

Church and State: the coming challenge to the Sangha:
can Church unity hold?

LANKA

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The militants must join in the final stage

— TULF leader in exclusive interview

— *Mervyn de Silva*

PPC AND DEVOLUTION

- * The fishing boat that may rock Tamilnadu
- * Sirima on the SLFP boycott
- * Shan: Is 'unitary' Sacrosanct?
- * SWRD: A federal form is only solution

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TRENDS

TROUBLE IN THE THOTTAM AGAIN?

With killings still going on in the north and east, especially in the Trincomalee district, and violence erupting in other places, the ten-day estate strike at Punduloya, and the accompanying clashes where 40 houses and seven shops have been burnt, did not grab the headlines. One report said that over 200 families have fled their homes.

It was the SUN that posed an interesting question about the political implications of this sudden outbreak of violence. Was there a rift in the CWC?

A plantation boss who has also remained trade union chieftain for over thirty years, Mr. Thondaman has taken on all challengers and outmanoeuvred them with surprising agility. He runs a tight ship. He is a phenomenon. But Mr. Thondaman has been away recently. Is that the reason why the CWC writ did not run to the four corners of the sprawling thottam? On Thursday July 9, the CWC General Secretary sent out 'get-back-to-work' order after talks with State-owned plantation bosses and the union officials.

But by the end of the week the strike was still on and about 10,000 workers did not report for work. Work was resumed by July 13.

During the troubled weeks of the "Citizenship Bill", there were persistent reports of a new challenge to the CWC leadership.

Some said it was generational; others hinted ominously of an ideological thread. Challenges

there may be but it would be difficult to oust Mr. Thondaman.

IN POLICE CELLS

While IGP Cyril Herath has been lamenting the reluctance of witnesses to come forward to help in inquiries connected with public complaints against the police, the press reported two deaths in police cells in the same week. Kandy's Additional Magistrate has ordered a person who claimed to have information about such a death to appear before him. In that incident, 32 year old Neil Kumara of Kadugannawa had hanged himself with a sarong in his cell. The Magistrate has had the sarong sent to the Forensic Medicine Dept, of the Peradeniya University and the police cell and rafter have been inspected.

In the other case, 26 year old Nimal Premasiri was taken into custody by the Dummula-

suriya police for the alleged theft of a bicycle. His uncle, L. L. K. Appuhamy had seen him dead in the police cell the next day. His body was taken to the Kuliyaipitiya hospital where an inquest was held. The verdict was death due to "asphyxia by hanging".

TRADE ZONE

Claiming a 25-fold increase in export earnings (in rupee terms), the GCEC proudly paraded a UNIDO study recently which spoke of the "makings of a miracle country — low labour cost, indigenous raw materials and excellent facilities". At the YWCA conference last week, its Director commented on the 'deplorable' working conditions for women. Ten girls had to live in one room, and the conditions were 'unhygienic'. Work was so hard in some factories, that women could not use the toilet during working hours.

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Danger of rocking the Tamilnadu boat

Mervyn de Silva

Warded for the past ten days in the Jaffna hospital is 40 year old Kanapathy, a wounded Tamilnadu fisherman over whom both Delhi and Colombo have thrown a blanket of official silence, inspite of a flurry of diplomatic notes and polite and not-so polite "protests" and defensive explanations and replies between the two capitals. In normal circumstances, Mr. Kanapathy would be a 'nobody'. In the present, highly delicate preliminary round of talks between the TULF and the Sri Lankan government, the poor injured fisherman from Rameshwarn could be described as a V. V. I. P. for his tragic tale could do much more than rock the boat.

He is so important that Kanapathy whose very existence was officially denied by some authorities is, according to unconfirmed reports from Jaffna, guarded day and night by some "Tiger" militiamen! Probably worried about his safety, the 'Tigers' don't want him to be removed from the hospital.

The man has meantime been visited by his boss, the owner of a small fishing fleet in Rameshwarn. This unpublicised ('secret') trip to Jaffna was made possible by the Sri Lankan government responding to a firm request by Delhi. His statement in any case has been recorded by the Jaffna authorities.

The man who has a couple of bullet wounds in his body as evidence of the veracity of his story belonged to a 'search party' sent from Rameshwarn to look for two fishing boats which had set sail from the Tamilnadu coast on July 1 and had not returned. The boats, it was feared, had drifted into Sri Lanka waters, as it so often happens, both ways.

The search party was stopped by the Sri Lankan navy. When

explanations were offered the officer in command of the navy patrol boat had been extremely sympathetic and helpful. He had allowed the search vessel to look for the missing boats and had in fact given the 'skipper' of the Rameshwarn boat (Ancharneyan No. 1) a permit.

Sometime later, the boat was ordered to stop by a Sri Lankan vessel with 'uniformed personnel' on board. The permit was waved but to no effect. The boat was sprayed with bullets from automatic weapons. Kanapathy wounded, hid in the engine room. And then quietly slipped over the side from the boat now on fire. He was finally rescued by a catamaran and then left at a small dispensary some miles from Jaffna.

That was his story. Nine bodies — first six, and then three, — were washed ashore later. These highly decomposed bodies have now been buried in Jaffna.

The Sun, the only paper to publish the story, quoted a Defence Ministry official's flat denial of the incident, and also a comment that if "uniformed personnel" were in fact the attackers they must have been "terrorists trying to scuttle the peace process".

Delhi refused to 'buy' the story, and insisted that Kanapathy's statement be recorded and a full inquiry made. Delhi was angry but for very good reasons, didn't go public.

On the last occasion that a similar incident occurred there were stormy demonstrations in Rameshwarn and the Tamilnadu government pressed Delhi for action.

When an Indian coastguard vessel seized a Sri Lankan navy

NEWS
BACKGROUND

Flash

A senior Indian High Commission official will fly to Jaffna to bring the wounded Tamilnadu fisherman Kanapathy to Colombo who will leave for Madras if the doctors okay the trip. With Kanapathy in Jaffna is the boss of the fishing company, Ramasamy. On the 14th, Indian High Commission presented its fourth 'note verbale' on the matter to the Foreign Ministry. 6 of the bodies of the 9 fishermen killed in the 'mystery' attack were buried in Jaffna, and the others cremated. Nervous about Tamilnadu reactions and an uproar in Parliament, both sides are keeping the matter under wraps.

patrol boat some weeks later and took its crew into custody the "coincidence" was marked well by all diplomats in Colombo. Finally, 17 Tamilnadu fishermen facing charges for poaching on Sri Lankan territorial waters were "exchanged" in a diplomatic deal for the naval crew.

Tamilnadu factor

In post-independence India, it was Tamilnadu that first raised the separatist banner. The leadership came from the DMK, which later split into two, the AIMDK of MGR now in power in Madras, and Mr. Karunanidhi his bitter opponent, still a powerful force in Tamilian politics. The AIMDK has the ruling Congress (I) as its coalition partner.

When the militant groups were summoned to Thimpu, Mr. Prabhakaran went into hiding. His patron

(Continued on page 5)

AMIRTHALINGAM INTERVIEW

If there is progress, talks with militants can be held outside...

EXCLUSIVE

Emotional and physical strain, and sheer fatigue showed on the faces of the TULF leaders when I saw them on Monday morning but friendly smiles greeted me from a group of politicians I had known from the parliaments of the 60's and 70's, and in a few cases from the late 50's. If they have been living it up as expatriates in Madras or Delhi, as their critics so rudely suggest, the pleasures of exile had not left any happy impression on their creased brows.

Entering the closely guarded "Hotel Empress" with CID operatives, upstairs — downstairs, I could hardly resist the temptation to refer to the "bombs" that signalled a premature welcome to the returning exiles. "A few bombs matter little when hundreds are being killed every week..." said TULF Leader A. Amirthalingam. The following are excerpts from an exclusive interview. (Part of the discussion was off the record).

Q: How did the first round of talks go? (The TULF was scheduled to meet the President that evening, July 14, for a second session).

A: Considering the preliminary nature of the talks, we found it very useful, a very frank discussion. We did raise some of the more important issues that had to be taken up. But of course some very thorny problems need to be sorted out still.

Q: What were these important issues?

A: First, the unit of devolution.

Q: What was your negotiating position?

A: We want the entire Tamil area as a single unit.

Q: Meaning a Tamil linguistic region?

A: Well, you can call it what you like as long as it brings together the Tamil-speaking people of the North and East.

Q: That would include Tamil-speaking Muslims, wouldn't it?

A: Our position on that is stated clearly in our 1977 manifesto. Muslims, south of Batticaloa, have the absolute right to decide their own future.

Q: What other important issue did you raise?

A: The structure of devolution and the extent of devolution.

Q: Would that refer to land policy and to law and order?

A: Certainly those are two critical problems. But there is also the legal machinery of devolution. It is not enough to merely say 'A' or 'B' is a 'subject' that is devolved.

Q: Could you explain that...? What precisely is your objective?

A: There has to be effective devolution.

Q: And on the specifics, land for instance...?

A: We will take that up this evening.

Q: Once you complete your talks with the government, and you feel that some progress has been made what will be the TULF's next step?

A: We would like to hold talks with the other parties...we would like to make every effort to state our point of view to them and hopefull to persuade them to understand and appreciate our position...

Q: Most of the parties have already issued statements... how did you react?

A: The Left parties have taken a positive approach. It is most unfortunate that the SLFP, the major opposition party, has taken a different stand.

Q: Will you be talking to the SLFP?

A: We have met Mrs. Bandaranaike almost on every occasion that was available to us. Yes, we will request a meeting.

Q: The militant groups have had a hartal in Jaffna? Are they totally opposed to your party's thinking?

A: No, their view, that is the five groups have told us they neither oppose nor support our decision to hold direct talks with the government. Theirs is an attitude of neutrality.

Q: The TULF has had talks with these militant groups in Madras; you have discussed this problem with MGR, and so have they. Isn't it your declared view that these groups must be associated with any settlement that may be reached?

A: That's correct, and that's where, in our opinion, India can play a crucial role. In fact the leaders of the militant organisations were in Delhi over the weekend.

Q: Including Prabhakaran of the LTTE?

A: I believe so. In any case, India's good offices will have to be used in that context... I mean if real progress is made, and there's a solution emerging. May be India can help in arranging that round of talks outside Sri Lanka.

