical summary his career. Against the possible charge of his wanting to indulge in self-laudation, he has given the valid reason that he was asked to do it by an eminent authority for purposes of record. While not many can touch the high administrative levels at so many points, as he has done, we can be thankful to God that we have among us one with a passionate dedication to public welfare who has striven over such a long period to give effect to his ideals, with a conviction that never flagged even in the most difficult circumstances. Such an example cannot fail to inspire.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE

In such a time as this

It was the middle decades of the 20th century that witnessed events and changes such as the world had not seen before. It was as part of the political and social changes of this revolutionary epoch that a thousand million people in Asia and Africa are now liberated from colonial servitude. The first attempts at a League of Nations over, the present United Nations Organization brought the world's peoples together (1945) and three years later proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (10 December, 1948) affirming the dignity and equality of all men everywhere. A no less epoch-making break-through in science and technology was marked by man's landing on the moon twenty years later. Perhaps, the one who more than any other lifted the age to a commensurate moral height was Mahatma Gandhi, earning this praise from Albert Einstein: "Generations to come, it may be, will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth".

It was my good fortune to be born in the first year of the Century, on the 13th of November. It was my privilege too, not merely to live in such a time as this, but to have been alive to what was happening and even in some small way from my young days upwards to have entered into some of the activities that heralded the new age in our country. While still a pupil at school I caught the vision of a free Lanka and of a new social order and of changes in education. What sustained me was both the Christian gospel and the Gandhian way to put it into practice. The habit of prayer helped to make the vision more and more clear and filled one with a sense of purpose.

What I owe to my mother and my school

I would indeed have been unequal to the demands of that Vision and this way of realizing it had I not had the opportunities I had in a school, like St. John's College, Jaffna. It was an age when the emphasis was on the study of English Literature and to some extent on the study of British History. My enthusiasm for these studies can be measured by the fact that I reached the distinc-

tion standard in English Authors, English History as well as in the Acts of the Apostles in the Cambridge Senior Certificate Examination, though, being over-aged I was not so declared in the certificate awarded. The school had a well stocked library of books and periodicals and my reading went far beyond English Literature and British History, my reading hours lasting on most evenings till the closing of the library. I remember, among my favoured periodicals, the **Modern Review** edited my Ramananda Chatterjee, the **Indian Review** and the **Strand Magazine**. I had also the chance of reading the daily **Rangoon Times**, which my class-mate Ramachandran received from his father working in Burma (then a part of undivided India).

In passing, I owe so much to my mother, who made it possible for me to pursue studies in this school, making the utmost of the slender resources of our family. She even spared some money to stock candles and encouraged me to read in the early hours by candle light. I must not omit to mention the self-sacrifice of my brother Chelvathurai who opted to be in the less expensive Elementary Department so as to make it possible for me to study in the Secondary Department. And when I decided to continue my studies at the Madras University, it was my brother-in-law Arul-Pragasam who helped me out by advancing the money I needed there. It was God's mercy that all this became possible.

How well my English studies and my following the events of the Indian awakening had helped to build my own convictions may be seen from an incident of 1919, when I was in the pre-Cambridge Senior. The acting Principal Mc Pherson, who came that day in place of the history teacher, had asked us to write an essay justifying the British stand on the issue of theWar of American Independence. When I protested that the colonial revolt was justified , he permitted me to write according to my lights, while the rest of the class wrote as the Principal wanted. Not that I failed to appreciate the role of the British Empire in the historical process. For, in the following year, I won the second prize in the British Empire Essay Competition, with my essay: In Praise of the British Empire.

That year, Henry Peto had become the permanent Head of this nearly century old school and began re-organizing it more fully

than before on the British Public School model. I was elected Editor of the MS weekly of the Senior Literary Association, member of the committee of an English Literature Club, and Secretary of a Ceylon Historical Association of which I was the prime mover. I was also active in the newly formed unit of the S.C.M. It dawned on me that I could make my best contribution as a teacher, though a career in the General Clerical Service had been placed before me by no less a person than F.H.V. Gulasekharam, who had taught me mathematics the previous year. One day when Peto casually learnt of my intention, he extended an invitation to me to come back after graduation to teach at St. John's I was happy to accept the invitation. My resolve to fulfil my purposes in life by being a teacher and prepare for that vocation by some years of residence and study in Madras was strengthened when in December under the leadership of Peto some of us attended the Triennial Conference of the S.C.M. of India-Burma-Ceylon held in Pune. It was my first visit to India and it was the right moment to be in India the very year and the month she was deciding on **Swaraj** as the goal and non-violent non-cooperation as the means. The saintly C. F. Andrews, who was the chief guest speaker at the S.C.M. Conference, in his face and speech held the mirror to the dawn in India!

The five years in Madras : Some of my many Indian tours

The five years 1921-26 when I sojourned in Madras were very rewarding. Let alone the studies, to live in the company of students who were all drawn into the national movement was itself an education. The Warden of Wesley College Hostel, Rev. Kingsley Williams, who also lectured to us on English Literature, organized our community life on lines which appealed to me. There were daily prayers normally taken by the Warden, but in his absence by the senior most student, who in my time was a Hindu Brahmin. The Warden also conducted a weekly study group, which studied in turn the Gospels, the Gita and the Quran. When my friend Arunachalam and I joined the hostel, being vegetarians, we joined the Brahmin Mess and ate separately from the brahmin students. But, the revolutionary surge in India prompted the brahmin students to summon a special meeting of this self-governing mess, change

its name to Vegetarian Mess and elect me as Manager for the next month following. Most evenings a group of us would go for a walk to the beautiful Madras Marina. When I moved later to Victoria Hostel, off the Marina, the walks covered several miles of the beach. Frequently, an outstanding Indian political leader would address a meeting on the beach and we would attend. Once a small group of us walked the 35 miles to Mahabalipuram to see the famous Pallava sculptures there and thence to Kanchipuram returning to Madras by rail.

My studies at the University of Madras were largely in the field of History. After the Intermediate-in-Arts at Wesley College, I proceeded to the Madras Christian College, then located at George Town, for the History Honours Course, which successfully completed, led to the conferment of the Masters Degree after two years. The two subsidiary subjects were Economics and Political Science. The two Special Papers I chose were the French Revolution in the field of History and Public Finance in the field of Economics. How deeply these special studies got into me may be gauged by my writing a series of articles in the **Morning Leader,** almost the only supporter of the 1932 Huxham proposals for Income Tax, and the enthusiasm with which I toured places connected with the events of 1789 when I had the chance to be in Paris in July 1939 for the 150th Anniversary of the Revolution. We had inter-collegiate lectures bearing on my course at the Presidency College and the University Senate House. Of course, my interests and my reading went beyond the examinations I had to take. The Madras Christian College Library and the Connemara Public Library, I used well.

Like some Englishmen returning with enthusiasm from the Continent after experiencing revolutionary ferment there, I felt I had caught something of the spirit of Gandhiji's India when I came back after my sojourn of five years.

Behind and beyond the appeal of Gandhi's India was the longing to re-discover and possess more fully my Indian cultural and spiritual heritage. It was in this spirit that I have visited over the years many places in India, North and South. The first big journey

with that objective was the three weeks tour by special train to the All-Asia Educational Conference in Banaras, December 1930. My itinerary then included besides Banaras, Buddha Gaya, Sarnath, Sanchi, and Jaganathapuri. I went again with my wife in January 1960, to Banaras, Gaya and Sarnath. In January 1975, I had the chance of visiting places connected with Shivaji, the Maharatta leader. I was able to visit Borobodur in Indonesia in 1952.

I join the staff of St. John's College

Now, to go back to the year 1926. I quickly realized that I belonged to a rare fellowship as a teacher under Peto in my old School. He told me often that I had his warm support in all my activities. I saw clearly that if the call of the national movement overflowed into my educational activities, my full involvement in education within and without the school walls in turn revealed to me the full dimensions of nation-making and nation building. It was as if I said to myself: Bliss is it in this dawn to be alive, but to be young is very heaven. Indeed, I beheld with my mind's eye, streaks of light in the Northern sky which possibly could illumine the entire land of Lanka!

Gain from an ethical code

I am sure that my inner strength gained by an ethical code I had gradually framed for myself. It may be that I drew my inspiration for this from the command of Jesus, 'Love thy neighbour', and Gandhiji's rendering of it :'All men are brothers'. I had early in 1920 given up my so-called Christian name and asked to be known by the Tamil name, also given at baptism. Later that year, I resolved to be a vegetarian, which I have since been, with two or three brief lapses. I said to myself that I would not seek an unfair advantage over another. Thus, though I was the only Christian student from Wesley College, Madras, to be selected that year for an Honours Course at Ihe M.C.C., I did not avail myself of the scholarship for the best Christian student proceeding from Wesley College to the M.C.C. because it was not open to my non-Christian fellow students. I had always set a ceiling on my income and devoted the surplus generally to help students in need; when I

obtained my post-graduate diploma, which entitled me to the Trained Graduate Scale, I added the next five increments to this fund. At the same time, I told the Principal to award two vacant Special Posts available, without counting me as a possible candidate. I have never accepted any honorary office unless I was chosen with near unanimity. I was selected for the Teacher's Diploma course in London without my attaching any recommendations. So was I selected to be a Lecturer in the University of Ceylon, and promoted to Senior Lecturer on the strength of the papers I had written, about the ônly University teacher appointed and promoted without a higher degree in his own field! And, how blessed I felt when after marriage, my wife agreed with me that we should not take an insurance policy, nor attempt to put by any tangible saving!

This self-denying ordinance which I imposed on myself, with something of the detachment of a Karma Yogin, far from causing any mental pain, became a source of perennial joy. I wanted to live a life of significance, and hardly saw any difference between paid and unpaid work. In fact, my primary calling as a teacher, first at St.John's Jaffna, then at S. Thomas', then at the University and now my modest School teacher's pension, has given me enough to live and something to spare for my voluntary activities. More than that, these three institutions and other offices to which they led, afforded me the vantage ground for many of my voluntary activities. There were scores of such activities in an active life extending to well over half-a-century; but I saw clearly from the beginning lhat the educational seed must seek a harvest in the co-operative field and in a Gandhian social and political order. The papers selected for this volume bear witness to lhe fact that my writing has most of it been in furtherance of these causes. So too have been my travels. I could see all along that my success in whatever I pursued was dependent on the purity of my motives. Thus, in my Teacher's Union days I never led a deputation to a Minister or Director, on a Union cause or individual teacher's cause, unless I was sure of the justice of my cause, and I hardly ever failed to get a favourable response from the other side. Yet another vindication of this principle, which I set before myself, is the fact

that nearly every honorary office for which I was chosen came to me without my seeking it—Examples: Member, Board of Education, Examinations Council, University Court; Jubilee Year President of the ACUT; Founder President, M.P.C.S. Jaffna; Commissioner for Ceylon, Churches Commission on International Affairs; Honorary Life Member, World Education Fellowship and N.E.S.S.L.; Director, Peoples Bank; Director, Y.M.C.A. Jaffna, Colombo, Kandy; Member, Board of Trustees, Ceylon School for the Deaf and Blind; Chairman, Thanthai Chelva Memorial Trust.

Labours in many fields

That God has given me a fairly long active life and enabled me all along to put forward new ideas and help to initiate new movements, made me always feel that I am a chosen labourer in His Vineyard. Here I shall try, to illustrate what I have been enabled to do in the three main fields in which I have done most of my writing.

In the field of Education

First, in the field of Education. While still in the Cambridge Senior form I took the lead in forming a Ceylon Historical Association to promote the study of Ceylon History. I wrote an article in the College Magazine, itself revived that year (1920), protesting against the excessive importance given to the study of English History and the total neglect of our own history. After I had graduated and joined the staff, the Association was revived in 1927, with Mudaliyar C. Rasanayagam as President and myself as Secretary. Among the distinguished lecturers we invited, the name of Swami Vipulananda stands out in my memory. I maintained my contact with the Swami for many years and I gained so much by that. His lecture on the Poets of Jaffna roused our enthusiasm, especially his reference to the Nallur Tamil Sangam. We organized seminars on the aims and methods of teaching History. My friend T. Muttucumaru, History Master at Jaffna Hindu College, and I drew up a syllabus in Ceylon and World History and sent it to the Department of Education. According to Dr. G. C. Mendis, our document it was that led him and others to formulate the new syllabus in Ceylon and World History and to write books along the new lines. When

I took over the teaching of history I substituted the modern for the Tudor and Stuart periods of English history for the Cambridge Senior, and a world history course for 'Britain and Her Neighbours' for the middle forms, writing out some of the material myself. Later, with a bright II Form, I tried an experiment with the class divided into groups compiling their manuscript books on such themes as the 'Story of the Ship through the Ages'.

Anotherexperiment of mine, a few years later, first at St. John's and then at S. Thomas', was to teach a comprehensive Social Studies Course for the Ceylon Senior School Certificate; the Department prescribed Civics syllabus formed about half of this course. A collaborator with me in this new venture was Stuart Wright of Jaffna College. He gave some talks to our senior boys in this field, and I did the same at Jaffna College. Our experiment included inviting various resource persons to visit our schools and talk to the boys on their respective fields of work. Our visitors included a police chief (Sydney Zoysa), a bank manager, an M.O.H. and so on. This successful Social Studies experience of mine in the two schools here, and later at S. Thomas', where I put on senior boys (at Gurutalawa) to a survey study of Boralanda Village, prompted me to include Social Studies in the Methodology course for the Diploma in Education at the University. There had been a parallel trend in India and other countries and the Oxford University Press (Indian Branch) invited me to write the book, *Social Studies in the School*, for their Teaching in India Series. The book is now in its 3rd edition and I believe widely used in teacher training courses. In retrospect, I see that I was evolving not merely new spheres of study but a new method of learning through field study and research.

Organizing the body of teachers

During the third year of my teaching it was that I beheld the shameful spectable of the Annual Meeting of the North-Ceylon Educational Association at the Jaffna Central College Hall. The only concern seemed to be who should capture the offices, Hindus or Christians,. Fortunately, the meeting dispersed in disarray and never re-assembled! Full of agony, I said to myself that I should

not let this happen again in my beloved Jaffna. During the same year, Mr. Gibbon, a visiting missionary teacher at Jaffna Central, gave a talk to us at the Teachers Guild of St.John's on the National Union of Teachers of England.

An idea gripped me. Organizing the teachers—School Teachers Guilds: Area Associations: Provincial Associations: All-Ceylon Union of Teachers—would be also an object lesson in building democracy from below! I canvassed the idea with my Youth Congress friends who were teachers in my own school, and in other big schools. The meetings of the Area Associations would be hosted in turn by the guilds in the schools, we decided. For the sake of continuity, the almost defunct sixteen-year old Jaffna Teachers Union we reconstituted on September 27, 1930 into the N.P.T.A. The largely attended meeting held at St.John's College Hall adopted the constitution by consensus. We had not merely organized the teaching profession in the North; we felt the warmth of a great fellowship. These developments prompted the A.C.U.T., at the Annual Meeting held the same year, to commission the N.P.T.A. to draft a new constitution for the Union. It fell to my lot to be the chief draftsman and to suggest a few conventions and also help to organize some provincial associations. Within a few years, it looked as if in the Annual Sessions, which now met in turn in the various provincial capitals, not merely was the profession being brought together but the country as well. One of the objects which on my draft the Union had adopted read: "to promote the national unity of Ceylon through education" We also encouraged the teachers in the Sinhala and Tamil media schools to form parallel unions and, on our recommendation, representatives of these unions sat on the Board of Education along with our representatives Through such representation, and national education weeks and conferences and publications, the organized profession of teachers sought to build the corpus of educational thinking relevant to the needs of an emerging nation.

If the early thirties witnessed an 'ad hoc' organization of teachers transformed into an educational movement covering the whole country, an even more vital gain was the involvement of the move-

ment in the cause of the national languages. From the time of Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and Ponnambalam Arunachalam to that of Handy Perinbanayagam it is sons of the North who fought "the battle for Sinhala and Tamil". The achievement for which I may claim credit was to have persuaded first the N.P.T.A., then the Kandy Teachers Association (in 1934) and finally, along with Handy Perinbanayagam, the A.C.U.T. at its Batticaloa Sessions (1937), to declare their support for the principle of the mother-tongue medium in education. A few years later, Mr. H. S. Perera, shortly due to become the first Ceylonese Head of the Department of Education, published a research report on the 1940 Fifth Standard Examination. He sought to make out that pupils from English schools performed better than those from Sinhalese and Tamil schools in Intelligence Tests and in Arithmetic (conceding, however, that Tamil pupils did better than their Sinhalese counterparts in Arithmetic) and so English was a better medium of instruction. At the request of the A.C.U.T., I wrote *A Report on Mr. H. S. Perera's Report* (1941), challenging both Mr. Perera's conclusions and his mode of inquiry. A year later, the first Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ceylon, Ivor Jennings entered the fray. He was probably referring to my statement, when at a Ratnapura Prize Day speech, he questioned the statement that seldom has first rate literature been produced except in one's own native tongue. He cited the case of George Bernard Shaw, an Irishman, he said writing in the English language. In a contribution to the Sunday Observer, I quoted Bernard Shaw's own words: "I am a typical Irishman; my family came from Yorkshire". Twice later, I had to take Sir Ivor to task (in the *Ceylon Teacher*, which I edited) for his persistent opposition to the mother - tongue principle. It was in 1945 that D. B. Dhanapala and his Old Book company came forward to publish my *Mother Tongue in Education*, which had long awaited publication. In this book I had challenged the Kannangara Report's advocacy of 'Universal English' as a means of achieving national unity. My book came under fire, in two centre-page review articles by Dr. H. A. Passe in the *Daily News* for advocating at all Sinhala and Tamil as media of education and public administration. Shortly after, the Central Y.M.C.A. organized a two-day public

debate on this question, witnessed among others by Mr. J. R. Jayawardene and members of the Select Committee on Official Languages. Mr. Julius Lanerolle, Mr. Handy Perinbanayagam and I spoke for the National Languages, while Dr. Passe led the opposing team. How happy I was, when in his 1951 Prize Day Report, Principal L. H. Mettananda of Ananda College quoted me in support of his plea that Sinhalese and Tamil children should learn each other's language to promote national unity. I believe that it was in recognition of my long involvement in the language debate, and my papers appearing in journals here and abroad, that I was invited to examine the place of language in the 1964 *Year Book of Education*, London, devoted to "Education and International Life". I gave the title "The Language Barrier to International Life" to that chapter, made a rapid historical and world-wide survey, and put forward a plea, where appropriate, to adopt the "three-language formula", the mother tongue, a second national language, and English or other international language. In passing, I had been invited twice before to write to the Year Book, but both in 1951 and 1958 the chapters I contributed were against a Ceylon background.

For years I had been looking forward to the dawn of freedom for my country. Restoring the right place to Sinhala and Tamil seemed an early step towards that dawn. While pursuing my studies in London in 1938-39 and gathering materials for my book, I also saw the need for 'decolonisation' in the matter of the school leaving examinations. But, since many sought higher British qualifications and the London Matriculation was the best passport to this, I thought that the first move should be to provide for London Matriculation exemption through the Ceylon School Certificate, subject to minimum standards being reached. In May 1939, I wrote to the Principal of the University of London who directed me to talk the matter over with Mr. Shurroch, the Secretary of the London Matriculation Council. The latter invited me to meet him at lunch in the University Refectory and assured me of favourable considerations of my suggestion. He asked me to get an official request from the Department of Education in Ceylon. I wrote to the Director Mc Robison, who promptly acted on my suggestion. I believe it was providing exemption through the Ceylon S.S.C. that made it

possible to terminate the holding in Ceylon of the Cambridge Senior Certificate examination after 1942 and the London Matriculation after 1943. On behalf of the A.C.U.T., I also urged with the Minister of Education the provision of an H.S.C. course in selected secondary schools, so that both those who enter the University and those who choose other careers may be adequately prepared. With the support of Vice-Chancellor Ivor Jennings, the suggestion was adopted and the examination for the H.S.C. conducted by the new University of Ceylon.

In the University Department of Education

While constantly touring the country in connection with the Union and now and then to speak at educational seminars organized by the Department of Education, the conviction deepened in me that the time was overdue for a full-fledged Teacher Training Department in the University. I also saw that if I were given the opportunity of working there I could make a larger contribution to the education of my country. It was then the right opportunity at the right moment for me when I was appointed the first Ceylonese Lecturer in the new Department set up during the academic year, 1949-50. With the full support of Vice-Chancellor Ivor Jennings and Professor T.L.Green, I found myself helping to plan the courses and work there and, in the initial year, carrying almost half the lecturing and tutorial load With the same enlightened support some teacher trainees were encouraged, while doing their teaching practice, to study the set-up of the host school, others to teach delinquents at Wattupitiya, and write case studies, and one to participate in the Rural Education Centre at Dalugama and make a village survey of that rural area, And I found myself a visiting lecturer in some of these places; also to Probation Department recruits at Prison Headquarters, to the new Health Education Officers at Kalutara Health Unit and helping to set up the new School of Social Work! What a measure of self-fulfilment my work afforded me personally!

The National Education Society: the W.E.F.

From the early Thirties I had been a regular reader of *New Era.* the journal of the New Education Fellowship, now the World

Education Fellowship, which has consultative status with UNESCO. Gradually, the conviction came to me that Sri Lanka would gain by having a non-professional body, with international contacts, to study educational problems in depth. When in England in 1938-39, I had called at the International Headquarters of the N.E.F. and obtained literature on their set-up, though I had to wait till the turn of the mid-century before the time was ripe to launch the Ceylon Section, under the name of the National Education Society of Ceylon, now the N.E.S.S.L. The support of Prof. T. L. Green and several university dons cutting across faculties, and of our own post-graduate students was heartening. So too the support of Prof. J. A. Lauwerys, then International Chairman, who addressed the Society in 1956, when I was President. I had been Secretary during the first few formative years and also edited the Society's quarterly journal during the first year of publication. I have been invited to write to the *New Era* on several subjects, and invited as a group leader to the Delhi and Bombay International Conferences of the W.E.F. in 1960-61 and 1974-75 respectively. I count it an honour to be an Honorary Life Member of both the W.E.F. and the N.E.S.S.L.

Founder member of the World University Service, Sri Lanka Branch, and with many years of association with the Student Christian Movement, I was invited to participate in the Asian University Teachers' Consultation, Bandung, 1951. I believe my name was suggested by Fr. Celestine Fernando, co-worker with me in many causes. I read a paper on 'The Function of University and the Ideal of Community.' Since then, I have put forward several studies on the subject, including one on 'The University and Society' read at a Seminar of the S.L.A.A.S. on 'The Future of University Education in Ceylon' (1966). Also, it was after my retirement from the University (May, 1962) that I was invited to conduct a brief lecture seminar course on 'Education and Change in India' at the School of Education, University of Singapore in 1964.

Perhaps, the educational cause more than any other that has gripped me since my retirement from the University is the scandal of the neglect of the Education of the Handicapped in this country.

On one hand, I realized the truth of the I.L.O. Resolution 99 of 1955 affirming the need of disabled children and young persons to have opportunities equal to those of non-disabled children and young persons in the matter of education and vocational preparation; on the other, how grievously our people and government have been remiss both in legislation and the provision of services for the disabled. I felt therefore a sense of mission when invited first to serve on the Board of Trustees of the Ceylon School for the Deaf and Blind, and since 1969, to be Manager of the Nuffield School unit of the Ceylon School. Mother Theresa drew her inspiration for her wonderful service by seeing in the dying and ailing in Calcutta streets Christ himself in distressing disguise! Would that we in Sri Lanka saw the latent divinity in all disabled persons here, and indeed in all others too whom we disable by our unjust structures and strictures?

In the Cooperative Movement

If I chose to be a teacher because of my simple faith that I could help to change men and society, I began almost at the same time to tread the Cooperative Road hoping that it would lead to a Gandhian social and economic order. I conceived of both Education and Cooperation as nation-building exercises each reinforcing the other. I may illustrate this from a few selected experiences and experiments of mine in the latter field.

Sometime in the 30's when the school canteen at St.John's suffered a heavy annual loss, I took the initiative in organizing a School Cooperative Society (as yet unregistered) to run the canteen. Some 180 boys subscribed one rupee each and a score of teachers five rupees each. A 7 - member Board of Directors, all students, with me as adviser, ran the cooperative. Two school cooks helped in the service, but there was something of a crisis situation one day when they refused to wash the cup of a harijan minor employee. A Special Meeting of the Society decided that each day of the week one of the Directors would preside over the canteen working; two student members would serve and wash the cups and plates; only one cook was needed part time from then. A dual revolution was achieved, it looked to me—a student cooperative, and student labour service to combat caste!!

Soon, I found myself Vice-President of the Co-operative Federation of the Northern and Eastern Provinces, visiting societies and expounding the Cooperative ideal at seminars. During the critical food situation in the latter stages of World War II I helped to found the Chundikuli Stores Society. It was run very successfully, my special responsibility was to ensure fair distribution of scarce commodities. Soon afterwards the MPCS of the City of Jaffna was formed and I was elected the first President. When my family moved to Wellawatte in 1949 I saw the Wellawatte West Cooperative in a parlous state. At the next annual meeting we saw to it that a good committee was elected which included W. H. T. Bartlett, M.M. Kulasegaram, Proctor de Alwis. In a couple of years the accumulated loss of Rs. 6000 was wiped out, dividened and bonus declared, and out of the surplus the land and building was acquired by the Society! More than this, Wellawatte West came to be regarded as one of the best run societies in the City of Colombo. We moved to the Peradeniya Campus in 1957 and the following year I was invited, along with a couple of students, to represent the University in the S. E. Asia Conference on University Coops in Madras and to read a paper. A year later, we formed the University Coop. at Peradeniya.

When we returned to live in Chundikuli once again in December 1963, it was with deep convictions within me about the role of Co-operatives in creating a democratic socialist society. India had already given a distinctive place to the Cooperative Sector in her development plans and, following the Karve Report, the Vienna Congress of the I.C.A. was to adopt the 1966 re-statement of Cooperative Principles. I was elected President of the Chundikuli Society in 1964 and the following year the N.D.C.F. invited me to be Chief Editor of their bilingual journal *The Cooperator*. Twice a month for five years I was able to write freely on Cooperation and on a variety of themes designed to educate the community. I knew that what I wrote won acceptance here and abroad since some of my contributions were reproduced in other journals; for example, the main passages of my critical editorial on the Ceylon University Bill 1966 were reproduced in *Minerva*.

On behalf of the Consumers Movement in the City of Jaffna, five of us, the President of M.P.C.S. Union and Presidents of four

other societies, joined together to submit a memorandum and evidence, before the Laidlow Royal Commission on the Cooperative Movement in Ceylon. The memorandum was drafted by me at the request of my fellow cooperators. Here I should like to refer to just two of our recommendations. One was the need for a cooperative super-market in the City of Jaffna. This was an idea which on behalf of the N.D.C.F. the Federation's Secretary and I had already placed before the Special Commission, chaired by the Commissioner of Local Government, then administering the City; the Commission undertook to reserve about one-third of the site of the New Market if the N.D.C.F. or the Jaffna M.P.C.S., would build the super-market. The other recommendation was to redraw the cooperative map of the City in terms of a large City Society with 23 ward branches; the Laidlaw Commission accepted this pattern and commended it to other urban areas as well (P.103).

If for me the Sun of Cooperation was at its zenith about the mid-century and I had tasted its warmth in the two decades preceding and the one following, the late sixties still shed the beautiful glow of a glorious twilight. When the Laidlow Report was due for publication in the first week of February 1970, I was in New Delhi participating in the International Seminar on "Relevance of Gandhi to our time", Jan. 30 - Feb. 5. During one session, I intervened briefly to say that the Cooperative Movement should form a vital element in the Gandhian social order. My point was taken up well, for at a special breakfast meeting at the Gandhi Peace Foundation the following morning, Chairman G. Ramachandran invited me to elaborate my submission. Shri Moraji Desai, who followed me, warmly supported my plea.

Alas, in Sri Lanka darkness began to gather that year over the cooperative landscape. With the proposed take over of Cooperatives by the government, I had to write a painful letter to the Minister in charge on 23rd December. when he visited Jaffna, that "after my many years of dedication to the Cooperative Cause, I found it difficult to attend the N.D.C.F. Conference and to join in the welcome to him". My faith in cooperation, however, continued undimmed. For, nine years later, though the new U.N.P. Government

had rejected the Laidlaw recommendation to increase the Cooperative holding of shares in the People's Bank, and the number of Cooperatively elected Directors, and transferred the Bank to the Minister of Finance and vested the Minister with power to appoint all the eight directors, I accepted nomination as the lone Tamil and lone Cooperator among the new directors in 1979. But my first Board meeting, significantly on July 14, brought some disillusionment. A ministerial directive laid down that new employees of the Bank were to be chosen by M.P.'s (excluding S.L.F.P. M.P.'s). Let alone, "equal access to the public service", how could we call ourselves "directors" and call the Bank, "People's bank"? Nine months later, it was the distressing spectacle of five of the Directors, having agreed to the mark of 78 reached by consensus for Mr. S. de S. Gunetilleke for the General Manager's post, going back on their assessment at the next meeting. I had no choice but to tender my resignation, which I did on April 7, after I met the Minister the previous day.

In the Youth Congress

Finally, I would like to give a somewhat disjointed summary of my involvement in politics. The year 1927 witnessed an epoch-making event in Sri Lanka, the visit to these shores of the greatest of living men. The visit was in response to an invitation by the Students Congress of Jaffna, which itself had come into being three years earlier, influenced by the Indian awakening. Nowhere in Sri Lanka did Mahatma Gandhi's sojourn produce a more dynamic social and political stir than in the North. The demand for national independence, the insistence that Sinhala and Tamil should come into their own in national life and the call for a society free from the canker of caste and untouchability became articles of faith with the young teachers and lawyers and the senior students in schools and the University College, who came together in the Congress, re-named the Youth Congress, four years later, in 1931.

It was my privilege to belong to this group, which for their dedication to Gandhian ideals has not been matched in this country, then or after. The greater was my privilege to be chosen Chairman of the Congress Executive, and to deliver the Reception Committee

Chairman's address to welcome Kamaladevi Chattopadyaya to the crucial sessions of 1931, the year of the inauguration of the Donough more Constitution. The famous Boycott Resolution, which asked for the boycott of the new State Council on the score that the new constitution did not measure up to Poorana Swaraj for Sri Lanka, was passed at this session. I may mention that at the steering committee stage, the Executive had by eleven votes to ten agreed with my plea that a unilateral action by Northern Condidates would serve no purpose, and decided not to place this resolution on the agenda. But, choosing a moment when I was out of the Congress Pandal, two members had moved for suspension of standing orders and got the Resolution accepted by acclamation. My friend Handy Perinbanayagam persuaded me not to seek to rescind it. But, I felt that our original stand was the right one when Jawaharlal Nehru, who met us at Duraiswamy's house a few weeks' later, told us that a move like ours without the support of the rest of the country was meaningless We had indeed to wait ten years for a conciliatory gesture, before D. S. Senanayake addressed a Youth Congress sponsored conference in the Jaffna Town Hall on 'Ten Years of the Donoughmore Constitution'. Professor C. Suntharalingam, the 1941 President of the Youth Congress, presided; P. Nagalingam was in charge of a strong volunteer brigade, and I was the Congress General Secretary now and made the arrangements for the meeting. Meanwhile, the question of franchise and citizenship for the Tamils of Indian origin had become an issue. On the eve of the Soulbury Commission, Minister George de Silva called an all party conference. Handy Perinanbayagam and I put forward a formula to grant citizenship and franchise to all Indians who had a minimum number of years residence and opted to be Sri Lankan citizens. A. Azeez, who led the Ceylon Indian Congress delegation, did not approve of linking franchise with citizenship and the conference broke up.

It was in the same session of the Youth Congress, where we envisaged an independent Sri Lanka sooner or later, that we devised a national flag for use at that meeting. My suggestion that it should be the tricolour of saffron, red and green got immediate acceptance. The next year, on National New Year's Day, April13,1932, three

processions carrying the new flag, converged on the Jaffna Esplanade, where we ceremoniously unfurled the Tricolour as a token of the country's independence-to-be. A. M. Brodie and I had signed the handbills, which also carried a small tricolour flag. When Dominion Status was announced in 1947, I noticed that there was no public mention of any national flag. I wrote editorially in the *Ceylon Teacher* in June, 1947 and again returned to the subject in December. A flag committee was announced in January, 1948. I contacted the key person, Asst. Archaeological Commissioner Sanmuganathan. He told me that it was made obligatory for them to adopt the Lion Flag, but saffron, red and green would provide the background. This flag was accepted in February 1950

Independence Day, the Fourth of February, 1948

And when Independence Day arrived, I did indeed think that the Fourth of February would, like the Fourteenth of July elsewhere point to the dawn of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity in our dear land. Had I not looked forward to this day for so long and donned local hand loom from 1940 to be ready for freedom day? With what enthusiasm my wife and I attended the ceremonial handing over by the Duke of Gloucester at Independence Square, the lowering of the Union Jack in Kandy, and the Special Convocation in Peradeniya (being then a member of the University Court, representing the A.C.U.T.) to confer an honorary doctorate on the Duke. A Special Independence number of the *Ceylon Teacher* (March, 1948) sought to commemorate the great event. After quoting in the front page, Rabindranath Tagore's famous lines ending with,

"Into that haven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake", I wrote, in the course of my editorial:

> We look forward to a creative period in our national history, a period of endeavour and achievement in thought and art, in science and industry and in every direction.

I asked, Why did we in the past cease to maintain the glory that was Lanka?

And suggested:

> We are betrayed by what is false within. The barbarian from without cannot succed unless the barbarian from within has started the work of destruction.

I concluded with a solemn appeal to fellow educators:

> As we salute our mother land and her new-born freedom, let us pledge ourselves anew to the task of educating for that freedom.

The Years following Independence

I did indeed think at the time that the nation-making period fo Sri Lanka was over and that we had stepped on the threshold of nation-building. I recalled to myself the inspiring examples from the history of other nations, which after attaining nationhood and independence saw outbursts in literature and the creative arts and sometimes overseas expansion, how they sought distinctiveness and distinction among the nations and how groups and individuals were prepared to dedicate themselves to causes larger than their selfish interests. For one like me, who had thrown myself unreservedly into so many creative movements in the 30's and 40's, it was a saddening thing to see some backward steps instead of the forward advances that one expected. Such, for example, was the withdrawal of citizenship and franchise from Tamils of Indian origin, the Government-sponsored Sinhalese colonization of traditional Tamil areas, and the Sinhala Only Act, which in effect meant the rights are for the Sinhalese Only! The moral crisis seemed to deepen with every decade after that fateful year of Independence; our new national status seemed but a coat of paint; the casket of democratic government did not enshrine liberty.

Yet, I could not make up my mind to support, say, the Federal Party, which came to symbolize the defensive Tamil reaction to communal politics. The federal ideal always appealed to me; but, if I had reservations about the party system, the communal overtones of the proposed federal set-up kept me away from the F.P. Likewise, I refused to support the Tamil University Movement, though I was pleading for regional universities. I argued that even the university community of a provincial university was part of the international intellectual community, and the university communities everywhere were precursors of the future world community.

Perhaps, my involvement in work camps and field studies, in turn inspired by my religious faith, my commitment to the Gandhian ideal and my educational philosophy, will make clear how little the sickness affecting my dear motherland corroded my own soul. The first major shramadana work camp in this country was born in my mind during a sleepless night. I had read in the newspaper the previous day how a whole village in Hanwella occupied by an underprivileged community, had been washed away by the monsoon floods of mid-1955.

In the morning twilight hour I wrote and posted a letter to Fr. Celestine Fernando, then living at Angulana, that we had a duty to help in the rehabilitation of the village. He responded promptly. Together, we contacted Professor C. J. Eliezer, Lakshman Gunawardene, J. E. Jayasuriya and the Director of the Institute of Social Work, Viswanathan. We also sought the help of Fr. Smidt of Hanwella. We decided that a fortnight's work camp and a study of literacy and educational provision in the village should be undertaken as a joint venture of the World University Service and the Institute, with Viswanathan as Director. It was a very successful camp and a rewarding experience for the participants. The following year, on my suggestion, Professor T. L. Green, J. E. Jayasuriya and I, organized a study of the social setting of the City of Colombo and the provision of Education and Leisure in that City. The field study was carried out by the sixty graduate students of the University Department of Education, under the guidance of the staff. We also had the co-operation of the Department of Census and Statistics in the selection of sample households and in the processing of the data. The UNESCO's Indian office wrote to me to say that this was the first time the use of leisure had been studied in any Asian City and published an abstract of my paper on 'Leisure in the City of Colombo'. Passing over other work camps and field studies in which I was involved, I may be permitted to refer to the Moladanda Work Camp, 1961, which I directed as Chairman of the Committee set up by the Kandy Youth Council. We had an adviser from the Indian Movement and one from the S.C.I. There were some 36 young volunteers, half drawn from the Kandy area, half from the rest of the Island. The enthusiasm to make this village accessible

by road for the first time prompted surrounding villages to work alongside our volunteers, each village one day. How proud I felt at the road opening, to be the first person to reach Moladanda in a motor jeep? The two big work camps in the North, Uruthirapuram (1962) and Neervely (1964) were organized by the All-Ceylon Gandhi Seva Sangam, of which I was the President then, with half the volunteers from the South, from the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement. On looking back, it is a matter for satisfaction to me that every field study or work camp team was national in its composition.

All these experiences filled me with hope that given the right cause and the right leadership we could work together, North and South.

Another experience of mine, at another level, also restored my faith in my people. The City of Jaffna to which I belonged was far from being the City Beautiful. I mooted the idea of a Civic Week, combined with a Health Week (1968). It was a joy to see young volunteers from the schools joining municipal labourers in a bid to clean up every road and bye-way in the City. Minister Tiruchelvam inaugurated the week at a meeting on the lawn of the Town Hall, where prominent citizens and humble labourers sat together. We published an illustrated souvenir to which I contributed the introductory article: "This is your City". Now, fifteen years later, the citizens of the Northern Capital, who witnessed with joy the country's first Civic Week, are, however, yet awaiting the fulfilment of their dreams about their beloved City!

I return now to the big dream I have dreamt all my adult days that my beloved motherland would one day bear the marks of liberty and unity, and perhaps serve as a model to countries in South and S.E.Asia. 'Liberty has no price in this country', the French Lecturer in Peradeniya had quipped at a meeting of some University dons in my last year there. It was a meeting a group of us had with Salvador de Madariaga in a don's house. I also often recall what Madariaga has written about the trend in modern states:

> "The strong centralizing trend of modern states gradually deprives of their substance all forms of community life that

lie between the individual and a huge central state. The individual is thus left with nothing between himself and that octopus which spreads over and absorbs his whole country.. and this is the first ground the liberal has for demanding in the name of liberalism that the central state should disperse much of its power over less than national communities."

The Gandhi Centenary: International Seminar on Relevance of Gandhi to Our Time!

So it was with much anguish, and yet with some hope, that I welcomed the approach of Gandhi Centenary Year, 1969. I had been invited to be a member of the National Committee under the Chairmanship of Senate President A. Ratnayake; and was a Vice-Chairman of the Jaffna District Committee of which Mr. F. C. Pietersz, the G. A. was Chairman. For the latter I helped to bring out five issues of "Gandhi Kaadiya Vali" and addressed a few Gandhi centenary meetings, chiefly in schools. But there were two grave disappointments. One, when the Government turned down the request, made through the Chairman of the National Committee, to issue a Gandhi Centenary postage stamp. The other, when the Jaffna Committee's 13 villages-development scheme and the Batticaloa Committee's 5 villages-development scheme, were denied any of the foreign funds which were freely available to the 100 Villages Development Scheme in the South. Nevertheless the visits of Shri Jayaprakash Narayan in January and Shrimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit in October were welcome like rain in a parched field. I prepared myself for J.P.'s visit particularly by studying his scheme of building democracy from below and also reading what Western thinkers, like Guy Wint and Hugh Gaitskell had to say about Jayaprakash's ideas. All this prepared me for the International Seminar on Releance of Gandhi to Our Time, in New Delhi, Jan 30-Feb. 5 as one of the three delegates of our National Committee. My wife accompanied me and we had a most enjoyable stay at the Gandhi Peace Foundation. Living there in the company of dedicated Gandhians like Jayaprakash and the Frontier Gandhi and daily meeting some of best known International Gandhianf igures, it was truly an uplifting period of my life. The week

commenced with a prayer meeting at the Gandhi Samadhi on the morning of January 30, presided over by President Giri. After the Seminar we returned to Madras, thence by rail to Madura and the Gandhi Museum hostel there. We took the opportunity of seeing some village work in the surrounding areas before returning home by the Tiruchi-Jaffna air route.

I re-enter politics

The Indian journey and the New Delhi Seminar re-awakened in one the hope of finding a Gandhian answer to the problems of my beloved Lanka, and by the same token of securing an honourable settlement for the Tamils in this country. And when the House of Representatives constituted itself into a Constituent Assembly, despite the flaw in that move, I thought we should join in what may turn out to be a historic task. I contacted a few men of worth like Justice Manicavasagar, Doctor V. T. Pasupati, Advocate Soorasankaran and Principal K. Pooranampillai, and together, we decided to call an All-Ceylon Conference of leading Tamil citizens, including all present and past Tamil Senators and Members of Parliament. The Tamil Conference met for its First and Second Sessions in the Jaffna Town Hall on September 15, 1970, and on February 8, 1971, and reached its decisions by consensus. But to our dismay we discovered that not only was Tamil opinion not heeded in the Constituent Assembly, even the members of the Assembly exercised no more than the right to vote on the proposals placed before them, the Minister of Constitutional Affairs having made it clear that any amendments proposed must conform to the party manifesto of the United Front. Further, the possibility of a national participat on in Constitution making by means of public meeting and the press, was curtailed by a pervasive censorship under the Emergency during that period. The Tamil Conference therefore met in its Third Session February 5, 1972, at Veerasingham Hall and unanimously adopted a Resolution stating our reasons why the Prime Minister should not proceed with the Draft Constitution.

We derived some satisfaction, however, from the fact that some of the new ideas which were placed before the country by our Conference were moved in "the Constituent Assembly" by its members. The following examples may be given:-

1. "The Republic of Sri Lanka shall be a secular State but shall protect and foster Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam". (Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam)
2. "Restructure Government on the V llage Council base and form Electorate and District Councils by the upward integration of Councils at lower levels." (Mr. S. Kathiravelupillai)
3. a. "The legislature shall be bicameral" (Messrs. J. R. Jayawardene, Dudley Senanayake and S. J. V. Chelvanayakam)
   b. "The total membership of the Second Chamber shall be about half that of the first. One-third of the members shall be elected by the First Chamber voting province-wise, one-third shall be elected, also province-wise, by electoral colleges consisting of delegates from Electorate Councils, which in turn are delegates' assemblies representing Village Councils. The remaining one-third shall be chosen by All-Island Electoral Colleges, half representing the major professions and the other half the Trade Unions." (Mr. M. Tennakoon)
4. "The President shall be elected for a period of six years by an electoral college consisting of members of both Houses of Parliament and the members of duly constituted local bodies in the country". (Messrs. J. R. Jayawardene, Dudley Senanayake, S. J. V. Chelvanayakam)
5. "No National Assembly shall function for more than five years" (Messrs. J. R. Jayawardene, Dudley Senanayake, S. J. V. Chelvanayakam)

These hopeful tokens notwithstanding, with our knowledge of the dismal story of the making of the 1972 Constitution, how could one subscribe to the claim that "we the people of Sri Lanka..acting through the Constituent Assembly established by us, hereby adopt enact and give to ourselves this Constitution"? Nor say, that the Tamils of Sri Lanka consider this Constitution as their Constitution? Nor yet think, that its Chapter of Fundamental Rights and the words that "all persons are equal before the law" carries any meaning when at the very moment of its enactment, the concept of "equal access to higher education on merit" was being infringed

in Sri Lanka? And infringed, as I said in an open letter to the Minister of Education, by a scheme of 'standardization of marks' unknown to the vocabulary of educational science?

The Tamils of Sri Lanka and their several parties met in the historic City of Trincomalee on May 14 to form the Tamil United Front. And on May 22, when by a majority, the so-called Constituent Assemby adopted the new Constitution, only 4 of the 19 Tamil members of Parliament voted for its acceptance; 3 of these had already been expelled from the parties on whose tickets they entered the House, while the fourth, elected as an independent, had crossed over to the S.L.F.P. At the call of the Front, the new Republic Day was marked by a hartal throughout the Tamil speaking areas. A founder member of the T.U.F., I was elected to their Action Committee and Working Committee. On June 25, 1972, the Action Committee met at Mahavalavu, Kopay, to ask the Prime Minister to amend the new Constitution so as to meet the aspirations of the Tamil people. At the request of Thanthai Chelvanayakam, I had drafted a resolution, with six demands, indicating the lines along which the Constitution should be amended so as to make it acceptable to the Tamil people. If meaningful steps were not taken to so amend the Constitution within a period of three months, the Front resolved to launch a non-violent struggle to secure the future of the Tamil people in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres on the basis of self-determination.

Let alone this appeal to the Prime Minister and the politicians, I felt that no stone should be left unturned. On September 1 of the same year I spent a whole day with Bishop Lakshman Wickremasinghe in Kurunegala to review the situation. One outcome of this meeting was the Sinhala-Tamil Dialogues – Colombo (September 24), Jaffna (October 22), and Kandy (December 3).

This sad Decade

The ten years following the 1972 Constitution have witnessed events contributing to the further unbuilding of the nation and the further erosion of the democratic principle in every sphere, in politics, in the economic structures, and in the control of both learning and

the mass media. The saddest thing of all, Racism has become a dominant factor in Sri Lanka.

Following the Tragedy of January 10, 1974, a public meeting setup a Committee of 10 citizens to arrange an Inquiry. The de Kretser Commission consisting of two former Supreme Court Judges and a Bishop heard evidence and submitted their findings. It fell to my lot as the Vice-Chairman of the Citizens' Committee to make the arrangements and to draft the Foreword to the published report. The Government failed to take action, but the tragedy of January 10th proved a turning point, something like Jalianwala Bagh in India. January 10th has become Martyrs Day. I was asked to preside over the meeting in the Muneeswara Temple grounds held in this connection and the anniversary meetings on January 10th, the first few years.

The new Constitution of 1978, from its first reading to the final Act, all adopted within the space of a few weeks, provided for a Presidential Executive style of government. A grave commentary on this Constitution, subsequently amended also in haste, was the device of the Referendum of December 22, 1982, by which the life of the present Parliament has been extended by another six years. The substitution of the Referendum for a purpose for which the Referendum is not used in any democracy is a repudiation of Art 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which lays down that the will of the people as expressed in periodic and genuine elections is the basis of the authority of government.

Meanwhile, racial attacks on the Tamils of Sri Lanka have become more pronounced, some of them with political backing, since the General Election of 1977. I had abstained from voting for the "Tamil Eelam" Resolution at the Vaddukoddai Tamil Convention of May 14, 1976. My formula still is, Tamil self-determination (or autonomy) within the framework of Sri Lanka, if possible; without, if necessary. When, on receiving a directive from the World Council of Churches, Program to Combat Racism, Bishop Lakshman Wickremasinghe called a Consultation on Racism in Sri Lanka, I took part in these meetings. 1979-80. I took part too in the goodwill meetings organized early this year by Mudiyanse Tennekoon.

CONCLUSION: the writer's prayer

Ours is in truth an ailing society—North and South. Sri Lanka went under the heel of foreigners over and over again, betrayed by what is false within. The dynamic of the Gandhian Indian revolution and the world situation promoted Britain's withdrawal from the subcontinent and from our shores as well.

Once again, lacking a social philosophy appropriate to our culture, our political structures and our economic set-up show so much weakness. Nor, did we gain any strength that comes by our adhering to moral values.

Nor indeed, are we the Tamils of Sri Lanka coming into our own. Violence and the cult of the bomb, if anything, adds to our weakness. Alas! Even if we gain our freedom, we may not be able to put our house in order.

Swaraj or self-determination, is not something to be gifted by one people to another. It has to be earned the hard way—by building deep convictions in our people, by laying the foundations of our economic strength, swadeshi not the least part of it, making the educational enterprise at all levels integral to the new social and economic order; more than all, by firm adherence to the right means to secure the right ends.

The writer of these papers has dreamt all his adult life of a New Lanka where Sinhalese-speakers and Tamil-speakers will live as equal partners and with equal dignity. He has derived much of his hope from the Gandhian message snd what it has achieved so far. It looks as if the world may once again turn to Gandhi. As Sandy Mac Donald, writing in **New Age** (February 1983) has put it:

> At a time once again—still? as always?—when the injustices and threats that stalk the world seem to demand desparate measures, Gandhi's message is as urgent as ever, and just as essential. If the universal acclaim that the (Gandhi) film has aroused is any indication, the world may at last be willing to listen.

No less, the writer believes:

Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain (Psalm, 127—1)

The writer sends forth these papers to his fellow Tamils, to the rest of his fellow countrymen in Sri Lanka, and to others beyond these shores, with a prayer that men here and everywhere may be helped to catch that Gandhian message and this faith in God's power.

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May 1983

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General Education

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCING CEYLON

Ceylon has a recorded history reaching back to at least the famous sixth century before Christ. But the two main streams of tradition that have irrigated her historical development go further back and derive their source from India, and are in fact drawn from the same great cultural reservoir from which the Eastern half of the world yet draws its inspiration. Of these two streams of tradition the one owes its birth to Siddharta, Gautama Buddha, India's great spiritual genius and one of the world's greatest sons. The other tradition is older still and represents Hindu Culture as developed in the schools of Southern India. Each of these traditions developed a distinct individuality in Ceylon, and in fact the Buddhist tradition attained to such perfection here, both in its philosophy and its practice, that when Buddhism disappeared as a separate faith from the land of its birth, Ceylon came to be regarded by all Buddhist lands as the spiritual home of the religion of the Middle Way.

The Buddhist tradition used the Sinhalese language for its appeal to the people and the allied Pali language for preserving the ancient canon. Thus Sinhalese and Pali developed side by side, but for a long time the language of the sacred texts held a higher place than the vulgar tongue. Slowly, however, Sinhalese came into its own, the new language drawing rich nourishment from Pali and Sanskrit and also from Tamil. Sinhalese literature entered upon its golden age in the fifteenth century in the spacious times of King Parakrama Bahu VI. Princes, priests and peasants contributed towards this renaissance, but pride of place belongs to the author of the immortal Kavyasekharaya, Sri Rahula of Totagamuwa.

The Hindu tradition was no doubt connected both with early Buddhism and the early history of the Sinhalese, but its characteristic development in Ceylon as in South India was in the Saiva religion and the Tamil language. This language is one of the earliest of the known speeches of man and the vehicle of a literature

that is among the highest literary achievements of the human race. Of all Indian languages it has a literature second only to Sanskrit. Its greatest extant classics, Silappadikaram, Manimekalai and the sacred Kural, belong to the Sangam Age of the early centuries of the Christian era. In its new home in Ceylon, Tamil had its savants and in its spoken style has preserved a purity known as Sen-Tamil that is beginning to attract South Indian scholars. The fifteenth century witnessed not only the greatest epoch of Sinhalese poetry but also the most flourishing period of Tamil poetry in Ceylon, of which Arasa Kesari's epic translation of Raghuvamsam was the greatest work.

Such then have been the traditions and the literature that guided and illuminated the paths of our forefathers during their eventful sojourn in the land they settled in. The poetry prompted by these traditions directed their lives and ennobled their hearts; it consecrated home life and cheered them in their toil; it wiped away tears and comforted the dying. It released the fountains of life and the springs of hope. And it assured them of a life beyond life. But the inspiration supplied by Buddhism and Hinduism bore fruit in other ways too. For our ancestors cultivated ideals of Truth and Beauty and Goodness, and during the active centuries these ideals flowered in works of Peace and lives of Heroes. They cultivated music and delighted in the rhythm of the dance. Their temples and monasteries were closely connected with the national system of education. Their architecture was also dedicated to religion. Their colossal schemes of irrigation tanks still astonish modern engineers. Their skill in medical science was associated with a great tradition of free medical aid to the people. They created a great wealth of social customs and traditional law, craft guilds and popular institutions. They established too a fruitful contact with the outside world, extending from the Nile to the Bramahputra, from Rome to China, and ambassadors and traders travelled hither and thither with messages to kings or merchandise to foreign shores. There was no narrowness in Ceylon's cultural or commercial outlook, and her ancient visitors included pilgrims from China, merchants from Rome and tourists from Arabia.

An Eastern Rome! so exclaimed a foreign historian when he saw the ruined city of Anuradhapura. There, as in the other buried cities of Ceylon, a civilization carved in stone though in ruins still refuses to crumble to the dust. These stones are an imperishable record of our history and beneath them are the bones of those who erected them. These men speak to us from their graves. Through these stones they proclaim to us the glory that was Lanka. They call to us to restore that glory with the work of our hands and hearts.

From the time of the Treaty of Kandy to the Report of the Donoughmore Commission it has suited the purpose of many a foreign official, publicist and historian to point out the differences between the Sinhalese and Tamils and to point to our national history as only a tale of war between the Sinhalese people and the Tamil "invaders". Very subtly this view has been communicated to Ceylonese writers and public men and thus a false view of the past has gained wide currency. It is no doubt true that there were occasional spells of fighting in those early days of pioneering and colonisation and when it came to war sons of both races exhibited prowess and chivalry of which their descendants need not be ashamed. But this tale of war is not the true tale of Ceylon. Wars are no more the history of this country than they are the true history of any country. It may be said perhaps that wars in Europe have often been wars in which whole peoples were interested, but our wars have really been the sport of kings. For, while princes were contending for power and crowns were changing heads, the peasantry in their fields and self-governing villages , the scholars in their schools or retreats and the monks in their monasteries lived unconcernedly in peace cherishing the everlasting goods of the nation. It is no wonder that while the civilisations of Greece and Rome have passed away ours continues to live. Whoever then would write the true history of Ceylon must write a history of Peace.

That history is the story of a splendid co-operation between the two races. The two traditions we have spoken of have flowed into each other at many points of the Island's history and often lost identity. Many a Tamil prince was a friend of the Sangha and many a noble Sinhalese king built some Hindu temple for his Tami

subjects. Many a memorial of stone is also a monument to the joint efforts of Sinhalese and Tamil craftsman. But further, Does not the Mahavamsa record that the blood of the brother races was mixed in the veins of princes and people? Were not some of the greatest monarchs of our history the very embodiments of national unity? And this is not merely a story of long ago; the process of fusion still proceeds slowly but surely. And there is too the happy riddle of Tamil-speaking Sinhalese in the Negombo District. Co-operation between the two races certainly extended in the past to institutions of learning. Thus the Pirivena established at Totagamuwa in 1295 provided "instruction for Buddhists and Hindus, clerical and lay, in all the knowledge of the time, the Buddhist Canon and the four Vedas. The languages studied included Pali and Sanskrit, Sinhalese and Tamil." The question which race settled earlier in this country is only of academic interest; but whoever thinks in terms of race in the affairs of the country is not only a traitor to Ceylon but is false to the past.

