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TRIBUNE



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Letter From The Editor

The TULF seems to have finally woken up to the reality that the most important problem confronting the Tamils and the government and the nation as a whole is the urgent and imperative need to restore normalcy and ensure stability in the country. This is not the time, as we have often stressed, for post-mortems or fault-finding (but extremists, chauvinists, romantics and demagogues compel us often to polemics). The most important task before everybody is to restore normalcy. Unless this is done, life will not be worth living in any part of the country. Not even in the Jaffna peninsula which many frog-in-the-well insularists think is a haven for all Tamils. The lack of normalcy in Jaffna, owing to a variety of reasons, has not only given rise to 'teenage rowdiness and delinquency but urban guerilla type of bank robberies. So far the robberies have been confined to the looting of government banks, but very soon, unless checked, such robberies will spread to the private sector also and no home will be safe in Jaffna. These rowdies, robbers and thugs are operating on the crest of a wave of anti-police animosities among the people of Jaffna, and there is no doubt that this situation is the result of unimaginative and anti-Tamil policies followed by some police officers during the Sirimavo Government, especially since the IATR Conference in 1974. It is unfortunate the J. R. Jayewardene Government did not transfer the old police out of Jaffna no sooner it came to power—if this had been done, EXODUS 1977 may not have taken place at all. The situation in Jaffna has not been normal since the punitive police actions from the IATR Conference: thereafter indiscipline has grown and at the same time a criminal element has emerged under cover of political slogans. The situation in Jaffna has to be normalised because every time there is an anti-government sneeze in the peninsula it will be taken as an anti-Sinhala outburst and a communal conflagration will erupt all over the island. Whilst careful attention must be paid to the police-civilian situation in Jaffna, even greater attention must be paid to the twenty to thirty thousand refugees who are in the peninsula. Their position is inter-linked with the restoration of normalcy in the rest of the island. The physical and mental wounds of the refugees in Jaffna have to be healed, and to persuade them to return to their stations a great deal has to be done in the Sinhalese areas from which they fled. There is no doubt that the government and a large number of organisations—Buddhist, Christian, Muslim and Secular—have done a great deal to restore normalcy in many areas where communal violence had taken place. The High Priests of Asgiriya and Malwatte have risen to the greatest heights of Buddha's *Dhamma* in pleading equality for the Tamils and one of them has even gone so far as to ask that Sinhalese should have opportunities to learn Tamil. All this was brought about by the initiative taken by the Prime Minister who has made fervent appeals for national unity. The government has announced the abolition of standardisation which is the greatest single cause for the cry for Eelam. In this situation, peoples of all communities outside Jaffna look desperately to the TULF leadership to contribute its mite towards restoring normalcy. Nobody wants the TULF to repudiate Eelam—if it does it will change the political climate of the country immediately in the most dramatic fashion—but only to lay Eelam by to a distant date. Under the hammer blows of communal fanatics and anti-social elements (acting under a communal cover) the TULF has climbed down so far as to say that for the moment it was only concerned with the refugees. This is a negative approach. A political party's statesmanship and maturity is shown by its willingness to adopt positive postures and to review and change policies, not opportunistically, but in the context of realities which cannot be ignored. It will be pertinent, in this connection, to draw attention to the full page advertisement that *Tribune* has run on its back cover for months: **MAKE A UNITED SRI LANKA POSSIBLE: ON THE BASIS OF EQUALITY: —IRRESPECTIVE** of race, religion, caste; **—OF LANGUAGES**, Sinhala, Tamil, English; **—OF OPPORTUNITIES** in education and employment on merit; **—IN ADMINISTRATION** with regional or district council autonomy; **—BEFORE THE LAW**, with civil rights, rule of law, and an independent judiciary. A Constitutional arrangement incorporating these will meet all the demands of the Tamils (and the Sinhalese) for a long time to come. And this is the best this country can hope to achieve in a turbulent era of human history. Only from such a state of normalcy and stability brought about by "the first step" of a just and fair Constitution based on embryonic district council autonomy, in which economic development can take place, can this country hope to advance to greater heights of qualitative progress which can truly implement the dictum of unity in diversity. To reach this still distant objective, we must take the first faltering steps right now in the darkness of communal tension and national disharmony.

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Preliminary Thoughts On
The Anatomy Of
Exodus '77

Colombo, September 12,

The communal disturbances, violence and looting which disrupted normal life from mid-August is one of the most traumatic experiences this country has known in the modern period. Not every socio-political upheaval of this kind has a silver lining, but this one has. For the first time citizens of all communities and different religious persuasions have come together not merely to condemn violence and to help the victims of violence but also to understand the motivation of those who committed the acts of violence and those who instigated such violence.

A very large number of organisations, in Colombo and outside, have come forward to restore normalcy. The Citizens' Committee For National Harmony (CCNH) is one of the organisations that has led the way in this matter.