PAKISTANI INVOLVEMENT

Q: In statements published in the press in India and here, the TULF has indicated that it will take up matters outside the scope of the proposals...such as the end to violence, PTA, detainees, 6th Amendment. Is this correct?

A: The 6th Amendment, not really... its not that important... other parties I know are interested in its withdrawal... that's because it concerns democracy, the whole democratic process... our principal concern is devolution of power to the periphery.

Q: But you have spoken about the de-escalation of violence, the killings etc?

A: That's true and we want to take up those issues separately... we don't want to confuse issues... in fact, we have told the President that we would like to discuss them in a separate discussion, and he has agreed.

Q: What specific matters have you in mind?

A: First, the killings of innocent civilians, by the forces and especially by these special units like STF, Home Guards etc.

Q: Surely there are killings of Sinhalese and Muslim civilians too...

A: Precisely the reason why the circle of violence involving civilians must be broken.

Q: Why did you single out these 'special units'?

A: They are notoriously brutal and indiscriminate in their killings and the use of force, of powerful weaponry... and they have been evidently given special training by hired hands from abroad. We have collected a great deal of evidence about the activities of the ex-SAS people, the MOSSAD or Israeli instructors, and of course the

Pakistanis... we are now convinced that these units and personnel trained by the Pakistanis are the most brutal... barbaric I would say.

Q: Is that the only reason why you are concerned about the involvement of these foreign elements...?

A: No, there is the bigger, long-term question of Sri Lanka being caught up in the policies and conspiracies of these agencies... as you know Prime Minister Gandhi has openly stated in Parliament that the Pakistani and Israeli involvement is a threat to India and to regional peace and stability... we agree. So it is more than the brutality inflicted on the Tamil people by these agencies, directly and indirectly... we, Tamils are the immediate victims of this brutality... but Sri Lanka too will suffer from the consequences of this brutalisation, and it can be a huge stumbling block if we are thinking of returning to peace, normalcy and a decent way of life. But there is also the long-term problem of regional peace and stability, and Sri Lanka's relations with India, which is so crucial to the peace process and what comes afterwards. The Pakistani-Israeli connections have complicated matters, and those connections are dangerous to both the Tamils, in the first instance, and to the Sinhalese too... so many parties, the SLFP included, and all the Left parties are vehemently opposed to these connections as we know from party statements we have read.

Q: The PTA?

A: First the violence level must be lowered to give the peace process a chance... then the PTA must be repealed and nothing like it must be introduced again in some new law, or by way of incorporating the terrible provisions of it in any other law...

Q: Any other issue?

A: Yes, the release of all those thousands detained under PTA and....

Q: Thousands...?

A: In Boosa alone, there must be 2,000... may be more... youths who have been rounded up in the North and East... particularly vicious in the East... Batticaloa, Trinco... by the STF... hundreds and hundreds who have been tortured... this must stop.

Q: All in all, do you think the situation is more promising than Thimpu...?

A: Well, before Thimpu there was much optimism, great expectations... now we are more cautious... we are neither optimistic nor pessimistic... it is up to the government mainly... if there is a sincere desire for peace, there will be progress...

— M. de S.

Danger of...

(Continued from page 3)

is MGR; and he himself something of a folk hero in Tamilnadu.

But Delhi can deal even with him quite easily if it makes up its mind to use its military muscle.

Delhi can, and has dealt with the TULF which is why the exiles have returned. The "boys" too were in Delhi last weekend for talks with Mr. G. Parthasarthy, Mr. Venkataswaran and others.

The key link in the chain however is MGR or more accurately Tamilnadu political opinion. Especially at a time of such turbulence in Indian politics, and ominous eruptions of sectarian violence in Punjab and Gujarat, Mr. Gandhi must act cautiously. His chief aide Mr. Chidambaram has handled the Tamil issue extremely well, and he is already on the up-and-up. If the peace process is to get underway seriously, Tamilnadu with its 50 million people must be appeased at any cost.

Ethnic conflict: a test of Sangha's real power, a challenge to Church unity

The dramatic decline and fall of the Maha Sangha-SLFP supported National Front was being discussed when a top-ranking UNP'er was asked for his views on the political power of the Maha Sangha. His reply really added up to Stalin's contemptuous query about the Pope: "How many divisions has he got?"

Was the answer too easily (and too dangerously) dismissive?

The way in which President JR deftly deflected the attempt of the Maha Sangha to initiate a "National Security Council" with Maha Nayake presiding over a high-powered committee that included the leaders of the UNP and SLFP, appeared to indicate that the basic judgment was correct. Detecting an attempt to blur the clearly drawn distinction between Church and State, President JR re-stated first principles: (a) the constitution gave Buddhism a position of pre-eminence (b) it was his constitutional duty to protect the religion and the Sangha and consult the Maha Sangha on all matters relating to these. (c) it was right for him to seek the advice of the Maha Sangha on social and political issues since 70% of the Sri Lankan population was Buddhist but (d) as President and more so as a Buddhist he could hardly discuss military matters — killing or bombing — with the Sangha.

State patronage of the clergy — most temples receive government grants, ad hoc assistance and state recognition — has weakened the autonomous power of the Buddhist clergy.

In any case, the organised structure of the Sangha and its institutional authority can hardly be compared to the Church in Catholic countries or the Islamic clergy in those countries where Islam is more or less a State religion, and where the regimes are conservative. What the Pope says becomes the official line, even in those Third World societies where 'Liberation Theology' has become popular. What the Cardinal preaches in Warsaw or in Manila on Sunday is likely to be repeated the Sunday after from every church in communist Poland or in a Philippines under the Marcos dictatorship. This can hardly said of a sermon by Mahanayake.

Besides, Buddhism itself is so individualistic. Be a lamp unto yourself. The Master's teachings are what matters.

More Influence, Than Power

Does that mean the Sangha has no political power at all? The right word would be 'influence'. It has, and recent political history has proved this. 1956 for example.

But that influence is most likely to be felt strongly in relation to a historic moment or an issue. Again 1956 demonstrates that on the way 'Sinhala Only' became the rallying cry of SWRD's "silent revolution". Students of the subject also note that this electoral power or political influence spells itself forcefully when the Sangha is not only advance guard or spokesman of an emerging movement but when it is in

alliance with an organised political force such as 'a Front' (MEP) or party (SLFP).

Today, when language, race, religion, national unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty are ALL issues in an all-encompassing Sri Lankan crisis, one notes that the SLFP has not chosen a formal alliance — the National Front is scarcely mentioned in the press — but works in close consultation with the Maha Sangha. Mrs. Bandaranaike went to Kandy for a meeting with the Mahanayake of Asgiriya after talks with the President had been arranged.

Obviously the SLFP's strategy is based on the calculation that the 'silent majority' (i.e. Sinhala-Buddhist) is opposed to the government's new proposals and that this is also true of a majority of the monks. Convinced of this the SLFP hopes to use the clergy, an instrument of considerable influence, to help the SLFP mobilise this mass opinion against the government and in favour of its sole demand: general elections.

But does the SLFP which has not been modernised (or 'dynamatised' as Comrade-Ambassador Tissa Wijeyeratne may have said) like the UNP by the JR-Prema twosome after the death of the essentially feudalist Dudley, have the capacity for mass mobilisation without the support of its old partner, the Left and the unions?

As the issue moves from PPC to Parliament (according to the UNP's time-table by August-September) that question will seek answers.

— J.

Church — the first fissures?

Archbishop Nicholas Marcus Fernando's unacknowledged but nonetheless direct reply to Bishop Deugopillai's St. Patrick's prize day speech a fortnight earlier was certainly no part of the 'liberation theology' debate which has swept the Catholic countries of the Third World, placing serious strains on the relations between the Vatican and the Church in a politically turbulent, violence-prone Third world. Yet, 'liberation' is a term that has been thrust into our everyday political vocabulary by the Tamil resistance. And it is this resistance which is at the heart of the island's racial strife and political conflict.

Here in Sri Lanka the ethnic issue has introduced strains into the hierarchy of a supposedly monolithic Church. That much was abundantly clear from Archbishop Fernando's Ave Maria Convent Negombo speech — also at a prize-giving — which had explicit references to the Bishop's provocative statement in Jaffna. The fact that there was no naming of names does not detract from the enormous significance of the toughly worded answer by the Rt. Revd. Nicholas Marcus Fernando who is after all the head of the Catholic Church. Even at the highest levels of the Catholic hierarchy religious allegiance was at war (a losing battle?) with racial loyalties and the enlightened self-interest of its institution in cordial relations with the State.

The Catholic Church has always wielded far greater influence on social-political affairs in this Buddhist land than the numerical strength of its lay support would warrant, although this influence has diminished somewhat from the mid-50's. (See Box) Of the about 1.3 million Christians in Sri Lanka well over a million are Catholics. **Especially in pre-independence times, the Church, largely through its entrenched position in the educational system, was very**

BISHOP'S MISSION

A Roman Catholic bishop served as an intermediary in arranging a meeting between Sri Lankan President Junius Jayewardene and his chief political rival, former Prime minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike. The two were due to meet on 25 June following a conference of recognised political parties seeking a political solution to the country's bloody ethnic conflict, though Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) said it would not attend the conference itself. The Jayewardene-Bandaranaike meeting is considered most important, as observers believe it is essential.

—Far Eastern Economic Review

much a part of the power structure, with individuals like Fr. Peter Pillai, Rector of St. Josephs, playing an openly activist role in the decision-making process. In parliamentary politics, the Church was a vigorously supportive arm of the UNP, even more intensely anti-Left than the UNP.

But it was not the Left that took on the powerful Church head-on. It was the resurgent Buddhist movement led by educationist-polemicists like Mr. L. H. Mettananda, significantly the principal of Dharmaraja College Kandy and then of Ananda College, the premier Buddhist educational institution. The Left leaders who made an impact on this rapidly developing Buddhist-Catholic confrontation did so as allies of the Bauddha Jatika Balavegaya (BJB) and not from distinctly Marxist or Leftist platforms. The most notable example was of course Mr. Phillip Gunawardene, whose son, Dinesh, represents that 'historic compromise', while his brother, now in custody under the PTA, represents the first phase

of the ideological development of 'the Father of the Revolution'.