Two other traditions have entered the Island in modern times. One is Islam with its emphasis on the oneness of God and the brotherhood of believers. Some of the Ceylon Muslims are converts, others came from abroad. The main section, known as Ceylon Moors, speak Tamil and sometimes Sinhalese as well. Their way of life and mode of thought is not far different from that of other Ceylonese. Islam has brought its contribution to the country, but it has not disturbed the fundamental unity of the national culture. On the other hand, thanks to the Muslim poets and theologians of South India, there is first-rate Muslim literature in Tamil, which language is also the one used in the "kutbas" and 'hathees" of local "imams" and "alims". Again Muslim merchants have for a long period before the coming of the European races to our shores and even afterwards contributed not only to the extension of Ceylon's international trade but her international contact as well.

The other tradition, that of the Christian religion, first arrived rather incongruously as the faith of foreign invaders. But even in the injury done to the Island by foreign occupation there was a measure of salvation. For surely we had fallen on evil days and

led a listless life; the past was hardly alive and the future uncertain; political intrigues marked this period of decadence. It was then the foreigner burst in like a storm. He ravished our land and trampled over our people. He pulled up the past by the roots and he imposed his alien culture. But there is value in discordance, as pointed out by Professor Whitehead. Dealing with the history of civilization in Europe he shows how Hellenism, instead of advancing by fresh adventure, was just striving for a static maintenance of past achievements. Instead of advance, decadence followed. But the fate of the Mediterranean civilization was saved by the fortunate irruptions of barbarians and the rise of two new religions, Christianity and Islam. The Indian seer who composed Raghuvamsam has an equally instructive parable: "Holy Father this curse of yours is to me really a blessing in disguise. When the fire burns a cultivated field it makes it the more fertile for send ing up shoots from the seeds sown."

It was, howeer, not merely by offering a challenge that the meeting with the West benefited us. The Christian Religion, though of Eastern origin, came to us through the mediation of men from the West. Christianity presented to us the wonderful per sonality of Jesus and his vision of the Kingdom of God where a man loves his neighbour as himself. This religion was preached by missionaries from Europe and America and its inspiration led them to establish schools and hospitals. Communities of Christians sprang up over the land and fortunately they did not become a social caste. But the appeal of the Sermon on the Mount transcends the walls of Christian Churches. In India it has found echoes in unexpected places from the time of Keshub Chander Sen to that of Mahatma Gandhi. So it does in Ceylon, where the true catholicity of the older religious tradition sanctions every new road to the self-same goal.

But the distinctive contribution the West has to offer is in the fields of Science and Government. The peculiar glory of the Western peoples consists in the scientific exploration of natural phenomena and in the scientific organisation of political institu tions. We have yet to make full use of this gift they can give us. The synthesis of East and West cannot be worked out till we breathe the air of material and moral freedom. For the creative spirit

flourishes only in a spacious freedom. But the absence of national freedom as well as the lack of a genuine national education has placed us in a helpless situation. And in the condition in which we are placed we have developed an excess of negative attitudes. Some deny there is anything in our national culture and blindly worship the West. Others are uneasy souls who hate the West and would fain go back to the past. Neither of these attitudes is helpful. Fresh creation will come neither from that copying nor from this conservative attitude. We must however await the coming of freedom in government and in culture for the emergence of a saner outlook, which will permit the judicious selection of the elements of a political civilisation to enrich what is essentially a cultural civilisation. To adapt words Radhakrishnan used of India: If Ceylon gains freedom within, then the Western spirit will be a great help to the Ceylonese mind.

To make anything of the future we must possess the confidence that can only be born of a consciousness of our priceless inheritance. The spirit that has characterised that inheritance is threefold: Firstly, an unconquerable belief even among the unlettered peasantry in the supremacy of the spiritual over the material; secondly, the ready acceptance of the principle of peace or non-violence based on the idea of the unity of all life; thirdly, a willingness to enter into harmonious relationship with members of all communities as is shown by the fact that Sinhalese and Tamils, Moors and Burghers, live side by side and show a toleration for one another that is hardly equalled in many other parts of the world. If we would that the river of life should flow vigorously in our country, we must see that the flowing stream draws its waters from the perennial spring of our inherited culture, and education must be the unobstructed channel by which the national tradition passes from generation to generation.

(*The Mother Tongue in Education, Ola Books 1945*)

CHAPTER 2 : EDUCATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN SRI LANKA

1. *The Background : Our Early Educational Traditions*

1.1 "India and Greece were the two great **thinking** nations who had made the history of the world. As Greece had been the leader of Europe, India would always be the leader of Asia"—Bishop Westcott, quoted by Radhakrishnan in *East and West.* Radhakrishnan goes on to list the countries, including Sri Lanka, which are witnesses to the spirit of India, Brahmanical and Buddhist. What has been said by another savant about the role of education in India would apply to this outpost of Indic civilization. 'There is no other country where the love of learning had so early an origin or has exercised so lasting and powerful an influence'. For, where the goal of life was conceived as the individual's need for self-realisation, life itself was conceived as an educational process and education as a life-long process. In the Guru-Sishya system, the family of the guru provided a natural environment for the personality development of the pupil; so did the communities of the early Hindu and Buddhist universities of India, the world's earliest universities. Not the least legacy of the past—'learning was independent of kings' (in the words of Vinoba Bhave).

1.2 The Indic civilization may well claim that it anticipated by many centuries *the inward freedom,* which constitutes the humanity of man, *the right to become; the freedom of ideas and expression;* and *the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions of their choice,* all freedoms now enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

1.3 But, despite the profession of two great faiths that affirmed the latent divinity of all men, the path of learning, at least of higher learning, was for the few. It was caste-

bound, or limited to the priestly orders, and thus knowledge denied free circulation. Besides, since life and learning were two sides of the coin to buy the life beyond, objective knowledge was not the thing sought, till to some extent Mahayana Buddhism liberalised the curriculum. Yet another limitation hampered the pursuit of knowledge in Sri Lanka till modern times, when in the age of paper and printing elsewhere, our scholars wrote with metal slylus on palm leaf. The saving factor, for the few and the many, was the oral tradition of teaching and preaching in halls adjoining temples and under the moon-lit sky.

2. *Portugal and the Netherlands in Sri Lanka*

2.1 By the mid-sixteenth century both the political situation and the levels of learning were at a low ebb in Sri Lanka. The local rulers, beset by political intrigues, called in the Portuguese virtually to take over the land and to establish Churches and Schools. So, it happened that Franciscans, Jesuits and Dominicans trained in the monastic Schools of Europe established schools on the European Christian model, over one hundred of them in the maritime areas which they came to occupy. There were 'colleges', one in Colombo, one in Jaffna, one in Nawagamuwa, which purveyed the learning of medieval Catholic Europe.

2.2 When the Netherlands wrested the maritime provinces from Portugal in the middle of the XVIIth Century, the Dutch established a decentralised network of schools, using the Sinhala and Tamil media, along with two seminaries in the Renaissance tradition, one in Colombo and one in Jaffna. The setting up in 1736 of the first printing press, casting Sinhala and Tamil types, was an event with far-reaching results.

2.3 But when all is said, we should not exaggerate the contribution of the education given in their institutions, during the two-and-half centuries of Portuguese and Dutch occupation, towards the development of Human Rights. 'To convert the benighted native to the true

reformed religion', runs a record of the Dutch period. If this was the motive behind free and compulsory education, that education could hardly have been a liberating force. All we can say is that the Portuguese provided a base in the shape of churches and schools for the Dutch to commence their 'Reformation'. In turn, the Dutch provided the added infra-structure of codified law and a communications system for the British who came after them. But, the sojourn of these two nations was no more than the commencement of a distant journey towards the Declaration of 1948.

3. Britain in Sri Lanka

3.1 At the close of the 18th century, society in Sri Lanka was still feudal, tradition-bound, and caste-bound, with little evidence of the emergence of the individualized 'free' man. If this society had to make the 'great ascent'. a pervasive social transformation was called for. In a study of 'Society and Ideology in Ceylon, 1795-1850'(*University of Ceylon Review IX*,3-4) Ralph Pieris speaks of these 'blind alley civilizations' of the Eternal East and quotes Arnold Toynbee about their remaining at this stage of Archaism, till some alien empire-builder steps into the breach to perform for the ailing society the service that ought to have been performed by native hands. Britain, who had herself found a sheet anchor during the stormy seas following the Industrial and French Revolutions, clutching to the Liberal ideology and Protestant Ethic, became the unconscious tool of history in promoting a social revolution here. Hers was now 'a civilization on the march' and it was confrontation with such a civilization that helped our own civilization to climb out of the valley of defeat.

3.2 True our history ceased to be a natural evolution. Much of it came to be made in Britain. Our political institutions were copies of theirs. So were our legislative and administrative measures. Even the nationalism before which Britain has retreated from Asia and Africa in our time is of her own making. Perhaps her greatest gift was the new legal system, based on the principle of the rule of law, the same law for all and all equal before the

law. We do well to remember that the rule of law is a dynamic concept, not merely to "safeguard and advance the civil and political rights of the individual, but also to establish social, economic, educational and cultural conditions under which his legitimate aspirations and dignity may be realized". (International Commission of Jurists: Declaration of Delhi, 1959).

3.3 Equally unconsciously, the English Educational Model, its goals, structures, syllabuses, examinations, text books and all, was transplanted here. And so a new colonial elite, transcending and to some extent assimilating the small elite created by the two Dutch Seminaries, came into existence. They became the conscious and willing agents of the ideas and values behind the new political institutions and administrative system. The ideas and values came from a study of the English language and its literature, British history and institutions. Western classics, and the Christian religion. The schools were indeed a bit of England, with English games played, English music cultivated, English plays acted and English manners held in esteem. Yet it was a revolutionary change for Sri Lanka—substituting secular for sacred learning, lay teachers for monks, and the employment and civic motives for study for the ancient goal of self-realization.

3.4 Apart from the goals and content, there was a wide departure from the rigid government control of the Dutch regime. In fact a State Department of Public Instruction was set up only in 1869. And early in the 20th century, various advisory committees were tried, till in 1920 a consultative body called the Board of Education was set up both to advise government on educational policy and to frame code regulations within the framework of the main legislative enactments. After Independence, with the name changed to Central Advisory Council, it functioned till the late fifties, the first two Chairmen being Sir Ivor Jennings and Professor G. P. Malalasekera. The significance of using the consultative process, is that it is an essential part of the machinery of democratic

government. In fact, in the parallel field of higher education, the conversion of the government controlled University College into the autonomous University of Ceylon in 1942, we may say, anticipated democratic self-government for the country a few years later.

4. *Protestant Christian Missionary Enterprise and the Role of Christian Schools in Sri Lanka*

4.1 Following Ihe XVIII Century movement in Europe, spoken of as the Enlightenment, there was a Christian Missionary Movement on both sides of the Atlantic. Several Protestant Missionary societies came into being in Britain. Their motivation was the desire to Witness to their Faith (like religious missionaries through the ages) and to Serve. Learning of the closing of churches and schools in Sri Lanka after the overthrow of the Dutch power, a number of missions arrived in the country, most of them in the second decade of the 19th century. They lost no time in setting up schools in the areas where the Dutch had functioned earlier as well as ministering to the neglected Christian congregations. It was well and good that it was not the government but these voluntary agencies that set up these schools. The schools were developed little by little on the model of the Public School in England. Unlike the Dutch seminaries, these schools admitted non-Christians as well as Christians and those from the humbler castes too. Thus they promoted a silent social revolution. A school like the Christian Institution of Kotte went further. Its multi-ethnic composition — Kandyan-Sinhalese, Low-country Sinhalese and Tamils, created a new 'Ceylonese'identity unknown before. That the first Protestant schools of the British Period were wellset on their course is supported by Colebrooke's assessment (1831): The 90 government schools in the Low-country and 4 in the Malabar districts were 'extremely' defective and inefficient He adds, 'To the labours of these (Missionary) societies in the Cingalese and Malabar provinces the natives are principally indebted for the opportunities of instruction'.

4.2 We now turn to the event which brought about dynamic changes in the North as well as in the rest of the country. The Batticotta Seminary, founded in 1823 by the American Missionaries, created (in the words of Bishop Kulandran) 'a tremendous intellectual upsurge, the like of which has not been seen in the country before or since. It may be analysed as due to a cross fertilisation of cultures. The upsurge was many sided and included among its important products the evolution of Tamil prose as it is written today. The impetus created by the Seminary released forces that have been at work since then, and what was happening in Jaffna was not without its effect elsewhere'. A connected development, the opening by Dr. Samuel Green of the country's first Medical School at Manipay in 1848 using the Tamil medium and publishing some ten books on medicine and surgery in Tamil translations, prompted the opening of the Ceylon Medical College in 1870. Yet another development, the opening of the Uduvil Girls Boarding School in 1824, led to many other Girls' schools and women coming into their own.

4.3 Other Christian schools came into being followed by the establishment of first rate Roman Catholic Schools and later, following the Buddhist and Hindu Revival, of Buddhist and Hindu Institutions, and still later of Muslim Colleges that are all assets to the country. While the Buddhist and Hindu Revivals drew inspiration primarily from our indigenous traditions and were in a sense reactions to Christian Missionary activity, the positive influence of the educational system introduced by the missionaries was evident in the particular manifestation of the ideology and missionary zeal of the leaders of the revival, the manner of organization of their activity, and in the institutions they founded. Continued co-existence and co-operation between these institutions and Christian institutions is attributable to the religious tolerance which is a proud part of our cultural heritage. Another pioneering service of the Christian Missionaries was the opening in 1912 of the country's first school for the Handicapped, the Ceylon School for the Deaf and the Blind.

4.4 Jaffna College, the successor of the Batticotta Seminary and some of the bigger schools in the Jaffna Peninsula, Christian and Hindu, may well claim that they have played a key role in promoting Sri Lanka's national consciousness. Witness the battle for Sinhala and Tamil as media of learning and civic life, which (according to Prof. J. E. Jayasuriya) was fought by Tamil educationists helped in some measure by English Missionaries like Rev. A. G. Fraser, at a time when the Sinhalese were prepared to do without Sinhala; the battle for replacing British History by Ceylon and World History in the Curriculum, the battle for the free access of Harijans to schools! And was it not a teacher from Jaffna College and one from St. John's, Jaffna, who issued a notice for the unfurling on Sinhala and Tamil New Year's Day, 1932, on the Jaffna Esplanade of the tricolour of saffron, red and green, heralding the nation's Independence-to-be?

5. *At the Threshold of Independence, And The Years After*

5.1 It was during the 40s, as the country was hastening towards Independence, that the gates of opportunity were opened to many to whom they were so far closed. The opening of a number of Government Central Schools, the provision of free education and boarding scholarships and the change over of the medium of instruction from English to Sinhala and Tamil removed many road blocks. The gates were further widened when the University of Ceylon replaced University College. The Protestant Christian community forming but one per cent of the population but which had a 23 % enrolment in the University in its first year, 1942, have had that percentage sharply reduced year by year; it should be a cause for satisfaction that opportunities of education are now more evenly shared. They should equally derive comfort from the fact that their schools are still able to send a substantial number of meritorious candidates, Christian and non-Christian, into the Science based faculties in the Universities. And derive still

more comfort from the fact that they continue to provide a good part of the leadership in all walks of life in our dear motherland..

5.2 After the 'take over' of Assisted Schools by the ill-thought out and discriminatory pieces of legislation of 1960,1961, it is mainly the bigger Christian Schools, that have stood outside the State System and thus affirmed that the freedom of the school is the symbol of a free society. That nearly all these schools have representative Governing Bodies is a further token of the same freedom. Though the present Government has stepped into assist some of them, a permanent settlement has yet to be worked out.

5.3 But, they and the whole nation should be concerned with the grave weaknesses that have shown up these recent years. In the Eighties of this Century, as we prepare for the 21st Century, the British Public School model and 'from school to University' model are no longer valid, here or elsewhere. The products of our instititions may find themselves unequal to the society, life-style and labour market of 2001, which as Malcolm Adiseshiah has said of India, will be a heavily agriculture-based rural economy. The utilitarian attitude towards higher education and examinations, with those parallel schools called tutories, is a striking commentary both on free education and its goals! Are our young just in search of money and elitism through that tangle of a triangle, consisting of a 'good' school, a 'good' marriage and a 'big' job? Are not all our schools no more than creaming off the country side, to set the faces of the pupils in the direction of the Metropolitan City, or cities beyond our shores? It seems as if the 'better' educated want to go West, if they cannot exploit their fellowmen in an exploitive society; the less educated to go to West Asia, if lhey cannot reach the Singapore-style F.T.Z.! And what about the flight of teachers now constituting a critical brain drain for Sri Lanka and every school worth its name? What, with so much of non-school-going, drop-outs, push-outs, a 100-pupil years to produce one com-

plete O-levelite, with the majority of even literates as non readers, is not most of our schooling and education wasted?

5.4 Above all, as Paulo Freire, in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, has urged, would we have a prophetic vision of the new Society, liberated by education, not enslaved by it? An education that is a true pedagogy of the oppressed. Will all our schools and our higher education institutions serve for a new Exodus in the last 2 decades of the Century?

6. *The Era of Human Rights*

6.1 It has been our privilege to live in one of the great epochs in the history of mankind. The cardinal year 1948, which saw the birth of Sri Lanka as an independent nation, was about the time when a 1000 million humans in Asia and Africa were freed from colonial servitude. It was the year when organized humanity committed itself in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to what belongs to the essence of man. It was also the year of the death of Mahatma Gandhi, who had led the Indian movement for liberation by a remarkable non-violent strategy which history had not witnessed before; he it was who had also broken new ground by going beyond the ancient goal of individual self-realization, urging his countrymen to seek the moral regeneration of Indian society; it was a simultaneous struggle, albeit non-violent, against the foreign foe and the barbarian within! We may regard as important postscripts to the Declaration of Rights the chapters of Fundamental Rights inscribed in many national Constitutions, the 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the two Covenants signed by Sri Lanka this year and even such documents as the International Cooperative Alliance's Vienna Statement of six Cooperative principles (1966). Indeed, mankind has an obligation everywhere to test all institutions and procedures in lhe light of these documents.

6.2 But, as Charles Habib Malik of Lebanon, one of the key persons behind the drafting and adoption of lhe 1948

Declaration, says, in truth they found everywhere "only caricatures of humanity—men deprived of their material needs, oppressed by the ideas with which they interpreted themselves and the world, distorted by the arbitrary laws of their governments, warped by the customs and conventions of their societies, diminished and disfigured in their human stature". Malik adds that there was an aspect of "imposing upon man his rights", which is a contradiction in terms! "Men, cultures and nations must first mature inwardly in the consciousness of what belongs to them as human beings before governments can pledge themselves in international instruments". We deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us if we do not admit that Malik's assessment of humanity elsewhere is true of us here. May be, the moral leadership, unlike that of Gandhiji, failed to build in the minds and hearts of our people the national ideal and any deep convictions about human rights.

6.3 Witness our approach to Constitution-making whether in 1972 or 1978. We had before us the example of India, with whom we share the values of a great civilization. The fathers of the Indian Constitution first turned the Constituent Assembly into an "India in microcosm" ensuring that even the small minorities were well represented, and then applied with great effectiveness the characteristic Indian concepts of consensus and accommodation. Several fundamental rights were specially inscribed for the benefit of minorities. In our party-dominated parliament, where under the **mass party** system, a small group can dispose of the will of the members without even consulting them a party-determined constitution was adopted both in 1972 and 1978. In a system of government which does not provide for the participation of the people in decision-making, what room is there for the democratic process to precede the legislative process, let alone seek a consensus? How could the functioning of political institutions help to create political consciousness in the people and the spirit of community? How could convictions mature

about justice or liberty or equality or fraternity or other human rights? How could the father-land be other than caste, creed or race? Who will condemn communal politics and, sad to think, who will condemn communal violence? And will the readership insist on a free press, the listeners and the viewers an independent audio-visual media, and, not least, the two million former co-operators challenge their virtual disfranchisement and the virtual disbandment of a great people's movement, indeed part of an international order?

6.4 What we are seeking through education, its goals as well as structures, is likewise, the enrichment of national life in the expansion of society rather than of the State. We do well to get a clue from the British answer to the question of the distribution of power in education in what R. A. Butler said about the Education Act, 1944: "It seeks to create a synthesis between order and liberty, local initiative and national direction, voluntary agencies and the State, and the private life of the school and the public life of the neighbourhood". As the Taylor Report, *A new Partnership for our Schools* (HMSO, 1977) puts it, there should be a partnership in which each school should have its own Governing Body consisting of equal proportions of teachers, parents, local people and representatives of the education authority. From the English set up and that of other democratic countries, there should be District Councils in charge of education district-wise and a national consultative council to advise the Minister on policy. The Universal Declaration as well as the practice of countries like India, seeking "to promote respect for human rights and freedoms", and enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, guarantee the right of any section of citizens to set up and direct schools of their choice, with equal State aid, as well as the liberty of parents to choose schools for their children. Certainly, the direction of education by a group of officials sitting in the metropolis goes counter to the concept that education in a democracy is determined not by the State, but by the general will of the

community. It is indeed ironical that as we recede from the year of Independence we should have less and less use for the machinery of consultation. At the University level too, it is incumbent on us to recapture the ideal of university autonomy operative during the first Ihree decades of Ihe University of Ceylon and recapture too our own authentic ancient ideal of the freedom of learning. We must also restore the principle of 'equal access' enshrined both in the Declaration and in our own University Ordinance of 1942 and restore too the 'conscience clause' also enshrined in Ihe Declaration and our own 1978 Constitution as the first of the Fundamental Rights and, not least, restore the "freedom of information and ideas' enshrined in Article 19, but infringed with the mass media being largely under government control and patronage. Alas! For discriminatory practices to enter the field of education is to cut Ihe very ground under our feet, for in the words of a UN Report, "Education lays the foundation of every single form of the struggle against discriminalion in general"!

6.5 Turning to the positive role which our education can play at this critical time, we may illustrate it by highlighting some aspects of education for national integration. First, the multi-ethnic classroom with reasonable concentration of both language groups, so as not to violate the identity and self-esteem of either group, can contribute to the evolution of a harmonious multi-cultural, multi-ethnic society in Sri Lanka sensitive to human rights and dignity. For, here they learn each other through each other's language and each other's language through each other. Second, since by Ihe nature of the case, the number of multi-ethnic schools will be limited, the distance between different ethnic groups and social classes and even different regions, would be reduced if senior pupils and school leavers are encouraged to live and work in shramadana camps in different parts of the country. Third, by a similar token, one or two universities conceived as national universities and some postgraduate departments of regional univer-

sities also so designed, will help to bind the generations together, when they come to share "a common intellectual estate". Fourth, "burn the books which teach hatred, burn them all". The movement for the mutual revision of history books started with this call of Anatole France at the end of World War I. We too would do well to re-write the History of Sri Lanka as an integral nation-wide conception, discarding racial myths and without elevating spells of fighting among adventurers into national wars. On the other hand, a trilingual anthology of selections from ancient and modern writing here, will help to convey the badly needed message of reconciliation. Lastly, neither nationhood nor sensitiveness to rights and duties, can be legislated for nor created under duress. They have to be a perpetual creation by education in the largest sense and by an educative society made up of all our institutions and their modes of functioning.

7. Conclusion

7.1 It is a revolutionary new society that was envisaged by the 1948 Declaration, and so our educational system itself must undergo radical change in goals, structures and modes of functioning in order to promote that social revolution. For one thing, we have to discard both the school model derived from the British Public School and the tutory model of teaching that has come into vogue especially in the higher forms of all schools. For another, the need has been insistent these many years to replace the pre-Declaration and pre-Independence Education Ordinance of 1939 (with subsequent amendments) by a modern Law of Education that will enshrine our own educational model, based on our own model of development. If this measure is to be equal to the challenges of our time, we must first take a synoptic view of the various constituents of a modern educational system, at all levels, by means of a full-fledged Commission, consisting of experts in various fields, including may be some picked from abroad. The willingness to think deeply, and to change radically, is the condition of our survival.

7.2 The school is a society of young people more than it is a place of instruction. There is no surer way of carrying an entire nation into the era of human rights than by planning its schools as model communities, designed to initiate the young in the art of community. The Common or Neighbourhood School concept implying that at the primary stage all children in the neighbourhood, irrespective of caste, creed, community or social status should attend the same school will not only help to weld them into a good school community, but go a long way to make the larger community outside more of a community. Complementary to the common primary school the School Complex or a system of schools for a larger, area integrally linked together will make both a social and educational contribution to the area. The special educational needs of lhe physically or mentally handicapped should not be forgotten in planning the school complex.

7.3 From another angle, the present Formal education, structured and graded must be modified too by the assimilation of 'schools-without-walls' or other avenues for Non-formal education, especially for school dropouts and working adults, still for others the possibility of carrying further this 'unfinished business' of schools. Thus , a school co-operative or farm can be a point of departure for Non-formal education in which both senior pupils and school leavers can jointly participate. This sociely will habituate pupils to the democratic process as well as implant in their social philosophy the Co-operative Ideal and the Development Ethic, both of value for development. Yet another powerful instrument of formal and non-formal education, both for young students and adults, is the provision of a network of school and public libraries, all linked together, and promoting the reading habit, discussion groups and other cultural activities.

7.4 The days of full scale, remote External Examinations for schools are numbered. The shift must be to internal school assessment, supervised by expert officers from the State Department of Education, and further checked by a modified system of local external examinations. Pupils must earn their places in the world of work almost in the manner they earn their places in the field of games. At the same time, the concept of life-long education derives from the discovery that a spell of schooling in the early years of one's life may be grossly inadequate to meet the needs of either a maturing person or a rapidly changing technological world.

7.5 We do well to heed the advice of the Kothari Report, **Education and National Development** (1966), that the district should be the basic unit for integrating education with socio-economic development planning. The programmes for the reduction of regional imbalances in educational development will have to be pursued side by side with the wider programmes for removing imbalances in socio-economic development. Democratic decentralisation on the basis of a local-central partnership will make these programmes meaningful. If five men sitting at the Centre should not determine educational policy and programmes, neither should there be 'directors of education' locally, but 'education officers' to implement programmes of the local authority! Indeed enlightened methods of educational consultation and administration could be a significant contribution to the art of government itself.

7.6 One of the high priorities in educational change in Sri Lanka is the need to raise the quality of teachers. If the Human Rights Declaration posits 'equal access'' it must be to 'equal education' by international standards. Much of the teaching force in this country must be classed as under-educated, especially after the entry of thousands of teachers by means of 'chits' in recent years and the

simultaneous brain drain of qualified teachers at the other end. And long, far too long, have we managed our education without a large enough body of educationists with higher degrees engaged in its direction and in research and writing. It is now a matter of the utmost urgency not merely to think of an all-graduate profession at the secondary level, but to have a core of trained graduates of distinction to teach Advanced Level classes and to fill directive positions in all schools and in non-formal education centres. One necessary condition will be the payment of salaries adequate to attract and retain a large number of our brightest graduates in the teaching profession and within Sri Lanka. The professional training of teachers, some of them drawn from other vocations, and Extension Services of various kinds will also help to improve standards.

7.7 Knowledge has never been so central to national growth as it is today. And in Boulding's striking phrase—the need is for human beings to change their ways of thinking more in the next twenty-five years than they have done in the previous twenty-five thousand years. The universities, the schools, research institutions, learned bodies, cultural institutes, book and periodical publications, and libraries form part of the constellation of symbols that constitute a country's intellectual system. It follows that where a country lacks the elements of an intellectual system, it loses the future! The schools miss their full potential!! And its citizens cannot rise to the height of the enjoyment of their human rights and basic freedoms!!!

(*Impact of Religious and Cultural traditions on the Development of Human Rights in Sri Lanka in the field of Education—with special reference to the Role of Christian Schools in the 19th and 20th Centuries.* Paper presented to the Seminar on the Development of Human Rights in Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka Foundation, Colombo, 1981.)

CHAPTER 3: THE LANGUAGE BARRIER TO INTERNATIONAL LIFE

LANGUAGE is the essential means of communication. When it comes to the mother-tongue, it is "the stuff of which our selves are made; it is the most important of all formative influences in moulding not only the intellect, but the character also". It is therefore much more than means of communication. It is a powerful implement by which not only individuals may develop and express personality but groups may discover collective consciousness. It should be granted that the world is the richer when an individual or a group use language as a creative instrument. This is, of course, not to say that people are born with a language; in fact, in early times people changed their speech freely owing to such factors as migration, conquest, and the shifting of frontiers. Israel is a modern instance of settlers drawn from other lands and speaking scores of languages all acquiring a new language in order to make a new nation. Apart from this example, modern history knows no mass change of language anywhere. In the older countries, as people got attached to their soil and became a self-governing group, a national language became a potent means of developing national consciousness, distinctiveness, and distinction. A people's language became part and parcel of their way of life. And one may no more stifle the speech of a people than deny them the practice of their faith.

The resurrection of the national languages is at the centre of the modern renaissance by which many erstwhile colonial countries are not only winning release from European domination but also gaining their own soul. Often it is the utterances of poets and prophets in their native tongue that has heralded the birth of a new nation. The concept of nationalism stands not merely for Ihe transference of power to the indigenous people but a sense of belonging together. It is the wide use of the people's language that will make it possible for the democratic community to become more democratic and more of a community.

It should also be remembered that it is largely through their mother-tongue that internationalism and a world outlook can be built in the minds of men. For it is through their everyday speech

that ideas of whatever origin can reach the masses. Genuine international understanding is not so much understanding between states as between peoples, beginning with individual men and women. Marcus Aurelius wrote in the second century: "My nature is rational and social, and my city and my country, so far as I am Antonius is Rome, but so far as I am a man, is the world."

So again, it was in his own Tamil that an Indian poet wrote:

"Every country is my country;
Every man is my kinsman."

Two Tongues for a Nation

A single linguistic group has often articulated a state of its own. Almost as often, as a result of the dynamic of history, two or more linguistic groups have found themselves within the bosom of a single state. Differences have been heightened when the languages were believed to be clues to different racial origins and heightened further when the racial myths coincided with the profession of different religious faiths. Toynbee discerned that "in disintegrating civilizations at an advanced stage of their decline we are apt to see languages waging internecine wars with one another.." Some of the newly independent Asian and African countries have yet to integrate themselves into stable nations by overcoming their language barriers and disposing of the connected racial and tribal myths. The writer's own country of Ceylon epitomizes the unresolved Afrasian tragedy. The population being composed of only two language groups, seven million Sinhala-speaking and three million Tamil-speaking (the latter includes a million plantation workers of Indian origin), the problem is itself relatively simple. On the eve of independence a decision of the legislature pledged the country to make both languages official languages on equal terms. A Select Committee recommended that both national languages should be taught in secondary schools in order to train the bilingual officers needed for the new public service, English being the obligatory foreign language from the primary school level. Eight years after independence, in the bid for power at the General Election of 1956, the leaders of the main political parties tried to outbid each other in their appeal to the racial consciousness of the electorates. The

Sinhala-only Act was passed in the new House of Representatives with every Tamil-speaking vote (and some Sinhala votes as well) cast against the unequal law. Tamil resistance, racial riots, and long spells of emergency have followed; but the conflict remains unresolved. When we cross over from Asia to Africa the problem becomes more complicated owing to the presence in each state of several different language speaking tribes. The most ancient and stable kingdom of Ethiopia presents this language dilemma as well as any newly emergent state. There are, first of all, the indigenous languages, the Emperor's Amharic, the official language, spoken in three provinces and the urban areas and in all by a fifth of the population, Geez, the language of the Coptic Church and its liturgy, and some fifly tribal tongues indigenous to different regions. Of foreign languages, English has now replaced French as official second language. The educational programme sorting out this confusion is to teach the mother-tongue for two pre-school years, use Amharic as medium at elementary school, with English as a subject and gradually taking over as medium in the higher forms. Granted the need for a trilingual approach in such a context, the almost total dropping out of the mother-tongue and the premature emphasis on other languages seems unwise both from the educational and social angles.

Many countries, however, which have a politically mature body of citizens and were fortunate enough to possess great national leadership at the critical period of their history, are well on the way to an abiding settlement. The happiest settlement has been in countries which, already possessing some degree of mass bilingualism (or trilingualism), decided to adopt the policy of according equal status to all languages. Finland has it written into its Constitution: "Finnish and Swedish shall be the national languages of the Republic." This equal status is scrupulously observed not only in parliament and general administration, but in such things as the telephone directory and street names. The language accord has necessarily reached the classroon. Both languages are taught in all schools, as first or second language, and translation from one to the other is required at the matriculation examination. But, since neither language has world currency, English and German are

taught in the higher forms. Two federal states, Switzerland and Canada, may also be cited to prove the value of giving equal treatment to all groups. German-Swiss, French, and Italian are full federal languages in Switzerland, and conventions about the composition of the executive add to the stability of this neutral republic. Her trilingual air mail labels carry the message of Swiss unity to every corner of the globe. The Constitution of Canada provides that both English and French shall be federal languages, as well as official languages in Quebec. In both parliaments both languages are used and the Throne Speech is delivered in both English and French. Paper currency and postage stamps carry legends in both languages with equal prominence. This bilingual policy is also obligatory on the courts and the Crown corporations. The secondary schools and the universities encourage Canadians to study both English and French, and to look upon each other's language and culture as their common heritage.

Two other federal states, also concerned to ensure the equality of all citizens, had to find a somewhat different solution owing to the multiplicity of the languages spoken. The U.S.S.R. has retained the Russian language, spoken by two-thirds of the population, as Union language and second language in schools while guaranteeing in her Constitution the cultural and linguistic autonomy of the constituent republics and regions. A foreign language, generally German and less frequently English or French, is now common in schools. The Indian Union, faced with a similar situation, is endeavouring to win recognition for Hindi, the most widely spoken of Indian languages, as the Union and inter-state language, with English as an associate language for an indefinite period, while recognizing fourteen regional languages(including Hindi), one (or more) of which may be adopted as official language of any state or even district. India is convinced that a three-language formula (the mother-tongue, English, and Hindi, or another Indian language for those whose mother-tongue is Hindi) both in higher education and the Federal public service will answer her problems best, equalize opportunities for citizens, and promote an all-India outlook.

Lingua Franca

Even in past epochs people realized that speaking in more than one tongue would not carry them far unless one of these tongues

had currency over a wide region. Conquerors, religious missionaries, and groups of traders helped to develop certain languages as lingua franca of great tracts of the world. Pilate put an inscription over the Cross of Christ in three languages—the local Hebrew, Greek, which was the lingua franca of Alexander's former empire, and Latin, borne to Palestine with the eagles of the Roman legions and destined to become successively lhe lingua franca of the Roman Empire and the world-wide Roman Catholic Church. From the age of Louis XIV, the French language won as much as French arms and succeeded in becoming the lingua franca of widely separated regions, while the English language allied itself with British sea-power to spread itself over even more distant shores. The Arabic language, too, has established a hegemony over the Moslem world. In the Far East the Chinese language has penetrated beyond China proper, from where Malay takes over up to the isles stretching from Madagascar to the Philippines. On the other side of the Pacific, despite the collapse of the Spanish Empire, South America remains a colony of Spanish.

Partly because of this historical development, partly because of the victory of the 'Big Five' in World War 11, English, French, Spanish, Russian, and Chinese were adopted as the official languages of the United Nations, with English and French as the working languages. English and French are also the official languages of the International Court of Justice.

Esperanto as an International Language

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, thinking men realized the value of having a single international language to meet the demands of increasing inter-communication between nations. A new language, Esperanto, was artificially constructed lest the adoption of one of the existing languages should offend the national pride of others. But Esperanto met with only limited success and that in small countries like Czechoslovakia. May be, even for an auxiliary language, we want it to serve many more purposes than political communication between governments.

English as an International Language

"Regions Caesar never knew thy posterity shall sway." Since the poet wrote these triumphant lines during the peak of Britain's

greatness, Commonwealth has replaced Empire and resurgent national languages are used where once English was the state language. But the Empire of English now extends even beyond regions Britain ever ruled or the poet's dream envisaged. And ironically, it is the English language that has been the British Empires undoing; for the nationalism before which Britain is retreating in Asia and Africa is of her own making, with ideas of justice and liberty and equality taught from English textbooks. K. M. Panikkar has pointed out that the English language gave to India more than a common language; it supplied the ideas that went to make the revolutionary charges of the modern period and helped to create an *elite* imbued with these new purposes. Now, no longer as usurper of the mother-tongue but its ally (in Gandhi's happy phrase) the English language and English books will help those in Asia and Africa to catch up with the modern world. Not least, it is the encounter with the West that will enable the Asian peoples to turn their own ancient languages to new uses. Granted that those who do not write in the mother-tongue will not be read locally, it must also be admitted that those who do not read English (or other foreign languages) will have little to write.

Nor is it all a one-way traffic from the West that has flowed from this confrontation of the East with a 'civilization on the march'. Witness the distinguished contribution made in every field of knowledge by Indian and other Asians writing in the English language. Mahatma Gandhi embodied in his life and message this two-way traffic. On one hand, he was deeply influenced by his reading (in English) of the New Testament and the writings of such prophetic thinkers of the West as Tolstoy, Thoreau, and Ruskin; on the other hand, he repaid this debt by putting forth his message in the English language for both Indian and foreign audiences. This inter-continental communication in ideas goes farther back in time. Thoreau, for example, derived his inspiration from reading, in English translation, the Gita and other ancient classics of India.

We are living in an age of rapid change. The social and scientific revolutions of our times have brought about a greater interdependence of all peoples. Meanwhile, amidst the cries of the cold war, the peoples of the world have listened to the deeper

anguish of humanity. There is a growing conviction that any man's hunger or squalor, ill-health or ignorance diminishes all men, and that it is a collective task of the nations to join in this other war. Amidst the contending nationalisms we can perceive an emerging world community, a new mankind conscious of its common destiny. Like any other association a world community has to be built on mutual understanding, which in turn has to be sustained by Ihe process of free discussion at all levels—the United Nations Organization, the official international agencies, and a host of voluntary associations cutting across linguistic and national frontiers. There are also official and voluntary institutes for study and research, some serving regions of the world, others fully international in their coverage. At another level, trade and economic co-operation are becoming more and more global in character. In this expanding context, knowledge and information have to be disseminated on a world-wide basis. The need has arisen to sponsor study and travel and consultation among statesmen, scientists, and experts of all kinds. Now, with no pre-meditated plan, English has become the language of much of this inter-communication. It was, paradoxically enough, the main language used in the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi, the Afrasian Conference in Bandung and the conference of Heads of African States in Addis Ababa. It would seem impracticable and unwise to refuse the aid of this ready-made tool of easy communication, no longer the King-Emperor's English but the self-chosen language of free peoples.

Apart from its wide dispersion, it is the wide range of knowledge that is available in English books and periodicals and other media that makes the language adequate for the purposes of an auxiliary international language. Books from the English-speaking countries feed libraries Ihe world over; millions of non-English-speaking people read English books and magazines, listen to English broadcasts, and see English films. In the field of scientific and technical literature, books and papers published in such languages as French, German, and Russian are systematically translated into English at documentation centres in countries such as India for the benefit of local scientists. International technical terms in their English form are being incorporated into Asian languages. For those who

cannot read English, 10,000 English books covering a wide field of writing are translated every year into other languages; English is by far the world's most translated language.

However, the plea for using English more and more as an auxiliary international language should not be understood as one for making legislation for its exclusive use. The spirit underlying the argument is well expressed in Gandhi's words: "The rich English language will ever retain its natural place as the international speech of commerce and diplomacy."

Conclusion—the Three-language Formula

Our survey points to the conclusion that several countries have no choice but to adopt the 'three-language formula'. Surely, to refuse to know the other language in a bilingual country or prize the culture enshrined in it as part of the nation's heritage, is to deny the existence of the nation itself; but to be ignorant of at least one world language is to be functionally illiterate in the modern world.

It is true that for a long time to come it is only a few who will be able to study a foreign language so as to absorb its thought and culture and use the language as a creative medium of writing and speaking before a world forum. Gandhi clearly envisaged this when he wrote: "I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I would have our young men and women with literary tastes to learn as much of English and other world languages as they like, and then expect them to give the benefits of their learning to India and to the world like a Bose, a Ray , or the Poet himself."

For many more, for those reaching the higher stages of secondary education, for those choosing professional and technical careers and indeed for men and women who, occupying some position of leadership among their fellow-citizens, would want to follow world affairs from day to day; for all such a world language would still be valuable if simply as a medium of communication. Yet there will be others for whom the study of language holds no appeal and they must rely on translations. In fact, the main way in which all men speaking whatever tongue could enter into their common human heritage is by translations from every language to others on an ever-increasing scale.

It would be a mistake to suppose that the need for a three-language formula is limited to countries speaking the languages which are less internationally important. We may well ponder over the reasons which have prompted the U.S.S.R. to adopt a similar language policy, even setting up special language medium schools where certain subjects are taught through a foreign language medium, often English. It must be added that the major Asian languages are also taught in some centres. The general school pattern, however, is: the mother-tongue, Russian, and a foreign language.

The case of the U.S.S.R. suggests that modern language teaching has acquired powerful motivation—both for nations and individual pupils—and so the task is made easy. Thus, when one is interested in, say, current affairs, or modern history, or science, it is a double achievement to study these subjects through a modern language and study that language through outstanding writing in these fields. The development of such technical aids as the film, the radio, and the recording machine has also made it easy and pleasant to study a foreign language as well as to study it correctly.

(*Year Book of Education*,
London, 1964.)

CHAPTER 4: THE CONTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL STUDIES TO CITIZENSHIP

The Role of the School in Asian Countries

The Welfare State is becoming more and more the ideal of men everywhere. In many European countries the democratic state which had replaced earlier absolutisms is again responding to the times by adopting schemes of social security and other welfare services. In Asian countries the paternal state of the past, while adopting the forms of democracy, is transforming itself into the welfare state. But democracy is more than a form of government and the welfare state would be a threat to democracy unless it were founded on a democratic society. Universal suffrage, periodical elections and a central parliament do not exhaust the processes of democracy. Nor is an over-governed state any substitute for an organic society where small groups of citizens are maintaining the processes of discussion and initiating activities of all kinds. Of what avail would it be, for example, if the central administration had to keep local self-governing bodies going, if state education officers were needed to maintain the efficiency of community schools and if co-operative inspectors were needed to make citizens stand each for all and all for each? If the state becomes the dispenser of duties and favours, and the citizens become the payees and pensioners of the state instead of being partners in a free society, they cease to be citizens and become subjects. What would prevail is not the will of the people but the will of the state.

The problem in India, Ceylon, or other South and South-East Asian countries is however more than that of insufficient citizen participation in the affairs of the state. The nation state itself is a new conception. Beyond the circle of those who have received English education (and even within this circle) the fatherland still tends to be the community of the caste or joint-family, and the linguistic or religious group mistaken for race. To the extent there is any territorial tie, it is loyalty to the village, which was once quite self-governing, no doubt, but made up of inter-dependent caste groups. In this system of parallel societies and cultures, often perpetuated by parallel systems of education, the individual belongs

to 'some' rather than to 'all'. The urgent task is to weld these bundles of communities into a nation. It is to promote attachment to the soil of the country as a whole, to help men share common ideals and institutions, and to make them belong together. Needless to say the function of the school, as indeed of the state, is to make the community more of a community. It must function as a democratic society; it must place worthy ideals of citizenship before the young.

The Contribution of Social Studies

Several school subjects may be used in a programme of citizenship education. Geography can help to extend human sympathy and imagination; History can instill patriotism; man's economic inter-dependence can be shown by Economics, and Games teach fair play. But it is Social Studies, based on life's problems in the total life-setting and drawing upon several or all of the social studies at the same time, that is calculated to call forth the young citizen's eagerness and interest to understand the world around him and to make his own personal contribution. It answers to his present situation and inspires his effort, but almost imperceptibly it prepares him for the obligations of adult citizenship.

From the point of view of citizenship the following may be listed as the objectives of Social Studies:—

i) To feel heritage and the sense of belonging.
ii) To choose and prepare for vocation.
iii) To train for active citizenship and service.
iv) To cherish the ideals and processes of democracy.
v) To cultivate respect for all races and religions.
vi) To understand the inter-dependance of people and nations.
vii) To learn how to co-operate with one's fellows.
viii) To exercise wisely such qualities of leadership as one possesses.
ix) To be able to listen and read with discrimination and think and express clearly in speech and writing.
x) To know how to use leisure creatively.

Means to realize Objectives

The means for realizing these objectives are three-fold:

(a) Imparting *Knowledge* by lessons in lhe class-room or from books. This is necessary but the least effective method.

(b) *Experience*, or learning citizenship by practising it in various situations, is far more effective. Mahatma Gandhi's scheme of basic education is founded on the principle that a very effective method of learning to live a full life is through processes of living. We may also recall the remark of Aristotle that men acquire virtues not by talking about them but by practising them.

(c) The *Example* of noble teachers and national leaders is the most effective way in which the young may absorb the deepest loyalties. Good teachers do not stop to point to themselves but point to great leaders of mankind and to the ideals which have illuminated humanity's upward march. A vision is thus held before the young; for, "moral education is impossible without the habitual vision of greatness," as A. N. Whitehead said. In order to provide as direct and natural an experience of citizenship as possible Social Studies may be studied through organising the school as near as may be to an ideal society. Several basic schools in India have demonstrated that in addition to running a school co-operative shop, a co-operative farm, a co-operative school kitchen and mess, it is possible to apply democratic principles to the over all running of the school. Indeed, the best preparation for the devolution of political power and the best antidote against possible dictatorial tendencies is a taste of real self-government from the earliest years.

The value of instilling a democratic social climate holds good for teaching techniques as well. Much of class teaching could be based on the discussion method and a freer relationship between teacher and pupil. Pupils are encouraged to speak, question and comment. The division of a class into groups or teams is a useful educational device. Not its least value is in helping pupils to learn how to work together as a team, to think in a group and to strive to come to a common mind on problems. Social Studies lends itself to such kind of study.

In Social Studies groups should be organized to go out for a local survey, or on a visit to the Town Hall (or Village Panchayat), a farm, a market, a production unit, a co-operative shop. the Post Office or the Railway Station. Occasionally, 'resource visitors' may be brought to the class room.

Most fruitfully, they go out to run a work camp in a village and the shared experience of manual labour helps to break down barriers that exist between castes and between urban and rural folk. A new type of leadership may develop in the work situation in camps.

Social Studies is brought up-to-date by the study of current events. Observing great anniversaries, organizing celebrations for United Nations Day, seminars on Human Rights as well as local festivals, the young person is drawn into the affairs of the community outside. He keeps in communication with millions of fellow citizens, young and old, by following the news in the daily press and by listening to the radio. But he has to be trained to read newspapers and listen to the radio with discrimination. Dwelling on the facts and trends of contemporary life, evaluating the evidence on which these are to be accepted as accurate, learning to think in modes appropriate to the problems they indicate, the young citizen receives an education that will help him to deal with the complex situations of modern life.

Choice of Work and Leisure

Field trips, work camps, resource visitors, and the study of the contemporary world will afford opportunities to young people to know about various occupations. They may have chances of even trying their fitness for certain jobs . If a guidance service is available, full use should be made of these first hand opportunities of imparting a knowledge of occupations.

Life in more than holding salaried jobs. The possibility of sharing in some appropriate form of Social Service would have suggested itself to the young in their contact with persons and voluntary agencies serving the community in various ways.

The kind of interest aroused by Social Studies will also lay the foundation for purposeful and creative use of leisure in after years. When one comes to think of it, the desire to go on learning is the true evidence of the effectiveness of one's school education.Such a development will in time lead to the growth of an Educative Society.

The Role of the Teacher

From all that has been said, it would be clear that the term "Social Studies" equally describes the method and the content of the subject. The scope and method of the subject would also point to the danger inherent in dealing with human problems which carry emotion and subjectivity, prejudice and partisanship. The danger is that a discipline which set out to knit men together by knowledge, loyalty to common ideals and the fellowship of teamwork may result in the acquisition of bias and the things that divide. The study of current affairs particularly carries the danger of political partisanship.

In this situation the teacher has a positive role to play. If he would rise to the height of his calling, his suggestive power can play a vital role in building up gradually "the critical truth-seeking habit, without which man's mind would be everywhere in chains."

(*Educational Forum*, Delhi, 1960)

The teaching of Social Studies becomes urgent in the present age of rapid social change. It is incumbent in education to prepare young people's minds for change, all the more because the generation now at school will become active members not of present society, but of the changed society, say of two decades hence.

(K. Nesiah : *Social Studies in the School Third Edition*, Oxford University Press, Indian Branch, 1965)

CHAPTER 5 : LEISURE IN THE CITY OF COLOMBO

Significance of Leisure

We live in an age of increasing leisure. In times gone by it was the privilege of he 'leisured' few; now leisure is everyman's goal. This situation is the cumulative result of increased technology, longer expectation of life, higher incomes, greater political consciousness, social legislation and the spread of education. The very monotony of modern forms of repetitive work calls for relaxation in the form of rest and the diversion of leisure, though its purpose is almost defeated when leisure activity itself assumes repetitive and standardized forms. But *leisure is a real human need* and has *deep significance for human development.* The higher the level of civilization the bigger the fund of leisure and the wiser its use.

The uses of leisure have also become increasingly varied. It would be a poor conception to regard it as a way of filling time or killing it. The growth of modern communication facilities has no doubt augmented the supply of activities appropriate to leisure. But it is not something that can really be used on a mass scale. The total fund of leisure may be apportioned among different groups of people according to certain well defined patterns: To some it is by reduction of the working day or week, to others by the provision of long vacations, to still others by means of 'sabbatical years' and so forth. Each individual, however, draws from the common stock what he needs and what he can use. For, *individual differences count as much in leisure as in education.* All good leisure, like good education, is a *personal achievement* and a *personal satisfaction*. And just as guidance helps in educational and vocational choices, there is need for guidance here —*education for leisure*! Education, work and leisure , all help the individual in his search for *self-fulfilment* and they all need choice and preparation. "It is essential to appreciate the fact that leisure is correlative to work, and that the problem it presents differs with the kind of work and the kind of person doing the work."

Scope and limitations of present study

There are about three ways in which the problem of leisure could be studied. First, study could be made of the forms and extent of provision made by society for the use of leisure. Examples are the number of evening classes, the scope of the library service, newspaper publication, radio programmes, places of worship, playground facilities, etc. A second method would be to count the proportion of people taking part in each leisure time activity and present the results in order of numbers taking part, such as:—

(i) newspaper-reading,
(ii) cinema-going,
(iii) radio-listening, etc.

The third method would be to check the range of activities in which selected individuals take part.

This study has made use of the first two methods. Information obtained from various agencies give some indication of the extent of provision for leisure available in the city. The proportion of people taking part in each activity has been worked out from figures obtained from a house to house survey of a sample comprising 507 households. Of the 3030 persons, 1963, not receiving full-time education and over 14 years, are classified here as adults and their activities classified under various heads.

The data for studying the range of activities in which individuals take part is available in the filled questionnaires, but that elaborate study has not been made. A representative number of individual entries has been glanced at and they confirm the truth: "For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath". The better educated, the better employed and the better earners are the people who get the best out of leisure.

Though much information has been gathered by this survey some limitations in that information must be noted. The leisure activities studied are largely those of the middle class. This is partly because these activities are the privilege of the English-

educated middle class, partly because it is about these activities that information is readily available. Naturally, the data about the provision of activities in the city were sought from agencies catering to the middle class. The fact of the matter is that, outside of the cinema halls, there is very little organized provision of activities for adult men, none for women, belonging to the underprivileged sections of society.

The whole field of leisure was not covered, especially those perversions of leisure which abound in modern cities. There has been no attempt to measure quantitatively the amount of gambling, horse-racing, drinking, dancing or carnivals, though the city seems to be living now from one carnival to the next.

No attempt has been made to analyse the content of leisure activity nor evaluate its worthwhileness nor measure the reactions of the participants. Neither was the study concerned with the activities of social groups as such. Lastly, it has not been the purpose of this paper to compare the differences between various communal groups in their use of leisure.

The City of Colombo

The City of Colombo, whose 4.5 lakhs constitute one-nineteenth of the Island's population and a third of the country's urban population, is an example of a 'primate' city. In Europe and America industrialization has led to urbanization and 'systems' of cities. On the other hand as pointed out in a recent Unesco study, urbanization in Asia has been generally the result of European occupation. Often only one great city has been created, not so much as a natural growth but rather as a link between the colony and the ruling country. The city has been oriented to the West; it was a door for trade with the ruling country and one through which the local elite looked at their dream world of the West. But it is not easy to kick against geography; so like the split mind of many English educated persons, the city represents the co-existence of East and West, marked by the existence of a 'fort' area and a 'pettah' area and of persons who speak and dress and live like Europeans as well as of a great majority who have retained their native characteristics.

In fact, a third of Colombo's citizens were born outside the city and have been drawn into the city partly by the 'push' factors of the low level of rural living and scanty provision for leisure, partly by the 'pull' factors of better jobs and more varied leisure pursuits.

What has been said about the Western orientation of a city like Colombo applies very much to the forms of leisure activity. In the villages of Ceylon it may be said that leisure is still enjoyed(or suffered) in traditional ways, but in the towns which have developed in the 'British Period', notably in the City of Colombo, new ways of filling leisure time have been introduced. This is part of the lure of the City.

Literacy and Adult Education

Of all forms of leisure activity pride of place must be given to adult education. It is true that any creative activity is educative, but no modern community can ignore part-time and evening courses for those who have left school. In fact the *demand for continued education* is both sign of a healthy community and evidence of the effectiveness of school education itself. Adult education planned to enrich the life of the local community even scores over school education in so far as the latter tempts the young to move out of their class and locality.

Compared with the courses listed in 'Floodlight' for the London area and the more modest yet considerable ones in other modern cities, the provision in Colombo appears very meagre. The Ceylon Technical College had a total enrolment in their evening courses of 1100 students, approximately 400 each in the engineering and commerce sections and 300 in the vocational section. The Wellawatte Polytechnic had an attendance of 200 in their evening commercial courses. The Adult Education branch of he Education Department organized a night school with an attendance of 60 to 70 in the Prisons and a second night school at Maligawatta for railway workers. Both these schools and a few privately organized ones chiefly teach English. These seem to exhaust the provision of continued education in the 'primate' city!