"The most fundamental question affecting our Society today is one of re-thinking and re-building our pattern of life. In this respect it is not proper to leave this matter entirely to the Government. We, as responsible citizens, must settle this for all time"—the Ven. Rev. Hevanpola Ratanasara Thero.

"The more serious problem today is the task of education. We have observed the havoc wrought on unfortunate and helpless human beings and find it difficult to understand how one set of human beings could inflict such atrocities on their fellow beings. The nation is going through a sad tragedy"—Fr. Tissa Balasuriya.

The thoughts expressed by these two religious leaders at a Press Conference held last week end, at the Society for Religion and Society, constitute the guide-lines on which the CCNH has based its work. "Violence promotes further violence, and we are certain that no lasting solutions to human problems could be achieved, and no benefit can be bestowed on people, through violence," stated

the CCNH. They went on to say that "the situation in which we are now placed, our concern will now go out to at least three categories of people: (1) those who have suffered through violence inflicted on them; (2) those who have committed acts of violence; (iii) those who for some reason or other, instigated violence."

The CCNH, has as its objective, the promotion of national harmony in Sri Lanka. The members believe in the "ideal of a united Sri Lanka, where its citizens irrespective of race, religion and caste, shall be equal in dignity and in rights." The CCNH "fosters understanding among the different races, religions and ideologies in our country."

Mere sympathy for the victims of the violence is not enough. The CCNH has, therefore, like many other charitable and religious organisations, begun the collection of money to provide relief of distress and for the rehabilitation of victims. It has also called for gifts of clothing, cooking utensils, household requisites such as bedding etc.

While the relief to the victims and their rehabilitation is, in a sense a short-term objective, the problem concerning those who committed acts of violence, and instigated violence is a long-term one of the utmost importance. Among those who inflicted the violence are the impulsive unthinking persons who join a mob or are driven to violence on the spur of the moment roused by rumour or gossip (they do not pause to consider whether such rumour or gossip is true or not). There are others who plan such violence and deliberately participate in violent actions either to satisfy sadistic poli-

tical impulses within them or to rob and loot.

But the most difficult category to deal with will be those who instigate the violence, some knowingly, consciously and deliberately, and others unknowingly, unthinkingly and unwittingly. The anti-social, criminal and subversive elements who plan and instigate violence are easily identified (even if they attempt to take cover behind political slogans) and it is not difficult to cope with their delinquency, but those in the shadowy world where allegedly dedicated persons preach and propound political programmes of hate that can only lead to violence are not easy to tackle.

The Tamil communalist (in or out of the TULF) and the Sinhala communalist (in the SLFP, UNP or the ULF) have now become political psychopaths who can be contained only if the spirit of national harmony and the realisation of the need for national integration (on the basis of unity in diversity) becomes part of the way of life of the vast majority of our citizens. Organisations like the CCNH can play a major role in containing and transforming the communalists in all communities responsible for the communal upheavals of 1958 and 1977.

In addition, among those who inflicted the violence and those who instigated the violence in 1977 are the young people (some now grown older) who participated in or sympathised with the Insurgency of 1971. A fairly substantial number of are employed in government department and have fairly easy access to heavy vehicles (buses, lorries, tippers etc.) and also to implements which can be used for

COVER

DISAPPEARING ?

The picture on the cover shows a disappearing railway train in one of the still-jungle areas in the country. For a long time now, the CGR has been a disappearing asset. In the seven years of United Front and the SLFP rule from 1970, the CGR had all but disappeared. *Tribune* has devoted a great deal of space in the past to the problems of train travellers and governmental neglect of the CGR. The new Minister of Transport has promised to rehabilitate the Railways, improve its services and even extend the mileage—to start with, from Matara to Kataragama. The CGR was always the back bone of development activity in the country. The neglect to the railways in recent years was a major setback to development. It is to be hoped that the new Government and the new Minister will fulfil their promises about making the CGR work as it should.

Sinhalese Protection

violent acts. Some were possessed of fire arms and others were in a position to grab dynamite and other explosives from government developmental construction sites. A section of those who sympathised with the insurgents of 1971 are now employed in the Security Services like the Police. Others are in key government jobs in the Bureaucracy and the administration. An influential and activist section of the 1971 insurgents have also become professional robbers, looters, and delinquent anti-social elements.

Whilst the official JVP issued statements against communalism and violence, it is clear that its influence among a large number 1971 insurgents and sympathisers is now only minimal: they no longer follow the lead of the official JVP. In many places, especially in the NCP, NP and EP, there are reports that ex-insurgents and also newly emerging terroristic groups played an active part in the violence: they had become the "military" and "tough arm" wing of the communalists—among the Tamils as well as the Sinhalese. Every violent act in Jaffna and in Tamil areas had a ten-fold repercussion in Sinhalese areas. It is futile and stupid to waste time in arguing as to who started the trouble "first"—who is to blame (the chicken or the egg)?—but the problem today is to end the violence and curb the communalists through national harmony.