Two Blows

While the BJB, joined by established political forces, chiefly the SLFP, bombarded the Vatican's local headquarters, this "softening-up" of clerical power reached its climax when the Church received two deadly blows, one turning out to be a self-inflicted wound. The first was the Schools takeover, and the other, in quick succession, the abortive army coup where the overwhelming majority of plotters were Catholics.

An adept user of the tactic of kissing the hand that cannot be chopped off, the Church intelligently accommodated itself to political reality and accepted its lowlier standing vis-a-vis the government and the State. It was during Mrs. Bandaranaike's tenure of office that the Pope made his first visit to a predominantly Buddhist country to receive a splendid reception.

(Continued on page 23)

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SLFP cannot agree with government proposals

The Sri Lanka Freedom Party wishes to thank you for meeting a delegation led by me on the 25th June, at the Janadhipathi Mandiraya in this connection.

It was seen from the invitations to the Political Parties to the Conference, that the purpose of your meeting with other Political Parties was to hand over and explain the proposals to them and at the Press Conference you held the next day, the 26th of June, the DAILY NEWS of 27th June, 1986, reported that you had said:

(i) "As long as my Parliamentary group supports us, we will go ahead with the proposals.

(ii) The participants in the Conference now being held will have no role to play in whether the proposals should be accepted or not".

We have taken due notice of these matters; but felt it necessary to respond to them with care, in view of the far-reaching implications the proposals will have on the future of this country. That is why we desired a little more time to study them carefully; and also inquired from you, whether there is any further material relevant to these proposals. Of course, we were disturbed to hear that these proposals of the Sri Lanka Government as intimated to India were different from what was presented to the Political Parties here. We have since seen the document titled "Proposals sent to the Government of India by the Government of Sri Lanka based on discussions with the Indian delegation led by Honourable Mr. P. Chidambaram, Minister of State" which contains notes of conclusion on Provincial Councils which is dated 4th May, 1986." In your letter dated 3rd July, 1986, you stated to me that "the document of proposals handed over

on 25th June, contains the totality of proposals sent by the Sri Lanka Government to the Prime Minister of India."

We now see that some of our original fears that the full proposals sent to India were not disclosed to us when our delegation met you on the 25th of June, are not entirely unfounded.

A feature we have observed with some dismay, in the presentation of the Government proposals is that the late Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike's name is being incorrectly associated with them as a forbearer of the thinking behind them. No doubt, we follow the strategy in the effort to make a pre-emptive point vis-a-vis Mr. Bandaranaike and the SLFP. But no reference made in the Government proposals to Mr. Bandaranaike has any valid bearing on his actual views as expressed in the Legislature or in the SLFP of which he was the revered founder. We find that the Donoughmore and the Soulbury Commissions are also mentioned as authorities in support of the Government proposals. But considering the actual outlook, substance and content of the Provincial or Regional Councils as conceived by Mr. Bandaranaike or these Commissions, the references would not be applicable to justify the federal union of nine states the Government proposals create for Sri Lanka in the guise of Provincial Councils.

In regard to Mr. Bandaranaike's conception of Provincial or Regional Councils, I would kindly refer you to:

(i) The speech he made in the State Council on 10th July, 1940, presenting the report of the Executive Committee on Local Administration in regard to Provincial Councils;

(ii) The actual reference he made in Parliament to Provincial Coun-

cils during the Budget Debate in December 1947; paragraph 24 of the Government Proposals gives only the reference. But the gist of what Mr. Bandaranaike said on that occasion, quite in keeping with his speech in 1940 as at (i) above is:

"I propose to establish these Provincial Councils with a view to co-ordinating, supervising and controlling the work of, local bodies in the District or Province concerned."

(iii) The contents of the Draft Regional Councils Bill of 1957, which was gazetted on 17th May, 1957, dealing with the constitution, power, standing committees, in particular, of the Regional Councils envisaged. This Bill was well within the policy in the speeches of 1940 and 1947 mentioned above;

(iv) The full text of the late Prime Minister's statement relating to Regional Councils in that oft-misrepresented document, the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact, reported in the Ceylon Daily News of 13.08.1947. The Pact was intended only to make certain adjustments in the Draft Regional Council Bill of 1957 mentioned here, and within its policy, to accommodate some of the wishes of the minorities. The Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact was not creating Indian type States in Sri Lanka as proposed now. Moreover, one has to consider the context in which this Pact was proposed. The situation then in the country was totally different from the situation today. I may also add there is enough contemporary material available to show the true reasons for the UNP Opposition to the Pact. I do not think they can be regarded as too complimentary to the UNP.

The reference in the Soulbury Commission Report was "that a proposal has been put forward in Ceylon for an extension of local government activities by the

establishment of Provincial Councils' (Para 184); and what the Donoughmore Commission Report actually said about the Federal form of Government by the Kandyan Chiefs Association (vide Para 23 of the Government proposals at Pages 23/24) was at Page 106:

"The time has long since passed when an experiment of granting to each of the three largest communities a separate government for the area principally occupied by them could have been attempted without the certainty of inflicting hardship on one or all of them."

I have to state therefore, that the historical justification sought for the Government Proposals in paras 20 to 27 is not quite correct.

In regard to the Proposals themselves as placed before the Political Parties Conference, it would appear that the SLFP is now really expected to go along with the Proposals; although they in fact have been formulated:

(a) during a period of deep uncertainty and weakness on the part of Government, displaying clear helplessness in dealing with the problems of terrorism and intransigence;

(b) at a time when the law and order situation in the North and East have completely broken down and the Government has shown its utter inability to contain terrorism which has, in fact, even extended its operations outside these areas;

(c) without having ascertained the views of the Tamil population of this country;

(d) without having duly obtained the views of the Sinhalese and Muslim people in the country, who in addition, now, are subjected to a highly partisan campaign by the mass media;

(e) at a time also when Government cannot be said to be honestly representative of public opinion;

(f) without a guarantee, in any event, that even if these proposals are in fact implemented, there would be an end to civil disobedience and terrorism or that the conditions of implementation given in Pages 28 to 29 of the Appen-

dices to the Government Proposals will be complied with.

In this light therefore, if the SLFP is not seen to be in a position to agree with the Government proposals, we hope it will be appreciated that this has nothing to do with what you have called the long-standing opposition of the two major political parties of the Sinhala people' (vide Hansard 20th February, 1986, at Column 65). If we are critical of the Proposals, we do so only in the national interest and the future well-being of our people.

The SLFP views on the Government Proposals are conditioned not purely by the negative aspects I have mentioned. Our appraisal stems largely from certain vital defects in the Proposals themselves; for, in our analysis, what in effect the proposals do are:

(A) To create a new system of Government in the country, establishing a federal structure of government under a Constitution meant for a unitary state. A Provincial Council, under the proposed Scheme has the same apparatus of government as a state within the Indian Union, with a Governor, a Chief Minister, a Board of Ministers and a Legislature.

These Provincils are not any kind of Local Authorities; and please see in this connection the definition of 'Local Authority' in Article 170 of the Constitution: also, some of the main characteristics of Local Government institutions given at Page 29 of Sessional Paper V of 1980, (the Report of the Presidential Commission presided over by Mr. Victor Tennekoon, former Chief Justice, on Development Councils). It should also not be possible to say that any legislation undertaken by these Councils is only subordinate legislation covered by Article 76(3) of the Constitution, because, not only do these Provincial Councils exercise powers similar to the States in the Indian Union, they seem to have, quite extraordinarily, even more legislative powers than the Indian States (vide Para 17 of the Government Proposals at Page

4). As we understand it, the Provincial Councils have:

(i) the powers in Annex I to the Proposals (i.e., along with all the matters stated in Paper I do VI appended thereto, dealing with Law and Order, Land Settlement, Agriculture, Industry, Education, and Culture). Annex I also indicates that more powers will be added. It is stated that the list is not exhaustive.

(ii) the powers in List II (the "State List") of the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution, i.e., the exclusive power of legislation on some 66 items stated therein as vested in the Indian States under Section 246 of the Indian Constitution;

(iii) the powers in List III (the "concurrent list") of the Seventh Schedule in the Indian Constitution. Here, there are some 47 items over which the power of legislation vested in the Indian Parliament can be concurrently exercised by the Indian States, too, subject to certain reservations. But in the Government Proposals (Para 17) shows that all these concurrent powers are to be vested exclusively in the Provincial Councils.

We have observed that there is some unclear overlapping between these List II, List III powers and the powers stated in Annex I. We also see that Annex II of the Government Proposals which states the areas reserved for the Central Government compared less favourably with List I (the "Union List") of the Seventh Schedule to the Indian Constitution with some 97 items exclusively reserved for the Union Parliament, which can also deal with all the 47 items in List III, if it so desires. It should therefore, not be incorrect to say that the Provincial Councils proposed for Sri Lanka has already been conceded more powers than a State in India. What further powers will be added to them in the process of bargaining, as already foreshadowed in Annex I, we do not know; and it may be that a further harvest of powers for the Provincial Councils is expected in the course of time,

depending on the balance of power between the Central Government and the Provinces or some stronger Provinces being tilted against the centre. There may well be also an unending struggle for the greater accumulation of power by one or more of the Provinces; and we may then be re-enacting the the Indian drama of a Centrifugal struggle of States ranged against the Central Government. Already there are persons who advocate that the units of devolution must be larger areas.

(B) To alienate the Legislative power of Parliament, partly though it may be, and vest in it in nine States called Provincial Councils in name only with a view to circumventing the Constitution, and possible, to add some other dimension by linking Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike to the exercise because he too had spoken about Provincial councils, although his Provincial Councils had a different content from the Government Proposals. In regard to the proposed Provincial Councils, we note that the proposals sent to the Government of India plainly state: "a bill passed by the Provincial Council shall become law on certification by the Chairman of the Council." This is Legislative power, pure and simple.

(C) To alienate, though partly, the executive power of the State vested in the President, to Provincial Governors and Chief Ministers, Provincial and District Services and Provincial officials, working under the direction and control of Provincial Governments.

(D) To appear to undermine the judicial power of the people exercised by Parliament through established institutions functioning at present. We observe that notwithstanding item 1.7 in Annex II of the Proposals, List II of the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution mentioned in Para 17 of the Proposals has this item;

'Administration of Justice, Constitution and Organisation of all Courts except the Supreme Court and the High Court.....'