It is not easy to explain the paucity of adult education provision in what looks to be a leading Asian city. By Asian standards Colombo is fairly prosperous. The average monthly expenditure is Rs. 184 per family. But a disproportionately large amount, i.e. 62% is spent on food and a sizeable portion of the balance on clothing and house rent. That leaves little for cultural pursuits.

Again, after Japan and Israel, Ceylon is Asia's third most literate country, with 65% general literacy and 6% English literacy. Colombo is Ceylon's most literate town, with a general literacy of nearly 80% and the population understanding English so high as 28% But as Mahatma Gandhi so wisely remarked, "Literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning..Literacy in itself is no education" The truth is that much of what passes for literacy is not functional literacy. Sir Cyril Burt has estimated the number of illiterate adults in Britain as between 1% and 2% and the number of semi-illiterate adults as between 15% and 20% Colombo's illiteracy may be 20% but its semi-illiteracy will be several times that. This survey revealed that out of 1963 adults, 320 had never been to school and a further 371 did not stay long enough at school to reach standard 5. These 691 persons, i.e. 35% *of the adult population surveyed could hardly have acquired permanent literacy.* Education up to the compulsory age of 14 may be said to be necessary to acquire functional literacy and so a much larger percentage, who left school too early, are without that level of literacy that may be described as educationally worthwhile. In the country as a whole, where a third of the population of school-going age is not at school, the general literacy figure of 65% must be considered illusory.

If the *popularity of adult education is the measure and justification of school education,* then judged by results our school education stands condemned. It has been remarked that *to cease to learn at* 14 *is as unnatural as to cease to live at* 14. If school education has not kindled the desire to go on learning then that education is hardly educative. The fact of the matter is that there cannot be any high level of literacy or education unless there are deep cultural and economic motivating factors. In countries of the West and

in Japan and Israel in Asia, high levels of mass literacy derived their inspiration from the Industrial Revolution, the demand for new skills, the push of increasing wealth and the idea of progress. A high level of education in turn prompts material progress. In Colombo as well as in the rest of Ceylon industrial development has yet to influence or be influenced by education.

Newspaper reading

Newspaper reading is as the saying goes an index of communication facilities. The daily newspaper fulfills an important role as medium of news, ideas, advertisements and entertainment, which are the rights of everyone according to article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The total newspaper circulation is as follows according to figures officially supplied by the local newspapers:—

Daily Papers

Language medium	*No of papers*	*National circulation*	*Colombo circulation*
Sinhalese	3	160,000	40,000
Tamil	2	42,000	10,000
English	4	92,000	48,000
All languages	9	294,000	98,000

Sunday Papers

Language medium	*No. of papers*	*National circulation*	*Colombo circulation*
Sinhalese	2	196,000	53,000
Tamil	2	54,000	14,000
English	2	106,000	37,000
All languages	6	356,000	104,000

True to its being the 'primate' city, all Ceylon's nine dailies and the six Sunday papers are published in Colombo and a third of the national circulation is in the City. The daily circulation works out at 34 copies per 1000 persons in Ceylon and 213 copies per 1000 persons in Colombo.

It may be of interest to compare the Ceylon figures with those of other countries. The British are the world's keenest newspaper readers, reading 31 million copies of the world's 255 million copies of daily newspapers. The circulation rate of 609 copies per 1000 persons is the world's highest. There are 137 dailies, published all over the country. The biggest is a London daily with a national circulation of four million copies. Japan's 179 dailies have a circulation of 34.5 million copies which works out at 399 copies per 1000 persons. A smaller country whose population is less than that of Ceylon is Denmark. Of her 131 dailies only 12 are published in Copenhagen and the paper with the biggest circulation sells but 150,000 copies. The circulation rate of 381 copies per 1000 persons is evidence of every adult citizen reading several newspapers, a vital safeguard against slavery to the printed word.

To return to the survey of newspaper reading in the City of Colombo. Out of 1963 adults, 759 persons did not read any newspaper, while 1204 read one or more newspapers, probably three persons sharing a copy. 507 read only one paper, 419 read two papers and 278 read three or more papers. By Asian standards Colombo is sufficiently supplied with newspapers. Past educational policy was calculated to promote functional literacy only for the few in the English medium. But it is a natural and wholesome thing that the circulation of the swabasha medium papers has already gained on that of the English medium papers, both in the City and the country. The stronghold of the English dailies is Colombo, where each of the four papers sells approximately half its copies. The largest national sale of any single newspaper is that of a Sinhalese paper which sells 73,000 copies of its daily edition and 143,000 copies of its Sunday edition. The weakness in newspaper reading in Ceylon is, however, the meagre circulation rate for the country as a whole and the absence of provincial dailies.

Books and Periodicals

There is, however, cause for concern if the daily and Sunday newspapers are all that people read, as seems to be the case with most of Colombo's citizens. The reading and writing of books and periodicals is the real test of whether a people are mentally alive.

The survey showed that:—

263 persons, who had completed standard 5, read 2 books each in the year.

269 persons, who had reached the S.S.C., read 28 books each in the year.

31 persons, who had a University degree or equivalent, read 50 books each in the year.

'Books' were not strictly defined and apparently the claims for reading them included the reading of booklets and even text-books. That the claims may have been exaggerated was borne out by a test-check of a staff officers' personal library. He had carelessly claimed to have a personal library of about 100 books; a scrutiny revealed that all but some ten books were text-books in a particular technical subject in which he was preparing for an examination. The general fact emerges that the regular book reading habit is confined to those who have completed secondary education and varies with the standard of education reached and the kind of job one is doing.

Another method of estimating the extent of book reading is to work out library circulation figures. Three of Colombo's most popular libraries supplied these figures:

Colombo Public Library:	(14,000 borrowers) lent 156,000 books a year.
U.S. Information Centre:	Adult circulation 32,000 Juvenile circulation 14,000 Total 46,000 books a year.
Y.M.C.A. Red Library:	(300 borrowers) lent 7,500 books a year.

Taking the figures of the municipal library, the annual issue of 156,00 volumes makes an average of one-third of a book per head of population. The stock of 35,000 books in the metropolitan city, only 10% of them in swabasha, is poor by any standard.

Still another method would be to consider the sale of local publications as well as the number of new titles published in a year. Two leading publishers were asked to analyse their sales for a

period and say which five titles, Sinhalese and English, sold well. Neither publisher could find so many as five titles in either language. According to one publisher, "general books do not find enough buyers in Ceylon"; a cookery book sold well in both its English and Sinhalese editions and a book on sex in Sinhalese was a good one and sold well. According to the second publisher, two or three books on Buddhism in English,one or two in Sinhalese, and a work of fiction in Sinhalese had fair sales.

Of the 1963 adults, 1468 do not read any magazines or periodicals. Of the 495 who claimed to read them, about half read only one periodical regularly and could hardly be reckoned periodical-conscious. The readers were as follows:

Language of magazine	*1 magazine*	*2 magazines*	*3 or more magazines*	*Total*
Sinhalese	33	13	2	48
Tamil	81	46	23	150
English	138	66	63	267
Sinhalese, English	—	1	2	3
Tamil, English	2	14	9	25
Others	2	—	—	2
Total	256	140	99	495

The small number of persons who read periodicals in Sinhalese is to be noted, may be due to paucity of such literature. The weakness in the more impressive figures for Tamil is that much of the periodical literature read in Ceylon is published in South India; one popular weekly of Madras sells nearly 20,000 copies of its 100,000 circulation in Ceylon. Practically all the English periodical literature too originates abroad.

A few comparisons will be of interest. Britain has an annual publication level of 15,000 books and 5,000 periodicals. The public libraries circulate 300 million books a year, making 6 books per head of population and an average of 12 books read by each adult. Denmark, a smaller country than Ceylon and like Ceylon an agricultural country, publishes 2,200 books a year and thanks to the mental alertness fostered by the folk high schools the reading

average is high. Asia's most literate country, Japan has a publication rate which is comparable with that of Britain. Both Japan, and the other very literate Asian country, Israel, have to include translations in their publication efforts and each of these countries translates each year between a thousand and two thousand titles.

The moral for Ceylon is clear. If education in swabasha is to have any meaning and if the adult population is to become enlightened with modern knowledge, original books on modern subjects and translations from foreign languages must appear by the hundred and the public library system must increase a hundred-fold. Special literature for new literates must form part of the publication programme.

Radio listening

There was a total of 110,400 licensed radio receivers in Ceylon at the end of 1955; a sixth of these, 18,200 in Colombo City. That makes 13 sets per 1000 of the population for the country and a much higher number for the city. According to the survey, 1059 or 54% of the adult population of Colombo do not listen. The remaining 904 listen regularly, the numbers. listening to various language programmes being as follows:

Sinhalese only	*Tamil only*	*Sinh.and Tamil*	*English only*	*Sinh.and English*	*Tamil and English*
282	181	117	104	89	19

The largest single age-group listening was that of the 20 to 29 years,except for English programmes, which were popular with the over-40 generation The under-20 age group did not listen much.

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the world the radio has outstripped the daily newspaper; 257 million radio sets in the world against 255 million copies of the daily newspaper.Asia, however boasts of only 18 million sets, 11 million of them in Japan. Denmark, often compared to Ceylon in this study, possesses 13 lakh sets, 300 per 1000 of the population. Almost every adult listens daily to the radio as in most Western countries.

Cinema going

The City has 22 of the 200 cinemas in the Island, but in view of the bigger seating capacity and patronage of the city cinemas the rate of attendance is higher than in the rest of the country. 1015 adults of the sample are cinema goers and their preference for films by language is as follows:—

Tamil Films	*English*	*Sinhalese*	*Unspecified*
292	251	238	234

The popularity of Tamil films, not confined to Tamil speakers, is partly due to the large number produced in India, which is world's third great producer of films, after the U.S.A. and Ja'pan. Sinhalese films are yet few and the Sinhalese film goer is relatively at a handicap. By age-groups, those in the 20-29 years group are the greatest film goers, followed by the 30-39 years group, while the under-20 group go least often. By frequency of attendance 333 persons, who go once a month, form the largest single group. All together, the rate of cinema attendance in Colombo is fairly high as in Indian cities.

But the most regular film goers in the world are the British, with an average of 25 films per inhabitant in a year. Taking the world as a whole, one person out of ten goes to the cinema once a week. The Americans prefer to watch T.V. screens and go to the movies once in three weeks.

Recreation and Games

There are a few clubs providing outdoor and indoor games, but these esrve only small sections of the middle class. An example is the Central Y.M.C.A. which provides daily gymnasium facilities for 80 members and indoor games for 110. The Colombo Municipal Playgrounds are used daily by 2800 young people and 1500 children.

The Galle Face Green and a few public parks are the lungs of the City and a number of citizens of all ages, but not a large number, take the air in the evenings.

The paucity of provision for promoting national physical fitness and recreation has been commented on by a Government appointed Recreational Activities Committee recently.

Conclusion

1. It is evident that planned provision for leisure in Colombo as well as in other urban and rural areas, requires urgent consideration. Leisure provision is a way of preserving the small face to face community, which is in many ways the unit of civilized life. It is equally important to provide for much of leisure to be spent at home. An indispensable part of organized leisure provision should take the form of adult education and the state, the university and voluntary agencies have responsibilities in this regard.

2. This initial general study needs to be supplemented by more detailed and specific ones. The introductory section on the scope and limitations of this study would suggest problems for further study both in Colombo and other areas. A particularly interesting study in a country like Ceylon would be the place of religious activities.

3. It would be rewarding to acquaint oneself with the use of leisure in other countries and especially the results that have flowed from such activities as the folk high schools of the Scandinavian countries. It would be useful to see how within half-a-century of their introduction a third of the Members of Parliament of Denmark were drawn from the products of these adult schools rather than the ordinary secondary schools and how 80% of the present leadership of the great Danish Co-operative Movement are of such origin and how the principal writers of modern Sweden are folk high school boys rather than university men.

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CHAPTER 6: TO WHOM DO SCHOOLS BELONG?

Introductory Note

This article was originally written with special reference to Ceylon. I am glad to be able to put my plea for reorienting our philosophy of educational administration before a wider Afro-Asian audience. I venture to think that many of these countries have a similar background, the basis of which is a strong local community, and that both nationhood and nation-wide democratic institutions are transplantations from the West. Some of these countries have had a fruitful association with Britain, and with the achievement of their political self-government, are in a position to reap a rich harvest from that association. In the field of education we would do well to study the remarkable British system of decentralised educational administration, and the ideal that education is a function of the community rather than of the State. That this modern legacy fits in with the great educational traditions of India, as re-stated by Mahatma Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave and the constitution-makers of that country, should hold an appeal to educational thinkers in many lands.

To whom do schools belong? In his book with the same title, Professor Lester Smith observes: "It is not impossible that during the coming years a new educational creed will develop more in harmony with the kind of political philosophy which attaches great importance to the community and draws a sharp distinction between it and the State." The Minister of Education in the Labour Government made the same point in the Report for 1950: 'Education in a democracy is determined not by the state, but by the general will of the community.'

Legislative Process v Democratic Process

It is no answer then to say that Parliament elected by the people can decide educational matters by legislation. It is true that in the end legislation should be passed by the elected body of representatives in Parliament. That does not mean that the legislative process in the central parliament is any substitute for the democratic process. With the modern party system, one party captures power

in parliament. Within the party, under the **mass party** system, a small group can dispose of the will of the members without even consulting them. How is this an advance on the feudal oligarchies of the past? It is hardly consoling to be told that the people have a right to change their rulers once in four or five years. There is little democracy except where the people are able to make their decisions and where the ideas which are embodied in policy and law seep upwards from below. We have therefore to see, with Harold Laski, the enrichment of national life in the expansion of society rather than of the state and in the growth of voluntary associations of all kinds: 'Such societies are the spontaneous expression of felt needs in the experience of men. And since the life of society is too vast to be capable, even if it were desirable, of government by the State alone, no small part of its direction depends upon them. Indeed, it may be argued that in any society, the richer the variety of group-life, the fuller will be the quality of satisfaction that it obtains.'

Decentralization

If power has to be diffused among the people instead of being concentrated in the capital city, it has to be by a process of decentralization. The state conceived of as an 'arithmetical sum of individuals' is contrary to the nature of human society and leads to the mass mind so beloved of party leaders as of dictators. On the other hand, a host of small groups, like co-operatives, trade unions, local government bodies, and education committees, endowed with independent life and activity, and where desirable joining together at regional and national levels, is calculated to restore to society its freedom of thought, a sense of responsibility and capacity for doing things. It is true that most people in this country do not feel the absence of freedom. They hardly realize that except for going to the polls once in five years they have little share in the making of laws or policy. A vital way in which this political consciousness can be created is by letting citizens take their part in such cells of activity. The function of the state is to make the community more of a community, a community knit by common purpose and mutual understanding.

When it comes to education, it is by no means satisfactory that it should be Colombo-determined and that rural youth should be creamed off the countryside and have their faces set towards the primate city or other towns. To that extent our education has been an erosive force depriving the local community of potential leadership and almost washing the community away. The means of both re-vitalising democracy and re-habilitating the rural areas is to give back the direction of a region's affairs to the people of the region. This democratic decentralization would, in the sphere of education, mean a regional board of education, formed by secondary election and co-option, and a chief education officer of the board rather than an Assistant Director of Education. In their task of re-invigorating regional life the local leadership should develop schools, training schools, technical and rural institutes. It will be their duty to ensure equality of educational opportunity and to strive to increase local employment opportunities for the youth of the area. A measure of central control will be inevitable, but a balance will have to be worked out between central planning and direction and local initiative and self-determination. The varied developments in different areas, in education and other fields depending on the genius of the place, will add richness and stability to national life. If a nation's schools are to be an organ of its life they must be the concern of the community in every area. For their part the schools should be the reservoirs irrigating the fertile region round. So would they become not only schools of the community, administered by the community, but also schools for the community.

II

Self-Governing Village Communities

The structure of a nation's educational system, like the form of its Constitution, depends among other things, on the legacies of its history. It may be recalled that the late Mr. S.W. R. D. Bandaranaike often felt doubts about the appropriateness of Western parliamentary democracy for Ceylon. In India Shri Jayaprakash

Narayan, the eminent socialist thinker, has urged, like Gandhiji and Vinoba, that self-governing village communities, the supreme discovery of India's and our own political genius, should as of old become the foundation stones of Indian polity. In a radio address, he quoted Altekar to show how manifold were their powers and functions:

They made effective arrangements for the defence of the community, collected the taxes of the Central Government and levied their own, settled village disputes, organised works of public utility and recreation, functioned as trustees and bankers, raised public loans to mitigate the miseries of farmers, organised schools, colleges and poor houses and arranged for their funds, and supervised the manifold religious and cultural activities of the temples. There can be no doubt that they exercised greater powers than those that are at present enjoyed by the local bodies in most countries, both of the East and of the West. They played an important creditable part in defending the interests of the villagers and in promoting their material, moral and intellectual progress.

Panchayat Raj is now being restored in several states of India as part of Prime Minister Nehru's socialist programme. Truly Mahatma Gandhi revealed his genius when he called the Indian village back to life and when he linked his great educational experiment with the work and life of the village.

The Spirit of Tolerance

We may next turn to the other great educational tradition which we share with India. Vinoba has so often in recent years reminded us that education in Ancient India was independent of kings and its great hallmark was intellectual freedom. Says he: 'No Government, whatever may be its political philosophy, should ever be allowed to control education.' Mahatma Gandhi, who was prepared to take the village community into partnership in primary education, did not favour state secondary schools or universities. Though the colossal problem of education on a mass scale calls for the intervention of the modern state, we may note how the authentic tradition of the past has been inscribed in the Indian Constitution. The secular ideal, Radhakrishnan has pointed out, is the modern

expression of the age-long ideal of spirituality, tolerance and freedom of learning. Following from the separation of State and Church, the Constitution in its chapter of Fundamental Rights prohibits the proceeds of taxation being used for the promotion of any particular religion. (Art. 27). A natural corollary to state neutrality is the prohibition of religious instruction in any educational institution wholly maintained out of State funds. (Art. 28). The same article prescribes the conscience clause for observance by aided institutions. The spirit of tolerance gives to minorities, whether based on religion or language, the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice, with equal state aid. The same spirit of tolerance and catholicity opens institutions to all would-be students, and expressly forbids any system of communal 'quotas' in state institutions. (Art. 29-30).

A further safeguard to freedom is provided by the high degree of decentralization in Indian education. The Union Government sponsors a few national institutions and research laboratories and co-ordinates and determines standards in institutions for higher education or research and scientific and technical institutions. The rest of education is a 'residuary' subject vested in the States, but lhe actual provision of institutions is largely with local government bodies and voluntary agencies. The universities are autonomous, subject however to the indirect control of the University Grants Commission. In fact the methods of consultation by means of Advisory Boards and Commissions of Inquiry are widely used at both Union and State levels. The influence of the Planning Commission has also to be noted since educational reorganisation is integrated in their Five-Year Plans.

British Legacy

Much of our modern heritage of political and social institutions we owe to Britain. It is primarily to our association with this Western country that we owe our unification into a single state, our new national consciousness, a modern legal system based on freedom under the law and our democratic political institutions. Not the least momentous of these innovations was a new educational system, significant both for the education imparted in the new schools and the administrative structure in which it flourished.

In both respects its British origin was evident. Be it remembered that not only is Britain the home of the Mother of Parliaments, but her system of educational administration has itself been a major contribution to the art of government.

The Dual System

The English compromise is a two-fold one, the partnership between Whitehall and Country hall and the dual system of County schools and Voluntary schools. While the Minister retains ultimate 'control and direction' and furnishes about two-thirds of the funds, the duty is cast on Local Authorities to secure sufficient educational provision for all pupils in their area according to age, ability and aptitude. The County Council maintains its own schools as well as the voluntary schools. Control is exercised by its Education Committee (and sub-committees) in which by election and co-option leading citizens of the area are associated. The act requires that every secondary school should have a body of governors and every primary school a body of managers. In the case of voluntary schools two-thirds would be foundation managers (or governors) for those classified as Aided Schools. In filling lhe balance of places for voluntary schools, and all the places for county schools, the County Council is expected (by a ministerial directive) to secure adequate representation for itself and co-opt other suitable persons. In the case of secondary governors it is suggested that a representative of a university and persons associated with commerce and industry should be co-opted. It is also suggested that the interests of the teaching staff, parents and old scholars should be reflected in the composition of the governing body. In the end in every area thousands of citizens, many of them teachers, are involved in the educational effort in a voluntary capacity. It may be added that there is no transfer of property or ownership of voluntary schools and foundation managers or governors may be entitled to determine the use to which the premises may be put on Sundays.

Compromise

The Independent Schools, including the big Public Schools, are outside the maintained system. So are those public schools which have become Direct Grant Grammar Schools, where in con-

sideration of substantial state assistance, the county can fill up to fifty per cent of school places and nominate one-third the governors. It is a credit to the British genius for compromise that church foundations, some of them heirs of a great tradition going back centuries, have all found their honoured place in the national system.

The Teacher's Freedom

Most worthy of note is that the schools of Britain have shared in the freedom of knowledge along with other institutions like the universities, the research councils, the publishing houses, the daily press and the B.B.C. Perhaps it is the autonomy of each school and the latitude allowed to those running it that has made many schools so distinctive. It is the headmaster and his staff who may determine the curriculum, the text-books and the method of instruction. Of course H.M.I. can make 'suggestions' and there is the indirect constraint of external examinations. But then the examination councils themselves are autonomous bodies composed of school and university teachers. The high degree of security of tenure of the teacher is itself a safeguard of academic freedom. His religious freedom is safeguarded by the provision that his religious opinion will not be taken into consideration except for teaching in Aided Schools or for giving religious instruction in Controlled Schools; no teacher in any school will be disqualified for promotion by reason of his religious opinion. The Local Government Act was specially amended in 1946 to enable teachers employed by local authorities to be elected to County Councils or be appointed to their education committees. Teachers have always sat in Parliament. Their great organisation, the N.U.T. is not a trade union, but enjoys such consultative status with the Ministry that Minister George Tomlinson was led to remark, **'I would never dare to issue a circular without the approval of the N.U.T.'**

A Great Inheritance to be preserved

We should count our great secondary schools modelled on the British concept of education, as the outstanding legacy of the

British connection. They must be counted among the nation's best assets and as good as any which other Asian countries can show. These schools represent as revolutionary an institution as the new legal and parliamentary institutions introduced by the British. Substituting an economic for the religious motive in education, secular for sacred learning, lay teachers replacing monks and clerics, the new education prepared the young for professions and occupations which were themselves new to our culture and for living in towns which represented a new spirit and a new civilization. The products of these schools became the conscious agents of change and of the new ideas from the West; not least significant, the products of the new girl's schools played their part in winning the emancipation of women here. Even the cultural renaissance was fruit of the new seed. The school was more than a place of instruction. It was an organised community. The classless school society served as channel of social mobility providing for many under-privileged persons access to places of honour first in the school and then in society. No doubt there were limitations, like the use of a foreign language as medium of instruction and the tendency to self-recruitment within the new English-speaking middle class. These were, however, marginal faults and can be remedied. They do not detract from the dynamic power of an institution which was conceived of as a responsible community, with individuality and autonomy. We shall deny to ourselves this great inheritance if we do not preserve within the national system these schools which are priceless assets. If we do not rear more such schools, we shall not be true to the future.

III

It may be useful at this point of the discussion to sort out the differing roles of the state in different countries that have been worked out as a result of the several operative forces, historical and ideological. There are four main forms of state participation in education:

(1) The dual system of Britain, described earlier, has been followed by several Commonwealth and other countries. Britain and Holland exemplify 'the principle of equal financial support'

for state and church schools as well as a thoroughly decentralized system by which state schools are really schools of the local authorities. The Indian dual system takes the form of grant-in-aid on an equal basis to all denominations but fees have to supplement grants at higher and secondary levels. It is interesting to note that the Union Government sponsors a few residential Public Schools.

(2) The close partnership between State and Church in Norway (and other Scandinavian countries) can be traced to historical causes; it works smoothly because of the religious homogeneity of the population (97% Evangelical Lutherans). The state looks after the general side and the church the religious side. Even the municipal schools are able to fit into this settlement The Scottish settlement may be regarded as a variation of this. Schools of the Catholic minority handed over to the county councils are run by them like the rest of the public schools, but the bishops have to approve of the religious qualifications of teachers appointed to these schools.

(3) The parallel system of the U.S.A. and France of secular state schools and independent fee-levying schools stems from the principle of separation of State and Church. The state schools of the U.S.A. are however community schools in the true sense of the term since there is very considerable decentralization. On the other hand, following the Napoleonic settlement, France is a highly centralized unitary state, but there is no political or ideological element in the centralized control of education. While American private schools do not add up to even 10% of the total, nearly 20% of French children go to private elementary schools and about double that number to secondary schools (mostly for girls). Since 1951 it has been possible for private schools to receive indirect state subsidies when parents turn over to their schools children's allowances paid to parents by the state. Burma is an erstwhile Commonwealth country which has withdrawn grants to private schools, but apparently the private schools are well supported by the parents. It is reported that the majority of matriculation candidates are from these schools.

(4) The state monopoly system of the U.S.S.R. (and other Communist countries) aims at both efficient education and ideological 'thought control'. There are common time-tables, syllabuses and 'stable' text-books throughout the Union. The individual self-consciousness of schools is discouraged, but youthful enthusiasm is canalised into the state-sponsored national service youth organisations, Pioneers (ages 9-13) and Young Communist League (14-26). Policy making is ultimately with the Central Committee of the Party. There are obvious limitations to academic freedom and security of tenure for school and university teachers. 'Thought control' extends to all publications, the press, radio and films. Fee-levying boarding schools are an interesting new departure.

IV

If we have to survive as a democracy, we must find a basis for reconciling the claims of the state with those of the community. Bertrand Russell warned us long ago that none of the agencies concerned with education (including the State) can be trusted to care adequately for the child's welfare, since each wishes the child to minister to some end which has nothing to do with its own well-being. How then shall we distribute power in this field?

1. *The Control of Education - the Central Government: Regional Authorities*

Education is to-day every nation's biggest enterprise and the state alone possesses the resources and the power to organize their use to maximum social advantage. The 'control' of education, as distinguished from 'management' and 'ownership', has to be in the hands of the State, divided between the Central Government and local authorities. In other fields of socialization too it is state control that is stressed rather than management or ownership.

The state's primary duty is to frame the Law of Education. The existing law consisting of the principal Ordinance of 1939 and the amending acts of 1947, 1951, 1960 and 1961 is extremely defective for a modern law on the subject. It neither imposes on any the obligation to secure the provision of schools nor is there any direct law of compulsory education—in Asia's third most literate country!

For another thing, there is no clear line as to what should be in the main law and what in the subsidiary regulations known as the Code (or Codes!)

Kandel has defined a national system of education as one in which 'free and equal opportunities are afforded to all according to their abilities and in which education is actuated by certain common purposes.' It may be claimed that the purpose for which an administrative machinery is set up by the State is to ensure that those 'opportunities' are afforded and the 'common purposes' not forgotten. Towards the end of the State Council era the introduction of free education, the establishment of Central Schools and the stepping up of the mother tongue medium opened the gates of secondary and higher education to many to whom they were hitherto closed. Since then there has been no significant advance. The fact that a quarter of the children of school-going-age are not at school is an adverse verdict on the administration. On the other hand, several administrative measures of recent years suggest that the Ministry and the Department have been pre-occupied with acts of discrimination. The children of so-called 'stateless' persons have in particular suffered by this policy of discrimination. In the event 'free and equal opportunities' have suffered a setback, and in that way we are receding from the ideal of a national system of education.

The administration can never be equal to the task of supplying the varied educational needs of every area except on the basis of a shared responsibility between the Central Government and local authorities. We have yet to create Regional Boards which will maintain a 'system of schools' and other welfare services at the provincial or district level.

2. *School Managers*

Every school should have a group of people behind it who give it strength and security and a feeling of link with the community around. They build the school from without while those who teach build it from within. Such an outside group may also lend a sense of reality to the sometimes limited outlook of teachers.

On this body should be represented the founders, the local regional board or other local authority, economic life of the area, parents, old scholars, the staff (not necessarily directly) and educationists drawn from bigger centres of learning.

We have already envisaged a small number of well established denominational schools remaining as independent schools. A good school is not built in a day and though you may in time create other good schools, you cannot take over a school ready-made and hope to retain for long its corporate personality. The conditions of independence should obviously be: (a) substantial number of pupils of own denomination, (b) adequate financial assets and property, (c) reasonable scale of fees for current running, and (d) a broad-based governing body on lines similar to state schools, but with greater weight for the founders.

3. *Ownership of Premises*

Given goodwill a fair settlement will not be impossible. When a scheme of decentralization is adopted and the schools become schools of the community one may expect school properties to be handed over willingly. Where, however, places of worship and other institutions share the premises, there should be no harm in the property being retained by the original founders on the understanding that it should not ever be disposed of without the permission of the Government. On the other hand, the original owners of property handed over should continue to have the use of the premises for religious purposes at hours when they are not needed for the schools.

There is also a further consideration about the school premises for other than school purposes. School halls and grounds are in most places the only meeting places available to the community. If schools are vested in the Crown without adequate provision in law for their use for other purposes at the discretion of a body of managers, there is grave danger that there may be some kind of political control by a ruling party and that only functions of a particular character may be permitted in them. One hopes that the latest of our education acts has not indirectly, perhaps unintentionally, introduced a form of 'thought control'.

4. *Academic Freedom*

It is a fine tradition that the Head of a school should be responsible for its internal administration without undue interference by central administration, regional board or managing body who will, however, have their say on matters of policy. The Head, will if he is wise, take his staff into his confidence in running the school. It should be remembered lhat 'morale'—the maintenance of internal equilibrium by which those who run the day to day activities have a sense of co-partnership and obtain spontaneous satisfaction in contributing their best to the objectives of the school—cannot be secured by edicts from outside but can only spring from conditions of freedom. The distinctiveness of character and the loftiness of a school's moral climate can be created only by the dedication of persons partnering not under duress, but under the freedom of a great inspiration.

5. *Machinery for Consultation*

We turn finally to the processes of discussion and the machinery for consultation which should mark the functioning of any democratic state.

If the procedures for 'free and equal opportunities' have to be worked out and the 'common purposes' of our education more widely shared, we would do well to go outside political party and parliament and use the machinery for consultation. Certainly the state cannot order 'common purposes.'

Parliament, regional boards, managing bodies and even advisory councils can only secure the **means** of education. In the last resort, those who can determine its **ends** are thinkers and poets historians and writers, and above all teachers. These alone can communicate to children a sense of purpose and, so sorely needed to-day, the sense that they belong to 'all' and not to 'some'. Nationhood cannot be legislated for; it has to be a perpetual creation by education arising out of the spontaneous conviction of a nation's educators, using the term in its broadest sense.

(*Oversea Education* London, 1963)

CHAPTER 7: EDUCATION FOR THE SEVENTIES IN CEYLON

Education and National Development

The Seventies, the period of the UN Second Development Decade, may well turn out to be the most revolutionary epoch in the world's history and our own. The central theme of all change today is National Development—a term which encompasses "economic, cultural, social and political development in the building of national identity and integrity", or simply, the process by which both persons and societies come to realize their full potential. Education occupies a key role in this, because basically what we are after is a broad strategy of human resource development in an age which holds within its palm the possibilities of phenomenal advance for the nation and limitless opportunities for every person.

An under-educated labour force

Of all the complex of factors that go to keep us in the group of under-developed nations, one is the fact that the Ceylon labour force is, by international norms, rather "under-educated" — University graduates in the total labour force are only about 0.4 per cent; 1.5 per cent have completed the A-Level, 6 per cent reached the O-Level, 60 per cent have not gone beyond Grade 7 and 20 per cent are without any schooling. Leaving aside large disparities region-wise in the provision of educational facilities, and the unashamed denial of anything beyond a poor primary education to the submerged tenth in the plantations, mark the huge wastage of high potential ability involved in drop outs all along the line so much so that it takes approximately 100-pupil years to produce one completed O-Level candidate with ten years of education. Besides, what goes for secondary education is qualitatively poor by international standards, seeing that not even one-tenth of the teachers are graduates, over a third of the non-graduates are untrained, and with the large numbers of "pupil teachers" appointed in recent years, much of the teaching force even in secondary schools must be classed as under-educated! Alas, when the aim should be an all-graduate teaching staff in secondary schools, not even all the Principals are university graduates, let alone the

fact lhat some of them lack professional training, like indeed the bulk of graduate teachers. Perhaps, the weakest link in the weak chain of secondary education is the lack of graduates of distinction to teach the A-Level classes. And long, far too long, have we managed our education without a large enough body of educationists with higher degrees engaged in its direction, and in research and writing.

When it comes to university education, no doubt our first degree standards compare well with those elsewhere, but in the absence of any significant quantum of post-graduate and research work, we have failed to build a self-sustaining intellectual or scientific community; our universities therefore hardly measure up to those of the developed one-fifth of the world. But, what goes to make Ceylon a poor socio-cultural environment and which takes away from the full potential of such universities as we have, is the intellectual waste land around—without significant research institutions, learned bodies, cultural institutes, book and periodical publications and a chain of public libraries which should form part of the constellation of symbols that constitute a country's intellectual system. Not doing anywhere near enough to promote our human resources , we have failed to build the necessary base for national development.

Crucial for development is attitude to learning at all levels, as stressed in the Dudley Seers report, **Matching employment opportunities and expectations: a programme of action for Ceylon (I.L.O., Geneva, 1971)**. Where the pupils have been conditioned to look on learning as a means not of gaining the knowledge to do a job, but of gaining the qualification to get one, the school's function to educate becomes supersed by the desire that it should qualify. A society facing lhe challenging need for rapid development can ill afford the work inefficiency resulting from a qualification-oriented approach to learning.

The proposed common school

Some of the proposed changes are surely welcome. For example, it would be a distinct gain if the basic cycle of schooling is made universal and compulsory by legislation. For, though we have

managed to evolve a tolerably good system of education without even any law of compulsory schooling, we cannot any longer do without a modern law of education, defining the goals of our education and the means of their fulfilment.

Welcome, however, as the compulsory common school is, we should not expect that the standard reached at the new terminal of Grade 9 would quite approximate to the present O.Level, modest as the latter is even by Asian norms. It would perhaps be a good thing if experimental courses on the new 5-4 pattern are run in a number of selected schools alongside the traditional 5-5 patterned courses in other schools. We may also consider whether dropping out the present Grade I should not be postponed till there is free pre-school education throughout the country. Else, the majority of today's 5 year-olds may suffer a permanent handicap, except of course those with exceptional ability who will be able to make up for their lost learning year. We must also remember that any proposed new course will flounder from the start unless sound teacher-training precedes it.

Certainly it is a wholesome change to get away from the idea that the main purpose of the two year A-Level course is to educate prospective under-graduates.

The same-curriculum-for-all schools for the compulsory basic cycle has much to commend it. But it should not be overdone to the point where the educational advantage is lost of a rich curriculum where, besides receiving a good general education, pupils can discover their special aptitudes by pursuing subjects of their choice at greater depth and heightened pace. It is well to remember that the USSR has been encouraging such an experimental approach, even to the point of allowing some modern studies and science to be studied in some schools through a foreign language medium, often English. It would be an unforgivable educational sin against the pupil and the nation if relevant studies were not adapted to the genius of the pupil working in homogeneous "sets". at least in the final grades of the common school. To some formal Mathemetics will hold an intellectual appeal;to others a training in simple statistical methods will have value. To some a foreign

language like English might become a creative medium for writing to a large readership; to others its use would be functional. at best, serve as a 'library language'. Agriculture will have the appeal of a science to some, while to many it will be just farming and its economic aspects. Even Handicraft is some of education for all; it is never all of education for some.

Pre-vocational studies can be academically challenging be sides being the means of picking up attitudes and skills. We do well to remember Harbison's statement: "The essential function of formal education is to prepare pupils for training rather than train people for particular occupations".

Relevant too is the exciting suggestion made in the Dudley Seers report that the schools should be transformed into centres of rural development, community workshops and centres of craft training. Open to all age groups, the early school-leaver can still keep in touch with education and training. Pre-vocational studies are envisaged as a means of integrating the school in the life of the community around. Through study-cum-service projects learning ceases to be bookish and second hand; in fact linked to the life and work of the community, it gains relevance and purpose and helps to implant new attitudes and values in the nation-builders of tomorrow. In turn, the school becomes an agency for educating and up lifting its environs: more, under wise guidance, the casteless and classless school community may be a potent influence towards ushering in a new social order.

Restricting higher education

When the authors of the scheme say that manpower requirements should determine the number (perhaps 30,000) allowed to proceed beyond the National Certificate of Education taken at Grade 9, they have simply missed the wood of development for the trees of reorgnisation. Apart from the growth of employment following from any worth while plan of human resource development, we must not overlook the significance, for proliferation of jobs, of labour-intensive intermediate technology for a country like ours and of the world labour market now increasingly open to those with the requisite skills. Besides, we believe today that

everyone is capable of a degree of higher education and has an inalienable right to be educated for self-fulfilment, as well as trained for a career. Therefore, we would say: More education rather than free rice, please!

But, what are we to think of the further proposal to select candidates after Grade 9, and then after Grade 11, on an area-quota basis, for admission to the university, teachers colleges and technical instiutes—supposedly to offset regional imbalances? Let us not deceive ourselves. Everywhere in Lanka, are not social diffdifferences more pervasive than geographical or ethnic differences? Are we not tacitly leaving the status quo undisturbed—by which the schools even in the public sector are unashamedly unequal, access to the good ones also unequal, the earnings of the few who make it educationally and the others who don't quite unequal, the earnings of those doing jobs of equal value so unequal, not to speak of the enormous inequality between the rewards of non-manual and manual labour? The chances are that under the area-quota system, the under-privileged will everywhere become still more under-privileged. Adding to the social inequalities in the country, denying that we are one nation and a democracy, the proposed area-quota system may well turn out to be a further divisive force and an anti-development measure as well. Why, it affects the very integrity of our educational system. Not least, area-quotas infringe on the fundamental right that "higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit", enshrined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (*Art.* 26).

New concept of life-long education

Perhaps, what has been missed most in the proposals is the new concept of life-long, or "recurrent" education and its intimate link with the maximizing of human resource development. The insistent demand for provision of facilities for life-long education stems from the educational discovery that a spell of schooling, or a period at the University in the early years of one's life, may turn out to be grossly inadequate to meet the needs of either a maturing person or a rapidly changing technological world. On one hand, "the greater an individual's potentialities, the longer

the time needed for their fulfilment"; on the other, in the words of Margaret Mead: "We are now at the point where we must educate people in what nobody knew yesterday and prepare pupils in our schools for what no one knows yet, but what some people must know tomorrow". The individual, who has received a basic school education, "creating habits of mind which lead to a continuing process of life-long self-education", may want to decide and re-decide on his career even more than once and as often seek re-training. Incidentally, in such a flexible approach, failing in a particular examination will not mark a dead-end in one's career

The answer to this new demand is to be found in an organically linked "system" of—school: university: technical institute:employment-in-service training: teachers' college (analogous, as Harbison has pointed out, to the power grid in Electricity)—where a person can enter at any point on possessing necessary qualifications. The most travelled route to the university may, therefore, be no longer, the completing of the A.L. course with credit; nor the most sought after places, the university's full-time courses.

The university which can perform all these functions has to be so to speak at one's door step. While not ceasing to be a community of learning with international recognition and a multiversity in its reach of studies, it is the regional university that can provide the part-time courses and the adult education programmes specially needed in the area and help too to re-vitalise school education by serving as the region's Institute of Education. Teacher education particularly has to be imaginatively re-oriented to meet the challenges of work and leisure in the Seventies. Here, it would be appropriate to quote the recent report of the James Committee: "Teachers—like everybody else—ought to be given the time to go on learning all their lives. All teachers should take at least one term off for study every 5 or 7 years without loss of pay." Such teacher education, including the much needed in-service programmes, will gain by being in the hands of "intellectuals who chose teaching after getting interested in education," than *vice versa:* this can happen more readily in universities than in Departmental Teachers' Colleges.

Need for a synoptic survey by a full-fledged commission

Education is such an intimate thing that affects the future of the young and the entire nation and so is the vital concern of the nation as a whole, irrespective of political parties. In the formulation of a new plan of education affecting the country's destiny for generations to come it is therefore necessary to secure the widest possible participation and reach a consensus which represents the will of the whole community and secures the cooperation of all in its implementation. Even at the school level, since we envisage the integration of the school into the life of the community, an advisory committee made up of representative citizens, parents and teachers will have to form part of the plan. So too, every region should have an educational council which will help to integrally relate the educational plan to the region's socio-economic development. Such an approach may well be a fresh contribution to the art of government in a young democracy like ours.

It is therefore so unfortunate that, far from any consultation in the evolving of the new plan, the country has not even been fully informed of its various aspects through a Green Book or White Paper. Whatever, is known is fragmentary, culled from Ministry officials' speeches and scraps of items appearing in the newspapers. In the light of what has been said earlier about the organic link between the various constituents of a modern educational system, the Government would be well advised to set up a full-fledged Commission (on the lines of the Kothari Education Commission of India) to make a synoptic survey of the total field of Education (School Education and Higher Education) in relation to National Development and submit a report to Parliament before we launch on any far-reaching reforms. It is time too that the nation's leaders realized that a permanent National Advisory Council on Education, as well as Regional Councils, are needed to discover for the state the spirit of the common life and what it demands—in terms of education, before these are translated into laws and acts of government.

(*Journal NESSL / New Era*, London 1972)

CHAPTER 8: PROPOSALS FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN SRI LANKA: THE ROLE OF CHURCH-RELATED INSTITUTIONS

1. Preamble

Sri Lanka is among the Least Developed Countries, according to a U.N. classification. The educational system must take its due share of blame for this. The country has, relative to other Asian countries, a large number of schools and now a number of universities, and its educational budget is rather high. Yet, due to such factors as the absence of rationalised school provision, non-school-going, heavy drop-outs and push-outs, a majority are without a meaningful education; and despite so-called high literacy figures, a majority may not be functionally literate, certainly must pass as non-readers of books! If we add the fact that most so-called secondary school teachers are under-educated, it would be no over-statement to say that most schooling in Sri Lanka is wasted!

The waste in the schools is due in part to the intellectual waste land behind—to the springs that should feed the reservoir of thinking in the field of education not being fed by research study, writing, reports of commissions of inquiry, books and periodicals. The sadder is the story because in the decades preceding the country's independence, the organised body of teachers, represented in such bodies as the Board of Education (re-named Central Advisory Council after independence), the Examinations Council, the University Court, and themselves promoting national education conferences and studies of various kinds, and regularly bringing out their own journal, sought to build the corpus of educational thinking relevant to the needs of an emerging nation. Even the lead to the campaign to give its due place to Sinhala and Tamil in education and civic life, was given by the organised teachers. And when the National Education Society of Sri Lanka was instituted at the mid-century, the intention was to make "an abiding contribution to a genuine educational movement in the country". Be it noted, that the NESSL is the Sri Lanka section of the W.E.F., which has consultative status with the UNESCO. Alas! What should have been a quickened march after 1948, turned out to be a slow return journey to the early

colonial period. The statutory consultative bodies ceased to function; like the early colonial directors of education, the educational administrators have entrenched themselves as back seat drivers, with the politicians as arm chair strategists!

Meanwhile, elsewhere for example, three current reports by internationally constituted teams show that education has acquired a new role and a new dimension. Witness the titles: The Kothari Education Commission Report of India, 'Education and National Development' (1966), Kenya Conference Report, 'Education, Employment and Rural Development' (1966), UNESCO'S 'Learning to be' (1970). We seem to have ignored even the Dudley Seers I.L.O. Mission's recommendation of a decade ago urging the transformation of our schools into centres of rural development. The message of the new thinking is a call to education to take on a new role-to prepare men and women for radically new societies and radically new modes of living and work.

11. Nine Priorities in Educational Reform

At long last, the White Paper 1981, provides a take off ground for a discussion on needed educational reforms. There are some timely proposals and some glaring omissions. Taking account of some proposals, modifying others and making good the gaps, here are nine priorities in educational reform as they appeal to the writer:

1. A modern **Law of Education** to replace the pre-Independence Ordinance of 1939 is overdue. The new Education Act should define the character and purposes of the country's educational system. It should lay an obligation on the Minister of Education to promote the education of the people of this country, set up and seek the advice of consultative bodies, and submit reports to Parliament. The law should provide for Compulsory Education; it is a grave omission that it does not so provide now.

2. Seeing that in the modern context, the educational programme should be integrated in the socio-economic development plan district-wise, the Act should also lay an obligation

on **the District Development Councils** the duty of securing directly or through other agencies, universal pre-school education and for older pupils, a comprehensive educational service, formal and non-formal, in their respective areas, including a library system, not overlooking the requirement that the need of the disabled "to receive education and vocational preparation must be equal to those of non-disabled". Paras 144-146 of the W.P. will have to be revised, since in the new democratically decentralised set-up, the Director of Education will become the Chief Education Officer of the Council and be guided by its Education Committee.

3. A concept of the school that has been missed in the W.P. is one which came to us with the bigger schools established in the British Period, that of the **school as an organised community**. In the words of Archbishop Temple: "The fundamental element in a school is not the instruction given in the class-room, but the life of the school as a society of young people". Somewhat like the family, the school community answers to the social nature of the pupils. For all its pupils, it strengthens and supplements the influence of the home; for those from bad or broken homes, it substitutes and compensates for the moral and cultural poverty of their native environment. And more than in a home, it is in the spacious environment of the school and its many activities that the growing boy or girl begins to feel significant, ceases to be a stranger or afraid, dares to enter with his or her fellows into the task of re-making the world. In order to be the more equipped for this role, the members of the school must meet the democratic process everywhere in the classroom, and in the activities outside. Why, he or she must see that in the form of a governing body for the school there is a four-fold partnership made up of teachers, parents, the community outside and the State, which sustains the school as an organ of the community. If the school is an epitome of the larger community, it can in turn serve as agent for making that community more of a community. The freedom of the school symbolizes the freedom of society; if it loses its freedom, the freedom of society is in peril.

4. So we arrive at the rewarding concept of **the Comprehensive School.** Such a school would be able to reflect in the composition of the school community and the courses provided, the richness and opportunities of the region and thus contribute to the country's unity and development. The base schools should be neighbourhood Common Primary Schools, followed by a Comprehensive Secondary School, attended by all senior pupils in the catchment area. The educational advantage of bringing together pupils following various courses, both the less able and the more able, and a staff of varied interests and specialized qualifications in the same school with a wide range of curricular and other opportunities, is that it facilitates educational guidance and informed choices by pupils. It is important that there should be enough choices as special attitudes may only then be discovered, or even change, in a rich school environment. Also, mistaken choices can be reversed because of the ease of transfer, and the parity of esteem, in courses in the same school. The large enrolment would make it possible to divide classes into intellectually homogeneous 'streams' and 'sets' so as to heighten the pace of learning. The social case as well as the educational one for a comprehensive enrolment, including all social classes and ability groups, in the same campus, argue in favour of the comprehensive principle applying to Unitary and Private Schools as well.

5. **School Clusters,** proposed in the W.P., are welcome, but for many more reasons than better organization and better utilisation of resources available. The School Cluster (or School Complex, as termed in the Kothari Report) is an extension of the comprehensive principle to a bigger area, say an Electorate or part of an Electorate, helping to integrate the community of that area. That is, while the Cluster system enables gifted pupils in outlying rural areas to share in what the bigger city schools have to offer, at the same time it helps to develop a sense of belonging together in the area covered. Much of the opposition to the proposal has come from ethnic and religious minorities fearing that their schools and children may get second class treatment. Their

experience during the past two decades lends support to that fear. Only a radical change of attitude on the part of the leaders of the majority community can inspire confidence. A guidance and counselling service by well trained and fair minded teacher counsellors will also be vital to the success of the cluster scheme. Might we realize that our education could, instead of being a divisive force, become a powerful factor for nation-building?

6. In the **alternative routes to Higher Education** indicated in the W.P., we come to one of its brightest parts. Dropping out of school half-way need no longer be a calamity, when after a period of work-experience and non-formal education, one is motivated to pursue learning, even research , in one's chosen field and the doors of opportunity are open. It is claimed that almost every man, given maturity and the right kind of opportunity, is capable of a degree of higher education; and "the greater an individual's potentialities the longer the time needed for their fulfilment." It may indeed be a good thing to reserve half the places in the university to those who come by these alternative routes. This may lead to the wiping out of the cram shops that disfigure our educational landscape.

7. The W.P. sets out, hopefully, "to minimize the harmful backlash effect of **examinations** in the learning-teaching process within the school". The last word has yet to be said on the subject. The SLAAS has recommended in a joint memorandum with the science institutes, that "curricula and examinations (at the Collegiate level) should be designed by Boards staffed by professional educationists, university teachers and employers". It is well worth considering whether instead of holding even the secondary school examination on an all-Island basis it should not be under boards set up at regional level, under the auspices of the various universities so as to further minimize the remote control on the learning-teaching process. We should indeed look forward to the time when examinations may "wither away" (in the words of the UNESCO Commission on the Development of Education, 1971-2)

8. An inquiry, not less urgent, is into the **books, especially History text-books,** in use in schools. If the people of this country have to learn to live together in peace (whatever be the political settlement) the growing children should be freed from the prejudiced mis-information about their fellows in other parts of the country which books (and newspapers) are seeking to give. We would do well to enter into the movement for the mutual revision of history books which started with the call of Anatole France at the end of World War 1: "Burn the books which teach hatred, burn them all". Another subject for inquiry—should the State publish books?

9. But, what more than any other factor will save our education is the **quality of teachers** in our schools. We have to think of an all-graduate profession at the secondary level, and trained graduates of distinction to teach Advanced Level classes and to fill directive positions in all schools and in non-formal education centres. It will help if some of these have been drawn from other vocations. Both pre-service training and continued in-service training and Extension Services of various kinds will help to improve standards. And we must envisage a core of teachers in every institution who will be able to communicate moral and social values by just what they are. Children instinctively seek, from among the staff, people on whom they can model their own growth.

111. Spiritual and Moral Values

Sri Lanka, like India, is a meeting place of the great religions of the world. She has also inherited the great spiritual and moral values of the Indic civilization. But, though it is a sad thing to say, it is just the truth to say that the report of the Special Committee on Religious Education is a total repudiation of our ancient legacy, just as the recommendation that "in the recruitment of teachers for the various subjects those with advanced qualifications in religion such as Dharmacharya Certificate in Buddhism should be given preference as an additional qualification" infringes the Right to Equality enshrined in Article 12 of our Constitution.

Witness to the spirit of the Indic civilization: I-Tsing tells us that the ancient University of Nalanda was the meeting ground of the different sects and creeds with their "possible and impossible doctrines". The Radhakrishnan Commission Report: "The fundamental principles of our Constitution call for spiritual training. There is no State religion..to be secular is not to be religiously illiterate. It is to be deeply spiritual and not narrowly religious". The Report quotes Gandhiji: "Fundamental principles of ethics should certainly be taught to the children and that should be regarded as adequate religious instruction."

The chapter on Fundamental Rights in the Indian Constitution includes Art. 29 (1)

> Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same.
>
> (2) No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.
>
> Art. 30 (1) All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.
>
> (2) The State shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language.

The significance of these provisions as well as the meaning of the Right to Equality in Art. 14 became clear when the Chief Justice of India advised the President to disallow the Kerala Education Bill. Said the Chief Justice, that through the ages India had welcomed all to her shores and given special rights to minorities: the Government of Kerala could not take over the schools of the Christians or Muslims. In the State of Bombay Vs.Bombay Education Society, the Bombay High Court held that the Anglo-Indian community had the right to conduct its schools using the English medium and admit pupils of other communities and receive proportionately equal grants for all their pupils.

Would that we in Sri Lanka rose to the height of our spiritual inheritance?

IV. Re-thinking the Role of Church-related Institutions

Sir Emerson Tennent, writing in 1850, notes that in the Kotte Christian Institution (founded 1822) there were "congregated the Tamils of Jaffna, the Sinhalese of the low-country, and the young Kandyans from the hills". What Tennent perceived with joy was a new 'Ceylonese' identity, which the Christian schools were creating. A little earlier he had visited the Batticotta Seminary, which he judged was entitled to rank with many an European University. Assessing the impact of the Batticotta Seminary and the sister institution, the Uduvil Girls' College, the first Girls' boarding school in South Asia, Dr. C. H. Piyaratna writes in his doctoral dissertation at Michigan in 1968: "Clearly the impact of the American Mission Educational System extended beyond the Jaffna peninsula, but its contribution to the development of the peninsula is singular". Professor D. J. Fleming of the U.S. in his book, "Schools with a message in India" (1920) writes of T.C.K.: "We find embodied in Trinity College, Kandy, some of the finest elements of an English public school". As an example of the stamina of the school, he cites how young boys, unarmed, did sentry duty on the streets of Kandy during the Sinhalese-Muslim riots, when the police were no longer able to do so. Not the least example of the contribution of Christian pioneering effort, the Ceylon School for the Deaf and Blind (founded 1912), which in the two units at Ratmalana and one in Kaithadi, still cares for nearly half the handicapped who have institutional care in Sri Lanka. All together, the Protestant Church-related schools, representing but half per cent of the country's population, can claim to have made as immeasurable contribution to nation-making and nation-building in Sri Lanka.

But , the Eighties which sees a sick society in our beloved country and which sees our young people grow up as marginal and not sovereign citizens, poses a new challenge to Christian Schools as to others. Are our schools bearing witness to our Faith today?

The First Question: Education forWhom? Is not "the entire ethos of the system oriented to the needs and aspirations of the upper and middle classes"? Are not our urban schools guilty of neglect and discrimination against the poor in the villages and rural areas and even the underprivileged in the towns and cities?

Is it not the right time "to show a new face of Christianity by showing a new pattern of our own commitment"?

The Second Question: Education for What? Bishop Newbigin's warning applies to Christian schools here as well, that they have stopped at the point where they could challenge the existing order. Or, as Neville D. Jayaweera has said, the Christians who are themselves an elite minority, culturally alienated, tended to take sides with the rich and privileged against the poor and the underprivileged. He says: "Only unequivocal and categorical commitments by the Christians and the churches on the side of the poor and the oppressed and in favour of change and progress, can restore some sort of credibility to the content of Christian communication". Or, again, as Fr. Thos. Kunnunkal S. J. has urged: Education must promote a sense of belonging; it should enable one to be and to become; it must produce "agents of change".