The country is today faced with the problem of terroristic groups of so-called "militant youth" both among the Tamils and the Sinhalese and unless they are contained and the socio-economic causes that sustains such terrorism are eliminated normalcy will be a dream.

The young have many legitimate grievances. The older generation have been so selfishly obsessed with petty parochial matters that they have let a Frankenstein grow in their midst on both sides of Elephant Pass. A great deal of thinking, discussion and re-thinking, about this matter has become essential and it is a happy augury that CCNH has come forward to examine violence in all its aspects.

Many observers have regretted that organisations like the CCNH and other bodies have not come forward in Tamils areas, in Jaffna in particular, to help estab-

lish harmony and normalcy. Little bouts of terrorism have already made normal living in the Jaffna peninsula a nightmare to many Tamils living there and also those who have fled there after the disturbances. Freedom of expression and opinion has been threatened by terrorism.

There is a greater civic and public sense of the urgent need for national harmony in many, if not in most, Sinhalese areas where troubles broke out. This, as we have said earlier, is a significant feature which was not there (in the present degree) in 1958.

Tribune has received many reports and letters from many areas where violence has taken place. A detailed examination about these matters can be undertaken only after normalcy and the Commission of Inquiry into the disturbances has completed its work. In the meantime we reproduce extracts from a letter from a Tamil reader in Kurunegala—one of the provincial towns where violence was inflicted on Tamils

"..Of course, there was a bright spot in the dark and gloomy picture. Many Sinhalese, at great risk to their lives, protected Tamil families. They condemn the communal frenzy and they admit

that innocent people suffered because of rumour mongering. I must single out the Regional Manager, North West Region, and the Manager and staff of the Bank of Ceylon, Kurunegala. Throwing fear to the winds they went by car to places like Nikaweratiya, Maho, Wariyapola and Rambodagalla to save their Tamil brethren who were trapped and were about to be attacked by the mob. Later they were housed in the Bank's premises. I must say that the Bank officers were not only humane but displayed courage of the highest order. Mention must be made of the yeomen service rendered to the refugees by Rev. Fr. Bede Fernando and the 'Sister Theresas' of the Holy Family Convent, Kurunegala. They fed the people and nursed the sick..! I wish more people had emulated their noble example..My reference here is to the voluntary and service organisations... The government Agent, Kurunegala, had his hands full but he discharged his duties to the best of his ability..The pall of gloom over Kurunegala has not cleared. There is genuine regret among people here about the events of the past. They say that a simple problem had been blown out of all proportion by mischief makers and innocent people suffered, as a result....."

UNIONS VOLUNTEER TO SAFEGUARD EMPLOYEES

Public Service and Corporation Trade Unions and branches have come forward to establish communal harmony in their workplaces and outside. Several conferences of Heads of Departments and representatives of Unions were held yesterday to give practical effect to the resolutions passed by the unions to bring back accord among the various communities which have been working side by side in perfect harmony in the past. The Ministry of Public Administration had permitted Tamil and Sinhala employees to keep away from office if conditions were not favourable for them to attend their work places in the respective areas.

It was decided at these conferences that every step should be taken by members of the unions to help bring the unhappy situation back to normal. It was also decided that every protection should be given to any member of any community who is in distress. Heads of Departments will call upon the membership of the unions to report cases of harassment to any employees by unruly elements or those who are deliberately creating mischief. Heads of Departments have pointed out that disturbances in Government offices and Corporations had caused large scale absenteeism resulting in serious disruptions in work.

They also pointed out the public have been seriously inconvenienced because of the compulsive prevention of persons attending offices. Patients in several hospitals have not been able to get treatment as a result of Doctors and others not turning up for work. Several departments are severely understaffed and cannot serve the public for the same reasons. The unions have given an assurance that they will call upon their entire membership to help bring normalcy in the shortest possible time.

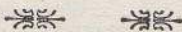
Similar tributes can be paid to a large number of Sinhalese families in all areas where there was violence against Tamils. In Jaffna, in the campus, Tamil students had protected Sinhalese students until they were evacuated. No single Sinhalese is said to have been killed in Jaffna though some Sinhalese shops and bakeries in the bazaar had suffered damage.

The picture on an all-island basis is not complete because reports have not yet become available. There have been many splendid instances of self-sacrifice in all areas where trouble broke out. There is hope for humanity in Sri Lanka if men and women of goodwill can get together to overcome the forces that have caused disharmony and violence to erupt in this island.

The government and all people interested in the future of the country are anxious that all refugees should be rehabilitated. This should be a two-way business. Even if the number is small, all Sinhalese who evacuated from Jaffna, Batticaloa and other Tamil areas should be rehabilitated in the same way that Tamil evacuees are being rehabilitated in Sinhalese areas.