It would appear this is also a power to be delegated to a

Provincial Council, and here we think also of item 7 of the document known as Annexure 'C' which says: "Provision will be made for constituting High Court in each Region. The Supreme Court in Sri Lanka will exercise Appellate and Constitutional Jurisdiction."

(E) To abate "the full control over public finance" that Parliament has under the Constitution.

Thus, we think the Government Proposals involve such an impact on the Sovereignty of the people and such changes in the manner that Sovereignty is exercised, that the very foundation of the Constitution would appear to be in grave danger.

Furthermore, we see that many provisions in the Government Proposals on Law and Order, Land use and Land Settlement, in particular, abound with potential areas of disagreement and discord in implementation. They would be sources of constant suspicion and friction; and a permanent cold war between the Central Government and some or more of the Provincial Councils, can well ensue. In areas like the Northern and Eastern Provinces the position might get too complicated before too long, leading to disputes in regard, for instance to:

(i) the nature, type and quantity of fire-arms and ammunition and other equipment which they wish to possess (vide Para 8 at Page 12 of the Proposals)

(ii) offences in relation to which the Attorney-General should launch an investigation within a Province with the assistance of the C. I. D. or other unit of the national division of the Police (Para 12.4 (b) at Page 13 of the proposals); and when the Director of Public Prosecutions has to prosecute in Provincial offences (Para 12.5 at page 14 of the Proposals);

(iii) Presidential wishes to restore public order in a Province with the help of the National Division of the Police or the Armed Forces (Para 11.2 (ii) at Page 13);

(iv) Presidential decisions to declare a State of Emergency in

a Province and assume powers thereunder (Para 11.2 (i) at page 13); or to restore public order in a Province (Para 11.2 (ii) at Page 13);

(v) Prevention, detection and investigation of offences within a Province by the National Division of the Police when they have the power to do so (Para 12.1 at Page 13);

(vi) Enforcement of National policies in land use, and ethnic proportions in land settlement, including settlements under the Mahaweli Project;

(vii) Observance of the rights of different groups in irrigation schemes, particularly in major and interprovincial projects;

(viii) The acceptance and implementation of national policies and criteria on Agriculture, Industry Education.

The Provincial Councils being themselves very powerful, disputes in these areas can always swell up to embitterments which can lead to internal disturbances. Which in turn will need Presidential intervention that might not be welcome too long; and we would be back to square one. Really the provisions in regard to Law and Order will break down in practice and will totally destabilise the Police Service, making Law enforcement authority ineffective, and powerless.

We also feel that the Government Proposals, if implemented even as they are, without the additional powers that may further accrue, as envisaged, to the Provincial Councils;

(a) Will further exacerbate sectarian, group and communal feelings at the expense of national peace, social harmony and economic development. Para 16 (page 3) of the Government Proposals only foreshadow the suspicions and divisions that can be expected;

(b) Will burden the country with nine virtually independent administrations and a whole lot of mighty officials, with big and small bureaucrats at cross-purposes

in National and Provincial Services, all too complex and heavy for the country to bear in terms of its needs, resources, social organization and economic capacity, and manpower;

(c) Can permanently impair democratic life in the country and make its independence meaningless; because to sustain the whole system a hard-herded dictatorship will become an inevitable necessity; it will be so full of provincial, inter-provincial and province — Center quarrels. An additional result can be, that, Government will need one or more powerful foreign governments to support it with aid in money and/or arms to sustain itself in the face of the serious national confusion that is endemic in the system when applied to Sri Lankan conditions.

Then, what happens if a Governor is appointed to a Pro-

vince from a different Party or community to that which is dominant in the Provincial Council? The same danger can arise even in the appointment of Chief Ministers. In the end, we might witness an expensive farce of many dissolved Provincial Councils, and Presidential rule therein. In the natural growth of the process of over-politicisation of national life and government that is rampant in the country today, this would appear to be necessary consequence.

Another aspect to be considered is this: the problem before the Government is the behaviour of some persons in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Instead of dealing with that problem, we do not see why the whole of this country has to be carved up in this manner into these Provincial States of infinitesimal size and populations compared to the States in India. We think that by this device Government is only fostering nurseries for new problems in areas where is now no question of non-allegiance or social cracking up.

The Indian States are very big in size, population and resources, many of them several times bigger than Sri Lanka. The whole of our country has only 25,000 square miles; divide that also into these nine states called Provincial Councils, each becomes a tiny area compared to the Indian counterparts. The Indian States can afford their Government structure; they probably need them too. But in Sri Lanka the whole apparatus of government that is to be imposed by the Government Proposals will be too heavy a burden which will only help to make this nation further indebted, and complicate its political and social life. The prescription in the Sansoni Commission Report (S.P.VII of 1980) to calm communal tension is to "provide the climate for the rapid socio-economic development of our country." These Provincial Councils cannot do that.

Looked at in another way, the question arises: what can be the

rationale behind this effort to federalise a unitary government? And here I would like to quote the note added to your address to Parliament on 20th February, 1986, at Column 66 of the Hansard of that date. It says in regard to the TULF proposals:

"There is no precedent anywhere in the world of a State which had a unitary form of government for an unbroken period of nearly two centuries of its history being carved up into separate states to form a federation, supposedly in the interests of achieving greater national unity... What is now sought to be set in motion is the reverse process of a single state breaking up into separate units and the fragmentation of an existing undivided sovereignty."

Fragmentation is what we will get in effect when further institutional devices are erected as envisaged in Para 16 of the Government Proposals; and we are surprised that within six months of such a clear statement of principle, the Government has brought in the present proposals which, as already examined, can only mean the division of Sri Lanka into separate states, with many of them in constant dissonance. We realise that many factors could have been responsible for this manifest change of outlook in government thinking; but we do not wish to guess. All that we would like to emphasise is that the practical effect of the creation of the proposed Provincial Councils would only be to split up a small Island into politically harmful, economically unmanageable, socially and culturally disruptive units which can bring no credit to us as a nation. In fact it may not be an overstatement to suggest the Government Proposals will almost inexorably underwrite our final disintegration as a nation — with the result that very little may be left for its own people, be they Sinhalese, Muslims or Tamils, themselves, whilst the Indian Community led by the C.W.C., and Mr. Thondaman will ultimately garner the richest crop.

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I would now advert to some of the new proposals in the documents submitted to India which have been made available to us on the 10th July, 1986. "In the Northern and Eastern Provinces the Provincial Councils shall deem to be constituted immediately after the Constitutional amendments come into force. Elections to the said Provincial Councils shall be held immediately thereafter on the basis of proportional representation." In regard to other Provincial Councils the existing District Councils in a Province may opt any time to constitute a Provincial Council. This device would deliberately deprive the people in these Provinces of their right to elect their Provincial Councils. Further, this is a device to perpetuate the present UNP control and rule in these Provinces.

In the Proposals submitted to

India, we also find that in the allotment of lands coming between the Northern and Eastern Provinces, the application of the principle of national ethnic ratio for the selection of allottees has been virtually departed from in the Annexure entitled "the alienation of new allotments under Mahaweli Project." In the Proposals submitted on 25th June, 1986, to the P. P. C. there is a note that the national entitlement on the basis of national ethnic ratio of the Sinhalese will be 75,504 allotments. We find that in the Proposals submitted to India, there is no mention at all about the allotments to the Sinhalese under the Mahaweli Project.

In view of the serious impact the proposed system would have on the country for generations to come, I would insist that you seek a mandate from the

people before you 'go ahead' with these proposals. But I must stress that the SLFP has been, and is, always for a political solution; not at any cost, however, at meetings of both the Executive Committee and the Central Committee of the Party held on the 13th and 14th of this month respectively, it was unanimously decided that the SLFP cannot agree that the Government Proposals are a satisfactory basis for dealing with the current problem. They also decided that the SLFP should not participate in the Political Parties Conference, which begins on the 15th of this month.

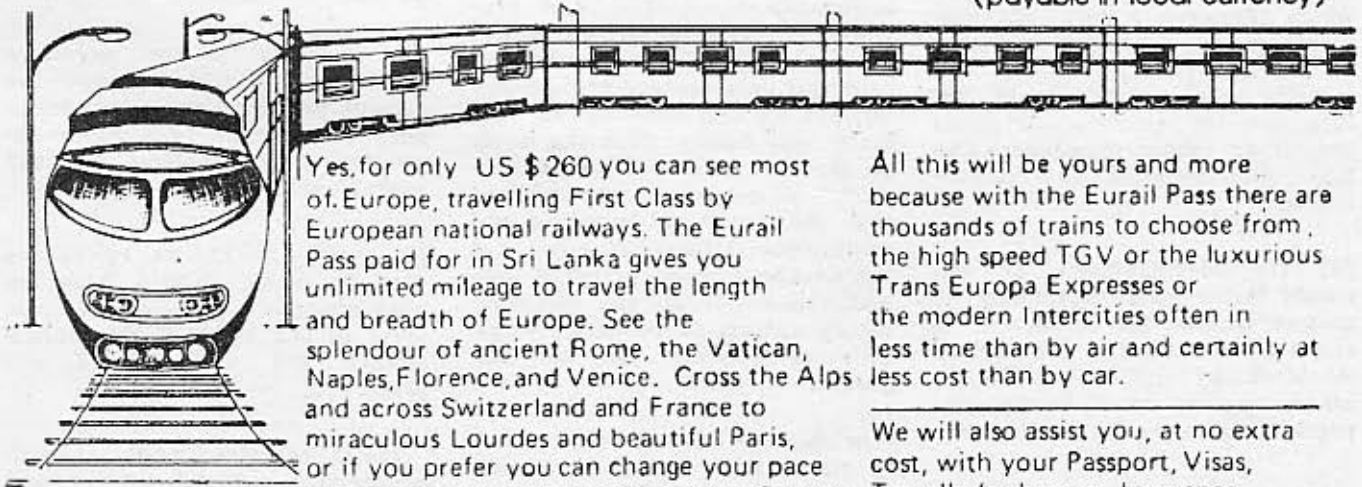
I am releasing this letter to the Press because it should be useful for the people to know what exactly our Party thinks of the Government Proposals.

Sirimavo R. D. Bandaranaike
President, Sri Lanka Freedom Party

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MIRJE calls upon all parties to muster popular support for devolution

The Movement for Inter Racial Justice & Equality is glad that the Government, after a long delay which has seen a worsening of the situation, has put forward proposals for the devolution of power to the provinces as a solution to the ethnic problem.