The Third Question: Why Christian Schools? At the least, to affirm the freedom of learning, and so the freedom of society by spelling out the fundamental right enshrined in Articles 29 (1) and 30 (1) of the Constitution of India. Then, to use our schools as launching grounds against social discrimination and injustice, especially having in mind the poor, the plantation workers and the disabled. Not least, to promote an alternative civilization, a counter-culture with a new Value System, to replace the consumer-culture derived from the West. But, the redemption of a radically sick society, which is hardly aware of what ails it, requires a revolutionary programme and a revolutionary group to undertake that programme. The noted Indian Economist J. D. Sethi has suggested the answer: "By whom and by what means are these sick societies to be cured? Gandhi insisted on and hoped for the emergence of a small revolutionary elite who would be the instrument of change—the morally oriented, truth conscious elite." Would that in each one of our schools prepared to participate in the programme we had a small core of teachers who by their life and example, even more than by their teaching, evoke the values, the vision and the urge in at least some of their pupils to join in this revolutionary task?

A 7-point Programme: The experiments by Church-related institutions elsewhere reported in the first dossier of papers released by the Office of Education of the WCC suggest possible thrusts in several directions for our institutions in Sri Lanka:-

ONE: The school should be organized as a community as well as a community school, with an on-going communication between the school community and the larger community. As life-like as possible, going further than the traditional House System, the community-building exercise may include 'homestead clusters' for groups of day pupils on the Woodleigh model of Australia. Class-work would be of limited duration. Within the school, one group may undertake lunch time catering and canteen duties; another the farm or flower garden; all must take turns in maintenance and cleaning. Work and social service in the neighbourhood may include recreational programmes too. Experiments in direct democracy may include a School Cooperative, may be to run the canteen, bookshop, or farm. Under the guidance of the School's Governing Body, the school campus may be used for the community's educational and cultural activities.

TWO: The 'adoption' of a village by a City School may be a rewarding experience for both parties. 'The adoption scheme' may extend to other units like a ship, a factory, an estate, or even an under-privileged group within the city.

THREE: A big school possessed of the necessary resources could set up (with special government approval) a Branch School or schools, in a rural/plantation/colonisation area—with occasional teacher, pupil exchanges—to provide good school education to the needy of those areas and adult education to their parents as well as non-formal educational experiences to batches of their own pupils.

FOUR: Again, with special state approval, one or more schools in the North may start a joint venture with one or two schools in the South, a Sinhala-Tamil dual-stream school in a frontier area (like Vavuniya) so as to re-open the doors of reconciliation where they are most needed and with enduring results.

FIVE: The scandal of the neglect of physically and mentally handicapped in Sri Lanka calls for massive expansion in the care and education of the young handicapped. Will the Board of Trustees of the first Ceylon School in this field take a move forward?

SIX: Parish Education Funds will be a good way of helping local poor children (not only Christians) to go to school and gifted children to pursue post-school education.

SEVEN: While each school, should have its own Governing Body to preserve a sense of partnership of all parties involved, much may be gained by setting up a national co-ordinating body, with a qualified Education Officer as Director/Secretary. This body should promote studies, surveys and seminars at school, regional and national levels as well as publish much needed literature in this field. Not least, this body should help to recruit the staff needed for this forward-looking service, arrange for their initial and recurrent training and help in the field by an Education Extension Service.

(*Ceylon Churchman / Morning Star*, 1982)

When all has been said, Japanese education has been a success. This Eastern country went West too in search of ideas, and she gathered them now from England, now from America, now from Germany. But Japan possessed the right to decide for herself. She did it in her own manner using her own mould; she used the precious metal of her own language, inferior to ours; she put on the coin of her culture the stamp of her own inheritance, posterior to ours. And the Land of the people remained the goal of the quest. Thus education became a reality. . . All this meant a country, with a negligible fraction of the world's area containing few natural resources, where there is no idle acre or idle site; with a huge and rapidly growing population, where there is no idle unemployed or idle beggar; with crowded industrial cities, where few men thieve or break the peace. Thus, through her education, Japan has become politically powerful, economically resourceful; in art creative, in science inventive; one of the greatest nations of the world.

(From the Report on the *Education of Japan* by K. Nesiah, delegate of the A.C.U.T, and the N. P. T. A. to the Seventh World Education Conference, Tokyo, August, 1937)

PART II

University Education

CHAPTER 9: UNIVERSITY AND SOCIETY

THE LEGACY OF HISTORY, AND CHANGE

Though learning has had a long history in this country and a close connection with ancient Hindu and Buddhist educational traditions of India, the universities in Ceylon, like those of modern India, have been modelled on those of Britain. In our ancient tradition education was employed by society to perpetuate its way of life, its value system and, not least, to prepare the soul for its immortal journey; modern education, stemming from the liberal rationalist European tradition, is an ally of progress. The Father of the University Movement in Ceylon pleaded sixty years ago for the establishment of a university that would make science and commerce an important factor in national life and foster "a good Sinhalese and Tamil literature instinct with the best spirit of modern Europe". The fact of the matter is that education is never in a vacuum, never something apart. "A University", said Flexner, "is not outside, but inside the general social fabric of a given era.. It is an expression of the age, as well as an influence operating upon both present and future".

It was indeed the redeeming feature of British Rule in a formative century and half of our history that she laid here the four corner stones of the democratic edifice—parliamentary government, a judiciary independent of the executive, a free press, and the freedom of learning and its crown and symbol, an autonomous university. All these institutions are bound together; to deny any one of these is to imperil the entire concept of freedom. It is said that Britain is not only the home of the Mother of Parliaments, but her system of educational administration is a major contribution to the art of government. Witness, the Asquith Report's reference to the obligation undertaken by the British universities "to foster, with financial help from the British government, the evolution of Universities in territories advancing to independence".

If the British-patterned universities and schools represent the will of the community rather than the will of the State, so were our own ancient seats of learning. Education in Ancient India and Ceylon was independent of kings and its great hall mark was intellectual freedom. Vinoba Bhave speaks the authentic voice of that tradition when he says, "No Government, whatever may be its political philosophy, should ever be allowed to control education". Other liberal features of our ancient educational institutions also blend well with the British legacy. The curriculum of Nalanda, for example, included Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhism. Hinduism, Jainism and the whole range of secular knowledge of the time. The students were drawn from all Asia. Admission was by entrance tests and standards were high. The practice was to invite the foremost Buddhist scholar from North or South to preside over the University: Hiuen Tsang of China, who studied there A.D.635-40, had as his teacher and Chancellor Silabhadra of Bengal, whose own guru and predecessor was Dharmapala of the Tamil South. Incidentally, the *guru-sishya* tradition made for a real, if informal, community of learning. The liberal spirit of Nalanda found an echo in Ceylon's great fourteenth century Totagamuwa Pirivena, which provided "instruction for Buddhists and Hindus, clerical and lay, in all lhe knowledge of the time, the Buddhist Canon and the four Vedas. The languages studied included Pali and Sanskrit, Sinhalese and Tamil".

We are treading on hallowed ground. No civilization can afford to ignore what is precious in its heritage. Rather, it is incumbent on us to build well and true on the foundations of the past, remembering that what has happened in the past century and a half is as much part of our heritage as what happened in earlier centuries. There is much yet to build. The University of Ceylon is barely a quarter of a century old,. It is idle to say that its autonomy is an abiding conviction even in the minds of all those who are within its portals, or that it has truly acquired all the marks of a community of learning.

Continuity is an important principle in growth, but it is continuity-through-change. In Goethe's words, earn thy inheritance anew if thou woulds't possess it. We have to come to terms with

the knowledge explosion of our time, especially in the field of science and technology. We live too in a time of global history, with an emerging world community. The university itself would have to partake more and more of the character of an international community of learning, some of its graduates being destined to go for jobs abroad, participate in world assemblies and write for world audiences.

To adapt words which the President of California used of the American university, we may say that the true Ceylon university lies in the future. It has yet to develop its full identity, its unique theory of purpose and function. Indeed, if the nation herself is to develop her identity, rise in stature among the nations, it behoves her to train her intellectuals and her men of science, her men of letters and her leaders in action in universities "which are the sanctuaries of the inner life of the nation".

RE-ORIENTING HIGHER EDUCATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

A report of the UN Secretary-General (1962) defines Development: "Development is growth plus change; change in turn is social and cultural as well as economic, and qualitative as well as quantitative". The university of today, while remaining the sanctuary of the inner life of the nation, has to re-orient itself to the tasks of development. Seymour Lipset avers that the tasks of the universities in the under-developed countries of the world are fundamentally not very different from what they are in more highly developed societies. According to him, they are as follows:

(a) *they must transmit in a more differentiated and more specific way the cultural heritage—the history, the scientific knowledge, the literature—of their society and of the world culture of which their society is a part;*

(b) *they must train persons who will become members of the elites of their societies to exercise skills in science, technology, management and administration;*

(c) *they must cultivate the capacity for leadership and a sense of responsibility to their fellow countrymen and they must train them to be constructively critical, to be able to initiate changes while appreciating what they have inherited;*

(*d*) *the universities must contribute new knowledge to the world's pool of knowledge and must stimulate in some of the students at least, the desire to become original contributors to this pool.*

We may, however, say that the fact of Ceylon being an underdeveloped (or developing) country casts on its universities a special role. While in advanced countries a large number of universities, research institutions, rich foundations and a multitude of scientists and scholars share in the tasks of development, a few universities may have to shoulder the entire burden of studies and research, and even applied research, in a country like Ceylon. On their side, the few research institutions here would do well to undertake some post-graduate teaching in their special fields. Correspondingly, the small elite in a developing country, who are drawn almost exclusively from the universities, is called upon to play a big role in every field of national activity. To quote Seymour Lipset again:

The universities alone must not only produce much of the elite which must modernise the society, but they are also almost solely responsble for the conduct of intellectual life in general in their own countries. A substantial proportion of the political elite, too, is bound to emerge from the ranks of university graduates, even in a time of populistic politics.

Knowledge has never been so central to national growth as it is today. There is a significant relationship between the level of enrolment in higher education and national development; it is no chance that the U.S.A. with 7% of its educational enrolment at the third level,and the U.S.S.R. with 6.5%, should be so ahead of other nations. Clark Kerr, President of California, says:

The great universities have developed in the great periods of the great political entities of history. Today, more than ever, education is inextricably involved in the quality of a nation. It has been estimated that over the last thirty years nearly half of our national growth can be explained by the greater education of our people and by better technology, which is also largely a product of the educational system.

Ceylon is still paying the price for a late start in the matter of higher education. It is true that during the last quarter of a century, while the country's population doubled, school enrolment went up 3 times, university enrolment 6 times and the total education budget some 20 times. Even so, university education, with less than 1% of the enrolment, remains the weakest link in the country's educational chain. It is not merely that in a democracy every gifted young person has the right to receive higher education; the needs of national development demand the diffusion of such education on the widest possible scale. But, what with early school-leaving, the uneven distribution of educational facilities region-wise, and the educationally submerged tenth in the plantations, it may be said without exaggeration that the majority of the nation's gifted youth are denied an education commensurate with their abilities. Qualitatively, a graver form of wastage is the wrong deployment of the nation's talent and the resources at our disposal. The trend in progressive countries is to step up the production of scientists, engineers and technologists and check the drift to the Arts. Up to ten years ago, the University of Ceylon followed a policy of keeping an even balance between the sciences and the humanities. During recent years, under political pressure, the ratio has been heavily reversed in favour of the Arts and Oriental Studies, stressing an education that is irrelevant to the needs and opportunities of Ceylon in the second half of the twentieth century! Equally short-sighted has been the policy of disproportionate development of under-graduate lecturing at the expense of post-graduate and research work. It is like failing to gather the full harvest after expending prodigious labour in cultivating a field

The question of expanding facilities for university education has been considered by both the Needham and the Gunawardena Commissions. They recommended the opening of campuses of the University of Ceylon in Colombo and Jaffna in addition to the one at Peradeniya. The latter Commission also recommended a system of affiliated University Colleges. Considering the need for a phenomenal expansion in facilities for under-graduate and graduate study in Ceylon, these are urgently needed developments.

Meanwhile, following the recommendation of the Technical Education Commission a College of Technology is being planned; one hopes that it will blossom into a modern technological university. All this should not, however, exhaust the pattern of university development. To redress the imbalance of the 'primate City' of the colonial period dominating life in all spheres, regional centres of higher learning are called for. Such centres may start as modest Institutes, or Junior Colleges, and earn university status in course of time. Some of these, let us hope, will answer to the description of Rural Institutes, or Universities, in the Radhakrishnan Report and help to pioneer new developments and train persons for new rural professions. Warning against education being the means of eroding rural life instead of giving it vitality and quality, the Report stresses the significance of the village for the sake of the country as a whole:

In the course of world history, seldom has the greatness of a nation long survived the disintegration of its rural life. For untold ages man by nature has been a villager and has not long survived in any other environment....When for a long time cities draw the cream of life and culture from the villages, returning almost nothing as has been the case in India during the last two centuries, the current village resources of culture and energy become depleted, and the strength of the nation is reduced.

Gearing education to the tasks of development calls particularly for a man-power survey and the promotion of much post-graduate and research studies. An inter-university (or inter-campus) 'division of labour' will be necessary so that the limited teaching power and equipment may be deployed to best advantage. It is time that senior university teachers and research workers took a decision as to whether more Ph.D's should not be produced within the country so that overseas scholarships may be increasingly reserved for post-doctoral courses. The possibility of doing significant advanced work within the country depends also on attracting foreign scholars and scientists of repute to accept contracts to work in such centres and, still more, on slowing down the flight abroad of exceptional ability that has been a feature of the past decade or so. It is said lhat more than half the scientists in human history are

alive today, taking the world as a whole. We in Ceylon can say that almost all the scientists in our history are alive today, but about half of them (including some of lhe best)have settled abroad!

UNIVERSITY AS COMMUNITY

We may turn to a more direct social function of the university. There is no denying the fact that our new nationhood is little more than a coat of paint; for beneath the surface we are still a bundle of parallel societies sustained by parallel school systems. Similarly, though Britain impposed a legal and administrative system that should have gone far towards making a free and equal society, the conviction is slow in coming that all men are equal. It should be the task of education to build in our country a homogenous secular democratic nation sharing a common outlook. Cardinal Newman wanted the universities of Europe to produce better citizens; here the task should extend to producing a better society as well, and a nation at that.

A university, like a well-run public school, influences by what it is as by what it instructs. Being a community itself is the vital service it renders to the larger society. The uniqueness of universities among social institutions arises from their possessing, Eric Ashby tells us,

> *a universality greater even than that of the Church, for they deal with concepts which command the assent of educated men irrespective of race, colour, religion, language, or politics. When two academics talk about science or scholarship the differences between them become irrelevant. As they discuss biology or history they are united by a network of assumptions which they share in common and of propositions to which they both subscribe. Therefore universities have a dual loyalty: everyone agrees that they must serve the society which maintains them; but those who understand universities know that this service cannot be fulfilled unless society grants them certain privileges, so that they can be loyal also to the international brotherhood of untversities. They are within the state, yet they must preserve an individuality apart from the state.*

The University of Ceylon may well claim that during the quarter century of its existence it has come close to being a community in several respects. Equal access to equal education is a 'fundamental right' and the indispensable basis of a sense of belonging one to another. The University Ordinance makes it, in Section 7, an 'open university':

The university shall be open to all persons of either sex and of whatever race, creed or class, and no test of religious belief or profession shall be adopted or imposed in order to entitle any person to be admitted as a teacher or student of the University or to hold any appointment therein (other than that of Warden of a Hall of Residence), to graduate thereat or to hold, enjoy or exercise any advantage or privilege thereof.

Admission by means of a common examination has given an equal democratic chance to every candidate, while free tuition and bursaries (on a means test) and other welfare services make this equality even more meaningful. Within the University the cosmopolitan Halls of Residence reflecting both the multi-group Ceylonese community and the various faculties of study would have helped to create an atmosphere in which the various cultural traditions are looked upon as complementary to one another. The functional character of most student societies would have helped further in fostering a sense of community.

The University is the only place in the country where scholars drawn from every group, racial, religious and ideological, have come into intellectual contact. It would be far-fetched to claim that many scholars at the University sensed, in the spirit of Ananda Coomaraswamy, an obligation to pursue studies transcending their own linguistic or religious groups, or that many common elements in their studies bound generations of scholars together, who thus came to share a "common intellectual estate". But it was an achievement to have provided the basis for an intellectual community to live and work together. Looking back these twenty-five years, those who have been members of the university community can well claim that they remain citizens of no mean city. And the country would have been the poorer without this creative minority.

UNIVERSITY'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE LIFE OF SOCIETY

If knowledge is central to the life of society in a time of revolutionary change like the present, the University has a responsibility for the continued education of the many as well as of the few. Its task is to make the semi-literate person literate, the literate person functionally literate, and the functionally literate still more so. Besides making the university more and more accessible to the rural and urban working classes, there is an obligation for the university to promote culture and learning among the masses and to supply inspiration to new national movements. The new media of mass communication can serve this purpose; but it is institutions like the Danish Folk High Schools, so fittingly called the poor man's Oxford, that are the best organs of the Extension movement. The university has an equal obligation for the continued education and re-education of its alumni in a world where knowledge is increasing rapidly and new professions emerging in large numbers. The university must see to it that those who have passed out of its portals ever remain at the height of their times. Both learned and popular publications are another means of disseminating knowledge among the few and the many. It may be that something of value, which is not paying for the private publisher to bring out, will see the light of day only under university sponsorship. The university's interest in publishing is a vital contribution to the freedom of knowledge.

The movement which has gathered momentum in Britain by which the universities are concerned with the standards in all the higher professions has significance for us. A few years ago University-centred Institutes of Education comprising all teachers' colleges in the respective areas were set up both to raise the standards of teacher education and to safeguard the freedom of such education. Still earlier nine autonomous Examination Councils, functioning under the auspices of the English universities of the different areas, came to conduct school-leaving examinations at both levels. Under this system these examinations can become the ally rather than the usurper of education while at the same time being free of control by a government department. Paradoxically,

the autonomous councils protect these examinations from undue dominance by the universities themselves. Meanwhile, there is a move to extend the scheme of University Institutes to other professions. In a letter to the London *Times*, a group of British Vice-Chancellors and others have appealed to the Government, the University Grants Committee and the professional institutions to encourage "the linking up of institutions in a variety of ways: through Institutes of Technology and of Commerce, as of Education, based on university centres and working through Boards of Studies; or through schemes of confederation; or by affiliation."

The university's function does not stop at seeking to discover and disseminate truth; it extends to endeavouring to integrate it into the life of society. The fact is that the world is all the time looking for ideas by which to live. J.M.Keynes warned us a generation ago: "The ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood....I am sure that the power of vested interests is vastly exaggerated compared with the gradual encroachment of ideas". There is no lack of designing men and groups, themselves the victims of bias and prejudice, seeking to enslave the minds of their fellows. The State, and the political group controlling the government of the day, have means at their disposal of shaping the ideas of citizens. It is in this dangerous situation, with the peril posed by uncriticized ideas, that the university and university men have the responsibility of standing for the 'intellectual virtues', for scrutinizing presuppositions and imparting not merely just judgements but the power of critical and generous judgement. The example of the scientist following the argument wherever it leads, of the historian refusing to take sides, and indeed of all intellectual men standing for the freedom of knowledge will 'catch on'. Indeed, as Eric Ashby claims, a university is the principal instrument of society for achieving these ends: "it must be the forum for dialectic over intellectual affairs, just as the Press must be the forum for dialectic over day-to-day affairs". And without independence, both these instruments—the Press and the University—lose their value to society: "A nation which deprives universities of their privileges soon shows symptoms of

a slow intellectual and cultural decay; that is what happened to Spain". The danger may sometimes arise from within: thus, for the university not to be concerned with promoting the freedom of knowledge will be to perform less than its mission; for it to compromise with the State over its own autonomy would be treason to civilization.

In fact the true function of the State, as Lindsay has pointed out, is to make the community more of a community, more of a democratic community. The end that the State should be after is not just democratic government, but a democratic society. Since a democratic community cannot be reached without mutual understanding, which in turn depends on free discussion, there can be no effective democracy without an educated people. Education therefore becomes the State's prime concern. "It is as important that the State should not directly control such education", says Lindsay, "as it is that it should support it". Indeed, if the State is to be true to its purpose of promoting the processes of democratic discussion, it has a concern in maintaining self-governing universities. The Radhakrishnan Report too stresses that an atmosphere of freedom in the university must be preserved if the values of real freedom are to be preserved in the country:

> *We must resist, in the interests of our own democracy, the trend towards the governmental domination of the educational process. Higher education is, undoubtedly, an obligation of the State but State aid is not to be confused with State control over academic policies and practices.... Our universities should be released from the control of politics.*

ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND THE LIMITS OF STATE CONTROL

Academic freedom is essentially the individual's freedom of thought and expression. But in the context of the university and its relations to society and the institutions of Government, it becomes institutional freedom. It is the right, which universities have claimed for six centuries in Europe, and much longer in Hindu and Buddhist tradition, to decide for themselves "who may teach, what may be taught, how it shall be taught, and who may be taught'.

In essence this means that only those who teach in a university should direct the inner process of its education in much the same way as those connected with the profession of law alone function in our legal system. That is why in the University of Ceylon, and the Common-wealth universities, the processes of policy making and administrative measures originate at the level of departments of study and seep upwards through the Faculty, the Senate and ultimately reach Council or Court. In fact the Council is precluded from considering any matter which has direct or indirect academic reference, "unless the Senate has first been given the opportunity of recording and transmitting its opinion thereon". At the same time, there is a lay element in Court, Council and Selection Boards, all chosen by valid democratic processes, which makes it possible to bring in the wisdom of the larger community as a wholesome corrective to any possible limited outlook of academic men.

Following the analysis of the Robbins Report, we may examine in more detail the components of academic freedom:

(1) **Freedom of Appointments.** *Appointments are made by the Council, itself a mixed body of academic and lay members, after considering recommendations of similar mixed Selection Boards set up for each vacant post. The habit of consulting external referees and the presence on most boards of eminent lay men besides academic men specially qualified in the particular field of study is usually a safeguard against mistakes; in any case, "'the risk is much less serious than the danger of interference on political grounds, which is inevitably present under any system of centralised control from outside".*

(2) **Freedom to determine Curricula and Standards.** *It is fundamental that an institution should be able to prescribe its courses and hold its own examinations. "Liberty of experiment with content and method is one of the surest guarantees of efficiency and discovery." The practice of appointing external examiners is a good way of securing the maintenance of standards.*

(3) **Freedom of Admissions.** *Institutions should be free to choose those they teach. Since the work of the schools which*

prepare candidates for the university is influenced by entrance requirements some system of consultation with them by means of a joint-council is called for.

(4) **Freedom to determine balance between Teaching and Research.** *Only the university concerned which is intimately concerned is in a position to judge the appropriate balance in particular instances. The tendering of informed advice by a competent body like the U.G.C. should help in the appraisal of academic efficiency.*

(5) **Freedom to determine Development Policy.** *Generally universities should have the liberty to determine their own programmes and policy; in particular to frame their own budgets. It is, however, necessary to evolve policy and programmes in consultation with the U.G.C. which is in a position to view things in a wider national perspective.*

The university must have a measure of independence of society and yet it must not dwell in an ivory tower, but be in responsible relationship with society. In the tradition of the Commonwealth universities the State ensures this, firstly, by defining the relationship in a University Act. Each university is created as an autonomous institution, by a separate law, whice defines its character and purpose.

The University Grants Commission is an ingenious device by which the Government is able to obtain independent advice as well as channel grants to universities. At the same time, it is an untainted source from which universities can learn of public needs, hear independent criticism of their own shortcomings and see how the efforts of a group of universities can be co-ordinated so as to use the country's manpower and material resources to maximum advantage. The U.G.C. Act of India empowers the Commission "to take, in consultation with the Universities or other bodies concerned, all such steps as it may think fit for the promotion and co-ordination of university education and for the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research in Universities". The Commission has also endeavoured

to establish a healthy convention on the English pattern according to which "the universities are autonomous within their limits and the U.G.C. is autonomous within its terms of reference". The 9-member Commission appointed by the Central Government consists of 3 Vice-Chancellors, 2 Central Government officers to represent the Government and 4 other persons who are either educationists of repute or have obtained high academic distinctions. In India the U.G.C. functions in close collaboration with the Planning Commission, because educational programmes are meaningful only if they are integrated in Economic Plans. In the conditions of Ceylon (as in India) the U.G.C. has to play a bigger role than in Britain, and can profitably have a large secretariat, and research wings and a unit for the examination of accounts, over and above each institution's internal audit.

Public Commissions of Inquiry are yet another means by which fresh light may be thrown at periodical intervals on the state of higher education. The Robbins Report has been described as "the most important social document since the Beveridge Report". The Kothari Education Commission, consisting of top level experts, Indian and foreign, has just completed a synoptic survey of Indian Education as a whole. The time is opportune in Ceylon, at the completion of a quarter of a century since the incorporation of the University of Ceylon, to have the future of higher education in this country inquired into by a full-fledged Commission, with the widest terms of reference.

Meanwhile, it is the duty of all those connected with university education in Ceylon to dedicate themselves to the task of defending the ideal of the autonomy of our universities as the indispensable basis of our survival as a free society.

(Paper read at Seminar of SLAAS on *The Future of University Education in Ceylon*, held at SLISIR Auditorium, 1966)

CHAPTER 10: A REGIONAL UNIVERSITY IN JAFFNA

It was the revered sage and scholar, Swami Vipulananda, who nearly half-a-century ago made a plea for a university in Jaffna. He spoke words of simple wisdom when he said that where there was a concentration of population, students and a tradition of learning; such a place was a fit seat for a university. He recalled how the Batticotta Seminary (founded in 1823)had produced internationally famous scholars and anticipated modern Indian universities. Going back further in time, he recalled the Nallur Tamil Sangam and its record of original works and translations from Sanskrit, the international language here at that time. The Swami looked forward to a University in Jaffna which would produce distinguished philosophers, scholars and scientists. The Needham Commission, before which the present writer urged the setting up of Regional Universities, in their Report (1958-59), shared the vision that Jaffna should become a seat of higher learning. The Gunawardena Commission too recommended a campus of the University of Ceylon in Jaffna, with affiliated University Colleges. THE SKANDA—1969 carried a fairly full article by the writer: 'A Plea for a University of Ceylon, Jaffna.' (This article was reproduced in the *Ceylon Daily News*.)

The country is still paying the price for a late start in the matter of higher education. With graduates forming only ½% of the labour force and graduates being only 1/10th of secondary school teachers, the population must be classed as 'under-educated' by international norms. Regional imbalances in university enrolment, due in turn to poor schooling provision and economic backwardness in some districts and the absence of even passable elementary education to the submerged tenth in the plantations, results in much wastage of potential ability. The system of restricted quotas for Tamil candidates seeking university admission introduced in 1970 and continued in subsequent years under other devices is also an anti-development measure. The reversal of the policy of keeping an even balance between Science and Arts enrolment during the past 15 years has led to unemployed Arts graduates being nearly 9,000.

The University of Sri Lanka, like most universities in former colonial territories, is an offspring of the University of the Western World. Located in the Primate City of the colonial era, still largely

urban-oriented, the centre of gravity of its academic life is hardly within itself; nor, has it by any means helped to build a large enough self-sustaining intellectual-scientific community within the shores of this country. At its best, like some of the bigger urban secondary schools, it still produces a colonial elite even out of youth creamed off from the countryside, depleting the villages of some its best talent in the process. The main motivation is utilitarian, not the pursuit of higher learning nor national development: It is the preparation for examinations which will get the qualifications that will fetch jobs. Alas, even the stimulus of that ambition is not strong enough to ensure that all who set out on secondary education complete that stage, nor to encourage as many as can to make the most of their under-graduate studies!!

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In the most revolutionary epoch in mankind's history, in the midst, that is, of three inter-related revolutions—the scientific technological revolution, the social revolution and the revolution in education, which makes education the instrument of all-round change instead of something which adapts itself to economic and political change—the task of the university is to 'create the future'. It is therefore an opportune moment to consider the question of university development in our country and more especially the unique theory of purpose and function of a Regional University. May be, that in the process of developing a good University in Jaffna, we may discover the Regional University of the future. But some planning of such a university is necessary to start with—if it is to be an instrument of rural renewal. For, Sri Lanka is and must remain a land of villages. The warning of the Radhakrishnan Report against education being the means of eroding rural life applies here as well.

The three missions of the university—teaching, research and service—have to function against the modern demands for social self-renewal and enhancing human capability. These purposes and functions of higher education apply to all universities alike, to the regional university as much as to the central university. All organs of higher education have a responsibility for making available new ideas and new technology, and for finding talent and guiding it to greater usefulness. No less than the central university,

the regional university has to be a university that, in its reach of studies, the quality of graduate and research work, the standing of its academic staff and the contribution made towards making new knowledge central to lhe conduct of society, is a community of learning so recognized by the international community of learning. It should be able to attract advanced students and scholars from outside to work in it as well as send out some of its alumni to key jobs abroad, still others to write for a national and world readership and speak to world audiences.

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When it comes to the fields of study in a regional campus,we have to remember some of the reasons urged by Swami Vipulananda for setting up a university in Jaffna- a concentration of students here and a tradition of learning. Thanks to our great secondary schools, which have been among Asia's best schools at one time, the North has provided a substantial number of doctors for some 125 years to the country's medical service and even to countries like Malaysia and India, and engineers, scientists, public servants and educationists for many years. Besides making use of this tradition that has gathered over the years, there are practical advantages in having, for example, a medical faculty in a Jaffna campus The world shortage of doctors, including the shortage in this country, offers the promise of jobs for those who would like to enter this profession; such expansion is also likely to throw up a number of very skilled physicians and surgeons as well as a number who would enter badly needed fields of research. Besides, students from this region who have to live in squalid lodgings in the crowded Kandy area will have better living conditions which will beneficially affect their medical studies. Some of these considerations would also apply to the teaching of Science and other science-based professions like Engineering, Technology and Agriculture.

Some of the studies in a Regional University should answer to the description of Rural Universities in the Radhakrishnan Report, and help to pioneer new developments and train persons for new rural professions. In the field of the Social Sciences too a campus sited here can make a very distinctive contribution to the socio-economic development of lhe North. For one thing, the Social Sciences should command more allegiance than the humanities

in an age "when statistical truths are preferred to the eternal verities". For another, the North lacks a sufficient supply of political scientists, economists and sociologists, just as it is bereft of trained historians. Thus, where are the revolutionary philosophers of local government who will dare to make the village community the foundation of our new polity? Where, again, is the informed leadership, unofficial and official, of the Cooperative Movement which is able to move at ease and with conviction among its concepts, and use it strategically for a pervasive transformation of society? And, yet again, are we not on vantage ground here to make studies of Indian 'colonial' and cultural expansion in South-East Asia and elsewhere, and of the Tamil cultural spread as part of the larger story? Not least, the significant story of the Tamils, their society, language and culture in this Island?

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We have to examine the facilities to be provided at a regional university in the light of the emerging view that one of the major tasks of education is to maximize human resource development. The university has a special responsibility to provide opportunities for life-long education and that not for an elite group but for all who can profit by it at any stage of life. In a rapidly changing world, where new jobs may demand new skills and new modes of life may call for new modes of thought, many would want to come to the university, or come back to it, in order to train or re-train. It may be at the level of scholar or scientist, who wants to pursue some line of research; it may be a worker, who has missed secondary education, or discovered his potentialities and wants to develop his ability as part-time scientist or inventor, writer or musician; it may be the local community as a whole who need library facilities, or the organisation of seminars on themes of their choice, or the presentation of plays; or, it may be the demand of the community that the university conduct a piece of research into a potential or present agro-industry of the area. The test and proof that a university campus is fulfilling these prime obligations is when those whom it instructs or influences in its extension courses and in-service programmes exceed the number of those in regular courses. Both learned and popular publications are yet another means of disseminating knowledge in a country where the paucity of books and

periodicals on modern subjects amounts almost to a book famine. Turning Tamil to new uses, we need books by the hundred and thousand to carry the people into the seventies; nor indeed need writing stop at the mother tongue when we can write for a national and world readership. A University Press will further mass communication while preserving the freedom of knowledge.

The revitalisation of school education is a major function of a university. For one thing, we need a large enough body of educationists possessing higher degrees engaged in directing our education and in research and writing. An all graduate profession is indispensable at least at the secondary stage. The new conception of both school and university as involved in the life of lhe community, and the use of the neighbourhood as resource material for learning' has implications for courses for teachers as for others; and for examinations, especially for External Degrees. The case is also for regionalizing school leaving examinations—to make them real tools of education. An Institute of Education, functioning within lhe regional university, should undertake responsibilily for the initial training of trachers, in-service training, extension work, library and research provision. And flowing from the concept of life-long education, "teachers, like everybody else, ought to be given the opportunity to go on learning all their lives".

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These many obligations of a modern Campus to its Region, not only underline the need for regional campuses, but point in the present case to the Northern Capital, or its suburbs, as the obvious location. The easy accessibility for the large numbers involved in full-time and evening courses would be answered by the modern requirement that a university should be sited on the edge of a populous city and at a focal point in the transportation system. It is in the spacious sites that are still available here the possibility exists of erecting structures functionally answering to the needs of a modern university and befitting the North. And well worthy of consideration for main campus would be the palace grounds of the Tamil Kings at Sankili Thopu, which carries the aroma of the ancient soil of Nallur with its memories of kings, temples and the Tamil Sangam of old.

As the Kothari Commission of India pointed out, the educational plan should be integrated in the socio-economic plan, and the region is the unit for such planning. It is not too late for an Advisory Body to be set up, with university men and others concerned in it, so that the new campus is planned with foresight as to serve as model for other regional campuses; and to make an abiding contribution to National and Regional Development. The new challenge is sure to appeal to Tamil scholars and scientists scattered over many lands, who may agree to re-assemble on their native soil to join in this adventure into the future. It is also incumbent on all to ensure, in accordance with our ancient tradition, that the halls of learning are hallowed ground on which only those connected with learning may tread.

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In a paper which the present writer presented to the Asian University Teachers Consultation in Bandung, December 1951, he sought to find the basis of unity of a university which today includes folks of different religious persuasions and political ideologies. Following the analysis of A. J. Coleman, it was suggested that there is a two-fold basis for the fellowship of the university community:

(1) its belief in and propagation of the 'intellectual virtues'— such as moral courage, intellectual honesty, docility to facts, tolerance and chivalrous fairness;

(11) the cohesive power of a community of work of people who are seeking together to discover truth, to disseminate truth and to integrate it into the life of society.

Though we have had a university community for well-nigh 50 years, the corporate sense has been slow in developing. May be, for teacher and taught, the utilitarian value of higher education leading to situations of emolument predominated; may be too, the university had shallow rootage in our soil and culture. It is the recovery of life-values from our own authentic past and the recall to our country of some of the great scholars and scientists whom we have pushed abroad which will be able to lend distinctiveness and distinction and personality to the university here as well as discover for it the secrets of corporate existence. For one thing,

the Ashram ideal, with simple living and deep personal relations between *guru* and *sishya*, which marked our ancient educational tradition, contains elements of abiding value for us. Of no less value for building up true educational communities, would be the new experiment in American, Canadian and British campuses of small self-governing student cooperative dwellings with self-service messes. For a people, whose ancient political genius flowered in cohesive village communities, such village-style campus-living would have greater relevance than expensive Halls of Residence with an array of servants calculated to produce a colonial style elite. Such a development would also help to reduce the distance between university folk and village folk and, if through 'village adoption' and Shramadana, the students embark on study-cum-service projects, the university can become the means of building a new society and the Sarvodaya concept of the State as a society of decentralised societies.

"The function of a university is to provide an antidote to fear." If we get our priorities right, the university does not belong to the State; it belongs to the nation, whose mind and conscience it is. Indeed the university, based on things of the mind and spirit is, like religion, society's safeguard against the State based on power. In every society there are designing men, often the victims of bias and hate themselves, who in their journey to power seek to enslave the minds of their fellows. It is in this dangerous situation posed by the peril of unexamined ideas, that the university and university men have the responsibility of spreading an atmosphere of tolerance and the power of critical and generous judgement. All the more, where the Press is not a responsible one, nor free!! Former Cambridge Vice Chancellor Eric Ashby pleads for 'constructive dissent'—"shifting the state of opinion about a subject in such a way that the other experts in the subject are prepared to concur," and adds: "Without disinterested and fearless criticism, society will lose its power of self-renewal." The same plea is made by Vinoba Bhave who asks teachers at all levels and other intellectuals to remain aloof from party politics and serve as the conscience or inner voice of society—to promote the awakening of the people and their power.

Vinoba Bhave speaks the authentic voice of our ancient tradition when he recalls that royal benefactors of old never attempted to control seats of learning and insists that government should not be allowed to control education. Reinforced by the British tradition, the Kothari Education Commission endorses this for India. University teachers should have freedom to express their views in lecture hall and outside and to publish. Universities should have the right to decide for themselves "who may teach, what may be taught, how it shall be taught, and who may be taught." As Eric Asby has put it: "Universities....must preserve an individuality apart from the state....and they must remain out of reach of politics. ....And a university which is content to let its privileges slip away betrays not only itself but its country." It therefore behoves university men in Sri Lanka to secure the radical revision of the Act of 1972, which turned all our universities into Campuses of one University run under the political control of the Minister of Education, so that the university becomes true to itself and fulfils its mission.

(*The Morning Star / Eelanadu* — in Tamil, 1974.)

We are puzzled how the National Government, pledged to the democratic way of life, could have placed before Parliament a Bill which seeks to do away with the autonomy and academic freedom of our universities. Undoubtedly, it is one of the most reactionary pieces of legislation ever contemplated by a Commonwealth legislature

Two reasons given by the Education Minister for wanting to take over the universities do not carry conviction. He referred to student indiscipline and staff faction and to the failure of the universities to contribute significantly to the tasks of national development. We must admit that the universities of the country have not acquired all the marks of a community of learning But this could hardly be considered the reason for the take over, as with the more direct intrusion of party politics, indiscipline may increase, if anything. In fact, as things are, it is the tensions and conflicts outside that find an echo within the university . . .

The ill b fore Parliament is .. a false answer to our pr blems. For one thing, it is a betrayal of the democratic process to rush through Parliament such far reaching legislation which was hatched by officials without open consultation with the persons concerned with higher education. The main objection, however, is that is a retrograde measure undermining the very concept of a University.

(K. Nesiah in an editorial comment on the Higher Education Act, 1966 in *The Cooperater*, Jaffna; quoted by *Minerva*, London Autumn 1966)

CHAPTER 11: FROM SCHOOL TO UNIVERSITY

The aim of this study is to discover the weaknesses in the conditions and manner in which schools present candidates for the University Preliminary Examination and to make suggestions calculated to better these conditions. It is based on an analysis of the Report on the Preliminary Examination, December, 1959. The present study is a sequel to my paper on 'The Provision of University Entrance Forms in Schools' which was based partly on an analysis of the results of the Examination held in December, 1953 and partly on a questionnaire study of the organisation and staffing of Sixth-Forms.

The significance of the Sixth Form for ensuring the quality both of higher education and of national leadership is being increasingly appreciated. It is one of those elements that have helped to put our bigger secondary schools among the best in Asia. It is only now that a country like India, with its million-enrolment in her universities, seeks to correct many weaknesses in that structure by instituting a pre-university course. If education is a 'nation-building' investment, as the Crowther Report puts it, it is higher education that is particularly so and the clearing house of the Sixth Form gets added significance.

II

But all is not well with either our university education or the Sixth Form that serves the transition from school to university. Ceylon is still paying the price for a late start in the matter of higher education. In size at any rate, university education is the weakest link in the country's educational chain. The University of Ceylon had 3,181 students in 1959, which makes less than one per cent of the age group. This enrolment compares very unfavourably with most countries, including India's 3% and Britain's 3%, which Lord Simon described as 'about the lowest in the civilized world'. It is not merely that in a democratic society every gifted young person has the right to receive higher education. The national interest demands the provision of that education on the widest possible scale. The case for increase in the number of university campuses, the expansion in content and types of courses and the provision of external degrees and extra-mural studies has been made by the Needham Commission.

It is true that free education, the establishment of a number of Central schools and the use of swabhasha have opened the gates of higher education to many to whom they were closed in the past. But not all feeder routes have been equally open and in consequence there has been a large wastage of potential university students. Economic reasons, parental indifference or lack of schooling facilities may explain the high percentage of children of 5 to 14 not attending school and the considerable number of children over 14 leaving school too early. Ultimately, it is these factors that explain why the total enrolment in 1959 in the University of Ceylon from the North Central Province is 10 students, from Uva 20 students and the Eastern Province 43 students.

Nor is it any cause for satisfaction to note that it is a medieval curriculum, bereft of the natural and social sciences, that is the staple fare in the schools opened in the rural areas. Even ten years ago Ceylon had caught up with the modern trend and the schools of those days were sending a substantial number of science students from their sixth forms. In fact the Vice-Chancellor was constrained to warn the schools against turning good Arts students into third-rate scientists. The trend in most modern countries is to stress the production of scientists, engineers and technologists and check the drift to the arts. Owing to limitations of accommodation the University of Ceylon has so far followed a policy of keeping an even balance between the Sciences and the Arts; when the second science faculty is established the sciences will progressively gain. The disturbing new trend is that the schools are sending more Arts candidates than scientists and orientalists at that than those studying the humanities. Are we reversing the incentives of ten years ago and turning potential scientists into orientalists? In 1951 there were 923 Arts candidates sitting the Preliminary out of a total of 1804 candidates; 259 were Arts entrants of the selected 508. In 1959 there were 2,231 Arts candidates out of a total of 3,938; 648 constituted Arts entrants out of 1,189 total entrants. The following figures for four languages on the Arts side reveal trends of popularity:—

	1951		1959	
	Sat	Passed	Sat	Passed
Pali ..	181	40%	588	39%
Sinhalese ..	472	70%	1749	85%
Tamil ..	137	49%	266	80%
English ..	185	32%	92	71%

The Arts candidates for the 1960 Examination rose to the new peak of 3,416. That these developments were the ones sought is clear from the comment of the Director of Education in his Report for 1959:

> "Each electorate, thus has at present more than one school of senior secondary status to counteract the exodus from rural areas to urban areas. A great advance has been made in this direction by the organization of H.S.C. classes in these Vidyalayas. ....As much as 33 percent of the admissions to the University of Ceylon have been from these Madya Maha Vidyalayas and Maha Vidyalayas.....Over a hundred Pracheena Pandits, with Sinhalese, Pali and Sanskrit as subjects, have been appointed to these institutions so as to raise the standard of Swabhasha which is now the medium of instruction in the H.S.C. classes as well."

In passing, it may be mentioned that there is considerable disparity in marking standards ranging from 30% passes in European History to 85% passes in Sinhalese and 80% in Tamil. Since such disparity is likely to weight in favour of candidates offering some subjects and against those offering others a committee has been appointed by the Arts and Oriental Studies Faculties to devise procedures to eliminate the disparity.

III

It has been shown that a large percentage of gifted pupils do not enjoy the opportunity of higher education because they have missed a school education or have not continued long enough in school. This is a negative form of wastage of potential sixth formers and potential university students. On the positive side, there is evidence that a fair proportion of those who have reached the sixth form do not possess the ability commensurate with the opportunity they enjoy. It would be fair to put into this category those candidates who failed all subjects or passed only one. 1,365 or a third of the total of 3,919 candidates, belong to this category; 602 failed all subjects, 763 passed only one. The story would be worse if we take into consideration the age and number of attempts of some of the other candidates.

A clear picture of the uneconomic and wasteful nature of our sixth form system would emerge from a study of the examination results schools-wise. It should be remembered that the number of schools presenting candidates remained round about 65 ten years ago. They were gradually increased year by year owing to various pressures. In 1959 they were 216 schools and their number has been subsequently increased.

TABLE 1: No. of Entrants, by Schools, by Centres

Centre	No. of Schools	0 entrants	1—4 entrants	5—9 entrants	10—19 entrants	20&over entrants
Colombo	99	19	44	14	15	7
Kandy	47	12	22	9	4	—
Galle	33	10	13	3	6	1
Jaffna	37	13	12	7	1	4
Total	216	54	91	33	26	12

TABLE 2: No. of Science Entrants, by Schools, by Centres

Centre	No. of Schools	0 entrants	1—4 entrants	5—9 entrants	10—19 entrants	20&over entrants
Colombo	54	16	18	9	7	4
Kandy	15	4	7	4	—	—
Galle	4	—	1	3	—	—
Jaffna	29	11	10	3	3	2
Total	102	31	36	19	10	6

What is the minimum economic size of a sixth form? The Crowther Report considers that it should be 40 pupils, first and second years, arts and science all counted. The actual average size of a sixth form is 65 pupils in Britain, 79 pupils if the average is confined to Boy's Schools. The Ceylon sample survey of 1953 worked out 17 second-year sixth forms per school and 8½ sixth form teachers per school. There was 1 teacher for every 2 candidates and 2 teachers produced each entrant. It was suggested in that study that the right to claim grant should be restricted to schools which are able to secure generally 5 admissions a year.

From Table 1 it can be seen that only 71 schools secured 5 or more entrants in 1959; 91 schools secured between 1 and 4 entrants and 54 schools failed to secure any entrant. In view of the exaggerated claims made for Government schools, it may be added that 78 of the 216 schools were government schools and only 17 of them secured 5 or more entrants; 34 of them secured between 1 and 4 entrants and 27 schools failed to secure any entrant. Govt.schools secured 269 entrants in all, i.e. 22% of the total 1,189 entrants.

In Table 2 we have selected the 102 schools which presented candidates for entrance to the Science Faculties (Science, Medicine, Engineering and Agriculture). It will be seen that 35 schools secured 5 or more entrants; 36 secured between 1 and 4 entrants, while 31 secured nothing. Only 14 government schools. including Royal College, presented science candidates. Royal College secured 31 entrants and ranked third among the science schools; Veyangoda Central and Matale Govt. College secured 8 entrants each; four other Govt· schools secured between 1 and 4 entrants each, while seven failed to secure any entrant. Govt. schools secured 58 science entrants in all, i.e., 10% of the total 541 science entrants.

The University used to publish the names of schools which secured ten or more entrants. The number of these schools used to range from ten to fifteen. In view of the doubling of the total admission in recent years any list made now should be of schools securing 20 or more admissions. Twelve schools would get into such a list made for 1959 securing between them 368 places, i.e. one-third of the total admissions. Nine of these schools are identical with the 'upper ten' of ten years ago, say 1950 or 1951. Royal used to find a place in the list every year; Piliayndala Central is the other government school which has found a place among the twelve schools of the year, Piliyandala having secured 27 Arts admissions. If we make a list of schools which have secured ten or more science admissions, there would be sixteen of them securing between them 309 of the total 541 science admissions last year. Ten of these schools in the science-ten list also find themselves on the list of 12 schools securing 20 or more places. Royal is the only government school on the science-ten list, and ten out of the

other fifteen are now Unaided schools. It may be added that eleven more schools securing 5 or more science places are unaided, making a total of 21 Unaided Schools in the larger list of 35 schools with 5 or more science entries.

The moral of all this is clear—that Sixth Forms, like the schools themselves, cannot be built in a day and very much like the school, a Sixth Form is not just a matter of buildings, books, equipment and staff. It is an intellectual climate nurtured over the years. It is true a phenomenal expansion of university education is called for and even more a phenomenal expansion of sixth form education. Let us however, be on our guard that the quality of this education is not uneven and the opportunities offered to any pupils are not unequal. To ensure these, the expansion must be in terms of larger Sixth Forms rather than more Sixth Forms.

When it comes to the Science Sixth, we have just noted that nearly two-thirds of the most successful classes are in unaided schools which are forbidden to accept fresh pupils of unlike religion. This unwise policy is likely to reduce opportunities to many gifted non-Christian pupils for several years to come and correspondingly depress science education in Ceylon.

Of all the forms of waste in the present functioning of all Sixth Forms, not the least is the failure to distinguish the several destinations of those actually in these forms. Even in the bigger and better classes, it is generally a minority who are potential university men. If the education in this class is regarded as the concluding stage of a good secondary education, no pupil loses by that. But if the work is dominated by pressure of subsequent university studies, the non-entrants fail to get the best out of their years in the Sixth Form.

IV

Conclusions and Suggestions:—

(1) As was remarked in the previous study, the beginning of reform should be clearness of understanding about the nature and function of the Sixth Form. It should be regarded as providing higher secondary education for all gifted pupils mainly of the age-group 16 to 18. It will include prospective undergraduates, those preparing for certain professions as well as those rounding off a good secondary education. Perhaps in the first year it will not be easy in all cases to distinguish the three groups, but it will be desirable for those intending to enter fields of specialisation to do

so as early as they can. While it will be futile to assume that all sixth formers are potential university entrants, the general education of all, specialists and non-specialists, must be kept in view... As the Crowther Report puts it, great importance should be attached to 'those complementary elements in the Sixth Form curriculum which are designed to develop the literacy of science specialists and the numeracy of arts specialists'.

At the present stage of development in Ceylon, it is particularly important that the basic skills of language and communication in both swabhasha and English should be stressed during these years.

(2) The courses in the Sixth Form derive balance and purpose from the examination which follows them. It is, however, vital that the examination should not dominate all the studies and is more a school leaving examination rather than a university entrance test. Be it remembered that only a minority enter the university. The requirement of four specialist papers and a general paper needs to be reviewed for prospective university entrants as it defeats the idea of a study in depth by which a pupil gets introduced into one or two related areas of knowledge. One hopes that examination reform may be more and more in the direction of internal school tests and cumulative records and finally lead to the system of 'accrediting' as in New Zealand

(3) Paradoxical as it may sound, the way to increase the number and quality of university entrants is to restrict their education to a smaller number of schools. It should be realized that larger sixth forms are not only economical in staff and equipment, but more fully educative than smaller sixths. They offer wider choice of subjects and 'ability sets' and secure the liberal education that naturally flows from having in the same place teachers and pupils of varied interests. Large Science Sixths are a must in Ceylon owing to the expensiveness of laboratories and shortage of science teachers. In assessing the total supply of sixth forms, the national interest demands altering the Arts:Science ratio by a considerable margin. There is need to effect some kind of co-ordination of Sixth Form provision in different regions of the country and the need too to provide a liberal number of boarding scholarships to pupils who have to look for their classes away from their home districts.

(4) The success of Sixth Form work will be impossible without teachers of real intellectual distinction for these classes. The really capable teacher, with a first or second class degree, will

also have an impact on the total work of a school. The ideal of every sixth form post being a Special Post appears to be the only means of recruiting the right staff.

(5) One can only endorse the suggestion of the Needham Commission on 'correlation' of University with School Education:–

> "That on account of the numerous discrepancies in policy which appear to exist between the schools and the University it is desirable that a Joint Consultative Committee be set up to discuss and correlate action relating to medium of instruction, courses of study in the later school and earlier university years, entrance and other examinations, &c. Such a committee should of course be fully representative of the University and school authorities and should report to the Ministry of Education as well as to the University".

It may indeed be desirable that an autonomous Examination Council, representing both school and university education, should take over examinations at this stage. With the opening of more universities a single Examining Body constituted on these lines may provide the best machinery to conduct all examinations for those who complete the sixth form courses, each university being free to choose its entrants on the basis of their performance.

(6) The need for continuous and systematic study of the Sixth Form, its structure, curriculum and examination is called for. If a Joint Consultative Committee or an Examination Council is set up, research may be undertaken into all related problems. A few examples may be given:

The technique of the Preliminary Examination.
Prognostic value of the Examination or Comparison with Degree performance.
Structure and Curriculum of Sixth Forms.
General Courses at Sixth Form.
Staff of the Sixth Form.

Such studies are likely to bring a clearer understanding to the Schools and the University of problems which are their common concern.

(Paper read at Jaffna Regional Group of NESSL; reprinted from *Journal, NESSL*, 1960.)

CHAPTER 12: BIAS IN HISTORY

Does the History of Ceylon mean to the local historian and student the same thing which the History of Britain means to the British writer and student—an integral, nation wide conception? Hegel remarked long ago that 'history is not to be looked for' in India meaning that the historical consciousness was absent in the Indian mind. He was thinking of the absence of secular national history and sought an explanation for this lack in the absence of the history making institution, the nation state, in Indian civilization. The difficulty of conceiving of a History of Ceylon in the full sense then stems back to the difficulty of developing the consciousness of nationhood. For most people the fatherland still remains race and religion rather than the nation; they would rather belong to 'some' than to 'all'.

A correct conception of history is important as its study partakes of the function of education itself. That may be defined as helping the individual to become his truest self while being at the same time the inheritor of the experience of the ages. It seeks to liberate the individual from bondage to his enivronment while seeking to preserve his bonds with it. It is the great dialogue between the present and past. For, everyone needs to 'belong' to his society and yet to be critical of it; stand inside his historic community, possessing and being possessed by a living and growing tradition, and yet step aside into a different world of imagination, a richer world; walk the street of his native town with warmth and ease as well as other streets of yesterday and elsewhere with cool detachment and then return home to see more clearly, to belong more. We need moral education no less than intellectual. And 'moral education is impossible without the habitual vision of greatness". Such vision is ready at hand in the lives of nations and of noble men. History certainly ennobles the heart as well as kindle the intellectual fires.

To what extent can history be objective? The fact is that it is impossible to separate events from their interpretation. What you remember of an event is your experience of it, or your impres-

sion of somebody's description of it. As M.V.C.Jeffreys has put it; 'The meaning of history, like beauty, is at least partly in the eye of the beholder'.

A historian may not pass moral judgments on events and nations, but when he selects his facts he brings his values to bear: 'out of the infinity of events he chooses those that have a bearing on man's destiny'. History is enormous; everything has a history. But we have developed a convention by which we call some things 'history'. A particular historian selects perhaps just one aspect that has appeal to him. In studying that aspect of history he again chooses, out of mass of data, those facts which he considers important facts—from his point of view. A further selection takes place when the writer of the popular school text-book makes an abridgment of the historian's history.

It would be appropriate at this stage to distinguish the elements that constitute the 'point of view' of a historian. Following the analysis of W. H. Walsh we may list four:—

(*a*) *Personal bias.* The historian may have personal likes and dislikes. He may admire a great national leader or he may have a strong antipathy to him; the historian's enthusiasm or aversion may colour his account of the political history in which the national leader has been involved. Both ancient and modern history provide numerous examples of bias of this kind.

(*b*) *Group prejudice.* We tend to take a strong stand as members of groups to which we belong—the nation, the race (often fictitious), the class, or the religious group. The patriotic historian selecting facts which serve national purposes is the rule rather than the exception in the West. The temptation for the Hindu historian even when he wants to be fair may be to deal critically with the political progress of Islam in India and for the Moslem historian to dwell on the cultural achievements of Muslim rulers. Of course, there have been exceptionally good historians, European, Hindu and Moslem. But if there are current stakes in maintaining prejudice, during a war or a period of racial tension, there will be a tendency to allow group prejudice to affect historical writing. Otherwise, the historian may not be read!