In Sri Lanka even after there are special District Councils or regional areas to develop Tamil rights, Sinhalese, Muslims, Burghers and other citizens and residents of Sri Lanka must have a right to live and work in these areas, in the same way that Tamils have the right to live and work in Sinhalese areas. If such a development can take place and a sense of security created for all communities, it will not be long before a united Sri Lanka emerges.

Out of the misery of EXODUS '77, great good can emerge. It is for the people of Sri Lanka to make this possible. The new emergent forces that have surfaced after the traumatic experiences of EXODUS '77 should continue to push the new momentum for national harmony with all speed—and there is no doubt that a united country with national concord and amity will soon be a reality.



THE LAST CHANCE ?

A Need For Goodwill

by James T. Rutnam

This will be my last article in this series which began on 2 July. Age and failing health are gradually claiming their toll. I hope to resume writing later, though not on a weekly or regular assignment. Looking back I find, on a deeper study, that the most important cause of the estrangement between the Sinhalese and Tamils is the want of proper communication. Language which should bring people together has in this instance torn them apart.

It is easy to blame S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike. The Reverend Ananda Mangala is reported in the Sun of 12 September as having remarked, "The Tamil people love their language. They love what we love. We must give them their language rights. The Sinhala Only Act has erected barriers." Indeed it has, but Bandaranaike had other ideas. When he introduced the Sinhala Only Bill he had intended to solve the Tamil problem through a Federal Constitution. "A thousand and one objections", he said, "could be raised against the (Federal) system, but when the objections are dissipated I am convinced that some form of Federal Government will be the only solution." (See Tribune 2 July). But Bandaranaike was not able to establish this himself.

Thus we had Sinhalese Only, with no corresponding relief to the Tamils. This way of appropriating one-sided gains has been a feature of our constitutional history for over fifty years. Arunachalam got the Sinhalese and Tamils together and campaigned for political reform as one people. This resulted in territorial representation for the Sinhalese at the expense of the Tamils.

In 1925 the Sinhalese and Tamil leaders entered into a Pact to remedy the situation, but this was not honoured. R. S. S. Gunawardena is the only signatory of this Pact now alive. The Donoughmore Commissioners came thereafter. They introduced Universal Adult Suffrage (including Vote for the Tamils of the plantations) and the Committee System.

A homogeneous Sinhalese Ministry was formed by Senanayake. This really exposed the absurdity of the Constitution. The Soulbury Commissioners followed. They abolished the Committee System and established a Bicameral Legislature, and also allowed the Vote for the plantation Tamils to remain.

Eventually the Bicameral legislature was abolished, the Plantation Vote scrapped and we had a lopsided form of Government that further denied the rights of the Tamils. This was accentuated by the Sinhalese Only Bill. Both Bandaranaike and Dudley Senanayake attempted to appease the Tamils with Pacts which they themselves repudiated, owing to alternating pressures from the contending UNP and SLFP.

This is where we are now. The seven years of SLFP Government made further inroads into the rights of the Tamils. The Armed Forces and the Police were far too disproportionately packed with Sinhalese who were recruited generally through the back-door. Education of Tamils was strangled, and there was open discrimination against them in every field. The present UNP Government has inherited this mess.

The Elections exposed the pathetic state of the plantation Tamils who form nearly a million, and who are represented only by one single individual, Thondaman. The Government has recognised the anomalies of the situation, and has acknowledged the need for reform. In the meantime we have gone through a gruesome fortnight of agony and terror and even savagery unparalleled in our modern history.

Are we at the parting of the ways? Tarzie Vittachi had asked the same question almost twenty years ago at the end of his book *Emergency '58*. Our Prime Minister has not abandoned Hope. This will perhaps be the last chance for all of us to live happily together in one undivided Sri Lanka. Could this be accomplished?

The lack of communication seems to be, as I said at the beginning, the prime cause of our division. As an administrative measure the suggestion given by the Deputy Speaker Bakeer Markar to carry in the Hansard Sinhalese translation of Tamil speeches and Tamil

translation of Sinhalese speeches is an appropriate step in bringing closer understanding among the Members of the Assembly. I would suggest that we have an English Hansard as well. It will be useful to both local and International Scholars, of which group we have an increasing number now.

It has been realised that in our hasty rush for swabasha (Sinhalese in 24 Hours!) we had failed to appreciate the value of English. We have now produced two or three generations of graduates with hardly a working knowledge of English. This is fatal to intellectual progress in this narrowing world. It will thus become apparent that we should give very serious consideration to recognising Sinhalese, Tamil and English as Official Languages. Nehru in India scotched the move for Separation by Tamil Nadu by allowing the use of English instead of Hindi in this State. As a link language between Sinhalese and Tamils, English has an important role to play especially in the present context.