In this context, MIRJE believes it necessary to begin by re-stating two basic postulates:

(i) The major problem that faces the country is ethnic in origin. The Sri Lankan Tamil people, constituted on the basis of their ethnicity, language, religion, culture and habitation have been led to demand the creation of a separate state because the existing Sri Lankan state of which they are a part discriminates against them and is unable to provide them the safety and security that a state should ensure all its citizens. Muslims and other ethnic minorities also face discrimination in varying degrees.

(ii) The development of demands for regional autonomy is uneven within Sri Lanka. It is at its most intense in the regions inhabited by Sri Lankan Tamils; others regions have hardly expressed any desire for devolution.

It is against this background that these proposals should be examined. The establishment of Provincial Councils throughout the country is being put forward by the Government as part of a continuing democratic process; it will also, according to the President at his press conference, settle one of the problems faced by the Tamil people; that means

in effect that it will not totally answer all their needs. While welcoming the substantial devolution of power to the level of the province, MIRJE believes that certain specific features of the ethnic problem need to be taken into consideration in revising the proposals.

For example, the decision to adhere to existing provincial boundaries and to devolve power on the basis of territorial areas necessarily negates the desires of the Tamil people for a region in which they can, in unity and security, manage their internal affairs; a redefinition of certain provincial boundaries will be necessary to achieve this. A similar defect relates to the devolution of power with regard to education. Letting the provinces exercise power up to the level of secondary education and reserving universities, professional occupations and training to the state will hardly meet the needs of the Sri Lankan Tamils, specially when it is remembered that the denial of linguistic and educational rights largely lies behind the present struggle and that the reject of the discriminatory system of education originally constituted the militant groups.

In short, a devolution of power to all citizens based on democratic principle does not constitute a total answer to the ethnic problem. In this respect, MIRJE is glad to note the President's declaration that the government is prepared to consider any revisions that will expand the scope of devolution within the present constitutional framework. It is our belief that considerable expansion of the

present proposals is possible and indeed necessary if the Sri Lankan Tamils are genuinely to feel themselves a valued part of the Sri Lankan polity.

MIRJE is, however, not happy with the government's declaration that it will implement these proposals unilaterally, if necessary. We believe that the proposals stand the best chance of evolving into a successful solution of the ethnic problem only if the representatives of the Tamils including the militants are drawn into a process of negotiation. MIRJE hopes that this will be possible with Indian assistance.

Two other matters need to be also considered:

(i) In view of the pervasive climate of mistrust between the various protagonists, some machinery that would guarantee the genuine implementation of any accords arrived at,

(ii) some mechanism to ensure that all ethnic groups have an adequate share of power at the level of the state & that fundamental and civil rights are preserved.

MIRJE therefore hopes that all progressive political parties and elements in Sri Lanka will assist in expanding the scope of the present proposals to the point that they amount to a reasonable solution of the ethnic problem and in mustering popular support for their implementation.

Charles Abeysekera
President MIRJE

President's Proposals

N. Sanmugathan

The proposals made by the President at the political parties conference on the 25th of June is the subject matter of all political discussions in the country. We do not have to have any excuse to offer our own comments. One fundamental weakness of these proposals is that it does not seek to identify the problem correctly.

The President states at the beginning that these proposals should be examined within the framework of

- * the maintenance of the unity, integrity and sovereignty of Sri Lanka,
- * the maintenance of the unitary character of the Sri Lankan constitution, and
- * the principles of devolution of powers upon the provincial councils within the frame work of the constitution as proposed to be amended.

Why should this be so? One can understand the importance of maintaining the unity and sovereignty of Sri Lanka. But why is it equally important to maintain the unitary character of the Sri Lankan constitution. In at least three of the great powers of the world — America, Russia and India, there are federal systems of Government. In Russia and India the federal units are based on ethnicity of language. Can anyone dare to come forward and accuse that because of the lack of the unitary character of their constitution these countries are not united or have suffered in any other way.

For a long time past, the Tamils of Sri Lanka have urged that the unitary nature of Sri Lanka's constitution has been a stumbling block to the solution of the Tamil minority problem. That is why, when in 1948, the late Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayagam

parted company with the All Ceylon Tamil Conference after he realised that power-sharing at the centre with the Sinhalese could not succeed, he went on to advocate that Sri Lanka should have a federal system of Government under which the Tamils and Sinhalese could co-exist under agreed circumstances.

It was however not S. J. V. Chelvanayagam who was the first to think of a federal solution to Sri Lankan problems. That honour goes to the late Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, who advocated this system in 1926, soon after his return from Oxford in a speech he delivered on July 14 to a Student Congress and as reported in the Ceylon Morning leader of Saturday 18 July 1926. He conceived of a federal system of Government of the Tamils, the Kandyan Sinhalese and the low-country Sinhalese.

In the following year in 1927 the Kandyan Chiefs Association suggested a federal form of Government to the Donoughmore Commission which was then in Sri Lanka. The Commissioners recommended an examination of a suggestion to have three self governing areas viz first being the northern and eastern provinces, the Second Kandyan Province and the third Southern and Western provinces. But it is worth while noting that both the northern and eastern provinces were bracketed together as one self-governing unit. But none of these proposals ever saw the light of day.

It is important to remind the President and the Sinhala leadership that the present discussion for greater devolution of power has stemmed from the 1976 demand for a separate state of Eelam and the consequent armed struggle by the militants in support of it. To ignore this basic fact is like an ostrich hiding its head in the sand.

One does not easily forget that at the first All-parties conference in 1984, the Government trumpeted through it's Prime-minister that it would give nothing more than District Development Councils to the Tamils. If today the President has proposed provincial council as the unit of devolution, the credit must go to the struggle conducted by the Tamil militants against heavy odds.

What is equally important to realise is that although it was only the Tamils who agitated for greater devolution of power, the provincial councils have been promised to all provinces, even to those who never asked for it.

But, the granting of provincial Councils is not a solution to the Tamil problem. The demand of the Tamils was for Eelam. As a result of the pressure from India and other moderate elements, a section of the Tamil leadership agreed to consider the possibility of a viable alternative. That was what all the discussions were about but at no stage did the Sinhala Government unbend sufficiently to go anywhere near the Tamil's desire for greater autonomy. The present proposals are nothing different.

If the Tamils are to give up demand for Eelam, there has to be a viable alternative. Such an alternative can only either be a federal system of Government within a United Sri Lanka or genuine regional autonomy for a Tamil Linguistic Region which shall consist of the northern and eastern provinces. Of course, it needs hardly to be said that such a Regional Council shall have full power over education, economy and Industry, Law and Order (police) Irrigation and Land and Land Settlement Culture etc., while such subjects as defence, finance, foreign affairs etc., will be reserved exclusively for the Centre.

(Continued on page 17)

From THE CEYLON MORNING LEADER, Saturday July 17, 1926.

"Federation as the only solution to our political problems"

S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike

Under the auspices of the Students' Congress Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, B. A. (Oxon), Barrister-at-law, delivered a very interesting lecture on "Federation as the only Solution to our Political Problems". Dr. Isaac Thambyah presided.

Mr. Bandaranaike said that it was necessary in the first place to realise the importance of the present time. A revision of the constitution was due in 1928. A satisfactory measure of self-government was expected. It was therefore necessary to think very clearly and realise in its entirety the whole political question. A false step taken, a false proposal made now would be very difficult to retrieve in the future. They all wanted self-government. The question remained what was the measure of self-government they were aiming at.

There were briefly two forms of Government within Ceylon. One form was the "Nindagama" system of land tenure, the other was the Headmen system of provincial administration.

The Nindagama system was a feudal form of Government. As long as the feudal dues were paid (they were always paid in hand) no notice was taken of anything else. In the Headmen system, the village was considered as the unit. The King had his various Disawas, Rata Mahatmayas, etc. The various provinces were divided and subdivided till one came to the Gansabawa. The Gansabawas was composed of the head of each family of all those in the village irrespective of wealth. The litigants had the right to appeal to the King himself but the Gansabawas' decision was rarely upset. All

that meant that the whole land was a loose federation bound by one common oath to the king. When the British came to the island they introduced a centralised form of Government. That centralised form of Government as introduced had a semblance of a free institution. Even to the present day it was nothing else but a bureaucratic form of Government.

The lecturer then referred to the course of political agitation for larger measure of reforms. It did not start till 1915 when the riots took place. The lecturer then referred to the great part played by Sir P. Ramanathan then the Educated Ceylonese Member. Sir P. Arunachalam started the National Congress. It was he who fathered the movement for agitation for reform. When the Congress was started the articles to which all the members subscribed themselves was that their aim and goal should be self Government within the Empire. Beyond the securing of a few more seats in the Legislative Council nothing else was done.

Those who agitated for reform concentrated their whole energies on arguing in two directions on fallacious bases. The system was not questioned as to its suitability, secondly they aimed at copying the type of Government as existing in England. The result was that the Legislative Council at present was a most mongrel assembly. It was an assembly of the people in theory but in reality it was utterly useless. Various compromises were made. They were Government Members who were not responsible to any body of voters. The territorial principle was acknowledged, the communal principle acquiesced

and when all was said and done the assembly had no real power. The Legislative Council had a certain measure of control over the finances, but that did not amount to much. The Executive Council was divorced from the Legislative Council which looked like a School Boys Debating Society. That was the nett result of the last few years. The price paid for it was the Sinhalese-Tamil Split and the Low Country and the Kandyan Sinhalese split. The minorities, looked with mistrust one at the other. It was wrong to think that the differences were not fundamental. There were men who thought that the differences were created by a few ambitious persons and when those persons died the differences would disappear. A hundred years ago there were no such differences. They did not appear because the Englishman sat on the heads of the Tamil, the Low-Country Sinhalese and the Kandyan Sinhalese.

The moment they began to speak of taking the Government in their hands, then the differences that were lying dormant smouldered forth. If they considered past history they would see that the three communities, the Tamils, the Low-Country Sinhalese and the Kandyan Sinhalese had lived for over a thousand years in Ceylon and had not shown any tendency to merge. They preserved their language, their customs, their religion. He would be a very rash man who would pin his faith on the gradual disappearance of those differences.