(c) *Theory of historical interpretation.* The historian may belong to a particular school of historical interpretation, such as the materialistic school. This is perfectly legitimate; but the sin would be to pretend that it is not a particular way of interpreting history, that 'the facts' are being allowed to 'speak for themselves'. The proper safeguard for the reader would be for him to be taken into confidence and told that such and such is the historian's point of view, honestly held. Conscious bias is the corrective to unconscious bias.

(d) *Moral and Philosophical beliefs.* The good historian will not take sides; he will stand impartial even between his group and another. But he cannot and should not shed his notions of right and wrong and his hierarchy of values, ultimately, even his conception of the nature and destiny of man. All historical interpretation is highly personal and the reader should recognize this.

Of these four sources of bias then, the first two can be reduced or eliminated altogether by a good historian; the two latter can be recognized by an informed reader. In other words, a great deal of objectivity can be reached in the study of history, but as in other social and imaginative writing a degree of subjectivity is inevitable. There can also be distortion due to insufficient data yet available about a historical period, or to ignorance or bad judgement on the part of the historical writer. Over and above all these individual limitations, our insights are often those of our age and it may perhaps need a fresh epoch to outgrow the Imperfections in the historical outlook of a particular generation,

A few examples of bias may now be given. It will be noticed that a particular example may combine in it different sources of bias. To give a title 'North Indian Period', a single title for some centuries of Ceylon's history, is too sweeping a generalization and is probably not true to facts either. History can be used to form virtuous men and good citizens, but it will mislead the young if all virtuous men turn out to be virtuous Englishmen. It becomes even more serious if, say, the Duke of Wellington 'the last great Englishman' was, according to English history text-books, solely responsible for the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo while, according to German

text-books, the credit goes to Blucher. To represent history as mainly the story of war and conflict or even as a series of political events not merely makes history a divisive force but may be a gross distortion. It becomes fateful when unscientific racial groupings, e.g. 'Aryans' and 'Dravidians', are imported into the story. For example, to elevate the spells of fighting between military adventurers and their small armies in early days of pioneering and colonisation in Ceylon into racial and national wars and to give disproportionate space in history books to these is both bad education and bad history. On the other hand, giving due place to social and cultural history makes a truer tale of human relationships as essentially one of peace and co-operation. Naturally, exphasis on the cultural contribution of different groups will tend to bring them together today.

The perspective of history suffers grave distortion when what is called world history is unevenly projected. A writer recently remarked with reference to world history taught to European students that 'Western world history has been giving nine-tenths space to one-tenth of the world'. There has been a tendency to make local students too to see world history from the Western angle. The outlook of text-book writers, teachers and examiners has contributed to this. In the event, the world outside Europe, Europe beyond Britain and Asia, beyond India, have remained unknown continents to pupils in Ceylon schools. In the interest of better history and better international understanding it is necessary not only to introduce a world perspective in history teaching but to stress the story of civilization rather than political history.

Perhaps the cruellest sin is to teach pupils to pass unfair moral judgments such as those referred to by J. A. Lauwerys in *History Text-books and International Understanding:* 'French children still blaming the English for burning Joan of Arc, Irish children blaming the English of today for Cromwell's misdeeds, or even Christians blaming Jews for the Crucifixion—as though these events had taken place yesterday and as though one could blame a whole group for the actions of a few.'

The remedy for the problem of bias in history is certainly not the control by the state of research, historical writing and publication. The Russian experiment in this direction should serve as a warning against allowing the state to trespass on the freedom of learning. Trotsky got unceremoniously expunged from the Soviet Encyclopaedia after 1930 and got into the 'gang of Trotsky' in the officially revised history, while Mahatma Gandhi received a favourable instead of an adverse article in the Encyclopaedia with the pro-Asian shift in Soviet foreign policy in recent years. There is indeed no remedy for this problem of bias short of the freedom of the individual historian to be true to himself in what he writes. He should stand or fall by the opinion of the learned world as represented by history schools in universities, historical societies and generally by the reception given to his books by the reading public.

A second condition of free and good writing is secured when a number of historians is engaged in research, interpretation and constant re-writing of history. Like the freedom of the press, the freedom of historical writing is assured when this source of enlightenment does not become the monopoly of a small group. Gradually, a climate of thinking will be built up which regards all historical data as incomplete and all historical interpretation as tentative. It is equally important that students should come to share this view and so consult several books and often go to sources.

On the other hand, it would be an indication of something seriously wrong if students of different ethnic groups ceased to use common history books. This is what happened in the U.S.A. after the Civil War when Northern and Southern versions were used in the respective areas. The futility of this was soon recognized and common and acceptable books came into use. Is there not a parable here for us in Ceylon? Equally instructive for us is the mutual revision that is taking place by conventions adopted by the Norden Associations of the five Scandinavian countries, between French and German historians and between Canadian and U.S. writers. The principle is that history books should be approved by historians of the other groups before they are adopted for use. Several of these moves have been sponsored by the

UNESCO. It is particularly important to ensure that all nations and all groups within a nation are treated by historians on a footing of equality. Witness the words of Arnold Toynbee: 'The only treatment of history that is objective is one that treats all communities as equals; and this objective view of history is the only view that we can afford to present to our children in our now rapidly shrinking world.'

Finally, like historians, teachers have a positive role to play in history teaching. In the words of Robert Birley: 'the supreme betrayal of our educational ideas is the book or the lesson in the class room which has no ideals.' Like a poem, history should be allowed to communicate its own message. But this is not easily done and hence the function of the teacher—to help the pupils to have perspeclive, to feel heritage and to look for the truth.

(Paper read at the Conference on *The Teaching of History*, University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, 10 August, 1957. Reprinted from *Journal NESSS, 1957.*)

We live in a time in which the struggle for liberation from racism and colonialism and in which the fight for social justice is gaining momentum around the world. Racism is no mere personal aberration, but is a part of a historically determined set of social relations and social values. Books form only a small part of the socializing information to which children are exposecl. Even so, children's books remain startegically important in the formation of historical and social consciousness. To the extent that racism tn books conditions children of the dominating group so that they cannot relate to people of other races their human potential is being stunted. To the extent that books fail to expose the mechanisms which maintain the system of privilege for one race and the oppression for other races, they serve to perpetuate those inequalities and contribute to the suffering of many.

(*Racism in Children's and School Textbooks*, WCC, Geneva, 1979)

The images that the school child receives of communities other than his own, and the attitudes towards them that he forms, are shaped by a number of influences and forces—some of them within, and some outside, the school. To the second category belong the influences of the home. of friends and neighbours, of exposure to media and to the social environment in general. School education cannot directly determine the nature of these influences, though it can be utilized either to reinforce or to counteract them, to whatever degree.

(*School Textbooks and Communal Relations in Sri Lanka*, 1982)

PART III

Sri Lanka wakes into the Gandhian dawn

CHAPTER 13: WELCOME ADDRESS, YOUTH CONGRESS, 1931

It is with feelings of great joy that I extend to you all a cordial welcome to the Seventh Annual Session of our Congress. It is a great occasion, this Seventh Congress, as the re-christening ceremony will take place in the course of the Session; the erstwhile Students' Congress attains youth and will be re-named the Youth Congress. In particular, to the noble lady who has kindly agreed to act as God-mother at the re-christening and to preside over the Session I offer a hearty welcome to this Island of ours and to its Northern Capital.

Srimathi Kamaladevi is thrice welcome to us. First, we welcome her as one of the leading women of modern India, a social reformer, an authority on women's education and one who was in the forefront of the recent struggle as President of the Bombay War Council and thus earned for Indian women a name for patriotism and courage. In the second place, we welcome her as the wife of the talented Harrindranath whose poems and songs captured our hearts last year. Lastly, we welcome her as a follower of Mahatma Gandhi, the philosopher-statesman of India. She has sat at the feet of the master, learned his lessons, practised his commands and earned his praise. We offer you revered lady a welcome that springs from the depth of our hearts.

This I think is the firat time in Ceylon when a woman has been called upon to preside over a gathering of this nature. But the event is very significant. It marks the new role our women are called upon to play. It is a challenge to the women of Ceylon to serve their country in the manner their Indian sisters are doing. The day cannot be far off when Ceylon too may boast of many Kamaladevis.

In bidding you welcome, I think it is also my duty to tell you something of our country and the problems that face her.

This beautiful Island of Ceylon is one of the most interesting places in the world. Nature has given her ample beauty making the whole land a lovely garden. But the people of Ceylon are even more interesting. Many races of mankind have found a common home in the Island; and it is too the meeting-place of the four great religions of the world. The Veddhaś, the Sinhalese and the Tamils, the Moors and the Malays, the Indians, the Portuguese and the Dutch Burghers, the Europeans and Eurasians all live side by side and are proud to call themselves Ceylonese. Likewise, the Buddhists and the Hindus, the Christians and the Muslims worship side by side and consider each other as brothers.

The history of Ceylon is the story of the coming in, one by one, of these races and religions. It is the romantic story of a long procession of peoples and faiths. As this grand historical procession moves great kings rise; cities appear all over the Island; Hindu temples and Buddhist viharas, Muslim mosques and Christian churches are erected; religious dagobas are raised and royal tombs are built; poems are composed and books are written; tanks are constructed and canals are cut; and the whole land smiles with abundant wealth and happy men.

The first historical event is the arrival of Sinhalese colonists in the sixth century before Christ. The Tamils came in some time later. There were centuries of struggle between the two races. But in the meantime the two peoples settled down side by side; Sinhalese kings employed Tamil builders to erect those wonderful buildings at Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, whose very ruins compel the admiration of foreign visitors; there was a fusion of the two cultures; and presently the two races mingled. But at every stage of our national history India has contributed to our culture. Indeed, India is the fountain source of our national culture; we owe to India more than what England owes to Greece and Rome. Ceylon is India writ small.

The early Sinhalese, like the Tamils, were Hindus. But, due to the evangelical efforts of India's great Emperor-Saint, Asoka, the Buddhist Religion was brought into the Island during the reign of the pious Devanampiya Tissa. The new religion met with such great acceptance in the Island that when afterwards Buddhism disappeared from the land of its birth, Ceylon became practically the holy land of Buddhism; the purest tradition of Buddhist teachings was preserved by the monks of Ceylon; the most powerful monarchs spent their wealth in raising numerous dagobas and viharas to the honour of him who preached the Middle Way; and Lanka became a place of pilgrimage for followers of the Buddha in India and Burma, Java and Siam, China and Japan.

Religious ideals predominated in moulding the Island's history; but economic prosperity was not lost sight of. The kings saw that on its oxen and its husbandmen a country's strength was laid. The greatest of these kings was Parakrama Bahu the Great, himself a symbol of Sinhalese-Tamil unity. His royal care preserved his people from foreign harm; his tanks and canals converted the Island into a smiling garden every acre of it bearing rich corn or mellow fruit; his ships carried the surplus produce to distant lands. Those were the great days of Ceylon.

But Ceylon's wealth in the soil and subsoil and her position as a centre of trade attracted foreign nations. They came here seeking commerce. The conditions in the Island made conquest also easy. The Portuguese occupied the coastal districts in the sixteenth century; the Dutch took over the Portuguese possessions during the following century; finally at the end of the eighteenth century the British became masters of the Island. They re-united the country and gave it peace; they introduced the colonial type of government; they constructed roads and railways; there was indeed a measure of material progress.

The British Connection

The British connection has been the cardinal fact in our history during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Mr.Gokhale once calculated the annual cost to India of England's political domination at 20 crores of rupees, and the loss on account of industrial

domination at 10 crores. If we too undertook a statistical study we shall then be able to estimate in money the direct or political cost and the indirect or industrial cost of our connection with Britain. Our sterling expenditure roughly measures the price of our political connection. The salaries of European officials; the earnings of European merchants and professional men, who occupy a position of advantage as members of the ruling race; pensions and other "home' charges; the cost of the military; interest on foreign debt; money spent in the purchase of foreign stores, and generally most of the public expenditure incurred outside the island. these items will feature largely on the debit side when the balance sheet of the British connection comes to be drawn up. To be fair, we must acknowledge that there are some items on the credit side as well: schools, jails, roads, railways and such like. There have been some compensating advantages in the political aspect of British rule.

But, there has been no compensating advantage in the economic domination which has indirectly resulted from the British connection. Mr. Justice Ranade observed long ago: "The political domination of one country by another attracts far more attention than the more formidable, though unfelt domination, which the capital, enterprise and skill of one country exercise over the trade and manufactures of another. This latter domination has an insidious influence which paralyses the springs of all the varied activities, which together make up the life of a nation." Quite recently, Mr. D. S. Senanayake estimated that two-thirds of our national income went to the credit of persons from abroad and only one-third was earned by Ceylonese, while the non-Ceylonese contributed about two-sevenths of the Tax Revenue and the Ceylonese the other five-sevenths.

Let us first look at our main national industry, agriculture. It is the irony of history that where in the past thousands of pretty villages surrounded by smiling paddy fields covered the fertile plains while the hillsides were overgrown with forest; now in modern times these forests have disappeared from the hills, which are studded with rubber trees and tea shrubs; while the greater part of these plains has been abandoned to wild jungle, and the malarial mosquito is now busy where once the farmer drove his plough.

Only one quarter of the Island is cultivated.Much of the best soil is in European hands, cultivated with European capital and European skill.The steady decay of the Ceylonese farmer, owning a little land and possessing little capital, working hard and obtaining poor returns, is the saddest commentary on the economic aspect of foreign rule. No wonder that though nature has made Ceylon a rich country, the mass of the people are steeped in poverty.

Let us now examine the position of our national trade. We have a wealth of raw materials. We export them and buy back foreign manufactures and other goods. We have a fertile soil lying waste; but we spend over a hundred million rupees every year on foreign rice. There are large tracts of land suitable for cotton cultivation; but we buy annually thirty million rupees worth of cotton goods. We grow excellent tobacco; but we have a large cigarette bill abroad. Our religions forbid us to drink; but our foreign liquor bill alone amounts to thirteen million rupees. Our forests contain every description of wood; but we import five million rupees worth of boxes and chests because we do not know how to put six pieces of wood together to make a box. It does not seem to be anyone's concern that these things are so. We have no national policy of fostering home industries, no fiscal policy of protective tariffs. We have yet to set up manufactures aided by Ceylonese capital, directed by Ceylonese management and employing Ceylonese labour. The structure of national industry can only be built on the foundation of fiscal policy.

The big scale of our national income and expenditure and the large salaries paid to puplic servants in Ceylon are likely to give an impression to the stranger that we are a well-to-do people. But these are the very causes that are tending to increase our national poverty. Our public finance is adversely affecting our national well being. For example, indirect taxation and big salaries directly affect the small farmer. He has to pocket out the money in the shape of various taxes. Then, what remains to him becomes of less value because a scale of salaries out of all proportion to the wealth of the country has tended to increase the price of articles for the farmer. Thus, behind the apparent wealth of Ceylon a steady process of declining prosperity is going on. Those who

are making money out of the present system are blind to the fact that their prosperity is being built up on the growing poverty of a people. No wonder when the proposed Income Tax threatened to restore some justice foreign exploiters and native exploiters joined forces to prevent the reform.

Economic exploitation is however not the the worst result of the British connection. Economic slavery pinches our stomach; political slavery wounds our self-respect; but the slavery of the mind kills the soul of the race. And to this last result our system of education has contributed in no small measure. Any system of education, in order to be successful, must stamp national culture upon the growing generation. In Ceylon we have attempted to plant an alien culture in unnatural surroundings. It was a foregone conclusion that this kind of hot-house culture must inevitably fail. Both in the subject-matter of our teaching and in the medium of instruction our educational policy has been unscientic and unpractical. Though we had with us four highly developed languages, Sinhalese and Pali, Tamil and Sanscrit, and a copious literature in each; though there was splendid material for study in oriental history and philosophy; in religion and art, we have failed to make use of these recorded achievements of our race gained during thousands of years of progress. In spite of the wealth of our national culture, we have starved our children. Instead of grafting western knowledge on to the eastern stem, we have attempted to plant that branch in our soil. But it has produced no fruit; it has withered. It has not raised up a race of patriotic citizens seeking to serve their country. It has failed to call forth original contributions in poetry or art, science or industry. It has failed to fill the young mind with a burning desire for noble effort and successful achievement.

Our Aims and Aspirations

But the Time-Spirit has awakened us from our slumber and a Voice reached us from India reminding the Youth of their duty. The Youth are up. The march has begun. Let our leaders join our ranks or we leave them behind. The Youth Congress is the bugle call to the nation.

It now remains for me to mention some features of the policy which this Congress has advocated in the past as that may help us to decide our future programme. National culture, economic prosperity, social unity and self-government have been the four pillars of the Congress.

NATIONAL CULTURE. We may not expect a Gandhi in this unphilosophic land; but no Tagore or Sarojini, or Bose or Ray, or Malaviya or Radhakrishnan, or Motilal or Jawaharlal has yet appeared; we are in eager expectation of such leaders and probably we may not have to wait long; and along with signs of their approach we see thin streaks of light across the sky that announce a coming Renaissance in Ceylon. We should prepare for the new age by a national system of education and a university that will serve as a fountain of national culture. The national dress is a symbol of nationalism. For, dress is not so unimportant for man as we may think. The King in purple thinks royally; the Judge in wig and gown thinks judicially; the Priest in robes thinks ecclesiastically; the soldier or policeman acts more bravely when he is in his uniform. Dress has a twofold function: it reveals us to the world and it reminds us of our high calling. The national dress gives the wearer a feeling of national self-respect and, if universally adopted, will go a great way towards national unity. Of course certain occupations will require modifications of this dress. But for general wear and for most occupations this dress will be the best for the majority of people.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY. The Congress stands for the economic uplift of the masses, the encouragement of local industry, a national fiscal policy, an equitable system of taxation and the expenditure of public money upon nation-building services. It will always fight against poverty and ignorance and drink.

SOCIAL UNITY. National progress will be impossible without natonal unity. Progress will be possible only if there is cooperation between the different communities and equal opportunities for all sections of every community.

SELF-GOVERNMENT. A country without a free government is like a people without a God. Good government is no substitute for self-government; nor is good government possible in the long

run, unless it be government of the people, government by the people and government for the people. There are some cosmopolitan persons amongst us who would put internationalism against nationalism. I have never believed them. It has been said that a bad neighbour will not make a good citizen; we may go further and say that one who is not loyal to his own country is not likely to show much devotion to mankind. We only want Ceylon to take her place in the comity of nations. There are others who advise self-government by stages pleading that we may learn little and little by experience. But statecraft can never be studied at the school of slavery. Swaraj must be its own education.

To the land of our birth the land of our fathers. and the land of our children we the youth of Ceylon have consecrated our lives.

What shall I do for thee,
Lanka, my Lanka?
What is that I would not do,
Lanka my own?
Says Mother Lanka:
"Give me Freedom, my son,
Serve me with thy life."

I will not cease from fight,
I will not rest;
Till I have got thy freedom back,
Till I have served thee with my life.

(Reception Committee Chairman's address at Annual Session, held in Jaffna Town on April 23-25. 1931)

The law of Swadeshi is ingrained in the basic nature of man. Hence the necessity for the vow of Swadeshi. A votary of swadeshi, in his striving to identify himself with the entire creation, will as a first duty dedicate himself to the service of his immediate neighbours. Peforming one's duty is swadharma. Swadeshim is not a cult of hatred. It is a doctrine of selfless service that has its roots in the purest ahimsa.

(*Mahatma Gandhi*, 1931)

CHAPTER 14: THE MAHATMA'S MESSAGE TO LANKA

It is a great privilege to join in the grand welcome our people have given to Shrimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit, who in her own person represents the *Gandhi - Nehru Era*, one of the most momentous epochs of World History. The philosopher - historian Arnold Toynbee has compared it to the celebrated Buddha - Asoka period of Indian history, which too was world - wide in its impact. I should like to tell the distinguished visitor that this part of our City is historic territory, having links with the distinguished duet of Indian history. The grounds opposite were hallowed by the daily walks of the Mahatma during his stay not far from here in November 1927; it was on these grounds that we received Jawaharlal with the welcome banner 'To the Uncrowned King of India' when he came here in 1932; and it was on the same grounds and the same year and deriving our inspiration from the self same source that we dared to hoist the tricolour of freedom, heralding the nation's independence, which came 16 years later. Surely, it was the North that first responded to the ideas of the Gandhi - Nehru Era.

What was the appeal which the Mahatma had for us, we may ask ourselves during the Gandhi Centenary Year? Perhaps, we instinctly realized that he belonged to the same civilization as we, and spoke its authentic accents. We realized at the same time that while he belonged to a culture that stressed self-realization as the goal of life, the Mahatma *broke new ground* that was likely to carry us into the 20th century—when he urged the need for the moral regeneration of society.

For one thing, we could perceive that here was a leader, the like of whom had never been before, who was unerringly taking his people to the gates of liberty; the dynamism and temper of the epic Indian struggle was already stirring a great forward movement of mankind which ere long was going to free a thousand million people in Asia and Africa from colonial servitude, without the shedding of blood. Toynbee has recorded that Gandhi liberated not only India but Britain as well; when the latter left and India became independent, it looked more an *act of reconciliation* than of parting.

Witness the gesture of Queen Elizabeth in laying a wreath of 500 white roses at the Gandhi Memorial in 1961, to honour one who deprived Britain of her Empire; witness too how that noble country recently broke all precedent in issuing a commemorative postage stamp carrying the portrait of the Mahatma.

For another thing, it was something more than freedom from British rule that he sought. Indian Independence was to be just a milestone in the moral emancipation of Indian and world humanity. Here was a sage who insisted on raising the stature and dignity of his countrymen as a pre-condition of self-government; and he was ushering in a world-wide assertion of the *dignity and worth of the human person*, now so fittingly enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Well did H. N. Brailsford write:

> The campaign of this mystic, who cleaned latrines one day and opened temples the next, is one of the strangest chapters in history and one of the noblest....India honours Gandhiji today chiefly because he led the fight for independence. Humanity owes him an even heavier debt because he opened the road of the untouchables to freedom.

In our time Martin Luther King and Chief Albert Luthuli followed in the footsteps of the Mahatma in asserting the ideal of human dignity and equality in America and Africa respectively. Any way, no longer will men anywhere, whether in race-ridden America or Africa, or in caste-ridden India or Ceylon, agree to be treated as secondary individuals, second class citizens, partial human beings.

What then was the special message which the Mahatma gave to us in Lanka?

First, it did not take long for him to discover that as in most of Asia and Africa the fatherland for many here was not Lanka but caste, creed and race. He foresaw that even after Independence there was a danger of our nationhood being an international status rather than a national commitment. In his address to the *Ceylon National Congress* (22-11-1927) Gandhiji said:

> I am afraid, as we are in India, so are you cut up into groups and communities. I read casually only today something in praise of communalism. In India also we have this blight—

we call it a blight, we don't praise it ..... Self-government you will not have — I was going to say you cannot have — unless you speak with the voice of one nation and not with the voice of Christians, Mussalmans, Buddhists, Hindus, Europeans, Sinhalese, Tamils and Malays.

The Mahatma added:

After all, self-government depends entirely upon our own internal strength, upon our ability to fight against the heaviest odds. Indeed, self-government which does not require that continuous striving to attain it and to sustain it is not worth the name.

Second, Gandhiji would build *democracy from below.* He told a Jaffna Public Meeting (26-11-1927):

The successful working of village organisations is undoubtedly a key to the attainment of final Swaraj.

"True democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the Centre," Mahatma Gandhi once said. A *voting* democracy was merely exercising the suffrage to change the rulers, whose power then came to rest on armed force and the propaganda machine. On the other hand, a *participating* democracy was possible only with the small group which favoured discussion and mutual understanding and the discovery of the spirit of the common life. With great insight, the Mahatma discovered that it is in the self-governing village that a self-conscious organic community can rise once again and the agro-industrial civilization of the future flourish. A partyless democracy, making decisions by consensus, approximate to the ancient ideal—"the Voice of the Five is the Voice of God!" In *Panchayat Raj* the national parliament would not be elected by individual voters, but be formed by the upward integration layer by layer of living communities. It is not the power of the State, *raja-sakti*, that he wanted, but the power of the people, *jana-sakti.* In our day, the Gandhian quest has been carried to its revolutionary conclusion in the *Gramdan Movement* of Vinoba Bhave. That a quarter of India's 550,000 villages should have voluntarily declared themselves as Gramdan Villages is undoubtedly the most remarkable peaceful land revolution history has recorded.

Our search for the true heart of Lanka should prompt us too to re-discover the organic village community, where now caste divisions and party warfare tend to erode the very concept of community. It is with recovering the organic unity of the village that you re-discover the lost unity of Lanka; but to re-design the village as a proper habitat for collective living is to commence the exciting task of building a new civilization on the ancient soil of Sri Lanka.

In passing, we may note Guy Wint's observation that the surrender of polilical creativity is part of the price Asia is paying for erstwhile colonial subjection: the local intelligentsia is still scanning the publications of Europe for their ideas. "Before feeling again on terms of equality with the West," Guy Wint says, "the great need of Asia is to direct itself by its own ideas." He welcomes as an original contribution to democratic thinking the re-structuring of the State with the village as the basic unit which has been urged by Gandhiji and worked out by Vinoba and Jayaprakash. This would be in line with India's political genius. The call to us in Lanka is to base our political structures and our schemes of economic and social development on a social philosophy in harmony with our needs and ideals, instead of copying scissors-and-paste from Western drafts.

The message above all messages that the Mahatma gave us is that of *Truth* and *Ahimsa*, which he described as the two sides of the same coin. Truth in action is ahimsa; truth is the end, ahimsa the means. On the other hand, hatred or evil intent, distorts your thinking. Blessed indeed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. To see the universal and all pervading Spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. Ahimsa necessarily leads to *Sarvodaya*, the welfare of all, which by its very logic stands for a world society. Said the Mahatma:

> There is no limit to extending our services to our neighbours across state-made frontiers. God never made those frontiers....I see nothing grand or impossible about our expressing our readiness for universal interdependence rather than independence.

Socialism can begin only with the first convert, Gandhiji said. Celebrating the Centenary will avail only if we are able to make the message of the Mahatma come to life for each one of us.

I suggest that each one of us takes a personal pledge:

(1) *I solemnly pledge to endeavour to practise Truth and Ahimsa in my life.*

(2) *I pledge to do all I can to preserve the unity and greatness of Lanka.*

(3) *I pledge to work for economic and social justice based on human dignity and equality.*

It is once in a thousand years that such a one as the Mahatma blossoms on the human tree. Those of us who have been privileged to live in his time—let us not lose the fragrance that came out of his life.

(*Chairman's Address at Gandhi Centenary meeting in Jaffna, to welcome Shrimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit*, October 8, 1969.)

Let us see clearly what swaraj together with the British connection means. It means undoubtedly India's ability to declare her independence if she wishes. Swaraj, therefore, will not be a free gift of the British Parliament. It will be a declaration of India's full self-expression. Swaraj can never be a free gift by one nation is another.

India's greatest glory will consist not in regarding Englishmen as her implacable enemies fit only to be turned out of India at the first available opportunity but in turning them into friends and partners in a new commonwealth of nations in place of an Empire based upon exploitation and force.

(*Mahatma Gandhi*, 1922)

CHAPTER 15: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GANDHIAN MESSAGE FOR TODAY

It has been the privilege of our generation to have lived in the Gandhi-Nehru Era, which, comparable to the Buddha-Asoka Era, was not only distinctively Indian in character, but has been one of the greatest epochs of history. The Era was marked by three great social revolutions which together form part of a great forward movement of mankind; the epicentre of the movement has been in India and its dynamic personalities Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. It saw 1,000 million humans in Asia and Africa freed from colonial servitude and become independent nations, and this, following the temper of the struggle set in India, without bloodshed. The second aspect of the social revolution is the assertion as never before of human dignity and equality not merely in casteisitic India but in this race-ridden world; that Martin Luther King and Chief Albert Luthuli, who have followed in the footsteps of the Mahatma in leading this struggle in America and Africa respectively, were both awarded the Nobel Peace Prize shows how the better conscience of humanity has responded to the assertion of this ideal. Thirdly, the quest has been for a new society based not only on liberty, equality and justice, but on fraternity as well; fraternity no longer as a national sentiment, but as the call for a world community, with non-alignment as a 'third force' for Peace in an East-West divided world.

The one who gave its distinctive stamp to the era was Mahatma Gandhi. He was almost India reborn. As the London *Times* put it: "No country other than India, and no religion other than Hinduism could have produced a Gandhi". The highlights of the Gandhian age are all in the tradition of India; Gandhiji's 'experiments with truth' are in line with the passionate search for truth of her great seers. His advocacy of the secular State was a tribute to India's undying belief in the supremacy of the spiritual. His teaching about *ahimsa* stems from the doctrine of the sanctity of all life. His insistence on human dignity and equality derives from the conception of the latent divinity of all men. His trusteeship form of socialism was perhaps evolved out of the joint family's *kula*

dharma ideal. Neutrality or non-alignment is the political expression of the philosophy of non-attachment. As for Nehru, he too re-discovered his India and interpreted her age-old message to the modern world. It was fortunate that Nehru was able to stand on the vantage ground of the social revolution ushered in by Gandhiji while he attempted to take India across the threshold into the phenomenal modern world created by the scientific and technological revolution

If Mahatma Gandhi's ideas have been carried over the globe. helped by the currency of the English language, a wise tolerance combined with the power of synthesis has helped India herself to assimilate much of the modern world, its thought, its technical devices and its political institutions. In fact, Gandhiji embodied in his life and message this two-way traffic in ideas which is the secret for the renewal of the life of nations and civilisations. His message of non-violence is finding echoes in distant shores, but from where did he derive his message? From the *Gita* and the *Gospel* too:

> I have not been able to see any difference between the Sermon on the Mount and the *Bhagavad Gita*.... Today supposing I was deprived of the *Gita* and forgot all its contents but had a copy of the Sermon, I shall derive the same joy from it as I do from the *Gita.*

He was also deeply influenced by the writings of such prophetic thinkers of the West like Tolstoy, Thoreau and Ruskin. In fact,he arrived at the ideal of Sarvodaya after reading Ruskin's *Unto This Last* based on Jesus's parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard in Matthew's Gospel (Chap xx) and his technique of non-violent non-co-operation after reading Thoreau's *Duty of Civil Disobedience.* Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You* made the deepest impress on Gandhiji, while the exchange of letters between these two saintly men showed how mankind can survive by sharing common ideals. This inter-continental communication in ideas goes further back in time. For example, did not Thoreau in turn derive his inspiration from reading the *Gita* in English translation?

Sarvodaya, the term coined by Gandhiji to express what Ruskin wanted to communicate through his *Unto This Last*, describes best the Gandhian social ideal. It means 'the total good of all'. It rejects alike the facile doctrine of 'the greatest good of the greatest number' and its political corollary, 'majority rule'. It stands for a self-conscious, organic society where people belong to one another. All men are brothers, all equal not only before the law and at the polls, but equal in dignity and status and in their value to society: the lawyer and the labourer render equally significant service and their remuneration should be about equal. If anything, it is the life of the tiller that is worth living. •Such a sarvodaya society, by its very definition, cannot be brought about by State action but must be self-created. India's men of religion had always stressed self-realisation as life's goal. The Mahatma broke new ground. Since he believed in the essential unity of man, he urged that we must seek the moral regeneration of society itself, realising the good of all rather than that of isolated individuals. It is a dual revolution that can transform existing society into a sarvodaya one—the inward change in individuals and the outward change in the social order. At the same time, the means of achieving this transformation is as important as the end. We must not only eschew violence, but ill-will as well. Hatred may indeed pervert our thinking and make our conscience subordinate to an ideology. And it is by voluntary action that we achieve this silent social revolution. The rich are not forcibly dispossessed; a new moral climate has to be created where the rich become trustees of the people for the wealth they possess. The principle of voluntary trusteeship of wealth and socially responsible use of econnomic power is, however, to be supplemented by 'social control' exercised by the State. But the internal human revolution in the hearts of men must precede the external social revolution. Socialism in any country can begin only with the first socialist, said the Mahatma.

He pleaded for democratic decentralisation of the Welfare State in order that it may become a Welfare Society. It is in the small face-to-face human-sized society that the individual can find his own significance and self-fulfilment; and it is in the small group that discussion and mutual understanding is possible and that

community and the spirit of the common life can be discovered. The Mahatma sought the small group in the village community that has been the creation of India's social genius. "If the village perishes, India will perish too. India will be no more India", he said.

The Bhoodan Movement initiated by Vinoba Bhave in 1951 seeks to give practical expression to the sarvodaya ideal. The five offerings—that of land, labour, wealth, learning and the 'entire self'—should help to usher in a juster social order by voluntary action. In the form of Gramdan in recent years, the gifting of nearly half-a-lakh of entire villages, the movement has become one of the most remarkable revolutions that history has known. The *partial* sharing of the five danas is getting merged in the *total* sharing in gramdani villages. And if the Gram Sabha gets accepted as an institution of direct democracy involving all the adult citizens in the village, and seeking the greatest good of all, it would be the consummation of the Mahatma's Gram Swaraj. A partyless democracy, reaching near unanimous decisions, would answer to the ancient ideal: "The voice of the Five is the voice of God!" Certainly a richer concept than the Roman: "*Vox populi, vox dei*!"

It was in quest of the new society that Gandhiji sought in Basic Education an organic connection between life and learning. The School is not a thing apart, nor is education only through the school. The school, itself a fragment of real life, should be the agent of a new social order helping to transform a profit-motivated society into an organic communiy. Producing things with your soul in your labour beautifies your soul and it is an affirmation of your conviction about human dignity and equality. Sharing labour with your fellowmen makes for fellowship. Not least, real life is the starting point in your social and scientific studies and use of language. Education is for life, through life and throughout life. It must be a source of pride to us that next to the Mahatma the one most associated with developing this great concept of education was one of Ceylon's greatest sons, Shri E. W. Aryanayakam.

Lord Pethic-Lawrence in his biography *Mahatma Gandhi* shows why the Mahatma chose the strategy of non-violent non-co-operation rather than accept such instalments of freedom as the British were prepared to concede. The struggle was to be simultaneously against the enemy from within and the enemy from without. The struggle quickened the will of India to be free while sapping the will of Britain to maintain her rule. The Gandhian goal looked beyond independence: it was not merely a Free India, but One India and a great India. Indian Independence was to be a milestone in the moral regeneration of Indian and world humanity. So at the bidding of the Father of the Nation, India was re-born.

Mohandas K. Gandhi's impact on the contemporary world was, however, not so much on account of the great ideals he exponuded though undoubtedly these had an appeal transcending India's borders. Albert Einstein spoke of him during his life time as "a man who has confronted the brutality of Europe with the dignity of the simple human being....so luminous a contemporary, a beacon to the generations to come.. Generations to come, it may be, will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth". To millions in every land here was a great human rather than an Indian. In an age of strife, they instinctively turned towards a man who had a burning faith in humanity, an unshakeable belief in the essential goodness of every man and every nation. In an age which had lost all standards and values, Gandhi seemed to be the Conscience of Mankind, who showed that the power of the spirit was mightier than all armaments, if they would but listen to the still small voice. Once again, they said, a man of God has come; such a man of God that he belonged not to India but to all mankind. To the Mahatma, God was the common Father; all men are brothers. Here his own words:

I have known no distinction between relatives and strangers, countrymen and foreigners, white and coloured, Hindus and Indians of other faiths whether Musalmans, Parsees, Christians or Jews. I may say that my heart has been incapable of making any such distinctions.

To us in Ceylon, which (in Radhakrishnan's words) is a witness to the eternal spirit of India, the Mahatma's message has a special significance. If we would that a new Lanka should arise out of the ashes of four hundred decadent years, where else shall we turn to revive our mind and refresh our spirit but to the same fountain from which we have drawn succour for centuries and to him who set foot on our shores four decades ago? Celebrating the centenary will be of value only to the extent that we are able to recapture for our people the real spirit of the Mahatma. A Ceylon where there is no exploitation of man by brother man in a world where one nation does not exploit another, would be the only fitting memorial to the modern world's greatest apostle of ahimsa.

(*Radio Talk, S L B C*, October 2, 1967; with some additions)

CHAPTER 16: TOWARDS A CASTELESS SOCIETY

Ideal of Human Dignity

There is nothing more powerful in all the world than an ideal whose time has come. Martin Luther King often quoted these words of Victor Hugo, referring to the ideal of freedom and human dignity. Certainly he brought the day for the realization of that ideal nearer by sealing his message with his own life. Chief Albert Luthuli who sacrificed his chieftanship in South Africa and died in detention had vindicated the cause of human dignity in race-ridden Africa.

The struggle for human dignity and equality is a world-wide struggle. The inspiration to both the American and African leaders came from Mahatma Gandhi's epic struggle in India. No doubt there are social inequalities the world over. But the crying injustice of caste in India, like that of race elsewhere, is that it stands for unchangeable inequalities and a social stigma based on birth. It offends the more because it is a denial, as Radhakrishnan has pointed out, of the Hindu ideal of the latent divinity of all men. And to add insult to injury, the wicked fiction of caste has not only its touch-me-not practitioners, but its priestly professors and its counterfeit historians as well. It was the new British legal system that began to undermine this unequal social structure. The crowning legal provision had however to await India's Republican Constitution—Fundamental Rights, Article 17: "*Untouchability* is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of *untouchability* shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law". The new ideal has been well expressed by Subramania Bharati:

ஏழை யென்றும் அடிமை யென்றும்
எவரும் இல்லை ஜாதியில்
இழிவு கொண்ட மனித ரென்பார்
இந்தியாவில் இல்லையே.

It was the life-long crusade of Gandhiji that helped to transform the cause of the down-trodden from being a mere legislative edict into a national conviction. With unerring insight he knew that he

must take "the children of God" into the temple before he took the nation to the gates of liberty. He knew too that the break-through in India had a significance for human dignity everywhere. Well did H. N. Brailsford write: "India honours Gandhiji today because he led the fight for independence. Humanity owes him an even heavier debt because he opened the road of the untouchables to freedom".

What Caste Prejudice Costs Us

No part of Ceylon, no racial group, not even the religious orders are free of the sin of caste. The casteistic attitude is a canker that has spilled over into our entire social relationships and institutions. Witness our over-peonised offices, attendants-over-staffed hospitals, and the way elders and children address their domestic servants even in otherwise cultured homes. But, it is society in the North that is weakened most by the unending contradictions of caste.

Social scientists tell us that children are born without group prejudice and during their early years they are almost incapable of fixing hostility upon any group as a whole. Caste prejudice is however a communicable disease that can be acquired gradually by the young from adult society. Once acquired, it deeply affects the nature both of the victims and their persecutors.

For those born in humbler castes, the obsession of their humble origin is an ever present force all their waking life. It affects their self-image. Some may give vent to their gifts in extreme ambition, others explode in aggressive behaviour, still others find escape in reticence and withdrawal. The more gifted the more imprisoned in caste they feel while pursuing every activity, intellectual, economic, cultural and social. The fact that even the most gifted of them cannot act or speak on behalf of the general community or even simply as a human being, diminishes his personality and takes away from his contribution to common welfare. Further, the warped parental attitude adversely influences the children's attitudes and aspirations. Ultimately, the loss is not confined to the discriminated group. There is continuing social loss when potential exceptional ability is neglected for generations in submerged sectors

of the population. But, in the world after Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Martin Luther King, men will not any where agree to be treated as secondary individuals, second class human beings, partial citizens. Social disorganisation and agitation takes away from a nation's sense of unity and purpose and its developmental effort. Indeed, the old distinctions become the more irrelevant as we step into an age of technology and global history with opportunities for physical and social mobility provided by new occupations unknown to the vocabulary of caste.

False Moves

It is a false position to take for those who enjoy social privileges that they could meet amongst themselves in conference and decide what social and civic rights they are prepared to share with the underprivileged; it is as false a position as that of a racial majority in parliament which arrogates to itself the right to decide what language and other concessions it will offer to the minorities; it is as false as the stand taken by the white minority in Africa that they could decide whether the non-white majority should be given their birthright of the suffrage! Fundamental rights do not belong to citizens as members of communities; rights belong to them as individuals and they are equal rights for all. Nor is it a just argument for the privileged to urge that some more time must elapse before the under-privileged can have their rights and they must be patient meanwhile. The time to end an injustice is when you become aware of it. Most false of all is for one to lay down the conditions under which another of the same faith can enter a place of worship; those who go to a place of worship are seeking to enter into a relationship with God, who looks only to the purity of a man's heart and not to external things.

On the other hand, it would be treason to the nation if opportunist groups use the caste grievance in their own journey to power or because they have stakes in promoting divisions in any part of the country. The cause will triumph if it can be approached in a non-party, non-sectarian spirit. At the same time, those who would join in this battle to eradicate the canker of caste from our society would do well to grasp the truth of the Gandhian dictum that means are inseparable from ends. To illustrate, a satyagraha

so-called would be a fraud and a failure if participants are not would be worshippers with genuine devotion in their hearts. When all is said, to use the immortal words of Luthuli: The length of the term of slavery depends largely on the oppressed themselves and not on the oppressor.. We have the key to Freedom, not the oppressor.

Programme for Action

Hope may be derived from a seemingly hopeless aspect of the problem, which may be called the "vicious circle". Briefly stated, it is as follows: Caste prejudice is expressed in discriminatory treatment, which keeps the "low castes" in low standards of living, health, housing, education, manners and morals. These low standards in turn cause "high caste" prejudice. Thus "high caste" prejudice and "low caste" standards mutually cause each other. But, if either of the factors changes, it will start a process of interaction which will change the other factor too. The great world anniversaries, Human Rights Year 1968, and Gandhi Centenary Year 1969, would be fitting moment for us in Ceylon to break the vicious circle and cross the threshold from being medieval casteistic communities into a modern homogeneous democratic nation. Temple Entry, if it comes, may signify a change that sets in motion this dynamic causation.

Nothing however would be so effective as action jointly initiated by leaders of under-privileged and privileged groups who share a real concern to end social disabilities. That kind of acting together would itself go a great way towards welding the two groups into a single community. By the same token, it would not do for the natural leaders of the under-privileged to be concerned only with their one battle (just as it would not help the Tamils if they were concerned only with Tamil rights and had no stake in the nation's problems). Nation-building democratic movements, like the Cooperative Movement, provide appropriate opportunities for members of all groups in an area to work together for their common advancement. Likewise, it would help to promote the concept of the village as an organic community if Community Centres and other voluntary associations are inclusive in their membership and not organised on a caste-group basis. Equal access to public places must be taken for granted. There is a case for turning a

sizeable portion of the Harijans into a land-owning peasantry, especially in colonisation areas. Reaping the full benefit of this measure also points to observing the principle of integrated neighbourhoods and integrated schools.

New neighbourhoods or old, there is no better place than the school to implant the conviction that a man's a man for a' that. It is the caste-less society of the school that can counter the erroneous ideas that are taught to the child by the caste-ridden home. It is a socially comprehensive school that can strengthen the convictions in children that they are equals and that they belong to one another. A good school is a potent means of building an integrated community in its environs; it makes a no less vital contribution to the freedom of society by placing before the young the freedom of choice of occupation and opportunities of leadership in the sphere of their choice. On the other hand, a school where members of one social group are segregated can be a self-defeating force.

Public Commission to define
Human Dignity and Rights

Caste has been so long with us that it will take time to wipe out its many remnants. It is not just enough to eradicate caste disabilities. We must envisage an act of massive reconciliation, and making the community more of a community. The time is opportune to set up a Public Commission to investigate the incidence of social disabilities arising out of caste and to suggest ways and means of removing them. Legislative and administrative measures should follow. Perhaps a permanent Commissioner may have to see to their implementation for some years to come.

A caste-less society can only in part be legislated for. The chief gain in the Commission's report would be a re-statement of the ideal of human dignity that would have meaning for the modern age. If ever we would educate and stir the social conscience of the ancient people of Lanka that time should be in Human Rights and Gandhi Centenary Years 1968/69.

(*The Cooperator*, 1968)

CHAPTER 17: DAWN IN THE VILLAGE

Half-way between the London Round Table Conference (1931) and the 'Quit India' Resolution (1942), Mahatma Gandhi, then in his 66th year, withdrew himself from active Congress politics and settled in Sevagram, a village right in the heart of India. Apart from its central location, it was a typically backward Indian village, without even an approach road, with the harijans a part of its population. The great leader seemed to have abandoned the independence struggle at that critical moment and become absorbed in village reconstruction!

To get some idea of what the Mahatma was after, we must examine how he pursued this question of national liberation. Lord Pethick-Lawrence has pointed out how he refused to accept meekly such instalments of reforms as the British were prepared to grant from time to time; instead he chose the method of non-violent non-co-operation. Lord Pethick suggests that the desire to raise the stature and inner strength of his countrymen was among the reasons for Gandhiji's choice. The struggle was to be simultaneously against the enemy from within and the enemy from without. While taking the nation to the gates of liberty, the sage was also getting his countrymen ready to bear the burdens of self-government. It was this search for the secrets of India's abiding strength that had taken the Mahatma to her villages.

Lanka too is a land of villages. Whatever towns we had in the past were no more than appendages to the king's court or derived sanctity from a nearby temple. But the British Occupation had shifted the centre of gravity of our life to the new towns and especially to the Primate City that sprang to life in the wake of the Occupation. Notwithstanding our international status, as an independent Nation and the forms of Parliamentary Democracy, polilical power is still centred in the Metropolitan City, and in the "twenty men who sit at the Centre" (in Gandhiji's memorable phrase). In the event, the rural folk are no more than voters with little part in the political process. Economic power is also so concentrated, 80% of the country's industries being located in and around the City of Colombo, the rest of the country being an industrial desert,

with an oasis here and there. Whatever there is of an intellectual system in the country, consisting of universities, cultural and research institutions, book and newspaper publication and the like, is also largely sited in the Capital, leaving much of the rest of the country a barren intellectual wasteland. Little wonder that the ancient village, afflicted by cultural and material poverty, has lost much of its character as a cohesive and self-determining community and the disinctive symbol of our civilization.

Yet, it is something to be thankful for that much remains which makes the country true to herself. Despite the advance of urbanisation and the weaknesses that have entered into her villages, it is still possible to recover the organic unity of the village community and indeed discover a true base for building a great nation on Lanka's ancient soil.

A Nine-point Programme for Village Development

1. *The Village Beautiful.* Our first task is to re-design the village as a proper habitat for collective living. We live in an age which possesses the know-how of designing the Village Beautiful, which would be a creative social environment for the realization of the highest possibilities of human living. It is not merely our towns that have to be saved from turning into human jungles; the physical planning of the village can contribute to restore order and efficiency and the good life in the countryside.

2. *Agro-industrial village, with full employment for all.* We want to go back to the village, but not to the tradition-bound impoverished area that often passes for a village. Rather, we want to build up in each village an agro-industrial society that has caught up with the life of the second half of the twentieth century. This would mean, on one hand, augmenting facilities for agriculture, including home gardens, that is, where conditions favour; and on the other, expanding small industries, may be with the help of the new intermediate technology, on the principle that what can be produced by the villages must be produced by them. Complementary to the human right of work and its free choice is the obligation, stressed by Mahatma Gandhi, that work with one's hands may be main occupation for some, but should be part activity for all the rest. All in all, the village community should ensure that, within the village or outside, all its sons and daughters have the opportunity of self-fulfilling work,

3. *Life-long Education.* If Development is the process by which both persons and societies come to realize their full potential, education gets a key role. The community and the state must ensure that there is provision for every child to receive his primary schooling in a common neighbourhood school, and thereafter have equal and open access to an organically linked system of educational institutions, oriented to meet the challenge of rapidly changing patterns of work and leisure likely in the seventies and subsequent decades. It is indispensable for every region in the country to set up an educational council which will help to integrally relate the educational programme to the region's socio-economic development as well as the national plan.

4. *Optimum material requisites of well-being.* The new "ideology of human rights" includes education, employment, health and decent housing. Not only are these basic rights of all persons, but rights inter dependent on each other since, for example "a boy from an unhelpful home needs twice the ability required by his contemporary who has every home advantage to do as well as he".

5. *Participatory Democracy.* Perhaps the most original contribution this country can make to the art of Government would be to experiment with re-structuring democracy on the village base, the party-less village assembly where decisions are reached by consensus—the supreme discovery of our ancient political genius. If area or Electorate Councils and District Councils are formed by the upward integration of councils at lower levels, these too would continue to incarnate organic communities. The essence of participatory democracy is in sharing the processes of discussion and decision-making with as many as possible. And it is consulative bodies chosen by elected councils that would be true "People's Committees", not those imposed from above. Not least, a vital function of these governmental councils (as of the State) is to make the community more of a community and a democratic community at that.

6. *The Co-operative Movement.* The State's great ally in creating a socialist society can be the Co-operative Movement which in its structure and underlying principles—embodying Justice

and Liberty, Equality and Fraternity—is truly a People's Movement, and no less a community building one. An inclusive Village Primary Society, with secondary and tertiary societies being delegates' assemblies formed by the integration of primaries, can be the grand crossing by which a hitherto fragmented society could make the journey to an integrated modern territorial community.

7. *Other Voluntary Organizations.* If human rights are "never an end in themselves, but derivative and relative to the power of being human", we are called into "responsible co-humanity". Voluntary associations of all kinds make for the richness of our pluralistic society. We have therefore to see, with Harold Laski, the enrichment of national life in the expansion of society rather than the State and in the growth of voluntary associations as the expression of felt needs in the experience of men.

8. *Sarvodaya Youth Peace Corps.* The call to youth is to dedicate a period of service in the Gandhian spirit by "adopting" a village in the name of their school or other institution. The test of success of their mission would be when they have not merely rendered service but communicated a spirit of revolution and a sense of participation to the villagers, created initiative and inpired vision. When schools enter in this way into service, learning in turn gets relevance and purpose. The young would do well to enter into the task of re-making the world as part of their education. Let them first build a "model" in their adopted village.

9. *Village Fund.* Genuine programmes of Village Development have to be people's programmes, with State assistance; the nucleus of the Common Fund needed must come too from the local people—in the form of one's day's income, or one day's free labour, or a handful of rice every day in a "Sarvodaya patra". Strength must always grow from within.

(*Religious and Social Issues,* CISRS, 1972)

My idea of Village *Swaraj* is that it is a complete republic.
(Gandhyi)

PART IV

The Politics of Sri Lanka

CHAPTER 18: THE FIFTEEN YEARS SINCE INDEPENDENCE

The Strategy of Nation Building

"THE EXISTENCE of a nation resembles a plebiscite repeated every day," said Renan. The search for national unity must take us to the people: the unity we are after is the unity for strength. That can only be unity of the people at the people's level, not of the state at state level.

It was on June 18, 1947 that the British Government announced their intention to confer Dominion Status on Ceylon. We were almost taken unawares. Despite universal suffrage since 1931, itself granted unasked for, there had been no mass struggle for national independence. The people hardly knew the contents of ministerial memoranda or even that they were being despatched. And when Independence Day arrived on February 4, 1948, we were not ready with the usual tokens of a people's movement such as a national flag or a national anthem. The Constitution too was not of our making: neither is there any real commitment to it on the part of the people, nor indeed enough commitment to one another. We may go further and trace to the British occupation the territorial unification of the Island, a modern administrative service, a legal system based on the rule of law and a number of British-patterned secondary schools using English books, and the English language media, all of which helped to create the 'like-mindedness' which made a Ceylonese nation at all possible.

Paradoxically, the fifteen years since Independence have witnessed a confused journey, the march towards nationhood and democracy being countered by steps negativing the national ideal and the democratic principle. The unfortunate fact is that those who sought the leadership of the country at this critical period looked for short-cuts and missed the road to national unity. A review of the political events of these years will bear testimony to

this. The new system of parliamentary democracy and Cabinet government called for political parties and so was improvised the United National Party which incorporated various elements, the Ceylon National Congress, the Sinhala Maha Sabha and later (and surprisingly) the Tamil Congress. It was no political or economic programme that was placed before those who voted at the first general election of independent Ceylon, but the cry that Buddhism would be in danger if the left parties should come to power. When in the saddle the new Government turned against the population of Indian origin and disfranchised them under new Citizenship Acts. At the next general election, that of 1952, the U.N.P. raised anti-Indian slogans and afterwards used its over-whelming majority to amend the electoral law so as to provide for two registers of voters, one for citizens of Ceylonese descent and the other for citizens of Indian descent. This measure was calculated to prevent the assimilation of the latter into the general body of the national community, but fortunately was not proceeded with. The mass of persons of Indian origin are still reckoned 'stateless'. The divisive trends were carried dangerously further in the general election of 1956 when real mass appeals were made to the electorate on a racial basis. The newly formed M.E.P. was a Sinhala party which stood for Sinhala Only and succeeded in out-bidding the U.N.P. in appealing to the communal consciousness of the Sinhalese. The Federal Party won most of the seats in the Tamil speaking North and East by a similar token, outbidding the Tamil Congress. Much of this appeal to race was carried on to the general elections of 1960 as well. In other words, with every successive general election, for more and more people the fatherland became race, religion and caste. No wonder that Dr. Kitagawa of Japan wrote after his visit in 1961: "Ceylon is one of the least 'secularized' among the civilised societies I have visited."

Politicians glibly talk of a 'revolution' in 1956. It is hardly the whole truth. No doubt, as we have noted, revolutionary changes have been brewing all over Asia during the period of the impact of the West and there has been a quick tempo of change sweeping over the continent these recent years. It is also true that Ceylon has shared in these changes and that Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike seized an opportune moment to spell the meaning of the new order

to the rural masses. But it is nonetheless a fact that in order to supplant the ruling neo-colonial aristocracy Mr. Bandaranaike recalled the shades of the past in the persons of obscurantist rural leaders and feudal remnants for whom time had stopped at the eighteenth century. It was thus a past-oriented nationalism that this modern-educated leader evoked. Yet in another way he repudiated the legacy of our history when he went back on the tolerance that was our ancient culture, the friendly inter-communal atmosphere that breathed in the multi-lingual hermitages and bilingual courts of those times. Likewise, he threw overboard the modern democratic principle as well as the ideal of one nation when he mustered the votes of one language group, no doubt constituting 70% of the nation, to decree that their language should be the only official language of the country. Little did he realize that the insistence on the 30% Tamil-speaking population's dealing with the state in Sinhala would tear them away from the rest of the nation. Even colonial rulers preferred that public officers should deal with the people in the latter's language rather than the other way about. Nor was Mr. Bandaranaike far-seeing enough to note that short of national consolidation there was no hope of survival for small Asian countries if ever massive aggression should cast its shadow across the continent. The saving fact, however, is that you cannot very well make the river flow backwards. If the Sinhala Only Act was a repudiation of our historical attitude, the mass murders of 1958 were a vain protest against a society that had become irrevocably multi-lingual and multi-religious and could only survive in the ideal: Four religions, one People! Two languages, one Voice!!