I would suggest a crash programme to be initiated by awarding attractive incentives to Sinhalese and Tamil students at Standards Five and Eight, for the study of these languages. The Sinhalese students should be examined by Tamil teachers and the Tamils by Sinhalese. The total number of prizes should be substantial, say twenty thousand prizes for Sinhalese and ten thousand for Tamils at each level. The suggestion made by the Maha Nayake Thera of Asgiriya that facilities should be provided for Sinhalese to learn Tamil as reported in the Ceylon Daily News of 6 September is a welcome sign of leadership given by one who has by his words and action distinguished himself as a wise and true counsellor of the nation. Hearken to his call. It will bring salvation to this presently unhappy land.

The only epic of **Hinayana Buddhism** was written in Tamil by a Tamil. It is the **Manimekalai**, a classic which should be read by every Tamil. Its Sinhalese translation should be made freely available to our Buddhist brethren. They should treasure it as a token of their obligation to the fervent author and his fellow Tamils. Few are aware that the great **Buddhagosa** was a Dravidian, and that many monks in the Maha Vihara

at Anuradhapura were Tamils. One of them was a Maha Nayaka of the Maha Vihara.

Knowing each other's tongues is not enough. We should all help to produce a climate of compassion and goodwill among our people, who I believe are ethnically more close to each other than to any other people in the world. The presently Sinhalese-speaking people of the Maritime Province, especially the Karavas, Salagamas and Duravas, are very much closer to Elara and the Tamils than they are to Duthugamunu or anybody else. So why not look upon each other with brotherly compassion and with no hate or bitterness? An excellent move would be to form a Race Relations Department under the auspices of the Government. We find this in the United Kingdom and in Australia.

Summing up this series of articles, I find that here and there I had allowed myself to express, rightly or wrongly, rather strong views whenever I felt obliged to do so. I suppose this comes when one is too near to events. However at the distance which I have now set for myself in order to appeal for goodwill, love and compassion, for no hate nor bitterness, I feel I should address this call to myself first.

I would like to clear a possible misunderstanding. I had always esteemed the Reverend Madihe Pannasiha Thera of the Vajirarama Temple, an abode internationally famous for its learning and Buddhist activities, thanks especially to the renowned Reverend Narada Thera. I had personally known, and could say been benevolently influenced, by the Reverend Kassappa and Soma Theras (both alas, no more) of this fraternity.

In the course of my writing I took exception to a proposed stationing of troops to enforce **State colonisation** in some places. I am certainly not opposed to the Sinhalese people, personally taking up residence or finding employment, or establishing themselves in industries in the Tamil-speaking areas. But I did not favour **State colonisation** that would change the communal or linguistic character of these areas.

This is a universally accepted rule and regional autonomy has been conceded to such areas. In Barcelona in Spain last week one

million Catalonions gathered to celebrate the imminent conferment of Regional Autonomy for this region. Scotland continues to remain the homeland of the Scots, Wales of the Welsh, but in England we find a large number of Scots and Welshmen, for (besides other reasons) London in England is the Metropolis of Scotland, Wales and England.

In taking up this issue with the Reverend Pannasiha Thera I feel that I had overreached myself. Hence this "unease" within me. I have been brought up to respect the members of the clergy, be they Buddhists, Christians, Muslims or Hindus, and while protesting I had no intention to disrespect anyone, yet for the sake of the cause to which we are all attached, I would like to express here my sincere regret for anything said by me that might have caused hurt or sadness to the reverend monk.

In the same strain I would like to express my sentiments towards my boyhood friend, who is by any standard the greatest living political figure in the country, R. S. S. Gunawardena, with whom too I had to disagree in some instances. Despite occasional embarrassments to himself when he is placed in certain offices or situations, he has for a number of years continued to work for Racial Harmony, and I have no doubt his invaluable and signal services in this direction would be appreciated and remembered by this generation and posterity.

As for me I am a humanist. I am neither proud nor ashamed of being born a Tamil. This is an accident of birth. I am on the side of those persecuted because of this accident. Presently the Tamils unfortunately happen to be the persecuted ones. Not for long, I hope, with a Prime Minister resolved, like the great Asoka, to follow the Dhamma, "whatever the consequences."

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

Aug. 24 — Aug. 28

DIARY OF EVENTS IN SRI LANKA AND THE WORLD
 COMPILED FROM DAILY NEWSPAPERS
 PUBLISHED IN COLOMBO.