The lecturer then proceeded to outline the difficulties that would crop up. The Legislative Council would under the anticipated reformed Government, elect their

Prime Minister and the various Ministers. Now here was a certain proportion of members to represent the various communities. If that proportion was maintained, in the ministry too the communities would demand a certain proportion.

A centralised form of Government assumed a homogenous whole. He knew no part of the world where a Government was carried on under such conflicting circumstances as would be experienced in Ceylon.

Those would be the troubles if a centralised form of Government was introduced into countries with large communal differences.

In a Federal Government, each federal unit had complete power over themselves. Yet they united and had one or two assemblies to discuss matters affecting the whole country. That was the form of Government in the United States of America. All the self-governing dominions, Australia, South Africa, Canada had the same system. Switzerland afforded a better example for Ceylon. It was a small country, but three races lived there. French, Germans and Italians. Yet Switzerland was a country where the federal form of Government was very successful.

Each canton managed its own affairs. But questions of foreign affairs, commerce, defence etc., matters about which differences and controversies would be at a minimum were dealt with by the Federal Assembly. In Ceylon each Province should have complete autonomy. There should be one or two assemblies to deal with the special revenue of the island. A thousand and one objections could be raised against the system but when the objections were dissipated, he was convinced that some form of federal Government would be the only solution. He had not dealt with the smaller communities. For such communities temporary arrangements could be made for special representation. Those temporary arrangements

would exist till the fear existed about one community trying to overlord the other. He would suggest the same for the Colombo Tamil seat. The three main divisions in the island were the Kandyan Sinhalese, the Low country Sinhalese and the Tamils. It was difficult to find a system that would completely satisfy everyone. That was in brief the Federal system. He would be amply satisfied if it was recognised that the problem did exist. If there were a better form of plan he hoped someone would think about it and place it before the people. (Several speakers then made comments and asked questions).

Mr. Bandaranaike in reply said that the question of religion was hardly a matter to be dealt with by legislation. The question of financial inequality was a serious objection, so also was the question of education. The common fund could be shared among provinces that required help. The subject was full of controversy. The last speaker had hit the nail on the head. Why not remain under the British? Why all that worry and discussion? No nation deserved the name of a nation if it did not want a measure of self-Government. It deserved to be wiped out of the surface of the earth.

Dr. Isaac Thambayah said that the lecture was powerfully delivered and reasonably thought out. He hoped that a great deal of interest would be created. The British Malaya was the only place he knew where Federation was working and working well too.

He suggested that their leaders of thought in Jaffna and Colombo should pay a visit to Malaya and come back and tell them what they thought of Federation. In conclusion Dr. Thambayah congratulated the Students' Congress for its choice of lectures. Sometime ago a gentleman spoke of the ideals of education. That night Mr. Bandaranaike had spoken of the ideals of Government. He moved a vote of thanks to the lecturer. The vote was carried with acclamation — Jaffna Cor.

President's . . .

(Continued from page 15)

Anything less than such a system cannot be accepted by any self-respecting Tamil.

We have also to address ourselves to the question of linkage between the northern and eastern provinces which has been totally rejected by the Government. This is a fundamental demand of the Tamils because it is only in a big region that they can safely organise their security in order that they could avoid holocausts, like those of July 1983. The argument that is being advanced against the demand for linking the north and east is that it is anti-democratic because all three communities are equally represented in the eastern province. What these arguments fail to see is that the influx of Sinhalese into the eastern province was and state-imposed took place as late as after the second world war.

To these people who are misled by such arguments against linkage, we would like to give the example of Israel. For 2000 years the Jews never lived in Palestine. Palestine was entirely populated by other races. Yet in 1917, the British Balfour Declaration gave it's support for a Jewish National Home in Palestine although the majority of the people living there were Palestinians. Then was organised a steady stream of illegal Jewish immigration, just as Sinhalese colonists were planted in Tamil areas. By 1948 Palestine was partitioned with the blessing of the UN and the majority reduced to servitude. Was it adherence to the principles of democracy that made the UN to close its eyes to the democratic majority of Palestinian residents? Or was it Zionist political pressure that caused them to close their eyes to the injustices to the Arabs?

This is not a question of democracy. It is a matter of politics. The Tamils cannot accept anything less than full Regional Autonomy for a Tamil linguistic region which shall consist of the northern and eastern provinces.

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U. S. Expert on The Star Wars nightmare

Ronald Reagan's SDI nuclear umbrella would need technological miracles achieved at stupendous cost — while increasing the nuclear war threat

Maria Elena Hurtado

Ronald Reagan's Star Wars dream of an impenetrable shield against enemy missiles is a nightmare prospect, according to space weapons expert Dr. Robert Bowman — it would increase rather than reduce the risk of nuclear war and even increase its destructive potential. This view finds concurrence among more than 6,500 scientists, including 15 Nobel winners and most of the top research physicists who are refusing to work on Star Wars.

Bowman, now retired from the US Air Force, was director of the USAF's advanced space programmes development, which included what are now the Strategic Defence Initiative (Star Wars) programmes. He was responsible for the development of high-energy lasers for space, and of advanced spacecraft surveillance systems, including radar and infra red satellites and support systems.

He unfolds the technological argument for his stark conclusions in a new book on Star Wars.

Although SDI planners visualise five defensive layers at different points on the missile trajectory, its supporters and critics agree that success depends on shooting the missiles down at the boost phase, when they are more vulnerable and easy to track. "If you don't knock out 90 per cent or so of the target there, you won't be able to get them at all," Bowman wrote in the US magazine *Technology and Society*.

Like the electronic Space Invaders game, Star Wars hinges on numbers and timing. The US system would have a maximum of 300 seconds, the duration of the boost phase, to track and shoot down say 1,000 missiles — mostly over the USSR — before they spawned 10,000 warheads and 100,000 decoys.

Ruling out the option of siting the systems close to the USSR, the next best choice is to put the weapons and surveillance systems in space — a costly business. Stationary orbit over a fixed point on the earth's surface is achieved at an altitude of 35,700km; and the further the killer satellite is from its target, the more powerful its weapons must be. The only other space-based alternative is to blanket lower orbits with Star Wars satellites to ensure that the targets are always covered.

Bowman points out that all this means that while these defences are technically feasible, the costs are much higher than those of deterrence.

And the new technologies that make them possible, such as high energy lasers, sophisticated missile tracking sensors and powerful computers, also allow missile designers to incorporate effective counter-defences. Bowman cites counter-measures that could punch large holes in Reagan's nuclear umbrella or sharply increase its projected cost. One option is to knock out the space-based elements of the system. Although the Pentagon now seems to favour ground-launched weapons to shoot down missiles, all the proposed systems would be dependent on space-based surveillance and tracking, battle management computers or data communication relay.

The risk of nuclear war would escalate if the Soviets opted to overwhelm the system by saturating it with missiles.

Soviet scientists could decide to protect their missiles in the boost phase with a switch from liquid to solid fuel that would cut the burn time to 120 seconds. This would make them harder to detect. The number of laser stations needed to maintain a

high enough kill rate would triple, the costs would soar and the space-based surveillance systems would be rendered useless — because the burn phase would be completed before the missiles left the atmosphere.

Even if all these problems were overcome, Bowman points out, nuclear warheads can be launched from submarines at short range and stop cruise missile, both of which stay well within the protective blanket of the atmosphere.

Reagan's experts have stopped counting Star Wars as the perfect defence, for pressing reasons. If the system is developed on this basis, other nations would force the US to get rid of its strategic nuclear weapons, on the grounds that it could otherwise threaten the world with impunity.

The US would only disarm if Star Wars was "totally reliable, invulnerable to destruction by opposing forces, impervious to any and all countermeasures employed by opposing offensive forces, and essentially perfect in its ability to protect against thousands of nuclear weapons deployed against it in any manner whatsoever," Bowman says.

However, another objective for a Star Wars system might be to limit nuclear war damage. This is a tall order, Bowman points out: "If more than 50 warheads were to fall on the United States, we would lose most of our people and probably cease to function as a society. It might not take even that many. But.... unless a ballistic missile defence system could reduce the number of warheads impacting to this level, it is probably not worth having. At present armament levels we would need a system that would stop 199 out of every 200 missiles. Except for the difference on the

(Continued on page 21)

Re-shaping Indo-Sri Lankan relations

Ralph Buultjens in a wide ranging, survey, commented on Indian policies referring particularly to their bearing on Indo-Lankan relations. The major emphasis throughout was on the critical need to mend the startling deterioration of these relations in the recent past and some of the ways to achieve these objectives: an emphasis that stressed the near-exclusive dependence Sri Lanka has (and will continue to have) on political and social developments within India both at the centre and state government, particularly Tamil Nadu. As for his references to the earlier more harmonious political relations one can argue that these were of a highly personal and sentimental nature confined to groups and individuals seeking common cause during a colonial and post-colonial phase. The important exception being the numberless Sri Lankans who had never quite lost the cultural and spiritual links of their forebears. One can additionally posit that before very long, given the new economic strategies of the Rajiv Gandhi government, India's industrial and scientific resources would bend the Sri Lanka economy willy-nilly in a major complementary pattern. Ralph Buultjens went on to explicitly call upon Sri Lanka to make radical departures from attitudes and policies of the recent past, resorting even to a Camp David style process to reverse the decline and restore a mutually dependent balance on the lines of an enduring peace process. India then, "both as participant and mediator" (RB) would be committed to ending the current stalemate and to promote the implementation of new approaches as bilateral relations are restored.

What follows is a partial and brief attempt to re-open some of these issues. I refer in particular to — tradition & modernity; ethnic & religious revivals; democracy; politics & violence; propaganda & truth. This formulation is not intended to be read as opposites but intellectual proces-

ses from which perceptions arise about a given political order, or the threats to it, resulting in our respective engagements and commitments.

One should add that within the ethos of political and social interaction no one has the last word within these depths: one ventures in the belief that some at least of our failures and distortions (and even deceptions) (emerging as they invariably do as events rapidly overtake one another) spring from confusions in the use and applicability of these concepts. They are used to buttress widely divergent positions thereby narrowing the area where a discussion can be conducted on issues that arise from them.