Mobilising all the Nation's Resources

In our search for unity for national development we return to the radical answer which is our thesis, that the doctrine of state power would be replaced by that of the power of the people—*Janasakti*, as Vinoba would call it. The question of majority rule does not arise, nor the goal the greatest good of the greatest number. Democracy of the *sarvodaya* conception means the welfare of all and the involvement of all in the management of the state. The citizen does not just vote at periodic elections on issues determined by slogans and subsidies. There is an end to "the never ending

audacity of elected persons" and the welfare state becomes a welfare society as well. Instead of being a pensioner of an over-governed state, the citizen becomes a partner in a self-motivating and self-governing society. Decisions are not imposed from above but flow from below upwards by a process of consultation and consent. And in the mutual understanding brought about by the process of discussion the state becomes more than "the arithmetical sum of individuals"; it becomes an organic society whose cohesion is based on that understanding.

In fact, as Lord Lindsay has shown, the function of the state is to serve the community and in that service to make it more of a community. This it seeks to do, firstly by sustaining the education of both young and old and by facilitating the process of democratic discussion in parliament, local bodies, voluntary associations of all kinds and in a press which is controlled only by the franchise of its readers. Secondly, it should provide for the peaceful settlement of disputes among citizens by enforcing the rule of law, the same law for all citizens and all equal before the law. Thirdly, citizens can exercise their free judgment on all issues if the state will help to free them from want by prescribing a national minimum of economic conditions.

In institutional terms, we have to agree with Harold Laski that "any society is essentially federal in nature" and that we have to look for the enrichment of national life in the expansion of society rather than of the state. This would mean that voluntary associations "the spontaneous expression of felt needs in the experience of men," fill an important role and receive the recognition and support of the state. Since such associations are real nation-building partnerships, it is essential that those of them which are formed for secular purposes are not constituted on racial or sectarian lines but are comprehensive in their membership and service coverage. The only limitation may be territorial, according as the body is to serve a locality, a region or the entire country. A trade union, a teachers' association, a professional organisation, a sports club, a merchants' chamber, a co-operative society or a community centre, should all be open to all. This of course presupposes a secular democratic state. Advisory bodies and state commissions

chosen from or in consultation with voluntary associations, are yet another service by which the state may obtain an understanding of the common life and its needs. Here too, it is essential that members should be chosen for their expert knowledge and impartial character and not because they belong to a particular racial group. Granted that the state and its legislative chambers are the proper organs for 'registering' the will of the people, the discovery of the spirit of the common life and the real genesis of policy and legislation must rest with the authentic thinkers of the nation.

One of the most effective ways in which the entire nation can be ranged together for national advance is by ensuring adequate representation to every region of the country and all sections of the population in the national parliament, cabinet, administration and state commissions and corporations and at the same time by offering the fullest opportunity to every region for self-identity and richer local life by democratic decentralization of governmental functions. There is an unanswerable case for reducing the dominance of the 'primate city' of the colonial era. It is not merely the excessive centralization of political and administrative power in the capital that is unhealthy, but the concentration of much else: witness the fact that eleven out of twelve daily newspapers are Colombo located and that three-fourths of the circulation of the Sinhalese and English dailies is confined to the Western Province. The free village community, functioning on the principle of a partyless democracy and unanimous decisions, was the supreme discovery of our ancient political genius. Students of modern democracy also aver that the 'willing' of the people is more possible in small rather than large groups. "A crowd of fifty thousand assembled in a single place can do fewer things than twenty five groups of two thousand each," says Lewis Mumford. It may be, that like Nehru's India, we will have to discover in *Panchayat Raj* and regional unions replacing the *Kachcheri* system, a new basis for democratic government and a unified people.

The Democratic Base for Development

The argument that national unity and advance must be sought in people's participation and in their patriotism can well be illustrated from the economic field. Research in industrial psychology

has revealed that production efficiency in a factory depends a good deal on 'morale,' the sense of partnership and dedication among those who work there. Experience likewise teaches that the success of an agricultural colony or a co-operative society depends on the sense of belonging that exists among the members. Indeed, genuine socialism, as Jayaprakash Narayan has pointed out, is not what is imposed from above, or even what is legislated by parliament, but what is willed by the people. Democratic planning is not government's programme-making so much as the people making programmes with government's assistance. The co-operative movement must inevitably occupy a large sector of the economy in a democratic society, but co-operation itself must be saved from any wrong twist. Thus when the Co-operative Wholesale Establishment was first set up as an agency for supplying the Co-operative Unions and retail shops, it was intended gradually to assimilate it into the movement as the apex society of consumers co-operation on the pattern of the English and Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society. Today, far from there being anything 'co-operative' about the Co-operative Wholesale Establishment, its retail shops have often been set up as rivals to co-operative shops. Similarly, the Co-operative Provincial and Federal Banks are being replaced by so-called People's Banks, which give no genuine share to the 'people' in ownership or management. Equally destructive of co-operation as a form of 'co-operative living' is the trend towards excessive officialisation of the general co-operative movement since 1956 and the emphasis on the 'profit motive' in the functioning of multi-purpose Co-operative societies.

In seeking a democratic basis for industry we too would do well to heed the warning of Bertrand Russell about avoiding the evils of industrialism in a land of village communities like India. Industrial decentralization and small scale production units in industries producing consumer goods lend most to a democratic structure and labour participation in management.

If there can be no economic advance unless we pull together there can be no social revolution unless we are all equal. In a democracy the fundamental right is the right of the individual as an individual and not as member of any community; every person is a candidate for every opportunity in the country. It is under

equal conditions that the country can put its supply of exceptional ability to maximum use. It is this country that has suffered loss by the flight abroad of much exceptional ability since the government started its policy of racial discrimination under the Sinhala Only Act. There has been much loss too when an unequal basis for promotions has led to premature retirement from the public service and frustration of those still in service. A negative form of wastage of potential ability and consequent loss to national development may be cited from the educational sphere. Out of approximately a five-thousand enrolment in the University of Ceylon nearly half are from the Western Province while the combined intake from the three most backward provinces- Uva, North Central Province and Eastern Province is only some 150. This latter is to be explained by the paucity of the channels of primary and secondary education by which talent in those areas can be drawn into the larger stream of higher education. Another example of grave waste is the educationally submerged tenth in the plantation areas where schooling provision is at its weakest. That this schooling is separate and unequal has also a bearing on the lack of assimilation of citizens of Indian origin.

Regional balance in development is vital both for stimulating economic effort and ensuring a fairer distribution of wealth throughout the country. Any long term plan must take note of the close inter-dependence between the rapid growth of the national economy and the needs and possibilities of development of different regions. Over a period, all regions should realize their potential for economic development and attain levels of living not far removed from those of the nation as a whole. The fair distribution of both large and small industries is a positive factor for promoting a national integration as well as national prosperity. Planned colonisation can make a similar contribution if it is socially and economically, but not politically, motivated. The distribution of educational facilities, especially institutes of technical and higher education, has a bearing on regional balance in development. When all is said, it is a massive effort that is needed to carry us through the threshold from a developing to a developed economy. If that effort is forthcoming, the manpower in a small nation of ten millions will not be quite enough for the manifold opportunities before us. Governments need not then look for survival to such wasteful items as subsidies, subterfuges and racial hysteria.

('Community' Book: *Organizing for Development*, 1 63)

CHAPTER 19: MUST WE SEPARATE?

On this 28th anniversary of the martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi we may, with Romain Rolland, say that Gandhiji incarnated the spirit of India and that at his bidding the nation came back to life. He regained for his people more than the liberty of their country. He recaptured for his countrymen the vision of a land which was spiritually one from Himalaya to Kumari. He embodied this unity in his own person and through foot-journey and ceaseless writing carried the twin messages of emancipation and unity to the remotest corner of the land. Said he: "What do you think could have been the intention of those farseeing ancestors of ours who established Rameshwar in the South, Jagannath in the East and Hardwar in the North as places of pilgrimage? They saw that India was one undivided land so made by nature". When Britain super-imposed a nation-wide political and administrative system in India it was but a fulfilment of the fundamental cultural and spiritual unity which was the message of her history.

Sri Lanka too, we may well claim, has been made one by her geography, by shared cultural traditions and now by common statehood. Says Fr. Thani Nayagam: "For the existence and interpenetration of these cultures, there is no better evidence than a religious shrine like Kathirgamam held sacred by Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims, located in the southern most part of Ceylon, and the religious shrines of the Buddhists located in Nainativu, a northern most outpost of the Island, held sacred by Hindus also". The British Occupation reinforced this basic unity by a common administration and the concept of the Rule of Law which made all citizens equal. The development of nation-wide education and communication of every kind further promoted mental homogeneity. If we understand the cumulative message of our history, it would read: Several traditions, one civilization; four religions, one people; two languages, one voice!

The Tamil movement for self-determination, far from being in conflict with the conception of a Lanka undivided, could well take us on the road to greater unity. Witness the historical record: "At a time when the Sinhalese were prepared to do without Sinhala

the battle for Sinhala and Tamil was fought by Tamil leaders, helped in some measure by Englishmen like the Rev. A. G. Fraser". (Prof. J. E. Jayasuriya) The firsr clear call for full independence was sounded by the Jaffna Youth Congress to counter the Donoughmore half measure. Walter Schwarz, in his M. R. G. Report, observes with great discernment that, till the present, the Tamils tended to see their status as similar to that of the Scots and Welsh. If Britain is planning a Devolution Bill and National Assemblies for Scotland and Wales to strengthen the Union, Sri Lanka could learn from that. The recognition of French Canadian identity and the scrupulously equal status accorded to the French Language and French speaking citizens has enhanced the strength of the Canadian Union.

The present Tamil nationalism (and desire for separation) has risen in a very short period in respect to challenge, as Schwarz has pointed out. It is the inevitable consequence of 'Sinhala only' and 'Sinhalese only' as reflected in an unequal citizenship written into an unequal Constitution and a series of acts of racial discrimination. For long, far too long, have politicians in power taken the Tamil Community for granted, and even Lanka's newly found nationhood for granted. But, in the last quarter of the 20th century, neither in Sri Lanka nor anywhere else, will any one agree to be treated as a second class human, with less equality and less dignity than his fellows and his ethno-cultural community as less equal than any other.

One may, however, question whether the moment has arrived this February Fourth to ask the National State Assembly to recognise "a mandate for the restoration and reconstitution of the free, secular, socialist State of Tamil Eelam"? Will it not be in the realm of wisdom to take a leaf from Mahatma Gandhi's suggestion in his draft constitution of 1920, on the eve of the Non-Cooperation Movement, "the goal of Swaraj within the British Empire if possible and without if necessary"? It has turned out that India is a sovereign Republic, but Empire too has changed into Commonwealth. Our goal then: "Within Sri Lanka, if possible; outside it if, necessary".

The fact is that the manner of historical change cannot be predicted with precision before the moment arrives. For one thing the Tamil Community must journey more miles to set its own house in order so as to bear the responsibility of separate statehood and develop too the moral power based on truth and ahimsa so as to earn and sustain that future.

At the same time, is it not still possible by the very manner in which we conduct the liberation movement, to suggest to the leadership of the Sinhalese Community to ponder over the obligations of belonging to the entire nation rather than to one community and be ready to enter into a meaningful dialogue with responsible Tamil leaders to work out a mutually acceptable settlement based on justice and reconciliation?

As we enter this age of global history, will not Sinhalese-speakers and Tamil-speakers capture afresh a vision of Sri Lanka true to herself and truly free?

(*The Morning Star*, January 30, 1976)

Granville Austin in his book on The Indian Constitution ascribes the secret of that 'successful constitution" to the fact that the fathers of the Constitution irst turned the Constituent Assembly into an "India in microcosm" ensuring that even the small minorities were well represented, and then applied with great effectiveness the characteristic Indian concepts of consensus and accommodation.

We too in Lanka have inherited the self-same values. If Lanka is to be true to herself, those who are charged with the solemn duty of writing her C nstitution should pay heed to our heritage both in the approach to constitution making and in what they write into it. Our children and our children's children should be able to say, with one volce—**Lanka is our great motherland, and we are one people from shore to shore; we speak two noble languages, but with one voice; and this Constitution which our fathers fashioned together in times of yore shall serve as the nation's charter for the years to be.**

(Concluding para: of the RESOLUTION rejecting the Draft Constitution of 1972, the All-Ceylon Tamil Conference, Third Session, Feb. 5, 1972)

CHAPTER 20: MUST SRI LANKA SPLIT?

1. *The Nation-Making Era and the role of the Tamils*

It was not an independence struggle but a luke-warm Reform Movement, confined to the English educated elite, that commenced in Sri Lanka at the conclusion of World War 1. "Ceylon does not ask for independence"....but for some reforms, "as a step towards the realization of responsible government as an integral part of the British Empire". A quarter of a century later, towards the end of World War II, the ministers and members of the State Council elected by universal suffrage were still prepared to consider an offer by the British Government, "to grant to Ceylon by Order of His Majesty in Council full responsible government under the Crown in all matters of internal civil administration". Perhaps following Indian events, it turned out that Ceylon achieved full Dominion status by the Ceylon Independence Act, 1947.

It may, however, be claimed that it is the Tamil leadership that, touched by the Indian and Gandhian awakening, dared to think in terms of a liberation movement and all its many ingredients. Was it not Ananda Coomaraswamy who first recalled the cultural heritage of this country and publicly protested against the dropping of the teaching of Sinhala in the higher classes in Buddhist Schools, like Ananda College, in 1905? Earlier, was it not a Jaffna Committee alone that urged before the Morgan Committee (1867) that an individual should be "well educated in his own language"? Was it not Arunachalam who made a forthright case for the mother tongue medium before the Macleod Committee (1911)? Prof: J. E. Jayasuriya must have had these things in mind when he said: "At a time when the Sinhalese were prepared to do without Sinhalese, the battle for Sinhalese and Tamil was fought by Tamil leaders, helped in some measure by Englishmen, like the Rev. A. G. Fraser". Jayasuriya also pays a tribute to educationists in the North, making a kind reference to me by name,who joined in this battle during the pre-Independence era. He may have had in mind things like my "Report on H. S. Perera's Report" (1941) and "The Mother Tongue in Education" (1945). The interest of Tamil scholars was by no means confined to language and culture. Arunachalam was the father of the Ceylon University Movement (1906) and the Founder-President of the Ceylon National Congress (1919).

Other Tamil leaders too played a key role in this nation-making period. Perhaps the first group in this country which dared to think in revolutionary terms was the Jaffna Youth Congress. It is this body that invited Mahatma Gandhi to our shores in 1927. The admission of Harijan students in large numbers to the big schools of the North must be attributed to the mass upsurge flowing from the activities of the Youth Congress. It is this group that prompted some of the schools here to refuse to observe the King's Birthday. It is the 1931 Annual Session of the Congress that organized a (partial) boycott of the elections to the first State Council on the score that the Donoughmore Constitution did not concede full responsible government. It is too this Congress that dared to fly the tricolour of Saffron, Red and Green heralding the nation's independence to be, on the Jaffna Esplanade on April New Year's Day, 1932. No less, it is members of this group that strove to preserve national unity even unto the moment of Independence.

2. *After Independence*

Freedom Day arrived, appropriately enough, in the year when the U.N.'s Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family. Alas, as we recede from that fateful year, 1948, it looks more and more that Sri Lanka's nationhood is but a coat of paint. Are we not essentially a no-nation if the majority ethnic group thinks that it can lord it over the others and if, for many in every group, the fictitious kinship of race constitutes the real father land? Nor should the forms of parliamentary democracy blind us to the absence of an unwavering commitment to human rights and the spontaneous fellowship of those so committed.

The first crack in the wall appeared when the self-same Ministers, who had indicated to the Soulbury Commission a scheme of delimitation by which the Tamil speaking minorities would secure 37 seats (Ceylon Tamils 15, Indian Tamils 14, Muslims 8), making, with six nominated seats , a minority representation of 43 as against 58 Sinhalese seats in a House of 101, were without any previous hint to withdraw the citizenship and franchise from Indian Tamils.

and bestow a heavy weightage on the Sinhalese majority by still retaining the count of the Indian population for delimitation of seats. So that in the last National State Assembly of 151 elected members, 124 were Sinhalese—a little over 70 per cent of the population having well over 80 percent representation!

Not content with depriving one half of the Tamil people of their citizenship and franchise rights, the ministers have been promoting planned and state-aided Sinhalese colonisation in traditional Tamil areas and large scale regularisation of Sinhalese encroachments in such areas, calculated both to get a foothold in Tamil homelands as well as to give Sinhalese colonists the benefits of land development in these areas. The creation of Snhalese constituencies in the Tamil-speaking Eastern Province, and later in the other Tamil-speaking Northern Province, was obviously part of the plan.

The All-Ceylon Tamil Congress had been formed under the leadership of Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam in anticipation of the Soulbury Commission (1944-45). The Congress mobilised Tamil support for a scheme of 'fifty-fifty' balanced representation for the majority and monority communities. The scheme was not accepted by the Commission. When the Tamil Congress leader joined the D. S. Senanayake Cabinet and voted for the disfranchisement of the Indian Tamils, a break-away group under the leadership of Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam formed the Federal Party, which gradually became the main spokesman of the Tamils.

3. '*Sinhala Only*' *and* '*Sinhalese Only*'!

The Official Languages Resolution, favouring Sinhalese and Tamil as official languages on equal terms had been adopted by a large majority in the State Council in 1944. Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike had warmly supported the resolution. But, kept out of the succession for the Prime Ministership, he adopted the 'Sinhala Only' platform and won the General Election of 1956. It was a fateful night, the 14th of June, 1956 and the day was breaking when the House of Representatives adopted by 66 votes to 29 the Sinhala Only Act which read: "The Sinhala language shall be the one official language of Ceylon". Every Tamil vote was cast against it; the redeeming feature, the Leftists, 15 in all, voted with the Tamils.

Bandaranaike tried to assuage Tamil feeling by a compromise pact with Chelvanayakam (1957) recognising Tamil as the language of a national minority and the language of administration in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, and providing for regional councils with power in the fields of Agriculture, Colonization, Industries and Education. But, bowing to militant Buddhist opposition, he unilaterally abrogated the pact.

That 'Sinhala Only' was meant to be an instrument of 'Sinhalese Only' was dramatically shown in the Kodiswaran Case. Kodiswaran, a Tamil in the executive clerical service, declined to sit the Sinhala proficiency test and in 1962 his increment was stayed. The District Judge held that the new language regulation was illegal as the Official Language Act transgressed the prohibition against discrimination in Sec: 29 of the Constitution. The Supreme Court set the judgment aside on the ground that a public servant could not sue for his salary. The Privy Council, which set aside the Supreme Court's ruling on suing for a public servants' salary, directed that the Supreme Court should now rule on the constitutional issue. The Government thereupon abolished appeals to the Privy Council, and the 1972 Constitution did away with minority safeguards enshrined in Sec: 29.

Be it noted that unequal language requirements give unequal access to the public service and its promotional opportunities to the limited number that seek to enter it. The graver consequence is that it makes nearly 30% of the population unequal before the courts of law and at every public counter. May be on the face of it a language preference, it is essentially racial discrimination. Little did its sponsors realize that, while two languages and Sinhala-Tamil blingualism in administration would make for One Nation, insistence on one official language would lead to Two Nations!!

Nor did they realize that it is when both linguistic groups use their respective languages not merely as means of communication and in every aspect of the democratic process but as an instrument of the creative life that the greatness of the entire nation is promoted. Yea, human civilization itself gains when language becomes the means of developing the collective consciousness of every ethno-cultural group, its distinctiveness and its distinction. The use of an auxiliary international language, like English, by those who can as a creative medium and by those who need it, as a functional tool, adds to the nation's stature.

It would, however, be a sad situation if Sri Lanka opts for the choice, that Toynbee warned against of "languages waging internecine wars with one another in disintegrating civilizations at an advanced stage of their decline"! Alas, it bodes ill, that as we recede from the year of Independence and the stability of the colonial era, we should make a return journey to the medieval period instead of catching up with the world of our time!

Emergency 1958 by the eminent Sinhalese journalist Vittachchi is a record of the mass killings of that year, for which there was no official inquiry or even the expression of sympathy with the wronged Tamils. (Insurgency, 1971 and the cruelty on both sides makes a dismal story, but it was not a racial conflict).

The Tragedy of January 10th, 1974 records the findings of the Kretser Commission, a court appointed by Tamil citizens to inquire into an unprovoked police assault on a gathering to bid farewell to some of the world's eminent Oriental Scholars who had participated at the 4th International Conference of Tamil Research Studies. The Government did not respond to the demand for an inquiry made by Tamil M.P's, but the police officer chiefly responsible for the unjustified eight deaths and the humiliation undergone by thousands of people received a promotion. What with imagination could have become a great national festival, not just a Tamil occasion, became a tragic experience and the turning point in our history!

And, three years after, in the 30th year of Sri Lanka's Independence, we have just gone through the 'black fortnight' of August 1977. Prime Minister Jayawardene has promised to appoint a Commission of Inquiry and it is best to await that investigation as to the extent of the killings, arson, loot and humiliation inflicted and the motives behind. One tentative statement may however be quoted here from the *Tribune* of August 27, 1977:

> "All those who have brought reports about the violence against the Tamils are unanimous that the Police in many places were not only silent spectators of looting, arson and assault, but in some instances active participants in the violence. Many observers feel that it was deliberate and pre-planned."

4. 1972: *Not our Constitution*

The Tamil United Front came into being in the historic City of Trincomalee on May 14, 1972 when the freedom, dignity and rights of the Tamil people were threatened by a retrograde Constitution. Notwithstanding the fact that it was the House of Representatives, elected on a party basis, that constituted itself into a Constituent Assembly and despite the denial of elected representation to a million Tamil plantation workers and the absence (since 1956) of even a single elected Tamil Minister in the Government, the Tamil people had agreed to give themselves and their fellow countrymen the chance of writing a new Constitution to serve as the nation's charter for the years to be. Representative citizens, including Senators and Members of Parliament, had met in two successive conferences in the Town Hall, Jaffna, and approved by consensus a series of Resolutions and a Memorandum on the Draft proposals. The Tamil political parties had also submitted their recommendations. None of these was given any consideration and, following this rejection, the majority of Tamil Members had withdrawn from the assembly. In fact, of the 19 elected Tamil members only 4 voted for the acceptance of the new Constitution on May 22; of these 4 members, three had already been expelled from the parties on whose tickets they entered the house, the fourth being an independent. It would then be correct to say that the Tamil people did not accept the Constitution of 1972 as their Constitution. The third session of the Tamil Conference also intimated to the Prime Minister that the Constitution was unacceptable.

Non-the-less the TUF asked for a dialogue with the Prime-Minister to discuss a six-point demand for the amendment of the Constitution adopted at a meeting at Mahavalawu, Kopay, on June 25, 1972:

(1) The Tamil language should be given the same status in the Constitution as the Sinhala language.

(2) There should be constitutional guarantees of full citizenship rights to all Tamil-speaking persons who have made this country their home. There should be no different categories of citizens and no discrimination between them and also no power to the State to deprive a citizen of his citizenship.

(3) The State shall be secular, while equal protection is afforded to all religions.

(4) The Constitution should provide for justiciable and therefore valid fundamental rights guaranteeing the equality of all persons and ethno-cultural groups.

(5) The Constitution shall provide for the abolition of caste and untouchability.

(6) In a democratic and socialist society, a decentralized structure of government alone will make it possible for a participatory democracy where power will be people's power rather than State power.

When, instead of holding a dialogue with Tamil leaders, Government spokesmen claimed that the Tamil people had accepted the new Constitution, Mr. S. J. V.Chelvanayakam, who had come to incarnate the mood and hopes of the Tamils of Sri Lanka, resigned his parliamentary seat on this issue. Two years and four months, by the very device of the Emergency under which the Constitution was adopted, the ruling group was able to put off the bye-election. When he re-won the Kankesanturai seat by an over-whelming majority on February 6, 1975, he announced that he considered the result as "a mandate that the Eelam Tamil Nation should exercise the sovereignty already vested in the Tamil people and become free".

Regarding the refusal of the Government to enter into a dialogue with the genuine leaders of the Tamil people for a political settlement, or to consult them on other matters affecting the Tamil people Bishop Lakshman Wickremasinghe of Kurunagala wrote in his Diocesan letter an year ago:

"The situation in Jaffna with regard to the Tamils continues to deteriorate. The continued obtuseness of the present Government and of those from all parties in the Sinhala establishment who openly or tacitly support its policy, is one of the heart-rending tragedies in our midst. The use of open force by police and army, the psychology of 'defensive reaction' and the attempt to use nondescript persons with marginal influence as puppets leaves me ashamed as a Sinhalese."

The failure of the provisions of the Constitution to uphold the national ideal and the democratic principle is aptly shown by the facility with which the majority ethnic group has been able to deny opportunities to Tamils in education, employment, land alienation, economic and industrial activity.

To cite one example, the selection by so-called open competition for the CAS in the very year 1972: Total 106, Sinhalese 100, Tamils 4, Muslims 2—For another, University admissions: A formula called media-wise "standardisation", unknown elsewhere, requires in effect different minima in different subjects from the two ethnic groups, with a view to severely curtailing the intake of Tamil candidates, especially in the Science-based studies. The disproportionately high brain-drain of professionally and technically qualified Tamils and their families is to be explained mainly by their search of educational opportunity for their children—leading to the draining away of further potential ability. Alas! Education the very means of fighting inequality should itself become an instrument of discrimination!

5. *TULF—Resolution on Tamil Eelam*

On the fourth anniversary of the formation of the T.U.F., on the 14th of May, 1976, the First National Convention of what was renamed The Tamil United Liberation Front, met under the Chairmanship of Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, Q.C., M.P., in the village of Pannakam in the Vaddukoddai Constituency and resolved "that the restoration and reconstitution of the Free, Sovereign, Secular State of TAMIL EELAM, based on the right of self-determination inherent to every nation, has become inevitable in order to safeguard the very existence of the Tamil Nation in this country". (The writer, who was one of the delegates to the Convention, was the sole abstainer). The full Resolution (running into several pages) was printed and distributed by Mr. Chelvanayakam and other members of the Action Committee on May 22, Republic Day. Mr. Amirthalingam, Secretary-General of the Front, and three M.P.'s were arrested, taken to Colombo for detention and later charged at a Trial-at-bar. 67 lawyers, including several eminent Q.C.'s, appeared on behalf of the accused at what turned out to be a historic constitutional case. Subsequently, the Attorney General indicated that the case was not being proceded with.

At the General Election '77, where voting took place on July 21, the TULF fielded candidates for all the predominantly Tamil and some of the predominantly Muslim electorates. The Front had asked the Tamil people to regard the vote as a plebiscite on the issue of Tamil Eelam. Their candidates won in 18 Tamil electorates and lost only in the 19th electorate, Kalkudah, which was won by a U.N.P. Tamil candidate (who was earlier associated with the Front). The C.W.C. ally of the Front won in the plantation Nuwara Eliya electorate. The very large majorities which the TULF scored and the enthusiastic election rallies, attended by entire families left no doubt about the response of the Tamil people. But the Front failed to win any of the predominantly Muslim seats, which were won by the U.N.P. The United National Party, which gained a big landslide victory outside the Tamil areas, also benefitted by the Tamil marginal votes in their areas. The sole Tamil candidate elected on a UNP ticket became Minister of Justice, the first elected Tamil Minister in 21 years! The TULF is the main Opposition Party and its leading spokesman Mr. A. Amirthalingam is the Official Opposition Leader.

6. *Must Sri Lanka Split?*

"Two different nations, from a very ancient period, have divided between them the possession of the Island: First, the Sinhalese inhabiting the interior of the country, in its southern and western parts, from the river Wallouve to that of Chilaw, and secondly the Malabars (i.e. Tamils) who possess the northern districts."—Cleghorn minute, 1st June 1799. The Vaddukoddai Resolution and Tamil leaders lay much store by the historical argument that it is the British rulers who for administrative convenience "shackled together" the hitherto separate Sinhalese and Tamil territories. But, cannot we argue that the British period was also part of our history, and that when the British super-imposed an Island wide political and administrative system, it was but a fulfilment of the fundamental cultural and spiritual unity which was the cumulative message of Sri-Lanka's history?

But, has not that noble message been betrayed these thirty years so much so that we have cut the earth on which to erect the very foundation of a new nation? Let alone the failure to think

out a social philosophy and the appropriate structures for this nation, are we one nation—if the Tamils of Sri Lanka are denied human dignity and equality, discriminated against in every sphere, the statues of their great men dishonoured, subjected to Uganda-type savagery from time to time and made to listen to insulting racial refrains from a police and army of 'occupation'? And for some years of the Emergency, as the Amnesty International has pointed out, "deprived of an important means of expressing its opinion democratically"? Meanwhile, a stream of propaganda, calculated to un-build our nation-hood, is poured out in mass media so freely available only to some. Two examples, one so to speak heralding the 'blackfortnight' of August and the other pronouncing the epilogue!! First, Professor F. R. Jayasuriya in a central page article so full of untruths and distortions, in the pro-Government SUN of August 11-12: "Sri Lanka is unquestionably and undeniably the land of the Sinhalese"......"it is the duty of every Tamil in this country" (to go over and settle in TamilNadu in South India). Second, according to an Information Department press release in the SUNDAY TIMES of August 28,a memorandum to the Prime Minister by the Ven: Madige Pannaseeha, a Maha Nayake Thero, in which the Venerable Thero advocates the planned colonization of the North and the stationing of an army of 1,000 soldiers in Jaffna. The Thero also wants legislation to prevent any talk of a separate state either orally or in writing! Did not Kelvin Knight write in the ECONOMIST (25 June 1977) that "the multi-party system of the West is not a good system of government for nations of the third world: it often places power in the in the hands of a majority ethnic group or the members of a particular religious creed?" And where masses of our countrymen have remained untouched by the time spirit and still live with loyalties which do not extend to the whole nation, it is an ominous sign if even men of learning and religion should fail to discern the authentic voice of Sri Lanka. The call of Lanka is still for some leader of thought or action who embodies in his person the Sri Lanka Man and the greatness of the nation to be!

Given lofty statesmanship on both sides, it may still be possible at this eleventh hour to work out a settlement assuring the Tamils the essence of their demand within the framework of Sri

Lanka. The self-determination principle can still find adequate scope in one or other of the new political systems emerging in other multi-racial societies of the modern world. Such, for example is the autonomous nationhood proposed for the Catalans of Spain, or Home Rule for Scotland (with direct representation in the European Parliament), or the formulas being considered for the coming together once again of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Or, may be, we can evolve our own new model of government, very different from the Western style of party-based parliamentary democracy, that would both obviate the domination of one ethnic group by another and at the same time ensure the much sought after participatory democracy. We can consider whether in the manner urged by Jayaprakash Narayan we cannot restructure government on the Village Council base, forming Electorate and District Councils by the upward integration of councils at lower levels, making the District the unit for socio-economic and educational planning. Nor should we overlook the role of the voluntary Cooperative Movement, similarly built from below to above, as a major instrument for creating a democratic socialist society.

Whether in our political settlement we opt for two autonomous regions within the bosom of a single state, or for two separate nations in the bosom of Sri Lanka, the two great communities cannot but afford to live in unity and with mutual benefit. Towards this consummation the schools and universities can make an immeasurable contribution. Not least, like what the Nordic States did some years ago, we need to re-write the History of Sri Lanka to reflect its composite heritage and to convey its enduring message of the supremacy of the spiritual over the material.

(CCA: *Identity and Justice* series, Tokyo, 1977)

History is replete with examples of tragic experiences which have proved a turning point in the the life of a people. They develop fresh strength from within and earn their future anew..... Meanwhile, the Tamil Conference Square, around Veerasingham Hall, becomes hallowed ground, and the 10th of January a solemn anniversary date for our children and our children's children.

(Foreword to *The Tragedy of January Tenth* 1974: Report of the DeKretser Commission of Inquiry)

CHAPTER 21: THE WAY OUT

1. The essence of the crisis

The tragic happenings of August'77 have deepened the crisis in Sri Lanka. It is a grave story that is now unfolding itself in the evidence placed before the Sansoni Commission—of widespread assaults and killings of Tamils, the looting and burning of their homes and shops, the humiliation of their women and the desecration of their temples. The essence of the crisis is that 30 years after reaching the gates of Independence there has been a return journey to the no-nation state of medieval times.

Indian Minister Asoka Mehta once said: "When a religious community, a language group makes sovereign claims and reduces all other associations to the status of satellites democracy is destroyed". It may help us to see things clearly if we compare ourselves with India, with whom we share much of our ancient heritage. India's road to independence witnessed a mass struggle against the foreign foe, while ours consisted of resolutions adopted in and out of the legislature. Even more significant, simultaneous with the external struggle, Mahatma Gandhi put forward a Constructive Programme calculated to strengthen India from within. True to form, our exercise in Constitution making was no more than disposing of the will of the people without their participation, claiming a party-mandate for the Constitution of 1972 and for the amendment of 1977. On both occasions, the party in power represented one ethnic group, more or less. India, on the other hand, was true to her (and our) spiritual genius. Her Constituent Assembly was an "India in microcosm", in which even the small minorities were well represented, and she applied with great effectiveness the characteristic ancient concepts of consensus and accommodation. And true to her commitment to deeply spiritual and not narrowly religious values, India is a Secular State. A Federal Constitution assures all linguistic groups of self-identity and self-determination.

Perhaps a clue to the sort of thing that may have over the years poisoned the minds of large sections of the population is provided by the following statement by a university don in the

SUN of August 12, 1977: "Sri Lanka is unquestionably and undeniably the land of the Sinhalese . ... It is the duty of every Tamil in the country (to go over and settle in Tamil Nadu in South India)". Social scientists tell us that children are born without race prejudice. Such prejudice is taught them in various ways.

You've got to be taught, before it's too late
Before you are six or seven or eight,
To hate all the people your relatives hate
You've got to be carefully taught.

Who are the persons in this country who teach the young and old this pernicious untruth of race? Politicians who have political stakes in race prejudice; discriminatory groups who have economic stakes in it; men with "perverse emotions and twisted reason" who write in newspapers and history text-books and, alas men who wear religious robes, but who hearken to the myth of race rather than to man's humanity! Both those who insist on 'Sinhala Only', meaning 'Sinhalese only', and those who seek "the foremost place for Buddhism", deny the existence of the nation.

2. Western political models provide no answer

For 30 years we have tried multi-party parliamentry democracy, with a Prime-Minister-led-Executive, as in Britain. Since last Independence Day, we have adopted a Presidentiai Executive system as in the U.S. and France. Both are sub-systems of the some parliamentary system deriving from the historical experience of those Western countries. But, as Jayaprakash Narayan has pointed out, Western societies have an infra-structure and a variety of institutional set-ups that give substance, not merely form, to democratic government.

First, the delicately balanced party system, where the 'swing at a general election is by a small margin, not a landslide. Besides, there is a basic national unity in Britain. In the words of Sir Walter Moberly: "Our party-differences have not been carried to an extreme. After a General Election, the new party does not undo the bulk of the work of its predecessors. The outlook which Mr. Churchill and Mr. Attlee have in common is more important than the things in which they differ". It is much otherwise in this part

of the world. The election campaign itself tends to partake of the nature of a civil strife, and after the elections, politicai tension continues with probes and policy reversals. We readily disintegrate into our primitive groups,

Second, there is the corrective of a powerful public opinion that exerts a continuous influence on the representatives. A connected element is a free and fearless Press, which acts as an extra lobby to tne House. The malaise that affects this young nation is that despite the adoption of the forms of democracy, the people have hardly imbibed the spirit of liberty. Who has protested against the two major newspaper groups being state-owned and heavily subsidised by government advertisements? Or, who has considered it unwholesome for the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation to be an instrument of Government propaganda?

In the next place, the free academic community should serve as the conscience of the nation; its positive function is to promote the freedom of ideas in a world where the state has at its disposal the means of enslaving the minds of men. But, how can the university, which has lost its own freedom, serve as societey's safeguard againet the State? And, are all university men alive to this betrayal?

Not least significant is the wide dispersal of power by a federal structure in the United States and a net work of local councils in France and Britain. In the U.S. there are 50 semi-sovereign states and all together 90,000 units of local government. France has nearly 38,000 units of local government. Britain, though a unitary state, has a highly decentralized structure, most governmental activities, including Education, being iu the care of local self-governing councils. The President in the U.S. and France, and the Prime Minister in Britain, do rule, but they have to carry both parliament and the nation with them.

Gandhiji objected to "20 men sitting at the Centre and ruling the country"; it was State power and not people's power. How much more open to objection one Executive President ruling from the Centre and not responsible to the legislature either. In addition

to 20 or more Ministers at the Centre, 20 or more 'District Ministers' appointed by the Centre and responsible to it, but adds to this concentration of power; it takes away from the people's participation in the decision making process.

If, as Harold Laski has urged, it is the citizens who have to play a creative role by being an active and integral part of the law-making process, the State and legislature's function that of "registering" the will of the citizens, the present proposals seek to reverse that process. It is hardly consoling to be told that the people can change their rulers once in a few years. There is little liberty except where the ideas which are embodied in policy and law seep upwards from below. We have therefore to see the enrichment of national life in the expansion of society rather than of the state.

Besides, centralization is not consistent with the spatial dispersal of power. Laski argues that it makes for uniformity; it "lacks the genius of time and place". If decision making has to commence in the small local community and flow from there to broader levels the system of Proportional Representation, extended to local self-government, certainly goes counter to the concept that men "belong to a community and to a place".

Our democracy is like a pyramid not standing on its base, but made to stand on its head!

3. An Asian Model

It was Hugh Gaitskell who said that neither the British model nor the authoritarian communist one may be the answer to the demand for an Asian model for social democracy. He thought that J.P, the founding father of Indian democratic socialism and associate of Gandhi and Vinoba, may be the one to develop a self-produced Asian model. Perhaps, the most original contribution which we who belong to the Indic civilization, drawing on our own ancient political genius, can make to the art of government would be to experiment with re-structuring democracy on the village base, on the partyless village assembly where decisions are reached by consensus. The voice of the Five, the voice of God!

Why, even in the West, political thinkers are in search of new forms of *participatory democracy* to replace the present system of *voting democracy*, called by Madariaga as "statistical representation".

A sound base on which to rest the democratic pyramid is the organic village community. Where villages have decayed into small hamlets or grown out of size, some re-designing may be necessary The same with the wards of our new towns and cities. The important thing is to develop neighbourhood groups, may be 500 households here and a 1000 households there.—large enough to be viable and small enough to make a community. If it is the shared living and the civic spirit that is the essence of community, the neighbourhood group should become the polling district for all elections, the area of a multi-purpose co-operative or its branch society, the catchment area (may be with adjoining areas) for a primary school and adult leisure provision and continued education. Not least, there should be a gramsabha consisting of all adult men and women.

We meet the demand for a paticipatory democracy and by the same token go a long way to resolve the racial conflict by decentralizing government on the gram-sabha base, forming Electorate and Regional Councils bv the upward integration of councils at lower levels. For socio-economic and educational planning the Region may be the viable unit. Parallel to this structure and reinforcing it, would be the structure for a Cooperative Democracy, building upwards from the face to face village cooperative assembly to the elective Electorate, Regional and apex delegates' assemblies. The corresponding decentralization of economic power would call tor the development of small unit technology, which will make it possible to produce in the small scale/cottage sector what can be so produced, with all that this means in terms of employment oportunities and human values.

It is possible that all those who want in Sri Lanka a society based on justice, liberty, equality and fraternity will generally support the suggested new model of democracy. Equally, they may subscribe to the amendments to the draft 1972 Constitution proposed

jointly by Messrs. J.R. Jayawardena, Dudley Senanayake and S.J.V. Chelvanayakam: (a) that there should be a 'bicameral' legislature; and, that (b) The President should be elected for a period of six years by an electoral college consisting of members of both Houses of Parliament and the members of the duly constituted local bodies in the country.

4. *Problems of the Tamil-speaking People: Conditions for an interim settlement*

The United National Party, in their Manifesto for the General Election, 1977 offered to summon a Round Table Conference on the problems of the Tamil-speaking people. Meanwhile, the select committee on the Third Amendment is drafting its suggestions. The fact is that the manner of historical change cannot be predicted with precision before the moment arrives. One believes that though the movement for a separate Tamil State has gathered much momentum, it is still possible to meet in a conference to work out an interim compromise, which may indeed pave the way for a lasting settlement.

Against the background of decentralization outlined above, 3 conditions may be laid down as minima:

1. The firsf fundamental element for a settlement is the recognition of *a territorial domain and territorial identity to reflect Tamil identity.*

2. *Language identity* (note how in the U.S.S.R. Moscow had to give up its proposal in the new constitution to replace Georgian as the sole official language of the Georgian Republic)

3. *Self-determination* (or regional autonomy) flows from the demand for self-identity. This should include local recruitment and set-up of police units.

Given good will, a number of conventions may be agreed to, which will make the settlement an enduring one. Such as, for example, that there should be the office of Vice-President and a firm convention that if the President of the Republic is from one language group, the Vice-President should be from the

other. Another convention, that members of the Central Cabinet, the Supreme Court Bench, State Corporations and other directive and consultative bodies should represent all regions in the country and both language groups.

5. The Spirit of the Settlement

When all is said, understanding between communities should be at the people's level, more than at the state level. Even nationhood is everywhere an unfinished business. Those who can communicate to the people that they belong one to another, to 'all' and not to 'some', are thinkers and poets, historians and writers, teachers and those public servants who can be described as true patriots.

Paradoxical as it may sound, the end we should be after is something more than a political settlement. All pieces will fall into places, if we can successfully set the people of Sri Lanka in quest of an alternative civilization based on Truth and Ahimsa.

(CISRS, 1978)

Is it not obvious that if we are to evolve the true spirit of independence amongst the millions, we shall only do so through non-violence and all it implies? It is not enough that we drive out Englishmen by making their lives insecure through secret violence. That would not lead to independence but utter confusion. We can establish independence only by evolving organic unity amongst ourselves not by terrorising or killing those who, we fancy, may impede our march ..Let those who are not past reason either secretly or openly endorse activities such as the latest bomb outrage. Rather let them openly and heartily condemn these outrages.

(Gandhiji, January 2, 1930)

PART V

Towards World Community

CHAPTER 22: PEOPLES OF THE WEST

I lived less than a year in Europe, most of that time in England, which is least like the rest of Europe. My contact was long enough to enable me to make a few generalisations about the nature of some of the European peoples and yet short enough to permit me to plead insufficient knowledge as explanation of any inaccuracy in my judgment of the peoples whose hospitality I enjoyed. Besides, there is an inherent difficulty due to the inconsequence of national as of individual character, every people being a paradox, strong virtues being found in partnership with strange vices. Thus, according to Madariaga, the Englishman stands for hypocrisy-practical sense, the Frenchman for clearness-licentiousness, the German for thoroughness-clumsiness, the Spaniard for dignity-cruelty, the American for vulgarity-vitality. It is the same as with great individual characters, like Hamlet and Don Quixote.

First, the English. They are truly islanders narrow in their outlook and blind to the really great possessions of humanity. Philosophy quenches no thirst of theirs, powerful passions sway not their nature and religion is not a means to a new order but just the grease to social machinery. Yet they are the most self-satisfied people on earth. The truth is most of their best things are borrowed from other nations; their own original contributions to humanity have been things of utility.

Indeed, they are full of paradoxes. They swear by progress, but they are terribly conservative, even the radicals among them. They cooperate with one another, but they are really individualistic. You find them in crowds at games, at the parks and at public meetings, yet they lead lonely and often friendless lives. Where they establish homes they are some of the best homes in the world, but many of them prefer to be bachelors and more often spinsters. They are a democracy, but they admire the aristocracy. The people are supreme, but the king is worshipped. They cherish

freedom, but they have despoiled millions of this same right. They give liberty of thought and utterance to everybody; but all being cast in the same mould nobody thinks differently from anybody else. They have given the franchise to their women and a woman is now the head of the civic administration of the County of London, but women are slaves for wages. They wait on men at the restaurants, they type men's letters at the offices and in the factories they do work which men do in more enlightened lands. Meanwhile, in the country with the biggest resources in Europe, two-million men are walking the streets searching for jobs. They claim to be a Christian country, but their sword has been laid across humanity ever since they emerged from civil strife in their own land. The message of love of the Christian Religion they understand in their own manner and they drape the universal cross of Christ in their national flag. In their great national cathedral in the City of London they have so to say canonised the sword buckling soldiers of their imperial history and turned the Church of the Prince of Peace into a monument of military exploits.

Yet, I like the Englishman. There is something in his character that has an appeal for me. If he has no excess of virtues, neither does he go to extremes in his vices. The national morality might be of the tribal order, but the individual Englishman has sense of proportion, is honest and plays fair. The class-system still exists, but the personality of every man, even the lowliest, is fully respected. And when you visit his home, the Englishman is really your fellow-human being.

The French character is again a paradox. We speak of the logical Frenchman, but French history is replete with illogical French behaviour. The City of Paris, so geometrical and certainly the most beautiful city I have visited, is typical of French character, and the Paris underground railway system presents no problems to the visitor. Yet the orderliness of London impressed me more and the London Transport system is unequalled. The French love courtesy and order, but I contrast the quiet manner in which I witnessed the Lord Mayor's procession with a London crowd last November and the confusion out of which, dangerously perched

on a point of vantage, I obtained a view of the great military parade in Paris on July 14. The French have the gift of clearness, but the Paris policeman has to consult his pocket map for the kind of information about places which his London brother rattles off without a moment's hesitation. Liberty, equality, fraternity are tenets of the French political creed, and Frenchmen and foreigners fraternise so well in Paris, but Djibouti did not impress me as an outstanding success in the French Government of an African Colony. The truth seems to be that the Frenchman is really individualistic and his love of law and system springs from a desire to socialize himself.

But the supreme position of France in Europe has been as leader of her Culture; for, next to Greece and Rome, the language and thought of France have been of the utmost influence in the evolution of Western culture.

The Germans are a puzzle too. They are an ungovernable people who therefore prefer to be ruled despotically; the dictator who governs them now follows naturally on the absolute monarchs of former times. They are by nature lawless and so they worship the law as if for its own sake. When I crossed a small street in the Wilhelm Square in Berlin against the red signal at a time when the street was bare of traffic, a storm-trooper questioned me on my disobeying the traffic signal. This upholder of the law forgot however that a soldier was here usurping police functions. Again, the Germans have been long regarded as the most scientific nation in Europe and yet they have been guilty of the most unenlightened conduct and, in fact, their theories of race are at variance with the facts of science. On one hand they adore strength and might; their new buildings and roads are no doubt imposing, and they pay much attention to physical education. On the other hand, they are musically inclined and still care for religion. I attended a German service in the great Protestant Cathedral in Berlin and the congregation was indeed large. And the individual German, sipping his coffee or drinking his beer in an open-air cafe, is cheerful and cordial to the stranger.

The Danes enjoy one great advantage over the others in the absence of a colonial empire. Consequently, they are free from any trace of racial prejudice and are very international in their outlook. The tokens of human brotherhood which I warmly experienced in Denmark I explain as the characteristic of a race that has lived as brother, not as lord, of fellow races. Possessed of a social temper the Danes are a cheerful race. Their abundant prosperity may be traced partly to this genius for co-operation and partly to a high level of education. Their international outlook, signified by their knowledge of several foreign languages and their desire for peace, was tempered by some shrewd comments I heard of the national policies both of Britain and of Germany. A socially well knit people, Denmark's cities run with so few policemen and the King can go out for a ride without an escort.

The Swiss are very much like the Danes; their standard of life is perhaps a shade higher and their qualities even more solid. Speaking three languages, French, German and Italian, all Swiss live in amity and are very proud of their country. Protestants and Roman Catholics show a toleration to each other unknown in the rest of Europe, but all Swiss are alike devoted to religion. I think I found in Geneva the most international outlook I found anywhere; the city seemed rightly to be the home of the League of Nations.

If I had to choose a home in Europe, the choice will be between Denmark and Switzerland.

(*St. John's College Magazine, Jaffna,* 1939)

CHAPTER 23: THE MORAL ISSUE IN EUROPE

THERE is a moral issue between the democracies and the totalitarian states. This phrase was used by the Premier not long ago, and no doubt the view is widely held in this country. Christian leaders have publicly supported it. Thus, the Archbishop of Canterbury, appeals for a "massing of might on the side of right," and thinks it is not against the will of Providence that nations should defend the ideals of justice and freedom which are so precious to civilization and human welfare. In his farewell sermon at St. Paul's Cathedral, the Bishop of London is reported to have said: "It makes the blood of Englishmen boil with indignation to see little nations crushed one by one under the ruthless heels of these dictators". He added that the whole nation was behind the Prime Minister.

A different point of view occurs readily to one who is a colonial subject (from Ceylon), besides being a follower of Jesus. It must be recognized that it is an economic issue that underlies Germany's aims. Germany sees no reason why she should be confined to a tiny fraction of the world's area, while the British Empire covers over one-quarter of the globe and possesses resources valuable in peace and war. Germany's partners in Rome and Tokyo share this inferior position and the consequent grievance. I happened to be in Tokyo at the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, and saw a significant discussion at that time in the Japanese press on the division of the world's territory and resources as between the "haves" and the "have-nots".

One could go further and say that modern war is the inevitable result of the ambition of nations to secure economic advantages to themselves at the expense of others. Every one of the major wars in which Britain has been involved since the days of the Armada may be directly traced to the conflict of colonial and commercial ambitions amongst the leading European nations. A few months ago I heard the Archbishop of York justify the British Empire at a young people's conference; but, the following words which Mr. Winston Churchill used in a broadcast talk on India are nevertheless true: "We have, in this island, 45 millions living at a higher level

than the people of any other European country. One-third of these would have to go down, out, or under, if we ceased to be a great empire with world-wide connections and trade."

Many would probably agree that in the past there has been a connection between imperial expansion and war; and yet argue that Germany is wrong in adopting in the twentieth century methods of aggression which are contrary to our present international standards. The obvious reply to such argument would be that, so long as Britain holds on to what she has obtained in violation of the principles of justice and freedom and continues to benefit by it, so long does she continue to recognize the validity of the principle of aggression. In other words, so long as Britain possesses an empire, so long and by the same ethic will Germany, Italy and Japan be justified in seeking fresh empires. That the German manner is less decorous than the British manner or that Germany blatantly proclaims doctrines of Nordic superiority, does not alter the identity of the position of both Germany and Britain. In a recent published sermon, the Minister of the City Temple gives a brilliant diagnosis of the situation in Germany, shows that psychologically Hitler is a sick man, and Germany is a sick country, and urges us to understand this sick nation with sympathy. I have great regard and affection for individual English people, but may I be permitted to suggest that in respect of the national attitude to other peoples, colonial and foreign, the attitude of Britain is no less pathological. If Germany is the case of a boy expelled from class and turned bully, Britain is the example of the spoilt child of wealthy parents, unable to concede a humbler boy's pretensions to equality. On the present issue most Englishmen think Germany is wrong; on the issue of independence for India or the British Colonies, few Englishmen understand the deep anguish in the hearts of us "natives" at the deprivation of our national freedom in what they think is a glorious Empire.

The moral issue, then, is not between Britain and Germany, but between the principle of Self-determination and the principle of Empire. The issue can be resolved only by the unqualified acceptance by all the imperialist powers, Britain and France being the chief, of the principle of the right of every people, even the

smallest, to be free and equal. Further, these powers must rally to the support of a really democratic League of Nations. In fact, it will be easier for the League to protect a just moral order than to preserve, as it vainly tried, an unjust status quo. If any colony is unable to assume immediate responsibility for its own self-government, that area should be administered by the League. Another vital function which the new League must undertake is the task of co-ordinating world trade and the promotion of general co-operation between nations. Short of this radical re-orientation, there is very little chance for disarmament or the peaceful sharing of the resources of the world as suggested in President Roosevelt's message to the dictators.

Are there no British hearts and minds which see that the waiting armies and the piled arms are caused by achieved empires as well as by contemplated empires? Are there no men in our time who hear the call of humanity above the roar of the nations?
(*The Christian Pacifist*, London, May, 1939)

With a view to the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, the United Nations shall promote universal respect for and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language and religion.

(*Charter of the U N* 1945, *article* 55c)

All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

(*Article* 1 *The International Covenants on Human Rights, signed by Sri Lanka*, 1980)

CHAPTER 24: AMERICA'S BICENTENNIAL

The Declaration of Independence which ushered in the American Revolution on July 4, 1776 is one of the great documents of history; it affirmed "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" as inalienable human rights. The men who wrote it were Englishmen, who were proud to be Englishmen and who loved English law and English liberties. Till one year before the Declaration their object was liberty, not independence, as Lord Acton has pointed out; there was no question of separation. The fundamental maxim that they canvassed was that no subject of England could be taxed without his own consent; they asked for the 13 colonies to be represented in Westminister. A short-sighted sovereign refused this. If it had been conceded, America would have remained a Dominion of the Commonwealth, and the history of the world very different.

The historical moment provided the new nation not only with the men of stature who wrote the Declaration, but a great soldier in the person of George Washington, who through seven perilous years sustained his small army with iron resolve till the British Flag was finally lowered at York Town. Apart from the limited violence of this War of Independence, and that of the Civil War of Abraham Lincoln's time, the United States has been free of "terror" and "purges", which have marked many a liberation movement elsewhere. No doubt the bringing of Negro slaves from Africa was a great blot, but great leaders from Abraham Lincoln to Martin Luther King have made an abiding contribution towards a free and equal society. In the event, the United States has built an identity of her own and made a continuing impact on world history. Truly a New World called to redress the balance of the Old!

It was Lord Acton who remarked that it was the confluence of French theory with American example that led to the explosion of the French Revolution in 1789: "France was deeply touched by the American Revolution, not by the American Constitution". We may say that the storming of the Bastille was almost a continuation of the victorious march of George Washington; possibly, there were

French soldiers who had fought for the American cause under Washington who joined in the march on the Bastille. In turn, the ideas of the French Revolution have helped to call new revolutions into being. The Stripes and Stars, in particular, just expressed the cohesion and solidarity of the new American Nation. But, the Tricolour of the French Revolutionaries and the slogans of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity that were shouted on the streets of Paris in 1789 have inspired many a national flag and what it stands for.

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Such is the meandering flow of the river of history that the ideal of liberty which carried the Pilgrim Fathers to the New World continues to flow back carrying many ideas to fertilize life once again in the Old. Thus, American Science and Technology has reached every shore. Its corollary, American Education, with its massive enrolment at the higher levels, is a much sought after model up to Japan on the Pacific Coast. Its compelling appeal that it has made new knowledge central to America's phenomenal national growth while providing social mobility to all who cared. That the schools and colleges with so much open access have been creators of a unified culture and been a force for national homogenity is no less worthy of note. Perhaps, pride of place should be given to the Federal Constitution, which with the amendments written into it these two centuries and the foot-notes and cautions added by the Supreme Court, has afforded guidance to constitution-makers in many lands, not least to the eminent writers of the Constitution of the Indian Union.