CDN—Ceylon Daily News; CDM—Ceylon Daily Mirror;
 CO—Ceylon Observer; ST—Sunday Times; DM—Dina-
 mina; LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa;
 SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa; JD—Janadina;
 DP—Dinapathi; SU—Sun; DW—Dawasa; CM—Chintha-
 mani; WK—Weekend; RR—Rivirasa; EN—Eelanadu;

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24: Over three million rupees worth of looted goods have been recovered during the past 48 hours as the Police and Armed forces began mopping up operations in a number of areas which were reported returning to normal; the total number of persons arrested by yesterday morning according to the police and armed forces was over 1,000. Three persons were placed under house detention at Kandy and 34 others arrested by the police in Kandy; those under house detention were former Army Colonel and SLFP candidate for Senkadagala, Mr. Anuruddha Ratwatte, Mr. C. D. L. Fernando, a medical practitioner and a leading Kandy politician, and Dr. K. N. Rajendra. Although the government had decided to continue with the curfew islandwide to prevent any further acts of lawlessness, National Security Council sources said yesterday that the situation throughout the country had improved considerably. The Government Statement of Policy was passed in the NSA last night without division. The ULF yesterday appealed to all its supporters, progressive forces and especially to the organised working class to do all they could to see that normal conditions were restored as speedily as possible relating to the violence prevailing in the country; in a statement issued yesterday the ULF advocated the formation of peace committees in villages and city wards throughout the country and especially in affected areas as a positive step in this direction. A commission to inquire into the activities of the previous regime during its seven year rule will be appointed by a UNP government soon. The Army Commander and the Navy Commander returned to Colombo last night after an on-the-spot inquiry survey of the situation at Trincomalee; the Army Commander said yesterday that the situation though tense was under control in the latest area hit by the current wave of violence. All long distance trains are now being escorted by armed guards with a view to protecting the passengers and the trains. Police investigations into a number of incidents in the Northern sector of the city, including the Pettah, revealed that gangs of hardened criminals bent on looting shops and other commercial establishments, had driven in cars to the city armed with molotov cocktails, knives and other weapons, a number of them were arrested; there are still some incidents in various parts of the city—CDN. The District Judge of Colombo yesterday awarded damages of Rs. 2 1/2 lakhs with costs to the PM, against the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd for publication in the Dinamina newspaper of a defamatory statement against him. 'Don't Panic' is the advice passed on by the security authorities to

all Tamils living in Colombo and other areas; mischief makers were rampant and they were exploiting the present situation to issue threats and even throw stones. The Minister of Agriculture and Lands said he would invite all TULF members to see for themselves the results of their careless talk in the Central Province. The PM told MP's of the Government Parliamentary Group yesterday that the current situation was being brought under control. An organised gang mingled among crowds at the Pettah vegetable market yesterday morning about 8 and stabbed 19 persons and set fire to three stores—CDM. The government yesterday reiterated its offer to the Tamil community to get together to find a solution to their problems. Mr. D. A. D. E. A. Seneviratne, DIG was yesterday appointed co-ordinating authority for security operations in the Colombo District; The PM has appraised his Indian counterpart Mr. Morarji Desai on the developments here. The government yesterday decided to make available two ships from the Ceylon Shipping Corporation to evacuate the refugees who are now in transit camps in Colombo. Life is coming back to normal in Jaffna; yesterday shops were opened for the first time after the recent incidence of violence. The government will appoint a commission to probe the expenditure that was incurred by the previous regime on the non-aligned summit conference, the Minister of Local Government, Housing and Construction said. Mr. E. L. Senanayake yesterday accused an SLFP member of Parliament of having played a major role in the recent disturbances in Kandy. A twenty four hour curfew was clamped down in Trincomalee district following a fresh outbreak of violence that left seven dead in its wake. On the orders of the Kandy magistrate, 39 persons have been taken into custody in the Kandy district for security reasons—SU. Mr. Gurubachan Singh, the Indian High Commissioner in this country will personally visit the hill country to ascertain for himself the damage caused to plantation workers in the recent wave of violence that swept over the country to enable him to submit a report to his government—VK. Since the 20 of this month over a thousand Tamils have sought refuge in 22 centres in Bambalapitiya and there are hundreds of others who are still coming. The Ceylon Workers Congress is taking steps to send back the plantation workers who have been affected by the recent events to their estates—DP. Many refugees of Indian origin who have no connection whatever with Jaffna are coming North and they are being accommodated in Killinochchi at refugee camps—EN. Damages worth 25 lakhs of rupees have been incurred in Jaffna in the recent incidents. The DC 8 is running 5 flights a day to Jaffna carrying refugees—EN.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 25: Acts of violence and looting which took place in certain parts of the country have now decreased; though these criminal acts appeared on the surface to be a communal conflict it is believed that there was a political conspiracy behind it, states a government communique. The situation in most parts of the country including the city and its suburbs has improved, the IGP said last night. The IGP last night, announced that social service associations and other voluntary organisations would help the police from today in bringing the situation back to normal in the city and suburbs. On Monday and Tuesday there were minor incidents of arson reported from Grandpass, Modera and Borelessa and patrolling was intensified;