Tradition and modernity are usually contrasted as opposites with a distinct break between them, the former an ineluctable loser. The decline of tradition is seen as taking place within villages and small towns, home, family, age old customs and manners, finally in the religious and ethical principles an individual holds affecting his duties and loyalties to his peers. He is then compelled to modify, disregard and finally abandon his roots before middle age or pay the price of failure. The speed and complexity of the process is such that there is little time for reflection and reformulation — more harshly "the good (nowadays) die young." These descriptions and analyses it should be noted invariably circulate amongst those who by reason of age, inheritance, professional success or plain opportunity ("luck") have overcome the crisis or passed it by. Science and industry, productivity (progress), urbanisation (megapolis), wage earning, the nuclear family — mourner and undertaker of the decline alike attest cannot be brooked: as they propose in the same breath that traditions are, after all, the outcome of myth, legend, unhistorical. The individual and group failure, the inability to think through the narrow sectional (sectarianism)

loyalties localised with a physical area, is now analysed from the heights of "the national identity" and the "global village." Both, places, where the victims do not (and cannot for several generations) hope to belong. An entire people (Nation) thus disposed are now seen as in conflict and contradiction with sweeping historical laws: their violent reaction and struggle as atavistic, a descent to tribalism and barbarism.

The inevitable next step in these perceptions is to shift the onus of responsibility onto groups who have reacted violently and mindlessly and by their campaigns threaten the entire apparatus (progress) — traditions and modernity. Scant attention is paid to the growing frequency of suicides, mental breakdowns, sporadic political protest, crime and corruption coalescing in more organised and manipulated action until it is too late to do more than attempt to restore 'law and order'. At the inter-personal level comfort (escape) is now supported by knowing assertions — 'its much worse elsewhere', the Kali Yuga, astrology, exorcism; at the national level, the curse of ages — "something" !! (RB, amongst others).

The comprehensive and unifying panacea (refuge) now proposed is a return to religion and culture even as the national failure is laid at the door of its major expression — ethnicity and cultural diversity. No significant or thoroughgoing attempt is made to study and define the principles of these concepts in all their common unity, artistic and literary expressions as an universal heritage — the *Philosophia Perennis*. Nor are developmental models and processes analysed as they unfold to bring them within these considerations as an essential component thereby compelling localised, ethnic and religious opposition to take extreme forms as counter action.

Similar obscurantist positions and circularities surround the

debates about the basic tenets and values of democracy as practised in Sri Lanka. It is only at times of breakdown and crisis that appeals are made to consensus and the larger interest — whether nation, institution or group. The multiplicity of interests are generally smothered by voting majorities whose function ceases no sooner exercised, being replaced by oligarchies of officials, boards and committees; interpretation becomes law; personal experience, evidence; felicity with language, argument. In a country where the overwhelming number are poor and left with little or no leisure or access to information, and reflection, democratic power is now exercised in their name by increasing centralisation, even coercively. Contrast that it was not so very long ago that Sri Lankans and their well wishers basked in the statistics of the public quality of life indices, the peaceful and orderly change of constitutional government and much else besides. Even the gifts of nature and its bounty are enlisted as a Sri Lankan achievement. As against the proposition that it is the elitist cliques who advocated and obtained the pre and post independence structures and which could not but culminate in the current crisis, we have the more recent assertion, of the enemy within the gates who has entered by stealth and treachery and to whom we bear no responsibility.

Hallowed constitutional forms, democratic in themselves, permeate no further than parliamentary debates, academic circles, the media and the rare individual. In the day to day business of life where one is contender, participant, recipient or consumer there is the most authoritarian and callous disregard of — for want of better — equality, liberty, fraternity. State, social and charitable institutions conceive their role as patronage, the mass as flock.

The professional classes, considering only education, law and medicine — are oriented towards people as heavily conditioned and helpless consumers. In the absence of countervailing power, democratic hierarchies cannot arise, or function when they do. The eclipse

and decline of local government, cooperatives, development councils, cultivation committees, procedures for conciliation and arbitration at community level is so complete that their proceedings merit neither study or discussion — one reads only about proposals and decisions that have already been taken for implementation.

Politics and violence engage our deepest feelings when it takes the form of civil war. In this arena the national interest, the doctrines of religion, virtue and honour are the first victims. It should cause no surprise that propaganda and truth (facts) assume roles of exaggerated importance and enlist intractable attitudes and emotions. At its simplest all propaganda (advertising) survives and prospers on a minimum, if shifting, basis of relative truth. To counter an opponent resources, skill and experience in themselves are insufficient weapons. There are just too many sceptical and neutral (uncommitted and unconcerned) persons around today who have access to multiple and alternate sources of information. The brute facts will out — even as film as media acts as potent catalyst. Where this concerns Sri Lanka the entire field is bedevilled by the absence of a middle ground at national level and amongst vast sections of the people — populism and constituency politics take precedence and the climb out is hazardous, long drawn out, as it is traumatic. One has to refer to the endlessly inconclusive debates on language, education, the arts, family planning, foreign aid, tourism, multinationals — where a constant refrain is about foreign penetration and the threats to an authentic "Sri Lankan" voice, its economic and cultural autonomy. Issues of exploitation and dominance apart these attitudes echo parochial and racist theories of origin and legitimacy alongside processes that brought the nation state into being. We would do well to recall the fate of communities and nations where these ideologies were shorn of their more universal human and transcendental bases.

— M. V.

The Star...

(Continued from page 19)

leakage rate, this system would have the same set of impractical technical requirements as the system to replace deterrence."

With the US retaining its offensive capacity, Bowman argues, such a system would greatly increase the risk of nuclear war: the Soviet leadership would be under pressure to preempt, because a first strike by the US would be more likely if it had some defences against retaliation. At best, the USSR would be on a hairtrigger.

In any case, as a system to enhance deterrence, Star Wars is redundant and counter-productive, Bowman says. The US already has enough missiles to cause unacceptable damage to the Soviet Union even after suffering a first strike.

"Star Wars is far more than is required to enhance deterrence — and far less than is required to replace it.... far more than is required to protect offensive missiles — and far less than is required to protect people. There seems to be no legitimate defensive mission for such a system."

Bowman sees a rather different military use for Star Wars: to exploit its large attack potential against vulnerable satellites.

After destroying all the unwanted space traffic, the country with a Star Wars system could then place all its arms in space; but Bowman says "such superiority would be useless against such things as car-bombs and biological weapons. Ultimately there is no military solution."

● **Star Wars: Defense or Death Star?** by Dr. Robert M. Bowman (Institute for Space and Security Studies, Potomac, Md, US, 1985) US \$ 10.95 p/b.

Barnala's Future in Rajiv Gandhi's Hands

Bhabani Sen Gupta

In Punjab, the question is not whether the Akali Dal government headed by Surjit Singh Barnala will survive. The question is whether the Rajiv-Longawal accord, already wounded, would still be implemented quickly and in full. On this depends the future of Barnala as the legitimate inheritor of the assassinated Sant Harchand Longowal.

The future of Barnala as the chief defender of the accord is now in the hands of the prime minister. If Mr Gandhi can muster the political courage to neutralise, if not mute, the orchestrated resistance to the Punjab accord of the Hindi-speaking states and their numerous clients within and outside the ruling party as well as the mass media, there is solid hope for the future of peace in Punjab. If, on the other hand, the prime minister falters, as he did in January, and implementation of the accord is once again delayed on this or that propped up ground, Barnala will be rejected by a majority of the Akali Dal legislative party, and Prakash Singh Badal elected its leader and therefore chief minister. That will mean a political compact between the leadership of the Akali Dal and at least a large segment of the extremists. The turmoil in Punjab will get worse, invading, as it did in 1984, the core of Indian politics.

Barnala did well to flush out the extremists from the Golden Temple with the help of the police and the BSF forces and a small commando unit supplied from New Delhi. For long had he tried the tools of persuasion and political dialogue. The extremists were getting isolated from their mass support base. Several splits had occurred both in the United Akali Dal and the mili-

tant All-India Sikh Students' Federation. Sporadic killings were going on. But steadily, though slowly, the Barnala government was getting the upperhand of the political situation. Meanwhile, as if as a witness to the turn for the better, Punjab was once again boasting a record April wheat harvest.

The extremists were therefore driven to desperation. Their declaration of "Khalistan", with a five-man "government", was just the manifestation of that desperation. They had to do something dramatic. And by doing this they provided the ideal occasion for the government to act against them. No government worth its name can tolerate the proclamation of an "independent state" within the territorial boundaries of India. The police operations of May 1 were therefore not only timely but also nationally imperative.

The execution of the police action was also politically sound, and showed a certain strategic finesse of prime minister Rajiv Gandhi. The initiative — indeed the crucial decision — was taken by the chief minister. When the "Khalistan" proclamation was discussed by the Punjab cabinet shortly before the police action, it was condemned by all ministers. Each of them spoke for strong action against the five men and whatever supporters they had were all hiding in the Golden Temple complex. The cabinet discussion left no doubt in any one's mind that action would have to be taken against the "Khalistanis" in the Temple complex.

The police action was planned between Barnala and the prime minister. The only other political leader who was directly involved was the acting Home Minister, Narasimha Rao. Of course, a crucial

number of police officers and the BSF chief were consulted and later briefed on the operations planned. But the political initiative was wisely left to chief minister Barnala.

The operations did not last more than ten to twelve hours and were completed with the least possible violence and destruction. There was no more than token resistance on the part of small groups of extremists. Only a very small quantity of weapons and ammunitions was captured. No more than 300 persons were held, and an unspecified number of them was released after interrogation. With the utmost speed, the Temple complex was handed over to its legitimate administration, the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee. Just about 1300 men in police and BSF uniform took part in the operations. A small force was posted to guard the Temple complex from infiltration by "Khalistanis", but it was made clear that this force would remain only as long as the five high priests of the Temple would want them to.

Still a big political storm broke out in the Barnala ministry. Within 24 hours of the police operations, two cabinet ministers, Amrindra Singh, education, and Sukhjinder Singh, agriculture, resigned from the cabinet. Prakash Singh Badal and Gurcharan Singh Tohra, a former SGPC chief, resigned from the Akali Dal working committee. The following day, May 3, a third minister, Sucha Singh Chotepur, an MLA of the Akali party, and four members of parliament belonging to the party also quit posts. It was clear that the Badal-Tohra group which had from the beginning remained unfriendly and basically non-cooperative towards Barnala was now out to remove him from chief ministership.