It is of interest to us in Sri Lanka to note how a group of American Missionaries established the Batticotta Seminary in the North, four decades after York Town, to teach—"the sciences usually studied in the Colleges of Europe and America"; "a thorough knowledge of the English language"; Sanskrit, Western classics; and Tamil literature and writing. These studies did prompt the Tamil Renaissance of the last century, and these and other institutions in the North sent out streams of public servants and "settlers" to some of the countries of South and South-East Asia. Why,

even political developments, like the Youth Congress movement owe so much to the atmosphere of liberty ultimately traceable to the Declaration.

It is said that the European nations are constantly looking to the American phenomenon for an evolutionary pattern which will enable them to survive, over-coming the handicap of the relatively small size of their States. This should suggest to us in South Asia too to cooperate across national frontiers.

Anyway, when we contemplate the achievement of America during two brief centuries, assembling the oppressed of many lands, the daring spirits and the gifted, in its expansive territory and building a new indigenous culture, if a frontier one, composite of several origins and dominated by the American Dream, we cannot but salute this great nation!

(*The Morning Star* 1976)

The British colonial authorities were singularly favourable to the Ceylon Mission, with growing admiration and support for the Jaffna enterprise from 1816. Educational activities, a medical mission, and a printing press were flourishing within ten years of the first turning over of the missionary sod, and in the first hundred years 120 missionaries had come out from home to labour in the Hindu vineyard of northern Ceylon. There are old churches by the dozen dating from the early nineteenth century, and the missionaries set out to recreate their New England structures, and moral fibre often supplied the cement when skilled labour and the appropriate materials were lacking.

The men of the cloth left Jaffna a mixed bag of blessings, even though their urges for the spiritual betterment of the native Hindu may not have yielded the desired harvest. They laid the foundation of modern education in the Northern province, and made the population of Jaffna the most literate in the island, both in English and Tamil. The education of females was especially noteworthy and socially singnificant. The excellence and vigour of both their educational programs and medical projects supplied both example and challenge to other Christian Missions and the Government to increase the scope, and improve similar facilities in other areas of the island. Labouring often under fearful odds they remained intensely patriotic and lived simple, almost spartan, lives.

(H.A. I. Goonetileke in his introduction to *Images of Sri Lanka Through American Eyes*, 1975)

CHAPTER 25 : THE UNFINISHED REVOLUTION

It is our privilege to have lived in one of the great epochs of history; indeed, we were so close to the epicentre of the events in Asia and Africa which, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, constitute one of the great forward movements of mankind. The two main strands of the movement were the decolonisation of the continents of Asia and Africa, and the assertion there and everywhere of the ideal of human dignity and equality. The temper of the struggle was lifted to a high plane, and so little blood was shed, following on Gandhiji's insistence on non-violence and the need to pursue good ends by right means. The heroic achievement of nation-making is almost over, but the very arduous task of nation-building remains.

For, surely, the Revolution initiated by Mahatma Gandhi is very much unfinished; the Indian record, and the record in many of the new nations, is a rather dismal one in terms of the freedom movement envisaged by the Mahatma. Alas! The heroic struggle for Independence over, far from the people imbibing the spirit of liberty and participating in the democratic process, it is a case of those who have come into the seats of power, whether through the ballot or the bullet, regarding themselves like medieval rulers and the people as their subjects. No wonder the doctrine of dynastic succession is tacitly assumed by ruler and people. The words which the eminent jurist N. A. Palkhivala used of India is true of many countries of the Third World: "The more palpable peril to constitutional freedom, which has already materialized, is from politicians in power who, after taking the oath of true faith and allegiance to the constitution, look upon the constitution as so pliant that it can be bent to any whim or caprice of the ruling clan. They challenge the very institution of guarnteed human rights. On the day when arbitrary power wears the apparel of constitutionalism, by a curious perversion peculiar to our age it is constitutionalism which is called on to justify itself." Witness the continued Emergency and the unashamed control of mass media. As R. R. Diwakar, Chairman of the Gandhi Peace Foundation, has said, these constitute a symptom of the decay of democracy. The experience of the last quarter of the century shows that parliamentary institutions have but run shallow roots in many of these countries. But, withal, fascism often wears a radical face!

Statism is no substitute for genuine socialism; neither does a dose of welfarism make for a welfare state. Social security, good clothing and adequate nutrition, sufficient housing and employment and universal education do not exhaust human rights. The basic right is the right to express dissent and to organize and strive to create a better society. But, alas, what stalks through these lands is poverty and semi-starvation, unemployment and unequal choice in employment, under-development and massive political corruption, all of which tend to corrode the human soul and erode the very foundations of society.

But India, the land of Mahatma Gandhi, cannot afford to fail humanity. She has to serve as the sheet anchor of democracy in South Asia and set the pattern for a new socialist social order. Indeed, it may well be claimed that the revolutionary movement which the Mahatma initiated has slowed down, but it is still there and has been struggling to find fresh leadership to give expression to present discontents. Three years after the death of the Mahatma, the Gandhian vision was recaptured when Vinoba Bhave walked to Telengana to receive the first land gift in April 1951. But, according to Girilal Jain, the New Delhi Editor of the *Times of India*, the "Bihar movement" of Jayaprakash Narayan is "the first genuinely non-sectional popular movement India has witnessed since independence". And surely, the Delhi March of the 6th March, 1975 may be looked upon as a continuation of the historic Dandi Salt March of 45 years earlier!

It was Hugh Gaitskell who wrote that neither the British model nor the authoritarian communist one may be the answer to the demand for an Asian model for social democracy. Hugh Gaitskell thought that J. P. the founding father of Indian democratic socialism and associate of Gandhiji and Vinobaji, may be the one to develop a self-produced Asian model. Perhaps, the most original contribution which we who belong to the Indic civilization can make to the art of government would be to experiment with re-structuring democracy on the village base, the party-less village assembly where decisions are reached by consensus, and the politico-economic system *building from below*.

Vinobaji, the bhaktan-apostle of Sarvodaya conceived as a series of gifts, will reach his 80th year on 11th September; he will be observing his vow of silence till 25th December. Gandhiji, essentially a karma-yogi, whose birth anniversary falls on 2nd October, discerned that socialism can begin only with the first convert. The Revolution is no revolution unless it is a moral revolution as well. The test of the wholesomeness of the new society is not whether the majority decide things, nor whether we seek the greatest good of the greatest number, but the good of all—a Sarvodaya society. Thus, Sarvodaya is socialism plus the ethical content, the essence of Indian culture. J. P., the Gandhian socialist political philosopher who will reach his 73rd year on 11th October, is striving to "give teeth to Sarvodaya", by integrating political activity, non-violent mass action and constructive work. His opposition to "20 men sitting at the Centre" and ruling the country is part of the struggle to replace Raj-shakti (State-power) by Jana-shakti (People's power) Seeing that urban workers tend to be anti-revolutionary with an eye, like the capitalists, on a disproportionate share of the economic surplus, he is mobilizing the peasants in the villages and student power. J. P's greatest contribution, J. D. Sethi writes in *Gandhi Marg*, is in revalidating Gandhi. J. P. is languishing in prison meantime.

By the very nature of these premises, the ultimate answers to the questions posed by the unfinished Revolution will depend on the struggle for a just society and a participafory democracy being the people's own struggle, based on their own democratic convictions and on their adherence to truth and ahimsa.

(The Morning Star/Sarvodaya India; 1975)

CHAPTER 26: THE STRUGGLE FOR WORLD COMMUNITY

When Mahatma Gandhi speaks of the brotherhood of man as a greater ideal than patriotism, he is echoing a concept deeply imbedded in the Indic civilization to which we belong and which finds utterance in the ringing words of the Tamil seer of twenty hundred years ago: யாதும் ஊரே, யாவரும் கேளிர் (Every country is my country. Every man is my kinsman.) The vision of mankind as one family should equally be rekindled in all those who daily pray for the Coming of the Kingdom!

The 30th Anniversary Year of the United Nations is propitous moment to turn our thoughts in the direction of the ideal of world community. These three decades have seen the rapid decolonisation of lands which for two centuries and a half have been under the hegemony of the Western powers. There cannot, however, be a return to the same world as before the advent of the West. For, what they have left behind in the wake of their withdrawal helps in the resurgence of these lands— the concept of the Rule of Law, the new political and economic institutions, the ideas enshrined in the new learning and English as an auxiliary international language. Why, the tens of thousands who now go to Britain and other Common wealth countries, to seek jobs or settle down, is ironically enough, colonialism in reverse! Perhaps, the U. N. itself and much of its near 140-membership is a bye-product of the era of empires.

But, hearken to the anguished cry of man everywhere. Half of humanity go hungry to bed everyday; more than half cannot read or write and a still larger proportion do not read any books. Empires may be in retreat, but ideologies seeking by subversion to win empires of influence pose a greater peril to the new nations. In country after country, power is in the hands of a few, who rule over the rest by violence. The world's biggest industry is the manufacture of arms involving a total expenditure of 210,000 million, "a sum roughly equal to the entire income of the poorer half of the human race". All this should be the concern of all men everywhere.

Yet, we should seek succour from the fact that for the first time we live in an age of global history. Politically and economically

the U.N.O., "the imperfect instrument for an imperfect family of nations," is the only possible redemption of mankind. It has to be a degree of World Government or many degrees of world chaos. The transformation of international *society* into an international *community* is possible only if men will agree to carry the concept of the Rule of Law across national boundaries and accept a body of international law adjudicated by an international forum. But such a Code, and the new political and economic order which it undergirds, can endure only if based on an international ethos, built in turn on the acceptance of a corpus of widely shared moral convictions. As the World Council of Churches Assembly at Uppsala stressed, "the contribution of law to international order and justice does not consist only in its conserving and stabilising function. It has also a dynamic and constructive role. Legal enactments and international treaties reveal the double aspect of law as a force of order and also of change and reform."

At the same time, what we are after is not so much a union of States at State level, but the deeper unity of the peoples of the world at the people's level. This increasingly interdependent world is sometimes described as a global village. The interdependence of peoples of different countries and their sharing in decision-making would be facilitated if political structures conform to the concept of the world as a union of villages. Man, still essentially a villager, finds most significance and self-fulfilment as a member of the small village community or other village-like small community. Thus, in the new economic order a trans-national Cooperative Federation, built by the upward integration of village Cooperatives at local, national and international levels, would be more meaningful than a trans-national Corporation not answerable to the people as a whole. This new approach would gradually erase the difference between "developed' and 'developing' countries and make a contribution to Peace.

As Adlai Stevenson said, the man-made institution of the nation state is a very imperfect institution indeed, however indispensable it may be. To us in Asia, the ideal of a homogeneous, secular democratic nation-state is an advance on the medieval

conception of the fatherland being caste, creed and race. The challenge to the new generation of today is to build further on the heroic achievement of their fathers during the nation making era and to push forward the frontiers of the Revolution. The struggle for a genuine world community is no less a struggle for a new society assuring the dignity of all men.

The indispensable condition of success of such a liberation movement is the liberators themselves first securing their inner freedom—freedom from all that enslaves, selfishness and untruth and more morbid forms of enslavement. Freed thus, poets and writers, intellectuals and educators, and other leaders of men can help to call into being a new world and a new humanity. It is only changed men who can change the world.

(*The Morning Star/Sarvodaya*, 1975)

If the human race is to survive, the human interest must be placed above the national interest. ..Throughout history, national governments have acted as final judges on all questions in which they were involved beyond their own boundaries. ..We live today in a world in which nations exempt themselves from the orderly and rational behaviour they demand of their citizens. ..This situation is no longer workable or tolerable. ..Today human sovereignty will have to transcend national sovereignty ..The almost total vulnerability of all peoples to sudden and overwhelming attack; the fact that the lethal effects of a nuclear war would extend far outside the nation directly involved; the increasing tendency of large nations to regard areas far from their own boundaries as vital to their security — all these factors are part of a new sitation in which the world has become a single unit without workable design for durable peace.

(U Thant,
Secretary-General, United Nations 1971)

I would not like to live in this world if it is not to be one world.

(Mahatma Gandhi, *All Men are Brothers*, UNESCO, 1960)

PART VI

The Co-operative Movement

CHAPTER 27: WHY I AM A COOPERATOR ?

While studying in Madras the Gandhian movement widened my concept of national regeneration. It was then that I came to see Cooperation as an essential ingredient of this regeneration. This is why I entered the Cooperative Movement 40 years ago and never turned back.

One saw clearly that *the Cooperative Sector is an essential part of a good economic system.* There is hardly any economic activity, small or large, that cannot be handled cooperatively. Witness the gigantic English C.W.S., the Danish cooperative network and nearer home the efforts of the Madras Triplicane Urban Society. The Cooperative Movement holds out the surest hope for the economic rehabilitation of the Northern Region. Having made some success of the Credit and Consumer Movements, it is time we turned to Production and Import and Export. To give but one example, the canning of our delicious mangoes or the fish that abound in the surrounding seas should open up a new industry with vast possibilities.

As has been said, Cooperation is not only an important fragment of planned economy, but *a democratic sector of the economy.* The very agency of the State that was devised to ensure the freedom of citizens may turn out to be a threat to such freedom. Genuine socialism is not what is imposed from above, or even what is legislated by parliament, but what is willed by the people. The cooperative organization meets the argument both for the wide dispersal of power and the spontaneous expression of life and its needs in voluntary associations. While in the usual socialist set-up the state seeks to retain 'control' of economic activity even if 'ownership' and 'management' do not rest with it, in the cooperative set-up 'ownership' and 'management' as well as 'control' are merged and securely rest with the community. Nor should we overlook the fact that it is in the cooperative societies, whether of consumers or producers or savers, borrowers or workers, that man remains his own master and the organization his servant.

The quest of modern man has been for a new society based not only on liberty, equality and justice, but on fraternity as well; fraternity no longer as a national sentiment but *an international solidarity*. The world-wide social and scientific revolutions of our time have brought in their wake an emerging world community. The new basic tenet of Cooperation among Cooperators, incorporated in the Vienna Magna Carta of cooperation, is calculated to lessen international economic conflicts and promote harmonious economic relations among nations. If under the cooperative roof, no man need be alone but have the fellowship of a group, no man is a 'foreigner' either. Cooperation helps to make the small face-to-face local community more of a community;it will also help to make the reality of a world community still more real.

"The Cooperative is *an educational movement* employing economic action."The practice of a thing teaches far more effectively than telling about it. Every successful cooperative society is a demonstration school in social education. But cooperatives need not stop with being self-educating media. The best investment of their trading surplus would be on the cooperative and general education of the community around. It is not merely that an educated population is the best foundation for a progressive movement like cooperation. After all the prime purpose of cooperation, as of education, is to enhance the quality of human life, to lend it dignity and significance.

Our ancients sought to pursue the ideal of individual self-realization while being unconcerned with the exploitation elsewhere of the many by the few. The Sarvodaya ideal envisages the transformation of society by the promotion of the total good of all by good means. Cooperation makes it possible for us to work towards the bringing about of such a new society. Of course, the system can also be used to defeat its own ends; that is part of the challenge. That there is individual self-fulfilment for those who labour in the cooperative field is not the least of its joys.

(*The Cooperator International Cooperative Day Special Number* 1967)

CHAPTER 28:TAKE COOPERATION INTO THE SCHOOLS

Cooperation is a revolutionary movement which seeks to bring about a pervasive social transformation in our country, converting a profit-motivated competitive order resting on hidden violence into a peaceful society based on liberty, equality, justice and fraternity. Education, to be effective, has to function in the context of an educative society; the social ideal of cooperation can serve its full purpose only if its institutions are reared in a society that is educative cooperatively. The time to build this ideal in the minds and hearts of citizens is when they are young and are searching for ideals by which to live.

The knowledge of cooperation and its purpose must therefore be included in the educational programme. This, however does not mean that we must add one more subject to a curriculum that already lies in uneasy equilibrium. Whether we look at it from the point of view of the child as a developing person, or the nature of knowledge as a unity or the wholeness of the learning process, the case is for an integrated curriculum. In fact, as Mahatma Gandhi envisaged, it is learning's link with the life and work of the community that gives it meaning and motivation. Nor, may we forget the role of the school as a means not merely of adjusting the young to their social environment but as an instrument for the superior reconstruction of society. Cooperation, as a part of the Social Studies sector of the curriculum,fits in naturally and meaningfully into the school programme.

Aristotle remarked long ago that men acquire virtues by practising them. Young people learn to be good citizens by living in the classless society of a good school community that is free from inequality, exploitation, and discrimination of all kinds. The school cooperative tends to heighten the nature of the school as such a society. A multi-purpose school coop may through various committees run such activities as the school shop, school canteen, kitchen garden, poultry, dairy, printing and book-binding, basket making, model making and other industrial sections, organize the mid-day meal and perhaps run a servant-less hostel. Outside the

school, the society could arrange for the participation of pupils in clean-up campaigns, farm work and village projects. The Cooperative Federation may set up a Schools Unit to further the movement in schools. The Education Department too has an obligation to sponsor a creative activity of this kind.

It has been established by studies that instruction is not half so effective as experience and example. In the past the Project Method was thought to be a good expression of the activity principle. It was the supreme merit of Gandhiji's educational system that he insisted on natural rather than make-believe projects. No doubt much of learning has to be out of second-hand narrative and vicarious experience. But it is the reality of the direct learning situation that makes knowledge meaningful and helps build lasting attitudes and ideals. In fact it is in their involvement in the real problems of conducting these activities that these young social scientists should turn to the study of theory and text-books to answer to their 'felt needs'.

The cooperative climate in schools can be sustained only by a body of teachers who have in their training and education been made familiar with the theory and practice of this great concept. This in turn points to the need for a nucleus of social scientists among the country's intelligentsia who have had opportunities in universities and field research of studying this sector of national development. Except this high level reservoir be full the channels may run dry in school campus and the country side.

(*The Cooperator*, 1968)

It may be said that a cooperative society which is not also an educational institution in the community is missing a great part of its role.

In the context of Ceylon there are two other ways in which the influence of cooperatives must be felt: first, in the eradication of vestiges of colonialism that still cling to the nation, and second, the promotion of national unity in a country that has strong divisive forces at work.

(*Report of the Laidlow Commission*, 1970)

CHAPTER 29 : RE-CAPTURING THE COOPERATIVE IDEAL

Alas! What was called the 1971 Re-organization Scheme, ironically, in the initial year of what the I.C.A. had designated the Cooperative Development Decade, held the 10,000 odd Cooperatives captive and by a stroke of the pen disfranchised the country's two million cooperators! And, if the name 'Cooperative' became synonymous with massive corruption, the blame must be shared between the nominees of party organisers who were now entrusted with the administration of the societies, the new employees chosen in somewhat the same fashion, and the one-rupee shareholders, many of whom found themselves cooperators for the first time! Nowhere was the blow more felt than in the North, which was once described by the Registrar of Cooperative Societies as 'the pole star of the Cooperative firmament'! Symbol of their loss was the take-over of the 6-storeyed NDCF Building, a monument to the lofty achievements of Northern Cooperators over half a century! The 7-years captivity should now end with the dissolution of the politically chosen Directorates of the societies.

But, Cooperation can come back into its own only when we realize that it is much more than an agency for distributing consumer goods, and that the gains of Cooperation are much deeper than the economic gains. In passing, our planners too have failed to hold the balance between the Private Sector, the Public or State Sector, and the Cooperative Sector in our Five-Year Plans. As Jawaharlal Nehru said in connection with India's Five-Year Plans, Cooperation could well serve as the major instrument for creating a 'democratic socialist society'. Nor is the multitude of 'selling points' talked of by politicians any heart-warming concept to the country's cooperators!

No nation can stand four-square except as its institutions are based on a social philosophy that combines ideas that stem from its authentic past and those of the world of today. The search for such a philosophy in this quarter of the 20th century must take us to the principles and structure of Cooperation. The Six Prin-

ciples, according to the ICA's 1966 re-statement, are: (1) Open and Voluntary Membership, (2) Democratic Control, (3) Limited Dividends on Shares, (4) Use of the Surplus either for common purposes or to give rebate on purchases, (5) Provision for Education, and (6) Cooperation among Cooperators, nationally and inter-nationally. What has been violated unashamedly during these seven years are the first two principles, which form the very essence of the cooperative charter. If consistent with the principle of a voluntary society, especially the village primary society, we strive to enrol the heads of all households in the area, we help to build a modern integrated territorial community, to replace the erstwhile caste-ridden, fragmented medieval society. We still contribute to the organic unity of the community, when with the second principle of one member-one vote in the primary society, secondary and tertiary societies are formed by the upward integration of societies at the base, voting here being in proportion to membership or in proportion to trade.

We should, therefore, urge the restoration by and large of the pre-1970 status quo as the first step in re-capturing the cooperative ideal. The share-holding members of that year should once again get their own back, but new share holders enrolled since should also be entitled to membership on their conforming to the share-holding requirements of 1970. This done, some re-defining of cooperative policy, and the re-moulding of the cooperative structure will be called for—to meet the challenges of today. Such, for example, would be the merger of smaller cooperatives in larger ones, rationalisation in the sense of only one cooperative (may be, with branch depots) being active in one area, and regionalisation or the forming of secondary societies Electorate-wise and District-wise. An Advisory Committee should be set up to study the Laidlaw Report and recommend needed modifications and a programme of how to implement these changes. The same committee may be asked to review existing legislation and rules and bye-laws and suggest amendments.

To promote this people's movement, and safeguard its unique role in the collective life of the nation, we would urge that the Ministry of Cooperation must be a separate ministry.

(*The Morning Star, August*, 1977)

PART VII

The Educative City

CHAPTER 30: RE-DESIGNING THE NORTHERN CAPITAL

In *The Culture of Cities*, Lewis Mumford the famed sociologist, who significantly enough teaches the science of society to would-be engineers at the M.I.T., says that the City, as one finds it in history, is the point of maximum concentration for the power and culture of a community. The city symbolizes the spirit and strength of a region, its past and its future. Its future too, since it is through the intercourse in the market and the meeting place, fresh advances in modes of living open themselves to a people and new thoughts occur about human destiny. The city is both a physical utility for collective living and a symbol of collective purposes. Along with language, it remains man's greatest work of art. Aristotle's insight still holds:

> Men come to together in cities in order to live;
> they remain together in order to live the good life.

It is, however, a fact that the science of city planning has been a late comer in the field of knowledge. Again, in the words of Mumford, statesmen who did not shrink back from welding nations and weaving empires, failed to produce even a rough draft of a decent neighbourhood. In the event, everywhere much misbuilding and malformation blots this beautiful earth.

As we said on an earlier occasion, we have some things to unbuild in the City of Jaffna too. A quarter million people are likely to have their homes here by the end of the century. This rapidly expanding city must surely have a planned network of parks and playgrounds to serve as its lungs and for the creative use of leisure. But, what are we to make of the slums that squatters are rearing before our eyes so as to disfigure the city's future Galle Face on the Reclamation Ground? Or, the ugly garages and workshops that are coming up where once stood the palaces of proud kings at Sankili Thopu, Nallur? Nowhere, nowhere else even in this country, would the public and the public authorities have been so

indifferent to the despoiling of what should have been considered consecrated territory. And where are the sites set apart for the cultural edifices, the school as community nucleus, the branch library and community centre, the university institution,the museum, the art gallery and the national theatre that must one day adorn the Northern Capital? Why, where is the town-planner's design for the country's second largest city and the zoning that goes to make the minimum ground plan of any town?

We would do well to remember that we live in an age which possesses the know-how of providing a creative social environment in which the highest possibilities of human life can be furthered. Fortunately too, Jaffna possesses the physical base and the potentialities of being reared into a City Beautiful. The lagoon-front, a sprawling flat land and as yet many unbuilt open spaces are no mean assets. Perhaps, where to begin is with the landscaping of the central area where the graceful Town Hall, the new Library and the Clock Tower form the inner arc and the historic Fort sets the background to the outer circle. Not one structure, not a shrub, should come up within this central circus which does not blend with the landscape as aesthetically conceived.

The time is indeed due to imaginatively remodel the Northern Capital as a regional city and formulate a new picture of local life. The task carries a thrill all its own because it is a voyage into the future. For, to re-design a city is to begin the task of re-building a civilization.

(*The Cooperator*, 1968)

Cities are the abyss of the human species. At the end of a few generations in them, races perish or degenerate. The renewal always comes from the country.

(J. J. Rousseau)

CHAPTER 31: THIS IS YOUR CITY

A UNESCO study pointed out some time ago that, compared with the 'systems of cities' that grew up in Europe and America in the wake of industrialization, urbanisation in Asia has been the result of European occupation. Our cities were no more designed by us than our history was our own. Even in the earlier period, except for designing temples and their grounds and palaces and their outhouses, the rest of the city accumulated somehow. The nearest to planning was that the dwellings of caste groups clustered together. In the event, most towns and cities in Ceylon (and even more in India) are human jungles not calculated to provide a creative social environment for the pursuit of the good life. But the gravest weakness of modern city life is that the transplanted villagers who came to form the bulk of the citizenry left behind the cohesiveness and sense of community of the village and became strangers unto one another—lukewarm citizens.

The safest sociological prediction that can be made for the future is that ten millions out of the twenty-five millions who may live in this country about the end of this century will be city dwellers. The prospect casts on us the obligation to plan them as cities for the people.

It is good to remember at the same time that walls do not a city make, nor a city council constitute government of the city by its citizens. It is the civic spirit and shared living that makes the city; it is the participation of the citizens in the processes of discussion and decision-making that constitutes civic government. The manner in which a city 's institutions and their functioning is organized can well be an educative force. Did not Plato tell us that, in order to educate the citizen, it is necessary to educate the city? To survey the city, dig its past and delve into the meaning of its institutions is in turn to use a live text book in civics.

A Civic Week is therefore more than a campaign for a clean and orderly city. Its purpose is to bring home to the citizens that the city is their city and its affairs their concern. There are three things necessary to put the citizen at home in his city—knowledge,

love and vision. The first of these liberating forces is KNOWLEDGE OF THE CITY, its physical limits, history, monuments, people, institutions and their modes of functioning. The second thing worth developing in the citizen is a SENSE OF BELONGING, falling in love with his city, as Pericles told the Athenians. In fact the beginning of loyalty to the country is to learn to belong to the small place and the small community of one's own town or city. The Civic Week should sound a call to the citizens, young and old, to lay their powers and their service at the feet of their city as their fairest offering. Not least, it should hold before them the VISION OF A NOBLER CITY as the symbol of a new life for all that dwell therein.

The manner in which the Civic Week is organized, involving the participation of all citizens, can make local government come to life in the area. It should be animated by the voluntary spirit, which has been called the life blood of democracy. Good city democracy, or the getting together for a Civic Week, may both be examples of *Jana Sakti* in action. Local self-government, functioning on the principle of unanimous decisions, was the supreme discovery of our ancient political genius. But, alas, the perversions and discords that mark it everywhere today! If the Civic Week can get going as a spontaneous activity of the people it may well be the means of rescuing City Government itself. It may perhaps be once again, as of old: The Voice of the Five is the Voice of God!

(*Jaffna Civic Week Souvenir*, 1968)

The city becomes again, as it has often been in the past, the chief instrument of education: the wider school of the young and the university of the adult; whilst the factory, the meeting hall, the political committe, the scientific society become, as it were, auxiliaries of the school.

(Lewis Mumford : *The Culture of Cities*)

CHAPTER 32: THE PUBLIC LIBRARY'S BAPTISM OF FIRE

The last recorded destruction of a library in the sub-continent was towards the end of the 12th century when a Central Asian horde under Khilji annihilated Nalanda University, the famed Buddhist seat of learning in North India, with a three-block library, one nine storeys high. It was then nearly 800 years after that, on the inglorious first of June 1981, the priceless collection of nearly 100,000 books in the Jaffna Public Library was consigned to the flames and a building which was the architectural pride of the North severely damaged. It was in the late 30's that District Court Secretary Chellappah pioneered the movement which resulted over the decades in one of the finest libraries in the land. It is a heart-rending spectacle to those associated with the movement from the beginning. The grimmer is the tragedy because the perpetrators of this dark deed were no other than those who were expected to be custodians of law and order and the moment chosen for their misguided action was the eve of the election of what was believed to be the conciliatory gesture of the District Development Council.

Would that we realized that the loss is not just to the North and to learning among the Tamils? It is a deep dent in the country's intellectual system and loss too to the international community of learning. So don't send to find for whom the bell tolls!

But, did not A. N. Whitehead say that at the terminal period of the Greek and Roman contribution to European civilization, the fate of that civilization was saved by the fortunate irruptions barbarians and the rise of two new religions, Christianity and Islam? Learning did not cease in India with the dismantling of Asia's best collection of manuscripts at Nalanda and the disbandment of the then world's finest assemblage of scholars. Was it not in subsequent centuries that Indian scholars, writers and scientists make their great contributions in other Indian languages besides Sanskrit Pali and Tamil, and in languages like English. Or, to take an example from another field, was it not following the Great Fire of

1666, London emerged as a great city of brick, stone and concrete and in some ways the World's Capital City, built on the ashes of an erst-while timber built town? It has oftentimes happened that such deep tragic experiences in the history of a people have proved a turning point in their life where they turned a disaster into a triumph.

It is heartening therefore to note that, on the advice of the Library Committee, the City Fathers have decided to immediately reopen in an improvised place, the children's section and the periodical and newspapers rooms. It is fulfilling an obligation cast by the Human Rights Declaration in articles 26 and 19. In due course even before the library is re-built let us hope that the Library will resume its role as an agent of Continuing Education. And in the long term, it could become the Centre for a system of libraries in the region and partake too of some of the characteristics of a National Library for the Tamil people of Sri Lanka.

Towards re-designing and re-building the Library in due time, the tax payer apart, men of means and men with the architect's genius have an obligation. Towards re-stocking the library, there is an obligation on the part of those who have books or could get at books, regardless of geographical frontiers. But the immediate obligation is to citizens of the City. Will every family contribute one book each and those who can, books by the tens and by the hundreds?

The purpose of a general public library is somewhat the same as that of education as conceived today. If education seeks to implant a sense of heritage and impart a vision of the future in the minds of the young and continue through life to stress that sense of heritage and enlarge that vision of things to be, so does a modern public library. The library then is much more than a classified stock of books and audio-visual aids. It has to be in its building design and mode of functioning an educational institution within its walls and without. Well may we say that a City's Public Library is the eye of the city by which the citizens are able to behold the greatness of their heritage and behold the still greater greatness of their future.

(The Morning Star, June 1981)

PART VIII

The Call to Renewal

CHAPTER 33: HERITAGE AND CHANGE

This is the season of spring, the time of the earth's renewal. For us in Sri Lanka, this is the time of the year and this is the month when the call to renewal comes with the National New Year.

This festival should remind Tamil speakers of the great culture to which they are heirs. Its great antiquity and wide dispersion apart, it has a vehicle in the Tamil language, in turn the carrier of a noble literature enshrining noble ideals of life. For, which of the literatures proclaimed two thousand years ago the ideal of one world and one humanity?

> "Every country is my country; every man is my kinsman."

Or, witness again, Dr. Albert Schweitzer's reference to Thiruvalluvar's *Tirukkural:*

> "There hardly exists in the literature of the world a book which contains such lofty maxims."

No less heartening to sons and daughters of Lanka should be the realization that, based on the Tamil and Sinhalese languages, these twin cultures have mutually influenced each other, binding us and the generations together. A bilingual society and a bilingual state is the legacy of our history. The early inscriptions, place names and family names, the documents of the courts of Kotte and Kandy, the curriculum of the medieval pirivenas, the extensive list of common words in the vocabularies of Sinhala and Tamil all point to the intermingling of the peoples and languages down the ages. So too dance forms and the drama, architecture and the sculpture of the two cultures. Says Dr. Xavier Thani Nayagam: "For the existence and interpenetration of these cultures, there is no better evidence than a religious shrine like Kathirgamam held sacred by Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims, located in the southernmost part of Ceylon, and the religious shrines of the Buddhists located in Nainativu, a northernmost outpost of the Island, held sacred by Hindus also."

With the coming of Britain to our shores we lost the initiative in our own life and our history came to be 'made in Britain'. But, there was a measure of redemption in this encounter with 'a civilization on the march'. The curse has proved a blessing in disguise, as often in the history of civilization. The British became 'the unconscious tools of history'. For the first time in history, the fundamental cultural unity was reinforced by the common statehood and a newly awakened consciousness that we could be one nation from shore to shore. So to speak we began to pick elements from the legacies of our history, especially the fact that it is a twin culture and a bilingual society that we have inherited from the past. And what we have derived from the century and a half of association with Britain is too part of our heritage. Is it really possible now to make a return journey in history, or undo the multi-group society that clusters in our new cities, or stop our gifted sons and daughters from sharing in the opportunities that an emerging world community provides? The saving factor lies in the truth that men in power cannot really alter the currents of history; at best they can only steer their little barks. The purveyors of divisive political philosophies and discriminatory strategies in education are certainly betraying the future. Likewise, it both belittles our grand heritage and denies our future when, with current stakes in group prejudice, historians substitute a collection of group legends for a composite History of Lanka where all groups are treated as equal and their contribution vital to the story of the nation. It behoves all men in positions of power and influence to realize that Lanka is irrevocably one nation much in the way in which Mahatma Gandhi affirmed that India is One Nation. For Sri Lanka, the message of the past reads—Many traditions, one History! Four religions, one People! Two (or, even three) languages, one Voice!

We would do well to bear in mind what Radhakrishnan said of India—that the richness of the inheritance should not enslave our minds. What we should be after is not a revival but a renewal. We are called upon to work out a felicitous synthesis between life values deriving from our authentic past and the challenges stemming from the social and scientific revolutions of our time. Not the least exciting aspect of this modern renaissance, that Sinhala and

Tamil turned to new uses would help to carry the nation into the world of our time; nor it lack an ever increasing number of gifted persons, who have absorbed the thought and culture of the age, able to write creatively to a world readership in English and other world languages. It has been claimed that Europe's preminence and world contribution in modern times was helped by her possessing unity-in-diversity in Space and continuity-through-change in Time. Sri Lanka, like India, has inherited a marvellous capacity for synthesis where the religious outlook in concerned. This gift should be used in other fields as well. It is in this wise that she will send fresh shoots from the older tree, fed by the sap of its subterraneon roots. To use the words of the Harvard Report, "as a feeling of commitment and of allegiance marks the sense of heritage, so a tone of tough-mindedness and curiosity and a readiness for change mark this pragmatic attitude."

It is by such a fresh cultural departure that Sri Lanka will serve as a model and hold a message to Asia and the world.

(*The Morning Star*, April 1975)

It is impossible to escape the realization that our society, like any society, rests on common beliefs.

The true task of education is therefore so to reconcile the sense of pattern and direction deriving from heritage with the sense of experiment and innovation deriving from science that they may exist fruitfully together.

(Harvard Report: *General Education in a Free Society*, 1945)

CHAPTER 34: EDUCATION AND THE NATIONAL TRADITION

Man is not ruled by logical ideas, nor does science and its findings dominate the affairs of men. Thus nowhere do we find an ideal system of education based all square on the data provided by the science of psychology. If we really want to discover the roots of social institutions we must look in the soil of past history. It is in this rich and congenial soil of history that the seeds of future growth will germinate. This truth may be well illustrated by the case of Mahatma Gandhi. From the time of Raja Ram Mohun Roy for over a century many eminent Indians have crossed the stage of her modern history. Schooled in Western traditions, versed in the politics of democracy and filled with fervent love of country these men did signal service to India. But not one of them reached the heart of the people, not one of them was able to make of the national movement the irresistible force it is today. Yet Gandhi has achieved this miracle of infusing new life into a nation of nearly 400 millions who had lapsed into abject stupor. He was able to do this because he came back from their own past; he is his people. So Romain Rolland sees his work:

> His doctrines are an expression of the deepest and most ancient longings of the race. For if there is such a thing as genius, great by its own strength whether or not it corresponds to the ideals of its surroundings, there can be no genius of action, no leader, who does not incarnate the instincts of his race, satisfy the need of the hour, and requiet the yearning of the world....He called upon the great shadows, the forces of the past plunged in mortal lethargy, and at the sound of his voice they came to life. In him they found themselves. Gandhi is more than a word; he is an example. He incarnates the spirit of his people.

This too is the secret of good education. To be successful any education must interpret the past. No doubt its mode of interpretation will differ from age to age. No doubt since history is a living and yet growing past the interpretation will become richer from age to age. But it will still remain the modern rendering of an ancient culture. Sometimes the ideas of a community may gradually change or find new expression, or the past may have to be purified of its dross, but the process can be achieved only by a social education taking account of the paat. Any successful educ-

ation must take full account of the national temperament and the national tradition. It must derive its sanctions from the counsels of the past.

John Dewey has, in one of his most remarkable books emphasized the need for a 'philosophy of experience'. He has shown that true education is not imposition from without, it is the directing of the experience of the young. No education can take place unless what is learned is within the range of the pupil's experience. Such educational experience involves continuity and interaction, continuity with past experience and interaction between the learner and what is learned. In other words, the true learning situation is both historical and social, orderly and dynamic. Now a system of education based upon the necessary connection of education with experience must constantly take into account the "condition of the local community, physical, historical, economic, occupational, etc., in order to utilize them as educational resources".

If we accept this view, which is really fundamental to sound education, we shall realize how much of our English poetry teaching is hardly 'education of experience, by experience' at any rate for the great majority of Ceylon pupils. Thus, say, Kipling's "River's Tale" will have little meaning for the pupil because its subject-matter is so foreign to his experience; but a similar tale of the Malvatu Oya and that in Sinhalese or Tamil will come home to him in the same way as Kipling's poem will appeal to the English boy. When you go to Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales, written in the English of 550 years ago, it becomes still more irrelevant to our pupil's experience though he may get up the poem with the help of an annotated edition.

Compare Sir Percy Nunn's remarks on play. "Play is the purest expression of motor heredity", he quotes Stanley Hall and adds: Our native dances, now rescued with the old songs from the wreck of time, may be a better medium for the physical culture of the young Anglo-Saxon than the saltatory idioms of the Latin races or the Slavs or the Negroes.

There is no more eloquent witness than England to the truth that a nation finds her genius in her native tradition. There was a time when that country came under the spell of Latin. For centuries the Church made it the sacred language, scholars studied the classics and gifted Englishmen essayed to create a neo-Latin literature in England. Meanwhile, after the Norman conquest, French also came into the country and especially into the Court, English taking a humble place as the speech of the lower orders.

But neither in Latin nor in French could any great literature be created in England and, apart from some quickening of thought, those two currents do not belong to the main stream of English life and letters.

Roger Ascham had written in 1545: "And as for ye Latin or Greke tongue, everything is so excellently done in them, that none can do better: In the English tongue contrary, every thing in a maner so meanly, both for the matter and handelynge, that no man can do worse". The famous English translation of the Bible known as the Authorised Version appeared in 1611. Between these two dates epoch-making events had taken place. English had come back into its own and the greatest of English writers wrote during this period using the native language. Indeed this was the time when England re-discovered herself. An unbounded patriotism swept over the land. National greatness was at its peak. The national Church was established. And English literature received such rich contributions from English writers that it advanced from being, in Roger Ascham's day, one of the meanest in Europe to a place worthy to be ranked among European literatures beside Greek. Since then the English tradition has continued unbroken in England. The essence of that tradition has been the use of the English language; for, as Professor Judd has noted:

> Languages are carriers of literature. Literatures in turn are embodiments of the national history of the peoples who produced them. Literatures are to society what individual memory is to each one of us.

What is the place of the schools in relation to the national tradition? Sir Percy Nunn answers the question as follows:

> A nation's schools (including the universities), we might say, are an organ of its life, whose special function is to consolidate its spiritual strength, to maintain its historic continuity, to secure its past achievements, to guarantee its future.

According to this ideal the schools should serve as the torch-bearers of the traditions of the community. School life and study should be based on the mother-tongue, national history and national ideals. The schools of England demonstrate how this ideal has been consciously carried out in that country. The Spens Report reaffirms this ideal in these eloquent words:

The intellectual and other activities to be specified are, we have said, to represent or reflect what is of highest and most permanent significance in the life and traditions of the community. By the 'community' we mean here, in the first instance the national community of whose life the schools are a part. It is true that the elements which have the highest and most permanent significance for our national life are not, in general, things denied to other nations; they have the highest value and significance for the human family as a whole. But for education one needs the influence of a concrete tradition or way of life, and there can hardly be said to be a common human tradition. There is, undoubtedly, a common Western European tradition, derived mainly from the Graeco-Roman civilizatinn as it was transformed by Christianity, and one of the chief functions of secondary teaching is to make boys and girls conscious of it and regard it as something to be reverenced and preserved. But the right way to do this is to begin by making them conscious of that tradition as it exists in their own country. Hence the importance of fostering in our schools the special traits of the English character at its best; of giving English letters a chief place in the studies of youth and of cherishing English traditions in the arts and crafts, including our once proud art of music. To speak thus is not to accept the ignorant and presumptuous doctrine that we have nothing to gain or learn from other nations. On the contrary our pupils should discover, as occassion offers, how much our national development owes, in many of its aspects, to the influences of other peoples, should learn to respect great civilizations which are widely different from our own, and should understand how essential international co-operation has become to the progress of science and invention and the applications of knowledge and skill in increasing the health, wealth and convenience of mankind. Nevertheless, *the national tradition in its concrete individuality must, for the reasons adduced, be the basis of an effective education.*

Leaders of English educational thought have uttered the most fervent warnings against any tendency to forget that the right basis for English education is Western culture. Thus, Sir Richard Livingstone:

If we were Indians or Chinese, it might be otherwise; but our origin and tradiions are different; we can learn from the East but we belong to the civilization of the West and shall neither understand nor master it, if we are ignorant of the rock from which we are hewn.

In his address to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Mr. Walter Lippmann criticizes American education as ceasing to be education for rejecting the classical-religious tradition in favour of modern science:

The emancipated democracies have renounced the idea that the purpose of education is to transmit Western culture. Thus there is a cultural vacuum, and this cultural vacuum was bound to produce, in fact it has produced, progressive disorder. For the more men have become separated from the spiritual heritage which binds them together, the more has education become egoist, careerist, specialist and asocial.

In sad contrast to the ideals advocated by these thinkers and to the systems generally obtaining in the West, is our own education in Ceylon and to a decreasing extent Indian education. As Ceylon followed the example of India in introducing English education we may inquire why English education was imposed on India. For one thing, there was need to secure clerks for the service of the East India Company. For another, the Directors of the Company thought "there was little in Hindu or Muhammadan literature that is useful". Lord Macaulay, who had even greater contempt for Indian culture, wrote: "We must do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern: a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, words and intellect", and he looked forward to the English connection with India being thereby firmly and for ever established. C. E. Trevelyan, his devoted kinsman, was equally confident that the natives "stimulated by the prospect of honourable and lucrative employment could not fail to be struck by our moral and intellectual superiority", and he too saw in English education the only means of converting what was at the time but a precarious into a permanent connection. Both of them saw in language the key to the situation, Macaulay opining that the "uprooting of a vernacular was the extermination of a race".

William Mc Dougall points out the folly of Macaulay and others in ignoring the fundamental importance of race and of national character. So does Arthur Mayhew, formerly of the Indian Educational Service:

> This substitution of one culture for another has not been as a watchword educationally effective....the most effective education is that which represents the efforts of a community to impose its cultural life with its ideas and aspirations on the rising generation.

Another eminent student of Indian culture, Lord Zetland, deplores that

> the whole system of education is completely divorced from Indian culture and tradition.

Lord Zetland quotes in this connection the testimony of an experienced educationist, Rev. T. Vander Schueren, S. J.:

Take what is best and most effective in the Western system, and in as much as they are adaptable adapt them to the East; but these can only be accessories; the essential and more substantial parts of the Indian system must be Indian and suited by their nature to the nature of the Indian mind.

A similar criticism of Ceylon education was made by Rev. A. G. Fraser:

Imagine a code in this 20th century which almost ignores their own history to teach them that of their conquerors, which forgets their classics to introduce them to Latin, which instructs them in the problems of the West and scarcely attempts to throw light on those of the East; which training them for clerkships and law, forgets to show them the duty and beauty of service to their Motherland.

The most gifted Indian minds have not been slow to note the futility of this unnatural system. C. R. Das observed as follows:

The education which we now receive is a borrowed and imitated article; it does not cooperate with the natural genius of our being, and hence is unable to enrich the life-blood of our soul.

Sarojini Devi, the Indian poetess and patriot, said:

We are today no more than the futile puppets of an artificial and imitative system of education, which is unsuited entirely to the special trend of our social genius. It has robbed us of our proper mental values and perspectives and deprived us of all true initiative and originality in seeking authentic modes of self-expression.

But under the powerful impact of the national movement, India is now actively re-ordering her education. At once experimental and national, progressive and planned, Indian education is increasingly contributing towards the modern renaissance in India. With Ceylon however it is yet otherwise. The whole orientation is not merely to uphold but extol English culture as the best for Ceylon. There are still prominent places of learning in our country, run with the people's purse and patronage, where Ceylon boys and girls are deliberately taught to look down upon their people and their culture. In these big schools our children are made to believe that "they are inferior beings belonging to an inferior race, speaking an inferior language and inheriting an inferior tradition and that all the best things are elsewhere and not here in their own country".

These queer educators little realize that

the lack of a sturdy race-pride affecte a boy's development, as it tends to undermine his national and personal self-respect, which is the ground work of character.

The effeminacy that is characteristic of the English educated class in this country must be traced to that training that destroys self-respect. The same source of weakness will explain the lack of fibre in many of our officials and public men. For English education in Ceylon, to the extent that it is contemptuous of our own culture, is subversive of character. Character is not a ready made commodity that schools may retail. If the public schools of England give a training in character to English boys they do not claim to stock the ingredients of character in isolation of the country. Rather the schools of England may be regarded as the well-conditioned garden where the whole English inheritance blossoms into English character. If the strength of England lies in her sons the strength of her sons is in turn due to their being Englishmen. It is as if England comes to birth in each individual Englishman. The spirit of England broods over him wherever in the wide world he goes. The Englishman is in fine an epitome of England.

Those who think they can implant English character in the Ceylonese by transplanting English culture here little realize that that culture will at best remain a hot-house plant. They delude themselves if they believe that by acquiring a foreign language anl a foreign style of living they can absorb that culture.

Compare what Tacitus says of the Britons under Agricola: Then he began to give the sons of the chieftains a liberal education....with the result that a nation which had lately rejected the Roman language was now eager to learn eloquence. Next even our manner of dress became a distinction, and the toga was frequently to be seen. Gradually they turn aside to the things which make vice seductive, porticos, baths, and luxurious banquets. This was called by the simple culture, when it was merely a part of their slavery.

Dr. Michael West points out ,'the fallacy that if one learns English, he will acquire English culture". He notes that some men know a foreign language and precious little else and adds, with some sarcasm, that if just learning to speak a foreign language is the criterion waiters are the best educated of men. But the English educated intelligentsia of Ceylon must have some pretensions to culture. So they practise a pseudo-culture, which consists not in fine feeling and high thinking, not in the creating or enjoying of art and literature, not in the creating or enjoying of art and literature, not in the cherishing of

ideals and values, but in the copying of Western modes in dress and language and manners. The fact of the matter is they have fatally confused with culture, which is values, civilization, which is technique. Using the tools of Western civilization is not the same thing as being animated by the spirit of the West. To feel the thrill of the European spirit is to be engaged in the study and application of the sciences, Natural and Social. This has hardly been felt in Ceylon.

Besides the British connection is not an eternal decree of Providence. The time may come, even in our generation, when we become a self-governing dominion; it is even possible that when the world undergoes its secular variations of fortune we may find ourselves willy nilly a free nation. It is not impossible, should the present war continue long, that Western civilization may go under. ',The King makes time" as the Sanskrit proverb hath it: but when the ruler has departed shall we still go after his culture? If India is a lesson to us, or Ireland, or for that matter any country that is realizing her freedom, shall we not in the days that are to be vie with one another in swearing loyalty to the national culture? Let us then not now make a weather-cock of education, but base it on the eternal needs of the nation. Education is concerned with the living past; it is concerned with the coming future; it is concerned with the passing present only so far as the present harmonizes with the past and the future. And it is concerned with the individual who is the inheritor of an individual and social yesterday and who is the herald of tomorrow!

If then we would fill the young mind with a burning desire for noble effort and successful achievement, if we would call forth original creation in poetry or art, science or industry, if we would raise up a race of patriotic men and women, then we must make the pride of the past pulsate in the nation's veins and the glory that has been must inspire the glory to be. If we would thus revive the nation, then we must re-make our educat on. We must make use the precious metal of our own languages; we must put on the coin of our new culture the stamp of our own inheritance, and in this national mint of our education patriotic teachers alone will

be the skilled and trusted craftsmen. At the same time, we shall not refuse to hold commerce with the world, for a nation's life would be mean and miserable if she should deny herself a share in the world's wonderful wealth of spiritual and material goods. Indeed. a national education for the nation's children in national schools will fit them the more to understand and appreciate the thought and writing, the art and achievement, of the best that this world knows. In fact the possession of a sound educational currency will give the nation a wider credit in the cultural markets of the world than when she conducts her international trade on the loan capital of a foreign education. Briefly, a national education, liberal and modern will be the best means of securing to the individuals of the nation a fuller life and to the nation itself true progress.

(*The Mother Tongue in Education*. 1945: Chap. IV)

You indulge in the vanity of mastering a language which is not of your heart and of your birth-right, which does not belong to your past nor to your future, and owing to that obsession in her children, your country is waiting in van for her wealth of literature which only can help her to discover her own soul and to brink out the treasure lying hidden in the lightless corner of her mind.

(Rabindranath Tagore in Ceylon : Quoted in *The Mother Tongue in Education*)

CHAPTER 35: WORK

A stranger walking down a city street was impressed by the number of men working on a great stone building. "What are you doing?" he asked a workman. "Cutting stone", the workman answered.

The stranger queried a second workman, "What are you doing?" "Earning five dollars a day", the second man answered shortly.

A third time the stranger pressed the question. "What are you doing?" The third workman straightened up and answered, "Building a cathedral".

—quoted in *Ceylon Churchman*

The workman building a stone cathedral, the craftsman creating an article of beauty, the gardener producing the enchanting flower or fruit, and the writer clothing his immortal message in apt words, all these find fulfilment in their labour and joy besides. The desire to work and excel in it is implanted in the very nature of man; his attitude to his work is an important factor in the growth of his personality. Why, it is the 'work attitude' that makes a child's play so interesting to him; for example, when he perseveres till its completion in building a bridge out of blocks. Such an attitude has a bearing on later school work too. A child who undertakes a self-imposed task begins to understand the concept of duty.

It is because work is integral to life that it has been enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art. 23—the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to equal pay for equal work; rights which are indispensable to assure to every one his dignity and worth as a human person. It is Mahatma Gandhi who stressed that all rights acquire their validity when exalted to duties. It is Gandhiji's reassertion of the importance of duty as the cementing bond of society that brings out its organic unity; it is in the kingdom of duty that man remains an end and not a means. The penultimate article of the Declaration concedes that it is in his duties to the community that the free and full development of man's personality is possible.

In the *Upanishad* there is a dynamic concept of life: "In the midst of activity alone wilt thou desire to live a hundred years". In fact, the wholehearted performance of duty is regarded as a path to god-head: "Whatever works thou doest, consecrate them to Brahma". Such self-offering brings about the kingdom of God in this world, says Rabindranath Tagore. The call to be co-workers with God is echoed in *Psalm* 127: "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it".

No doubt the exigencies of civilized life need some who only 'stand and wait'. But are there not many, far too many, in our over-peonised offices who fill the day with idle hours? Many too in over-staffed departments of government who hardly fill each hour with sixty minutes of work done? If pay must be equal to work, it must also hold that work must be commensurate with pay. But, what are we to say of those who fail to deliver urgent messages to their fellow-citizens, or transport them to their destinations? Refuse to give light to their homes, or supply water to their fields? And, alas, threaten to cut off their food? And, what about that diversion called 'work to rule', meaning work the least as the rules will allow when the ideal for all of us is indeed to work better than the rules?

Awake, my countrymen. Work, work for your self-fulfilment. Work not just to get equal pay for equal work. Nor use your organising power to get so much more ahead of the mass of your fellow countrymen. Work rather to build a new society where all men and women shall be equal in worth and dignity.

(*The Cooperator New Year Message*, 1969)

Educational programmes should take into account the special problems of disabled children and young persons and their need of opportunities equal to those of non-disabled children and young persons, to receive education and vocational preparation best suited to their ages, abilities, aptitudes and interests.

(ILO Resolution 99—1955)

CHAPTER 36: SHARING A SIXTH PART

Vinoba Bhave has appealed to parents, who have been blessed with five children and land or other income, to set apart the share of a sixth child for a parentless one or other needy person. The Sarvodaya leader's call to offer Bhoomi-dan and Sampattu-dan has evoked wonderful response in India. We dare say that the ideal of sharing a sixth of what we have with others of God's children would have touched many hearts in this country too. The time must come when the Sarvodaya ideal becomes part of our dharma.

In the present Food-cum-Exchange crisis the call to us is more circumscribed. It is to free ourselves from the habits of waste that are a marked characteristic of our people. It is a negative kind of waste when we fail to process available raw materials into finished articles, when we do not turn the produce of the land and sea around into food for the millions.

The waste takes a more positive form in our kitchens and on our tables. In many an affluent home and hostel this thoughtless waste of cooked food assumes staggering proportions. It would be no exaggeration to say that the waste in a middle-class family of five is enough to feed at least one hungry person in the country. Nor should we overlook the gain in character that accrues from the responsible use of our resources. But, alas, what shall we say of those who imagine that over-spending is a status symbol?

Certainly, our wardrobes have always been class symbols.With textiles on coupons and luxury textiles at utility prices, the urge to buy clothes in excess of our needs has spread to all layers of society in the last few months. Meanwhile, the substitution of home-washing by 'express' laundry service has led to the need for quicker replacement of our apparel. Yet, it would be a good summing-up to say that half the country's households carry enough excess stocks to clothe the more modestly clad half of the households.

Nearly all our towns are faced with the problem of water supply. Where the water is available on tap, the waste is enormous; for every gallon of water that is put to use, two gallons run down the

drain. A quarter of the City of Jaffna enjoys pipe-borne water from the limited source of a string of wells at Kondavil; if the fortunate few avoided waste of the precious water, another quarter of the City can share the supply.

Most of the streets of the City are lit and a great many homes get electric supply for domestic purposes. If during the peak hours consumers would switch off at least one light out of every five or six, there should be enough reserves to supply current for all on the waiting list and to light up the remaining streets. What is more, all lamps will burn brighter.