there was looting in Kirillapone and one was shot; a number of refugees had come into Colombo from the suburbs and the outstations and were taken to homes of their relatives; a round-the-clock patrolling by police and the armed services was being conducted at private homes and social service centres where the refugees had been housed. The Sarvodaya Shramadana movement has decided to form small Shanti Sena units of ten persons each in villages and towns throughout the country in view of the present wave of violence. Discussions were held at the Ministry of Trade regarding what steps should be taken to bring down the cost of living. The Ministry of Trade yesterday announced that 65 lorries with vegetables had been brought to Colombo from upcountry and that vegetables will be made available in markets in Colombo and the suburbs. Around 150 persons were arrested in Kandy yesterday for alleged looting and other offences committed during the past few days; this brings the total number arrested so far to about 650. The situation in the country will be well under control within the next 48 hours, the Army Commander said yesterday. The Sinhala Tharuna Paramuna has appealed to the PM and the government to take the sternest security measures necessary to arrest the current wave of violence in the country and restore unity and peace in the Republic of Sri Lanka. The co-ordinating officer of the Matale district said that since the Air Force took up security duty in that district, not one unfortunate incident had taken place. The LSSP leader, Dr. N. M. Perera left for London on Sunday—CDN. It appears that some people who were in power and have lost that power have attempted to obstruct the endeavours of the government to provide speedy relief to the people, this is stated in a communique issued by the Cabinet of Ministers yesterday. An easing of the situation throughout the country was reported by the Defence Ministry yesterday afternoon. Eleven public sector trade unions have in a joint statement condemned the present wave of communal violence, which they say, besides causing harm to persons would have effect of causing diversions among the working class and masses and retard the progressive movement in the island. The Citizen's Committee for National harmony says this is a time for national self examination and it also welcomes the appeal made by the religious leaders and wants citizens to declare for themselves Sunday, August 28 as a day of religious observance and fast—CDN. Nearly 7,000 men, women and children who have been displaced as a result of the recent disturbances have been accommodated at the Saraswathy Kovil, Bambalapitiya, St. Peter's College and St. Paul's Girls School, Bambalapitiya. A new civilian volunteer scheme to assist the police was announced by the IGP yesterday. Mr. T. B. Tennekoon, former Minister of Cultural Affairs and his son have been taken into custody by the Kandy police for security reasons. The government is likely to mobilise the public servants with a view to curbing acts of violence being perpetrated by hooligans and some unruly elements. The Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka has conveyed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs details of instances where Indian nationals here have suffered injuries and loss of property, said the first secretary (broadcasting) The Indian High Commissioner in this country yesterday visited Kandy and Matale and inspected refugee camps there. Joint efforts by Ministers, MP's, Co-ordinating Authorities, GA's, Services and Police personnel are leading to a restoration of law and order in the country

—SU. Over 2500 persons have been arrested by the police up to date for acts of violence, arson and looting. About 12 refugee camps have set up in Killinochchi and about 2500 persons are housed in them. Security operations in the Colombo District have been intensified since yesterday—VK. There was a total hartal in the city of Madras in Tamil Nadu yesterday in sympathy with all the troubles the Tamils in Sri Lanka were facing. A decision to appeal to the Central Government in India to stop the atrocities committed against the Tamils in Sri Lanka and to stress to the government of Sri Lanka to afford protection to their property has been passed yesterday in the Assembly in Madras—LP.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 26: Departmental procedure was ignored and the applications of ordinary people rejected in the allocation of flats belonging to the Department of National Housing by the last government; almost all the allottees of about 1600 flats belonging to the Department were made to supporters of the CP, the LSSP and the SLFP; thousands of people who were on departmental waiting lists and who were eligible for allocation have been ignored; these are the findings of the Commissioner of National Housing which have been forwarded to the Minister of Local Government, Housing, and Construction. Religious leaders, trade unions and voluntary organisations have condemned the acts of violence that have taken place during the last few days and have called for the restoration of peace and goodwill among all sections of the community. The law and order situation in the island had shown a marked improvement in the 24 hours which ended yesterday and the tension was easing in the more troubled areas of Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Mannar, police and armed forces said yesterday. Vigilance committees organised by a number of voluntary organisations began assisting the police to maintain law and order in the city and suburbs yesterday. Three ships that left Colombo harbour on Thursday morning carrying refugees to Jaffna will return to Colombo with a large consignment of subsidiary foodstuffs from Jaffna according to the Deputy Minister of Trade. A plan to make Buddhist temples and other religious centres sanctuaries for people in distress was launched yesterday at the Vajirarama by four leading members of the Sangha; the scheme has been launched to restore present conditions to normalcy—CDN. Defence Ministry sources described the present situation as a 'vast improvement'; sporadic incidents were reported from some areas and the security forces have got the situation well in control, they said. Several peripheral medical units were unmanned for the past two days as the staff kept away; even in the outstations the DMO and MOH areas there has been large scale absenteeism. Police are now trying to track down the culprits responsible for creating panic among Tamil residents in what is called telephone directory warfare; police sources said that certain mischievous elements took the telephone numbers of Tamils from the directory at random and informed them that the Tamil houses down their street would be the targets of attack that night; the message was then passed on to other Tamil residents and utter panic reigned in such areas; the telecommunication authorities are trying to assist the police in trying to bring the culprits to book. Many imported food items have arrived here; they include dry fish, cow pea, dates and dhall. The three vessels of the Ceylon Shipping Corporation carrying 1800 refugees are expected to reach Jaffna this