The ministers who resigned complained that Barnala had not taken them into confidence about the imminent police operations. Some of the Akali leaders undoubtedly were jolted by a second police entry into the Golden Temple complex. As noted, Barnala had not taken recourse to police action against the extremists during the seven months of the life of his ministry even in the face of considerable criticism in the press, by opposition parties including the Congress-I in Punjab, and even by some Central cabinet ministers! He had shown great patience, and an admirable preference for political action to get at a political offensive by the extremists, which was gradually losing its edges.

He could hardly be blamed for not sharing with his cabinet colleagues the police action he had ordered. The chief minister has certain unquestionable prerogatives in the cabinet system of government. His leadership has to be accepted by his colleagues unless he acts against their expressed wishes. In the very nature of the police operations, they had to be kept a closely guarded secret. In New Delhi, only a handful of persons knew about it, and none but the prime minister and the acting home minister at the political level. Barnala had kept the finance minister, Balwant Singh, informed since the latter was, and is, his strongest political asset.

At the cabinet meeting he had obtained the sense of his colleagues that strong action was needed against the proclaimers of "Khalistan". He did not inform even the Governor of his decision to order the police to enter the Golden Temple complex and flush out the Khalistanis. However, despite the effort to maintain the utmost secrecy, the five Khalistanis who had formed the "government" and who falsely claimed that Khalistan had been "recognised" by a number of states including the US and Britain, had advance information of the police operations. They were able to slip out of the Temple complex evidently with an unspecified number of active militant cadres. This fact alone argues strongly for Barnala

not sharing his decision with members of his cabinet.

The Barnala government is in no danger of falling. The Badal-Tohra group cannot mobilise more than 25 Akali MLAs against it. If in a meeting of the Akali Dal legislature party, they move a motion of no confidence in Barnala's leadership, they will lose. The other groups in the Assembly will stand by Barnala.

But the mere survival of the Barnala government is of little consequence for the Punjab and the country. What has been insufficiently recognised is that Surjit Singh Barnala showed exemplary personal courage to order the police action. He has risked his life. The extremists will spare no effort to gun him down as they did Sant Longawel. If Barnala fails to the bullets of an assassin, hardly any Akali leader will dare form a government that will deliberately court the wrath of the extremists.

Therefore, the prime minister must act with the utmost expedition to strengthen the political position of Barnala. There must be no further dilly-dallying about handing Chandigarh to Punjab and give flesh and blood to the other clauses of the Punjab accord. Also, the Centre needs to announce an impressive programme of industrialisation in Punjab so that the youth left out of the benefits of the green revolution, who probably form the core of extremism, have prospects of gainful employment in the near future. Side by side, a vigorous political campaign must now be mounted against extremism in Punjab, and in this the prime minister must seek and receive the active help and participation of the opposition chief ministers and the large intellectual community in India.

Another level of action is also vitally important. The decision to depoliticise religious shrines and temples is a welcome assertion of India's commitment to secularism. But the Golden Temple is not the only shrine in the country where politics now predominate. All over the land, thousands of organisations have mounted an ominous movement of Hindu revi-

valism. They may not be using established temple complexes. They, however, use improvised shamianas, hold highly expensive jagnas, and convene largely attended conferences to proclaim that Hindus and Hinduism are a danger! This movement is fast growing sinister political wing. These wings must be clipped before it is too late for India's still fragile democracy.

Church — the first . . .

(Continued from page 7)

The impression of a direct counter-attack was inescapable since Bishop Deugopillai's June 18th speech was published on July 3, just two days before Archbishop Nicholas Marcus Fernando spoke at Negombo. The Tamil bishop of Jaffna — there are 2 other Tamil bishops, in Mannar and in Batticaloa — had spoken of "peaceful Tamil civilians brutally massacred by the armed forces". The Archbishop posed the pertinent question of other massacres — of 'our Buddhist brethren' (men, women and children) 'moved down' at Anuradhapura, where the sacred Bo tree makes the city holies of places of worship to Buddhist pilgrims.

The Bishop had referred to innocent Tamil civilians "forced to flee from their traditional homelands". Obviously conscious of his own environment, (Negombo has a flourishing fishing industry) Archbishop Fernando hardly minced words when he pointed to the refugees in that town who had been forced to flee "from their traditional fishing grounds" in the north.

Even more sharper than the S. L. Bishops Conference letter to the Tamilnadu Bishops (L. G. Trends June 15) this counter-blast on the Bishop's "bomb-blasts, rocket-blasts and shell-blasts") hints at a slow-burning fuse that may cause an explosion in the foundations of multi-racial unity which have so far sustained the Catholic Church.

— J.

Part III

A close look at Rupavahini

Jeanne Pinto

Line-up/Duty Editor

Next in importance in the newsroom is the person who is responsible for the content and sequence of the newscast: who is on duty nine hours of the day — and more, if necessary: who screens all material available for all newscasts for the day — scripts, video cassettes and films, local and foreign: who lines up all this material, balances local and foreign items, decides the final shape of the bulletin: co-ordinates constantly with everyone else in the room — reporters, satellite and Asia-Vision editors, copy editors, the Director, and especially the Producer for the day.

In a small newsroom, he should be able to stand in for anyone of these other persons.

The Producer/Director

This is the person who "puts the show on the air": he relates with newsroom and studio staff, sees that everything to do a newscast is in the right place — sketches, maps, credit cards, videotape items, in the VTR playback centre, in Master Control, slides and 16 mm film with Telecine, and, of course, the News Reader in the studio.

At the studio panel, he concentrates unrelentingly for the duration of the bulletin.

Reporters/Field Producers/ Production Assistants

Television reporters must have the largest number of skills, more than called for in other media: for "the journalism of sight and sound is the only truly new form of journalism to come along", in recent times: it is a true mass medium, universal — when practised with expertise.

A television reporter must learn to: go out and get a news story; direct camera crews in the field; come back and write out a full background report for the script writers; supervise VTR and/or film editing; write out a detailed "shot-list"; write television scripts when necessary; conduct television interviews, act as studio announcer and Interviewer, in times of urgency; act as production assistant.

News judgment, that fabled "news sense" is only developed through good teachers and experienced co-workers: experience is not always the best teacher — for one could, over the years, merely set oneself in the concrete of self-taught bad habits.

A reporter, therefore, has to be specially guided and trained — but, first, there must be a "nose for news" and a "feel for the medium" and, above all else, a strong desire to acquire the wide background knowledge, mastery of specific skills and some measure of specialisation needed for professionalism — then selection and presentation become intuitive, effortless and pleasurable.*

News gathering and production must be a team effort: without

a sense of camaraderie and a desire to pull one's weight, TV will not work: any other media newsroom can accommodate "loners" and "Malingers", not a television one as small as Rupavahini's: typical governmental proliferation of staff, in this area, has been proved a continuing disadvantage — which is, first, noted in the current roster.

* It is supposed to be permanent, that is, worked out to last until the next drastic change in staff composition, which, in a static government department, is not likely to happen for years on end.

* It has been worked out at the expense of just four or five members, who are known to be enthusiastic and conscientious workers.

* Take the duty editors as example: they work a 12-hour shift, three days consecutively, with two days off. But it is not unusual to see them stay on and handle the 8.15 Sinhala bulletin, the 9.30 English one, and even the 10.30 headlines, when, as often happens, someone fails to appear.

(To be continued)

* **Organisation chart:** Once the qualifications, roles and inter-relationships of personnel in a newsroom, as neat and small as Rupavahini's are worked out, it is also possible to devise an organisational structure capable of co-ordinating effective action.

— **News Director/Editor;**

— **Copy Editor/Script-writer** — one each to each language for the week, with, at least, one stand-by for every language;

— **Line-up/Duty Editors** — three to each language for the week, with the ability to slide between, at least, two languages: stand-bys, of course, who could be co-opted from the basic newsroom staff;

— **Satellite/Asia Vision Editors** — two to each service for the week, with one other as standby;

— **Producers/Directors** — two to each language, each of whom must be able to produce in, at least, one other language;

— **Reporters** — six local reporters with bi = or tri = lingual qualifications;

— **Production Assistants** — three, or three very competent persons — not both;

— **Trainees** — not more than four at any given period;

— **Auxiliaries** — translators, consultants — only as required.

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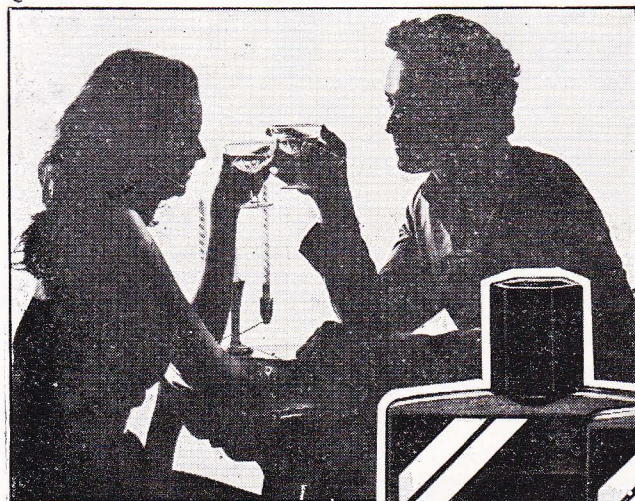
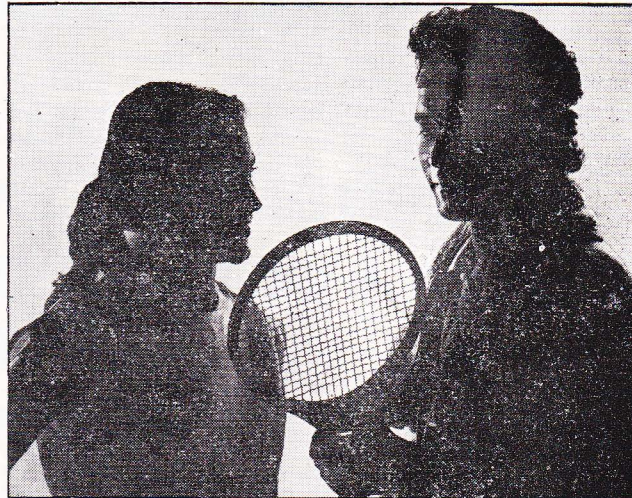
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