With curtailed paper imports, good writing paper is hard to come by. None the less there is much waste of stationery in public offices and in homes. May be, saved scraps of paper in an average middle class home will add up during the year to the equivalent of a 100-page pad, in public offices to several reams of foolscap. The salvaged paper should provide enough writing material for many semi-literate persons to cultivate functional literacy, for many functionally literate persons to spread more epistolary good cheer.

When all has been said, it is a matter of good taste to be able to make the most economical use of available resources, without waste of material or effort. It is vulgar to over-do things.

(*The Cooperator*, 1967)

In the *Gita* we are told that he who eats without offering sacrifice, eats stolen food. Sacrifice here can only mean Bread labour.

(Gandhiji)

CHAPTER 37: A SIMPLER LIFE STYLE

In January 1976, as we stand on the threshold of the 4th Quarter of the Twentieth Century, the past three decades appear in retrospect to have been the most creative epoch in history. It is spanned by two revolutionary streams, each of which has enriched life on this planet in several ways. The Socio-Political Revolution, consisting of the decolonisation of the Continents of Asia and Africa and the no less significant assertion of the dignity and equality of all men and women everywhere, has been a great liberating force. The Scientific-Technological Revolution, symbolized by man's first voyage to the moon has added a new dimension to man's mode of life. The indications are that the last quarter of the century may record further conquests for man in both the social and scientific sectors.

The great challenge before him is to create a new society and a new civilization equal to the demands of these changes. Those who can rise to the height of this call are those who are both true to themselves and also able to identify themselves with their fellowmen. Self-fulfilment for man who is both a social animal and a spiritual being becomes possible only if he purifies himself by his mode of living. It is a fact that great leaders of men led simple lives and so drew a following and these in turn to high endeavour.

The Christian ideal of stewardship expresses this commitment to the Kingdom of God. This finds an echo in Mahatma Gandhi's remark that socialism can commence only with the first convert. He defines the attitude to wealth in terms of trusteeship: Out of your earnings take what you require for your legitimate needs and use the remainder for society.

Moreover, there is an artistic appeal in the simple life style, whether it be in wearing simple but clean clothes that match your person and your work, or in dwelling in a beautifully designed little cottage that serves as a home for your family and harmonzies with the neighbourhood and the beauty of the earth. All the more,when we realize that even twentieth century man still remains essentially a villager and is most at home in a rural civilization.

On the other hand, it is so vulgar to want to live beyond what is needed for the good life, let alone live beyond one's means. It is permissible for you to use an appropriate car if the nature of your work demands it, and if it does not preclude you from walking, travelling by bus or bicycle, as occasion permits. But you are a dull dog, if you must, along with your pet dog, roll in a Rolls Royce as a status symbol.

It is no less senseless to opt for big factories where small work places, with small machines answering to the description of Intermediate Technology, will enable the worker to remain master of his craft and preserve his humanity. Whether in your pattern of living or work, it is a crime when you waste the earth's non-renewable resources or pollute the environment.

Is it not our duty, and a matter of good taste, to wield the broom ourselves to keep the lane in front of our house and our own garden clean? And, where there is no modern sewage, should we not adopt the septic tank system and do without the bucket system and a class of people to remove them?

It is heartening to note that Christian leaders in England have come together in a campaign for a simpler life style. Say they: We are stewards of God's world; good stewardship requires that we use no more of its resources than we need, sharing them generously with all men.... We should adopt a simple, adequate, thrifty lifestyle and encourage our families and fellow-Christians to do the same...."That's the Style"—to promote a simpler life style to conserve resources, avoid waste and pollution, and redress the balance between rich and poor countries.

The call to a simpler life style in our time is a call to all responsible men and women everywhere. It is a call to good taste, to make the most economical use of available resources, without waste of material or effort. It is a call to the good life, to be mindful of the needs of others. Shall we not hearken to this call as we commence the New Year?

(*The Morning Star, Jan* 1976)

CHAPTER 38: THE CALL TO RENEWAL

This is spring time, the season of the earth's renewal. For us in Lanka, this is the month and this the day when the call to renewal comes to every son and daughter of this ancient land. It is a call to renew our unspoken pledge to serve our country and our fellow citizens; it is also a call to respond to the ideals of modernization so that this country of ours catches up with the world of our time.

1. Lanka Matha calls to every *citizen* to say to himself: "From Point Pedro to Dondra Head this is my country; in every ancient village and in every modern city they are my people who live. Ours is a common composite heritage; and we behold a common future".

2. Lanka Matha calls to every *patriotic leader* to give himself undivided to Lanka undivided. She summons them to make the nation more of a nation, one that increasingly seeks after unity and freedom, distinctiveness and distinction.

3. Lanka Matha calls to every *thinker and writer* to turn the nation's two ancient languages to new uses, to write of a land that is perhaps lovelier than all lands, bring out the legacy of a civilization that is unique, and set down our dreams for the years to come.

4. Lanka Matha calls to every *reformer* to valiantly join in the struggle for human rights and the dignity of the human person and the setting up of the institutions of a just society where every man is involved in the processes of decision-making and is an equal candidate for every position.

5. Lanka Matha calls to every *man of religion* in a race-ridden world, to embody in his own person the ideal of world humanity and in an age that tends to be coarse and without values, to serve as the conscience of mankind.

6. Lanka Matha calls to every *man of science* and every *person of exceptional ability* neither to lay waste his powers, nor leave his country just for pecuniary gain, but to add to his experience here and abroad so that "he can lay his powers at the feet of his country as his fairest offering".

7. Lanka Matha calls to *those who plan for development* so to plan 'the great ascent' from a traditional to a modern society that ere long, Lanka can stand beside the nations of the world.

8. Lanka Matha calls to every *worker* so to change his attitude towards life and work that he fills each hour with sixty minutes of work done and makes two blades of corn grow where one grew before, remembering, that "he trespasses against his duty who sleeps upon his watch as well as he that goes over to the enemy".

9. Lanka Matha beckons to every *public officer* to fulfil his obligation to serve all citizens equally, each in his own language, so as to make them stand equal before the law, at the polls and at every public counter.

10. The motherland lays the obligation on every *teacher at school and university* to assist every child of Lanka to blossom into full flower so that he in turn sheds lustre to the nation's greatness.

(*The Cooperator April New Year Message*, 1969)

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high ;
Where knowledge is free ;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls ;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towardes perfection ;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit ;
Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-widening thought and action—
Into that haven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

—*Rabindranath Tagore*

PERSONAL TRIBUTES

I

THE REVEREND HENRY PETO

Principal, St. John's College, Jaffna (1920—1940)

St. John's, Jaffna, had been without a permanent head for over a a year and it was with eager expectancy that we welcomed,one bright May morning in 1920, our young new Principal and his charming wife. There was something in his face and manner that told us that this was the man the school needed at that urgent hour. I was in my final year at school and belonged to Henry Peto's first batch of pupils.

My mind flies to a historic scene eight years later when I was back as a master in my old school. Peto had already transformed St. John's and made the century old school greater than ever;both the school and its head occupied a prominent place in the life of Jaffna. It was a Tuesday morning, November 2,1927, and the occasion was the visit to the school of Mahatma Gandhi. Clad in white, partly in Indian kaddhar, he rose to the height of the moment when he led up the steps of the school platform the greatest of living men. I well remember how Gandhiji was touched by Peto's sincere words of welcome. Said the Mahatma: "It is undoubtedly a great thing that in your school there are no distinctions and no one is considered to be an untouchable. What you have done in giving me this generous purse is really following along the lines that you are doing for these children. I can only pray to God that He may bless you for all the good things that you may do in life."

Then, sadly, my mind moves to that woeful night, June 13,1940, when in silence and tears we received the news that the cruel sea at Tondamannar had deprived us of our beloved chief. Two days later we laid his body to rest in the Chundikuli Churchyard. It was not merely St.John's that was bereaved; Jaffna mourned his death. In a way, those of us who had worked with him derived quiet consolation from the fact that our captain had accomplished what he set out to do.

My tribute to Henry Peto is not a post-dated cheque. He was my teacher, my chief and my friend. I daily lived in his presence and in lively appreciation of all he was and stood for. In turn, I knew that, over and above my work at St.John's, my social and educational activities, and my politics too, had his lively appreciation. If I were young again, as I was then, and had a choice to make, I would chose no other school but St. John's under Henry Peto. I became a teacher because I liked to teach, but to teach in Peto's school was a privilege..

An Exhibitioner of Pembroke College, Cambridge, and a product of a Church of England public school, with experience too of teaching in a public school, Peto contributed more than any one else towards making St. John's one of the most distinctive schools in Ceylon. The school assembly brought the school together and kept it in top form from day to day; a uniform dress added to the sense of order and beauty; the house system taught the boys to put the group before the individual; compulsory games extended the meaning of education; while the C.C.B. he looked upon, as a necessary discipline for Ceylon boys. Senior boys were encouraged to reside for a period in the boarding house to learn how to live in a community. The re-formed Prefect's Guild elevated the young magistrates of the school from being mere custodians of order into the organized moral leadership of the school. The Teachers' Guild (wives coopted on ceremonial occasions) and the Brotherhood transformed the staff into an inner community; the Advisory Board made them co-partners in school administration, and home visiting by teachers linked the parents to the school. Sunday Chapel (to which Chundikuli Girls College and families of staff members came) became a time of great inspiration for the week's work; the numerous S.C.M. meetings and retreats were regular sources of spiritual refreshment. Prize-day was the presentation to the public of the school in all its order, beauty and achievement. It is no exaggeration to say that many of Peto's ideas have since gained wide currency in the school world of the North.

The School itself was lifted to great heights by these changes. Among tangible results may be mentioned the winning of the Jaffna Inter-collegiate Athletic championship for three years in succes-

sion, 1922—24; and the cricket championship for six successive years, 1921—26. But the thing to remember is how Peto taught the boys to 'play the game'. He attended each match or other event, note book in hand, and had something to say about it at morning assembly. If ever a St. John's crowd jeered at an opponent who dropped a catch, every boy knew the school was in for a severe rebuke on Monday. Once he threatened to dismiss all the five hundred boys if the school was again disgraced like that!

No wonder, boys became intensely loyal to the school. The boys of a school, they saw, entered into permanent membership of a great community. They saw it the more when the Principal paid periodical visits to the University to keep in touch with 'his boys' there and developed contacts with 'old boys' through out the Island and in Malaya.

Nor were Peto's interests confined just to his school or merely to education. He was an active member of the H.M.C. and of the N.P.T.A.; the latter's educational work he once publicly commended in his prize-day report. He held progressive ideas on education: he protested against the prevailing system of individual examination of pupils in standards 5 and 7 by inspectors and urged either internal school tests or entrance tests conducted by the organized body of teachers, such as the N.P.T.A. He vehemently protested against the state of affairs where schools were closing their year all the twelve months of the year; this, he pointed out, militated against academic efficiency and the development of a real corporate sense 'when boys were coming and going in any and every month and day of the year'. I believe it was owing to his firm advocacy in 1931 that the Department adopted, soon afterwards, the principle of a uniform school year. Outside the educational sphere, all good causes found in Peto a valuable supporter; the uplift of the backward communities, the co-operative movement, temperance campaigns and even the cause of national independence.

But, unlike other callings the headship of a school is a sacrifical job; one has so to speak forgo the world and live for the school. A school is not a pile of brick and mortar; rich endowments may

or may not add to the strength of the school; nor does the possession of a qualified staff always make a great school. A school is essentially a climate, intellectual and spiritual. It is a climate more temperate,more healthy, more invigorating than that of the surrounding society, whose sons (and daughters) seek to blossom in its rarefied air. A school owes its distinctive climate to scores of factors, human and environmental, past and present, but it owes most to the personality of the head of the school. St. John's, Jaffna, was fortunate that Henry Peto spent twenty years in imparting to that school its distinctive character and outlook.

Henry Peto was a great Christian and a great Englishman. On one hand every problem was for him a matter for prayer; on the other hand he was a man of action. He was, what Hindu philosophers would call, a Karma Yogin; he lived in the plane of action and even his death was in the manner of a man of action. The outstanding thing about him was character; he had flint in him. He put that character into his Latin teaching, into his administrative actions, into his public utterances. That gave him dynamic power and the school moved forward steadily with him at the helm.

The last half-century of our educational development has been brightened by the names of many distinguished headmasters and headmistresses, missionaries from abroad as well as sons and daughters of Lanka. Some of them were in some respects more eminent and caught popular imagination more than the subject of this tribute, but in consecration to his task no one could have excelled the Reverend Henry Peto of St. John's, Jaffna. He taught hundreds of Ceylonese lads how to be men; many of them made him their pattern to live and die. To such a nation-builder free Lanka owes a deep debt; his grave in our midst shall ever remain consecrated territory.

(The Ceylon Teacher: Great Headmasters and Headmistresses, 1951; based on talk at the School assembly in 1940)

2

DR. ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY

(Ob. Sep. 9, 1947)

The ashes of this savant were brought to Ceylon last week by his widow Dona Luisa Coomaraswamy and received on behalf of the nation by the Governor General. In his Foreword to Durai Raja Singam's *Homage to Ananda Coomaraswamy*, Prime Minister D. S. Senanayake described Coomaraswamy as "one of Lanka's greatest sons to whom we owe, as to no other man the stimulus for the renewal in modern times of our cultural and spiritual heritage". Undoubtedly, Coomaraswamy is also the greatest world figure Ceylon has produced. Wrote Eric Gill, who was Ananda Coomaraswamy's distinguished contemporary: "No other living writer has written the truth in matters of art and life and religion and piety with such wisdom and understanding." To one like him, who represented the authentic tradition of our national genius, the obligation to pursue Hindu, Buddhist, Christian or Islamic art was not to be confined to the votaries of the respective religions. He travelled extensively in Asia, following the routes of India's former cultural colonies, and in Europe, and studied the principal languages of both these civilizations. Commencing with his native Ceylon, his first monumental work was *Medieval Sinhalese Art.* As he matured, he took all art and all thought for his province: the sage in him was seeking a vision of God through works of beauty.

It behoves the nation's votaries of culture, more particularly the Ananda Coomaraswamy Cultural Society, to think out various ways of commemorating Ananda Coomaraswamy and still more for preserving that tradition of scholarship in our seats of higher learning.

From a more popular point of view, a postal stamp carrying the Coomaraswamy portrait will not only serve as inspiration to Ceylonese youth but help to remind the world that the savant belonged to Ceylon. We would appeal to the postal authorities to mark the 90th birth anniversary of Ananda Coomaraswamy, falling on 22nd

August 1967, or even anticipate the event by a year, by issuing a commemorative stamp in a denomination that is likely to go abroad in large numbers. The legends on the stamp should be in all three languages—Sinhalese, Tamil and English. Any lack of imagination in this regard will defeat the purpose for which we suggest the issue of the stamp, as well as deny all that Coomaraswamy stood for.

(*The Cooperator*, 1965)

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In Asia all roads lead to India.

Indian art and culture was a joint creation of the Dravidian and Aryan genius, a welding together of symbolic and representative, abstract and explicit, language and thought.

Of the unity of the Indian peoples, Ceylon is economieally mentally and spiritually, a part; and with the culture and life of India, must Ceylon's own survive.

A. K. C.

3

RT. HON. DON STEPHEN SENANAYAKE, P. C.

(Ob. March. 22, 1952)

When Mr. D. S. Senanayake became Prime Minister on the eve of Ceylon becoming a Dominion, we wrote (December 1947): 'We offer our felicitations to Mr. D. S. Senanayake, our first Prime Minister. In inviting the whole country to give him full backing on the independence issue we do not look upon him as the leader of a party, but as the nation's leader negotiating with Britain.... There are moments in the life of nations, when the nation's heart should beat in unison:. We fervently wish that Independence Day would be such a moment.' Today, we invite the nation to pay its homage to the departed leader.

True he had his limitations. He was no sage, no saint; he stirred no mass awakening; clearly, he had no message for the ages yet to come. But no polished marble, he was Lanka's rough hewn rock. He embodied the nation's strength as well as her weakness. He was a man of the people, of like passion as they, understanding them and understood by them. He was the best of the nation, the epitome of Lanka in her present mood.

It was appropriate that to him fell the leadership of the country at the hour of her destiny. He it was who led us imperceptibly from servitude to nationhood, from colony of Britain to Dominion of Commonwealth. More, he saw a vision of civilization once again flourishing on the banks of Lanka's ancient rivers.

(*The Ceylon Teacher*, March 1952)

4

FR. PETER A. PILLAI

(Ob. Sep. 27, 1964)

Scientist and social philosopher, educator, priest and prophet, Father Peter Pillai hailed from a devout and talented Catholic family in the village of Karamban in the North. This distinguished son of Sri Lanka has many claims to remembrance by his countrymen, but none perhaps so enduring as his consistent call for a full range of social services as would assure the dignity of every human being. His scholarly mind had delved into the concept of the Welfare State and he sought to enlist as many as possible to carry the Nation into the freedom and social security of welfarism.

His wide social vision included the development of a House-owning democracy and a land-owning peasantry. The deep humanity in him recognized that without a cosy shelter the human being would not have the firm base for dignified living as man and citizen. At the same time, he was prophet enough to insist that houses should be designed to last the next fifty years and not five hundred, since styles, materials and modes of living may outstrip present concepts. Prophet enough too, to envisage a Ministry of House Construction to promote a building programme and direct research in this sphere.

Father Peter Pillai stood for more than Social Welfare; he was the apostle of Social Justice. The Welfare State will be powerless without the conviction in one's mind of a Welfare Society, This conviction and the belief in the Moral Values must be planted at school.

The world over the seed time for fresh advance is often the time of war. We recall that much of Father Peter Pillai's rousing of the social conscience of his countrymen was in the perilous years of World War II. Appropriately enough, he was invited to serve on the Jenning's Commission on Social Services set up in July 1944. The Commission's Report, the first comprehensive Blue Print for Social Security in Sri Lanka is a document comparable with the Beveridge Report of England, 1942, Some of the recommendations, like Old Age Pensions, have yet to be implemented.

A clue to the deep religious conviction that inspired this great Christian reformer may be found in his plea for radical land reform basing it on the doctrine: "Land and natural resources were given by the Author not for the exclusive use of any particular individual but for the sustenance of all men". This blends so well with the authentic accents of our ancient heritage. In the words of Vinoba Bhave, "Like air and water, land is God's creation and cannot be owned by any individual."

Father Peter Pillai's selected writings reproduced in this Memorial Volume will, we may be sure, continue to inspire generations to come.

(*Foreword to Peter Pillai and Social Justice*, 1975)

The new agrarian policy must propose in addition to the colonization idea, the gradual transferance of a considerable portion of the actually cultivated land to the peasant whose property at present in inadequate to assure him of subsistence. That is neither socialism nor communism but sound social doctrine. Land and natural resources were given by the Author of Nature not for the exclusive use of any particular individual, but for the sustenance of all men without exception. Private property is just and proper but only on condition that the distribution of property is such as not to deprive any section of mankind of the means of earning a livelihood.

Our political and social life has been disgraced long enough by a hard hearted indifference to-wards the sufferings of our rural population. It is intolerable that we should have the land that they need and that we should refuse it to them, that we should have the opportunity to make our landless villagers independent and self-respecting citizens and that we should prefer to see them remain paupers.

P.A.P.

5

SHRI E. W. ARYANAYAKAM

(Ob. June 20, 1967)

Shri Aryanayakam came 'back home' to Vaddukoddai, Jaffna on the 19th June 1967 and passed away in the early hours of the 20th morning. As Asha Devi remarked, it was God's will that he should come back to where he belonged to spend the last few hours of his earthly sojourn and to die. In recent years, the plight of the Tamils in Ceylon and in fact of the country itself moved him deeply. He deplored the nation's false standards and disapproved of so many of our gifted sons leaving the country in search of better pastures abroad. The strength of character and simplicity of living that had been once our proud armour may yet be the means of retrieving the situation, he thought. Three score and fourteen years at the time of his death, Shri Aryanayakam has left to us in Ceylon the legacy of the Gandhian ideal. The corner of the Christian cemetry at Vaddukoddai, where part of his ashes are interred, will ever remain consecrated territory, reminding us of this noble son of Lanka who sought and brought for us from Gandhiji's India, the challenge of a social order based on human equality and dignity.

His native Ceylon was always close to Aryanayakam's heart. He regarded his mission as indivisible. In enlisting for India's regeneration he felt that he was serving his country as well. He was not Ceylon's first son to so regard his labours: Witness the work of Anagarika Dharmapala, Ananda Coomaraswamy and Arumuga Navalar. Aryanayakam did however visit us often and expound the Gandhian message. I am happy that I was able to help to arrange for some of these occasions, notably the Basic Education Week and Exhibition (with the Aryanayakams as the central figures) that marked the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the All-Ceylon Union of Teachers, Trinity College, Kandy, August 20-24, 1945. Those of us connected with the All - Ceylon Gandhi Seva Sangam cherish his laying the foundation stone of Gandhi Nilayam, Uruthirapuram. Not least is the privilege I had of paying a tribute on these lines to him at the funeral service conducted by Bishop Kulandran at Vaddukoddai.

Shri E. W. Aryanayakam has been one of Ceylon's greatest sons. Born in a family which has given many men who distinguished themselves in the service of Church and State, more especially in the field of Education both in India and Ceylon, Aryanayakam was intended for God's service. He did perform this service but in a manner different from what his parents intended, and found self-fulfilment in rendering this service, as he once remarked.

How fortunate he was in the training and experience that prepared him for his life's job: a Divinity Degree at Serampore, a period of service with the Madras Y.M.C.A., Warden of the Indian Y.M.C.A. Hostels in London and Edinburgh, Teachers Diploma of the University of London Institute of Education, B. Ed. of Edinburgh and advanced studies in the same field under Kilpatrick in Columbia.

His association with the Poet Rabindranath Tagore and C. F. Andrews, which included years of travel as the Poet's Secretary and the headship of one of the institutions at Shantiniketan, must also be regarded as further preparation for his life's main job. When he returned from his studies abroad in 1925 he had gone across to the Ashram in Tirupattur and it was while he was there that C. F. Andrews invited him to go to Shantiniketan. Incidentally, it was at Shantiniketan that he found his life's partner and co-worker in Shrimati Asha Devi, a great woman in her own right.

In the fulness of time Aryanayakam threw in his lot with Mahatma Gandhi. That was in 1936 at Wardha. In the *Harijan* of October 30, 1937 Gandhiji wrote editorially announcing the appointment of a Committee, with the present President of India as Chairman and Aryanayakam as Secretary and invited those who had suggestions to write to the latter. Gandhiji had just before put forward a new concept in Education, which has been described as one of the world's great contributions to education. The Zakir Hussain Committee was to work out its implication in the form of a tentative scheme and syllabus. Aryanayakam then became Secretary of the Nai Talimi Sangh, succeeding to the Presidentship when Dr. Zakir Hussain became Governor of Bihar. What an exciting

thing it was to be associated with the Mahatma and the great educationist in the development of a revolutionary idea. Considering the revolutionary character of the total Gandhian movement, the Gandhi-Nehru era was certainly one of the greatest epochs of history. For all of us, bliss was it in that dawn to be alive; but for the Aryanayakams it was a rare privilege to be part and parcel of the history that was being made, their names becoming household words over the sub-continent.

When after the death of the Mahatma, the greatest Gandhian of them all, the saintly Vinoba, inaugurated the Sarvodaya movement, the Aryanayakams themselves gradually moved from preparing the young for the new society to the task of remoulding society itself. Shrimati Asha Devi took the Jeevadan pledge, the dedication of her 'entire self' to service, at Buddha Gaya along with Jayaprakash Narayan and others thirteen years ago.

As I write this, she is Sevagram-bound bearing part of the ashes of her husband. From Sevagram she will proceed to Vinobaji's camp in Bihar, to undertake fresh tasks as may be assigned to her.

(Based on Funeral Oration at Vaddukoddai on June 21; *reprinted from Sarvodaya,* 1967)

The Community of the Past, the autonomous, close-knit village with its web of intimate human relationship is still in India a community of the present. Our history for the past half-century is, at least in fact, a record of the struggle of some of our greatest men to give to the word *swaraj* not merely political meaning on the modern, western pattern, but a social and economic meaning in which the ancient democratic communities of the villages should be purified and strengthened and made the basic units of a free and better India.

The reading of *The Community of the Future* may enable us to see more clearly, in a world-setting, the significance of what is happening in India.

E. W. A. in Foreword to Arthur E. Morgan: *The Community of the Future.* (1958)

6

SHRI T. M. MATTHAI

(Ob. March 3, 1972)

Mr. T. M. Matthai, who passed away in his home at Tiruvalla on 3rd March at the ripe age of 81, served on the staff of St. John's, Jaffna, from June 1921 to April 1951. The Rev. Henry Peto had assumed the headship of the school in May, 1920 and was looking for graduate teachers, to help in the all-round advance he was commencing — studies, compulsory games. daily assembly, regular Sunday Chapel, the House system, the C. C. B., the Teachers' Guild, the Staff Christian Brotherhood, a revived S. C. M. and other school societies. Science graduates particularly were not forthcoming locally and Mr. Matthai filled this need, and fitted in well into almost every line of the new development planned. Among other roles, he was Senior Science Master, Scout Master (rising later to be Asst. District Scout Commissioner), Lay Reader and Choir Leader. In his twenty years stewardship before his untimely death in 1940, Mr. Peto had succeeded in making St. John's one of the country's most distinctive schools, setting new trends in several directions. Mr. T. M. Matthai, who was one of the faithful team who helped in this work, remained an asset to his successor as well for ten more years. till the mid century.

Mrs. Matthai, who was blessed with a social temperament, made herself useful in all school and Church services and functions. And from their vantage ground at St. John's, the couple became active in fields of social service in Jaffna, notably in Health Work. Somasundaram Avenue, where they lived most of the time, functioned too as a conscious neighbourhood group. Those who were children in the lane at that time will remember how T. M. master took them for an annual outing to Mandativ Island!

A personal note may be permitted. My family spent Christmas Week, 1956 at " Theverthundiyil ", the home of the Matthais at Tiruvalla. And in our nine days' tour of Kerala from Ernakulam to Kanya Kumari (just beyond the border), T. M. was with us all the time Our younger son Lanka was not in the trip. He and his wife Malathi, who had known the Matthais only as little children, went there a year ago, to make good the omission. They were received, they say, with such warmth that they too immediately felt a sense of " belonging " to the family.

(Morning Star, 1972)

7

SEVAK SAMUEL SUBRAMANIAM SELVARETNAM

(*Ob. March* 29 1973),

Founder of the Christa Seva Ashram, Chunnakam

It has been our privilege to live in one of the great epochs of history, marked by the resuscitation of national languages and cultures, and at the same time by the emergence of the concept of a World Community; no less, by movements for Church Union and for spiritual re-awakening. One aspect of this spiritual re-awakening has been the founding of modern ashrams by Indian national leaders like Aurobindo Ghosh, Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi. The Christian Ashram movement in India, of which the Christu kula Ashram at Tirupattur is a fine example, has drawn on two streams of influence—the Christian Religion flowing through Western soil on one hand and India's rich religious and cultural heritage on the other. The Ashram Chapel at Tirupattur symbolizes this confluence. The architectural style of the chapel has been borrowed from the historic Raja Raja Temple at Tanjore; the worship inside includes elements of the European Christian tradition. The co-founders were Dr. S. Jesudasan of India (Periannan) and Dr. E. Forrester-Paton (Chinnannan) of Scotland, also expressing the supra-national character of the Kingdom of God.

This great period threw up in North Sri Lanka three outstanding Christian leaders—an intellectual in Bishop Sabapathy Kulandran, a man of action in D. T. Niles and a Bhaktan in S. Selvaratnam, the subject of this tribute. Perhaps, influenced by the Ashram movement in India, especially the Tirupattur Ashram, Selvaratnam conceived of the idea of a Christian ashram and in due time set it up at Maruthanamadam, Chunnakam and later set up a second ashram in Kiran in the Batticaloa District.

That the Christa Seva Ashram answered a felt need is shown by the fact that that apart from the Ashram Fellowship which gathered round the saintly founder, men and women began to go there for worship, meditation and study. Soon study groups and conferences

were organized and the Ashram became a focal point in the life of the North. For some time a Third Order also functioned as such and some of us even tried out a 7 - point Rule of Life.

The fact is that every human needs three successive elements in his or her life which are indicated by the words—Bramachari, Grihasta, and Vanaprasta or Sannyasi. That is why, men and women sought the quietness of the Christa Seva Ashram. Sometimes, it was to lay the burdens of their own sorrows and problems before the understanting Sevak. For he was one who willingly undertook to share their burdens. Paradoxical as it may sound, Sevak Selvaratnam was a much sought after person to arrange marriages and to speak at marriage services and receptions.

Not least, Sevak Selvaratnam was involved in the total life of the total community, like the founder of Sevagram and the founder of Tirupattur. Witness his participation in the Sinhalese — Tamil dialogue at Palm Court in October last year and his concern over the recent Press Council Bill.

The Christian community of Sri Lanka did produce a modern St. Francis of Assissi.

(*Based on the Tribute at the Thanksgiving Service at the Ashram, May* 17, 1973)

The fact is not that we see visions but visions are thrust on us. That is what Paul was able to say: "I was not disobedient to the Heavenly Vision". The personal story of the Ashram can be only that, that this crept coming upon me early in life. It was the strong hand of God that pursued one and guided one through ways which I could not understand at that time.

(Sevak Selvaretnam)

8

SHRI SHANKARRAO DEO

(Ob. Dec. 30, 1974)

The death in Poona on December 30 of Shri Shankarrao Deo at the age of 80 removes another prominent personality of the Gandhian era.

Born on January 4, 1894 and educated in Poona and Baroda, he graduated in 1917 and, like a great many gifted and dedicated youth of his time, soon found himself in the thick of the Gandhian movement. His name became known throughout India first when he worked with Gandhiji among the peasants of Bihar, and when he was active in the non-co-operation movement of the twenties.

Elected President of the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee in 1934, he it was who built up that organization as an effective force. He was jailed several times; the final term being in Yeravada jail for his part in the Quit India movement. In the late forties he was elected General Secretary of the Congress Party.

When Acharya Vinoba Bhave re-awakened his countrymen in the mid-century to the social implications of the Mahatma's message, Deoji resigned his secretaryship of the Congress and became an ardent champion of the Bhoodan movement. Almost till the end, by padyatras, speeches and writings, he promoted the Sarvodaya ideal in his native Maharashtra, in Tamilnadu and other parts of India.

In 1953, the All-Ceylon Gandhi Seva Sangam invited Deoji to come over to Sri Lanka and expound the idea to the people. He spoke at Ceylon's first Sarvodaya conference held in a village in the North, at a public meeting on Galle Face Green in Colombo and on the national radio. Among his engagements in the capital was a visit to Vijirama Buddhist Monastery, where he conversed with the scholarly monks.

It was one of the most precious experiences of my family to have Deoji stay with us in our home in Colombo. One interesting aspect of it was to comply with his request that the doors and windows of the front room where he stayed should be left open day and night.

My homage to the memory of this great Gandhian who first brought the Sarvodaya message of Vinobaji to Sri Lanka.

(*Himmat; This was a life* section, Bombay, *Jan* 10, 1975)

9

SHRI T. T. JAYARATNAM

(*Ob. October* 29, 1976)

(*Principal, Mahajana College*, 1945-1970)

In the passing away of T. T. Jayaratnam the ancient village of Tellippalai lost one of its greatest sons, and the country an outstanding educator. Mahajana College, which he made a front rank national institution, will always remain a measure of his achievement.

It will by no means be far-fetched to trace Mahajana's origins to the planting of the Batticotta Seminary in 1823 on Jaffna's receptive soil. It was both the inspiration and the challenge posed by the Seminary that stimulated the intellectual upsurge that helped to create the Tamil Renaissance. Perhaps, without the impact of Western learning through the Seminary, there may not have been a Taylor Thuraiappahpillai, one of the figures of the renaissance. On the other side, without the great son of a great father, what Thuraiappahpillai stood for may have become a forgotten dream and his very name but a dim memory. For, it was Jayaratnam who made the dream of his father become a reality, and fulfilled his hopes even beyond the horoizons his great father espied.

If Jayaratnam had just sought a career for himself, and a university degree as a qualification, his success would have been assessed in other and limited terms. Soft spoken and sweet-tempered and a winsome smile always adorning his face, Jayaratnam possessed the gifts and graces that spell success in a man; and he harboured a vision that enlarged as the years passed by. As a result,he turned out to be much more than a successful teacher, a builder of new things.

The real uniqueness of his achievement was to build a great school by urban and national standards in a rural setting—a double achievement!

There has been a prophetic note in this new departure. Modern planners, in search of a human habitat that will enhance both the individual and the virtues of collective living have been looking once again in the direction of a rural civilization. Just to return to the traditional village will however, not make for the necessary renewal that this revolutionary age demands. Newer and newer elements will be needed to aid in re-designing the village as a proper habitat for collective living today. Institutions like Mahajana are destined to play a key role in this re-discovery of a new rural civilization. We salute the memory of T. T. Jayaratnam as we stand on the threshold of this future. May his great Institution illumine life here for times yet to come!

(ஜயரத்தின தீபம், 28-11-1976)

Ever since the Sinhala Only Bill was passed an year ago, the political situation in the country has deteriorated so rapidly that the thinking section of the Community can no longer look upon it with equanimity. It is feared that the cold war which has been raging between the two communities of the Island for the past few months may very soon develop into open warfare bringing destruction to life and property in its wake No one in his senses will fail to realize that every possible means has to be explored to avert such a catastrophe. The Prime Minister's four point plan to concede what he calls "a reasonable use of Tamil" does not satisfy the Tamils because they do not want concessions. They want the restoration of a position which their language had been enjoying for ages and from which it was rudely and unceremoniously elbowed out last year by the infamous Sinhala Only Act. Nothing short of equality of status will remove their feeling of humiliation and sense of frustration.

T. T. J. 1957

10

DR. MISS E. M. THILLAYAMPALAM

(*Ob. November* 23, 1976)

Travelling by the Delhi-Lucknow Mail, my wife and I reached Lucknow Station quite early in the morning on January 7, 1960. There we saw waiting for us on the platform, Dr. (Miss) E. M. Thillayampalam, who then presided over Isabella Thoburn College. Arrived at her College residence, after a cup of tea, she personally brought me a bowl of warm water for my shave. That is the great woman whom we have come together to remember today and for whose life and work we want to thank God. It has been the prilvilge of my family to have been close to her for well nigh six decades and a half and to bear witness to her greatness.

When Dr. Thillayampalam returned to Chundikuli in 1941, gradually to take over the headship of the School, she came into her own. She had read for her M.Sc. at Allahabad and her M.A. at Columbia, and when she worked for her research doctorate of Columbia in Science half-a-century ago, she was probably the first woman in the sub-continent to gain this distinction. Perhaps too, the first Asian woman to fill an exchange professorship in the States when she occupied a chair in Zoology at Wellesley. Thus, full of honours, she became Chundikuli's first national Principal in 1943.

It was a fitting moment in Chundikuli's and indeed the nation's history. For the significant educational advances of the 40's were not only preparing the country then hastening towards her independent status, but were part of a great forward movement of mankind, symbolized by the founding of the UN in 1945 and its proclaiming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the selfsame year as our Independence. A network of Central Schools opened the gates of opportunity to children in the countryside, while universal free education, including boarding scholarships, widened those entrances. The support for a concomitant advance, calculated to enable the nation to recover its own genius, that is, the replacement of English by Sinhala and Tamil as main media of instruction, came largely from the Northern educators.

When the Cambridge Senior and London Matriculation examinations were replaced by the Ceylon School Certificate, with possibility of Matriculation exemption, it was a further step in 'decolonisation' in the educational sphere. Dr. Thillayampalam had a large share in drawing up the first General Science syllabus for the new S.S.C. Regulations of 1944, though tradition-bound teachers resisted for some years the concept of an integrated science curriculum.

It was, however, when the University College, linked to London, became the autonomous University of Ceylon, the Constitution of the University itself a step towards our self-governing nationhood, that higher education in this country came into its own. It was from this point on, that Chundikuli Girls College blossomed into a great school and Chundikuli girls in increasing numbers sought places both in the University here and in India and other universities abroad. Nor was this outflow restricted for long to the school that set the new pace. No less noteworthy, that girls took more and more to the study of Science and Home Science. Much of the inspiration for all this came from the woman scientist who presided over Chundikuli.

We may at this point turn to have a closer look at the school itself, to have yet another measure of Dr. Thillayampalam's achievement. It has sometimes been the experience of nationals taking over from foreign heads of institutions that they found it hard to get the loyalty and support of those with whom they worked. But, it can be said without fear of contradiction, that from the first she succeeded in welding her staff into a responsible partnership with her and the Principal-Staff fellowship extended to the students too. In the event, the school became more than ever, more than a place of mere instruction, a community with character and purpose—as indeed all good schools should be. Further, since growing children instinctly seek, from among the staff, heroines on whom they can model their own growth, during that great decade she was in their, midst, a whole generation of Chundikuli girls learnt to love Miss Thillayampalam, followed her, honoured her, caught her clear accents, walked with smart steps like her, and made her their pattern for life.

It is a cardinal function of the school not only to initiate the young in the art of community but also into the task of remaking the world. The measure of a school's effectiveness, it may be said, is its involvement in the life of the society around and its message spilling over its boundary walls. During the Thillyampalam era, Chundikuli put on the boards in alternate years a Tamil play and an English play, and we are glad to say that that tradition is being continued in some measure. The Ariyalai West Community Centre owes its beginnings to the pioneering work done there with the help of the staff and students of Chundikuli and St. John's, Miss Thillayampalam being an unfailing visitor every Sunday evening. When Miss Bookwalter started the Women's Centre at Maruthanamadam, Miss Thillayampalam gave her full co-operation and served on the first Board of Management and her last piece of public work was as Manager of the Centre in the early 70's.

But, like all great women and men, this great woman whose radiance illumined the Northern sky has passed to the beyond with her task unfinished. Her life was a parable. She came from an ancient family of headmen it is true, but she came from the island village of Alaipiddy. Her initial strength came from her Lord, whose she became. But her gifts flowered in the context of the great women's movement of India, with the Gandhian awakening in the background. Sri Lanka has yet a great way to go to build up a comparable Women's Movement. The call to her Old Girls, and generally to the women of this country, is to respond to the challenge posed by the lead given by Muthammah Thillayampalam. Many more must take not only to university education, but be involved in work for higher degrees and research studies, in scholarship and in writing. Women must come forward to run institutions and organizations. And they must be concerned with improving the quality of life in this country, especially in the villages and among the down-trodden. Will you respond?

To conclude, let us thank God for the life and work of Evangeline Muthammah Thillayampalam—

For a consecrated life, reflecting the glory of God;
For the gift to us of a woman of genius and learning;
For her life of service and abiding friendship extending to high and low.

(Text of Tribute at a Service of Thanksgiving held at Church of St John the Baptist, Chundikuli on 5 March, 1977).

11

THANTHAI CHELVANAYAKAM

(Ob. April 26. 1977)

It has been our privilege to live in one of the great moments of history, which has witnessed the almost complete decolonisation of the continents of Asia and Africa and liberation movements sweeping several countries in a continuous flow. The greater has been our privilege in this country since God raised for us a leader in the person of Samuel James Velupillai Chelvanayakam, who came to incarnate the mood and hopes of the Tamil people of Lanka almost in the manner in which Gandhiji incarnated the spirit of India; no less, his feeble frame enshrined the dedication to Truth and Ahimsa that made for the strength of the Mahatma.

His historic achievement was to have implemented in his people a deep national consciousness, the consciousness of their identity as a people, the territorial identity of their homeland, and their right to self-determination.

On this consecrated territory, where his ashes are buried, the Samadhi has been erected, crowned by an 80-footcolumn symbolizing his life span of 80 years. This great pillar standing where the main trunk roads commence in the North, will ever remind us and our children and children's children of the prophetic leader who took his people miles and miles on the road to liberation. This stately column, visible from afar, will be a beacon call, reminding them of one who meaningfully trod Eelam's ancient soil, and calling them to tread that soil in the same manner.

Like the Mahatma, he taught us that Swaraj is never a gift from one people to another, it is a people's own self-expression. Or, in the words of Martin Luther King, freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be won by the oppressed.

But Thanthai Chelva has left us a stupendous task; he has called us to turn from nation-making to the equally important task of nation-building. You will recall how Gandhiji urged a twofold struggle — one against the dominant British power, the other to build a new society from within, and that a Sarvodaya social

order based on non-violence. At this critical turning point in the history of the Tamils of Sri Lanka, they would do well to examine the working of their institutions, their local self-governing bodies, their co-operatives, their business houses, the trade unions, the educational structures and goals, and not least, how their public servants serve the people. Having reached the threshold in nation-making, let us now turn to this other task of building a great nation, also on Truth and Ahimsa.

On this solemn occasion I suggest that we, who are heirs to his legacy, pledge that we shall complete this unfinished journey, not forgetting the Thanthai's injunction that we should always strive to be in amity and friendship with our Sinhalese brothers and sisters.

Let this Samadhi be a prayer corner in our Northern Capital where our people can come singly or in groups to get a clear vision of the future and to strengthen their spirits. Let our leaders and our teachers, our poets and writers and scholars come here when they need to seek values, purpose and guidance.

(Portions of the Chairman's Address at Foundation Stone Laying of Thanthai Chelva's Memorial on 14-1-1978; incorporating also a portion of his Address at the Opening of the Memorial on 26-4-1980)

Throughout the ages the Sinhalese and the Tamils in this country lived as distinct sovereign peoples till they were brought under foreign domination. It should be remembered that the Tamils were in vanguard of the stuggle for independence in the full confidence that they also will regain their freedom. We have for the last 25 years made every effort to secure our political rights on the basis of equality with the Sinhalese in a united Ceylon. It is a regrettable fact that uccessive Sinhalese governments have used the power that flows from independence to deny us our fundamental rights and reduce us to the position of a subject people. These governments have been abie to do so only by using against the Tamils the sovereignty common to the Sinhalese and the Tamils I wish to announce to my people and to the country that I consider the verdict at this election as a mandate that the Eelam Tamil Nation should exercise ihe sovereignty already vested in the Tamil people and become free. On behaif of the Tamil United Front I give you my solemn assurance that we will carry out this mandate

S. J. V. Chelvanayakam

(Quoted in *"Tamils of Sri Lanka" Minority Rights Group Report No.* 25 London 1975)

12

SHRI HANDY PERINBANAYAGAM

(*Ob. December* 11, 1977)

It was at the conclusion of World War I that the youth of this country, especially in the North, felt the stirrings of a national awakening. For hundreds of years, the Western nations strode the Continents at will making and unmaking their history. National leaders here, who were thrown up by that system, tended to think of the Empire as an eternal decree of Providence. It was, however, the privilege of my generation when we were young, over half-a-century ago, to have dreamt dreams of a free and great Lanka, and a cultural renaissance in which both our native tongues would come into their own. It was my generation and companions who refused to observe the King's Birthday, organized the boycott of the elections to the first State Council on the score that the Constitution did not envisage full responsible government, and dared to fly the tricolour of Saffron, Red and Green heralding the nation's Independence-to-be, on the Jaffna Esplanade on National New Year Day, the 13th April, 1932. All this achievement owes to Handy Perinbanayagam more than to any other, and to the Jaffna Youth Congress of which he was the principal founder.

Ideas and events in India have through the ages influenced the course of our history. It was our fortune in our youth to witness the political and cultural impact on Lanka of a re-awakened India; it was our greater fortune that the message was brought to us by visits to our shores of some of the very men and women who were shaping India's and Asia's destiny—Sarojini Devi and Kamala Devi, Jawaharlal and Rabindranath, Rajagopalachari and, above all, Gandhiji, who came to Lanka on the invitation of the Youth Congress

Handy Perinbanayagam stood on vantage ground too on his base at Jaffna College. If this great institution, established to promote "studies usually pursued in the Colleges of Europe and America", had prompted the Tamil Renaissance of the late Nineteenth Century, in John Bicknell it now had a President no less committed than President Woodrow Wilson to the doctrine of national self-determination, which the latter had propounded as the issue of the War. John Bicknell promoted the Mahatma's visit to the North in every way he could. The resolute stand of Jaffna

College and the Youth Congress and the upsurge following the Gandhian visit led among other things to the admission of Harijan students in large numbers to the big schools in the North, including several Hindu institutions.

That Perinbanayagam and I were in the forefront of the campaign to secure the rightful place for Sinhala and Tamil in this country is well-known. It is perhaps not known that Perinbanayagam, as a member of the University Court, played a key-role in instituting the Chair of Sinhalese in the University in the teeth of opposition of even some dons of the Oriental Faculty.

Handy Perinbanayagam's involvement in the national movement illumined his work as an educator, while on the other hand it was his standing among his pupils that added strength to his public standing. His pupils of Kokuvil Hindu College would agree with what his Jaffna College pupils said to him in their Address in December 1933:

"Already many homes in our country and many walks of life are filled with men who have loved you, followed you, honoured you, learned your great language, caught your clear accents and made you their pattern to live and to die. Your example is ever a call to the generations to come to live the good life."

Not only did he help to build men out of his pupils, he is recognized as the builder of Kokuvil Hindu College, now one of the leading schools in the North.

When the famous writer and historian Arnold Toynbee was in Lanka and returned to Colombo after a visit to Jaffna, he remarked that his conversation with Perinbanayagam was one of the most stimulating ones he had here.

It was my own good fortune to have been associated with Perinbanayagam in several of his causes, notably through the Youth Congress, the Teachers' Union and the Gandhi SevaSangam. I recall scores of motor car and train journeys together when for hours we compared notes on all issues of the day. I recall particularly the voyage to Japan, to attend the World Education Conference, 1937, when we shared the same cabin in the good ship, *P & O*

"*Rajputana*". This association over a long period of time led to a similar approach to many questions. I felt weakened, therefore, when he gradually fell out of public life.

I, however, cherish the memory of our coming together again in the Gandhi Centenary Year, 1969, he to give the welcome address to Jayaprakash Narayan to mark the opening of the year's celebrations on Jan. 9, and I to chair the last big meeting on Oct. 8 with Shrimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit as the chief guest.

When the history of our times comes to be written down, one trusts that the chronicler will not confine himself to the happenings in the legislature and official memoranda, but study the origins of the national movement at grass-roots level. When it is remembered that participants in the Youth Congress always included visitors from the South, from E.W. Perera to D. S. Senanayake, its national character becomes clear. What emerged out of those epoch-making sessions, spreading illumination from the Northern sky during the pre-Independence decades, the opening of the road of the harijans to freedom, the battle for Sinhala and Tamil in education and civic life, the demand to relate education to the life of the nation, and the spectacle of the unfurling of the tricolour flag heralding national independence, would be history in depth and truth.

(*Homage to a Guru* / *Ceylon Daily News* 1978)

The Mahatma's still small voice quickened the conscience of the world and of India to an acuter perception of man's obligation to fellow man and to a new apprehension of the heights which frail humanity can climb to if only there be singleness of purpose, purity of motive and a personality completely free from unacknowledged inhibitions and un recognized inward conflicts. S. H. P. (1948)

13

FATHER XAVIER S. THANI NAYAGAM

(Ob. Sep. 1, 1980)

We are gathered here for our last meeting with Father Thani Nayagam.

It has been our privilege to live in the Chelvanayakam—Thani Nayagam era of the history of the Tamils of Sri Lanka, truly a historical epoch. While Thanthai Chelva led his people in their 30 year march to the gates of liberty, Father Thani Nayagam it was, who built in them their political and cultural personality. Surely, God sends to a people the right leader of the needful hour!

One was an outstanding product of St. John's College, the other of St. Patrick's College. Both were men of prayer. When I had occasion to journey with Father Thani Nayagam I knew he took time off to say his prayers.

This deeply read scholar strode the continents carrying with him the flag of the Tamil language and its culture. He was able to address the world's oriental scholars here in Tamil, there in English, here in French, there in Italian. And so came into being sixteen years ago, the International Association of Tamil Research linking the world's foremost Tamil scholars, who were able to meet successively in Kuala Lumpur, Madras, Paris and Jaffna.

When Father Thani Nayagam had delivered his Chelva Memorial Lecture last April, th Tamil Leader Amirthalingam remarked that there was hardly any other, here or elsewhere, who could have spoken with greater authority on the subject of Tamil Culture, and perhaps hardly anyone likely to do so for years.

I, who have enjoyed his friendship and weekly meeting over the years, am constrained to cry in my agony: Now, where shall I turn for my succour? And, where shall my Tamil people turn for sustenance?

(Chairman's introductory speech at the Cathedral Grounds Meeting after the Funeral Service on September 3, 1980)

14

SHRI ROBERT O. BUELL

(Ob. December 11, 1980)

They laid him to rest at Kanatte on the 13th of December 1980. It was a matter of great satisfaction to me that I was in Colombo at that time and was able to pay my respects to one whose fellowship I had enjoyed during my own active Y.M.C.A. days—in Jaffna, Mt. Lavinia, Colombo, Kandy and once again in Jaffna. I had found in him not merely one fully committed to the YMCA cause, but a man of great personal integrity.

Robert O. Buell was the first national to take over as General Secretary of the Colombo YMCA from a succession of American secretaries. His outstanding contribution was that he helped to build a number of separate YMCA's in this country into an organic whole and to transform the YMCA into a dynamic national movement, with objectives widened and deepened. It was paradoxical that one brought up in the Western-oriented city of Bombay in a home where, if at all, Marathi competed with English as the home language, and whose first experience of work was as lecturer in Philosophy at Wilson College, should want the 'Y' to run roots in the soil of this country in its rural areas no less than its towns. Was it not significant that one who was not literate in either Sinhala or Tamil should have organized that significant two-day language debate in the Central YMCA during the crucial year 1946 with the Jayawardene Select Committee on Official Languages as keen observers?

Well may we say that the great advances recorded by the 'Y' movement in Sri Lanka during the three decades after the mid-century owes more than to any other to the vision and service of Robert Buell during his service of something more than that number of years spanning the mid-century. I was privileged to be one of the Committee of 8, headed by V.L.P. Perera, who sat fourteen times through most of 1953 and 1954, to write that report and its 92 Recommendations, **Plan for Advance**. The two dynamic personalities involved were Robert Buell and E.S. Wyburn, the latter being the chief draftsman. Some of these recommendations concerned the setting up of a National Council of Ceylon YMCAs to spearhead the YMCA Movement in this country. It was in the

fitness of things that when Robert Buell finished his quarter century of service to the Colombo YMCA, he stepped forward to serve the new council.

The Jaffna YMCA as it is today is a fulfilment of his dreams. He it was who conceived of the idea of turning that almost triangular bit of wasteland into a site for that red building, which has hosted so many visitors and handles so many activities; he it was who negotiated the long lease with the City Council, invited Prime Minister Mr. D. S. Senanayake to lay the Foundation stone, helped to raise the needed funds and made the building come to life as only 'Y' can.

True, the 'Y' was a foreign transplantation of the Eighties of the last century, nurtured mainly by Westeners. Today, as we reach the century of its coming here, it has become a national Institution, with international links throughout, but with a character of its own, and hundreds of men, pass through its halls every minute, every hour. We owe all this to so many men who have laboured in this field, perhaps to none more than to Robert O. Buell.

(Ceylon Men: R. O. Buell Memorial Number June 1981)

The purpose of the Council of Y. M. C. A's of India and Ceylon is defined in terms of **Uniting Young Men together for the development of the physical, social, intellectual, and spiritual manhood of India and Ceylon, to inspire young men with Christ's ideals of service and lead them to his discipleship, to co-operate with the church and other organizations working for the welfare of India and Ceylon, and to stimulate movements in the furtherance of the Kingdom of God.**

(Quoted in Introduction, *Plan for Advance*, 1954)

15

SHRI K. SUBRAMANIAM

(Ob. March 8, 1983)

K. Subramaniam, who had a brief sojourn at St. John's in his pre-university days, came to us again as a graduate teacher in the late twenties. That one who had studied at the University College and offered Tamil for his London Degree was to be the Senior Tamil Master immediately lifted up the status of Tamil studies in the school. The study of Tamil gained the more because this Tamil scholar was also at ease in the spheres of Latin and English Language and Literature. The gain to this century-old school extended well beyond Tamil studies. The Reverend Henry Peto had during the early years of his service earned for St. John's College, Jaffna, a great name in the field of studies and sports and the life of the school as an ordered community. In Subramaniam (or 'Kadavul' to use the pet name by which he was called) he found not only a good class-room teacher but one who rarely missed a cricket or soccer match or sports event, and one who fully shared in the ideals for which the school stood. No wonder, Subramaniam earned the confidence of both Peto and his colleagues. The fact that he was a practising Hindu helped to make even a wider circle of the community look with favour on this Christian school. They even appreciated the fact that, like many good Hindus here and even more in India, Subramaniam sometimes joined in Christian worship. Of course, his students held him in high regard.

I know that Peto made his appointments to the staff, and for offices within the school, after prayerful consideration. Thatis how he built a good team around him. Subramaniam's choice must have been in that manner.

I may be pardoned for bringing a personal note here. When 'Sub' joined the staff, he and I became good friends instantly. Both of us wore the national dress, the only senior graduate teachers to do so. Both of us had the Youth Congress background. The bond was strengthened further by both of us being vegetarians. It was a vegetarianism that was treated with respect in the school. For, not to be outdone in the kindness both of us received at Mr. Peto's hands, Mrs. Peto would prepare a special fruit cake (without

eggs) for us at staff meetings, while the rest of the staff had to be content with the plain butter cake served. When Sub's erstwhile pupil and my nephew, Rajasekaram, joined the staff, there was fruit cake for the three of us.

It is a matter of joy for me that our friendship continued to the end. When he came to Colombo for surgical treatment in 1947, two years after I had left St. John's, I looked him up often and kept in touch with his surgeon. Off and on my wife and I called on him at Suthumalai, after he had retired. In recent years, when he came to live with his daughter first and then with his son Sivathasan, we were able to call more often. How glad I was to find that in spite of the affliction from which his elder son suffered and his own physical disability, there was no note of bitterness in him. On the other hand, how nicely my friend and his gracious wife still looked at life! Certainly, his children and children's children are beholden to an ancestor of that nobility of nature.

We thank God for a teacher at St. John's, who in the critical decades before and after Independence, made generations of Tamil youth become aware of the rich heritage in their culture and their literature. And, no less, we thank God for the witness of a noble character in the person of Kanthiah Subramaniam.

(*His friend of over half-a-century,*)

நகல்வல்லார் அல்லார்க்கு மாயிரு ஞாலம்
பகலும் பாற் பட்டன்று இருள்.

(திருக்குறள்)