81 special flights to Jaffna for those refugees who want to leave for Jaffna. The PM announced that Rs. 5 extra per day would be given to all police personnel in addition to the benefits they already enjoy—CDM. Several high ranking politicians and former bureaucrats were among those who have been placed under surveillance as the investigations to crack down the 'political conspirators' who are suspected to be behind the spate of violence and looting. A group of people who attempted to purchase goods from the Building Materials Corporation by producing forged documents were arrested by the Colombo Fraud Bureau yesterday. Ten persons including a woman were taken into custody on charges of looting by the Wellawatte police who conducted a lightning raid on the Canal Bank shanty area in the early hours of last morning. Public Service and Corporation Trade Unions and branches have come forward to establish communal harmony in their workplaces and outside. Over 200 persons including several IRCs have been taken into custody in Uva Province following the outbreak of violence in Badulla. Three released insurgents were among the five suspects taken into custody by the Deniyaya police in connection with a case of house breaking and theft on Tuesday. A team of army personnel yesterday escorted 2500 refugees in the Yal Devi train from Colombo to Jaffna—5U. The Tamil students and neighbours around the Jaffna campus of the University looked after the Sinhala students and no harm was done to a single Sinhala student of the Jaffna campus, says a statement issued by the Leftists Students Front of the Jaffna campus; the statement in the form of a handbill has been printed and distributed. According to the Sri Lanka Chamber of Small Industry, the Weaving Supplies Corporation has been responsible for the high cost of locally manufactured textiles; if its products sold to the consumer at full production and price, this corporation should be scrapped it feels. For the second day conditions were reported normal in the Kandya region; the authorities still have in their hands nearly 4,000 refugees all cared for by the government. Sri Lanka is expected to negotiate for the purchase of 200,000 tons of rice from China next year when the Sino-Sri Lanka trade pact comes up for renewal in September—CO. According to an official in the Ministry of Defence, Tamils are being sent to Jaffna at their own request—LD.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 27: Special 'food permits' are being issued to all persons who have lost or misplaced their ration books during the disturbances to enable them to draw their weekly rations from any authorised food distributor or co-operative in any part of the country; instructions to issue these permits were out yesterday from the Food Minister to all GAs in the country. Prominent Tamil elders in Colombo have issued a statement calling upon the people of all communities to completely and permanently eschew violence which has been responsible for the tragic loss of lives and property of innocent persons and to work towards a political consensus based on mutual understanding and respect for human rights. The Viharapadachary of the Putana Nagadeppa Vihara, Nativatu yesterday regarding his safety and the viharas. The General Secretary of the Public Service National Trade Union Federation

by the present disturbances in the country to obtain their rations are now being worked out by the government—SU. Except for the Trincomalee and Batticaloa districts where the curfew was from 6 p.m. last evening to 6 a.m. this morning, the curfew was in operation from 8 p.m. last night to 4 a.m. this morning—VK. There was a large crowd gathered at the KKS pier to receive the refugees who were taken by ship; this was because nobody knew who would be on the ships. About 2 a.m. this morning some shops near the bus stop were on fire and efforts made to put it out were of no use. In the Vavuniya district 14 villages were set on fire and burnt and over a hundred families have escaped to safety. In the town itself, over 15 large shops and many small ones were looted and burnt—EN. The Minister of Health has discovered that while there was a shortage of ayurvedic drugs in the country, Rs. 30 lakhs worth of ayurvedic drugs were rotting inside the Ayurvedic Drugs Corporation Stores—DW.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 28: A luxury yacht-building industry, that will involve a production cost of Rs. 50 million a month once the factory is in full gear has got off the ground in a Sri Lanka Air Force owned World War 2 hangar at Malay Cove, Trincomalee. The Indian PM has said that there is no reason for public opinion in India to be perturbed over the incidents in Sri Lanka, according to agency reports. Fourteen envoys are due to return to Sri Lanka by the end of the year on completion of their terms of office; another will return by the end of January, while two others announced their intentions to resign earlier. The curfew was operative between 9 p.m. last night and 4 a.m. today islandwide except in Jaffna; official sources expressed satisfaction about the law and order situation throughout the country and said that normalcy was being restored; the number of incidents reported had been few, the sources said. The Minister of Transport has placed before the government a blueprint for placing the CTB on an entirely new footing; it envisages the establishment of seven regional autonomous boards in the seven regions the CTB now envelopes. A large consignment of onions has been airlifted from Jaffna on the instructions of the Minister of Trade and will be available for sale from today. The exodus of refugees which began a few days ago was a land, sea and air operation on a scale rarely seen in Sri Lanka before—SO. The PM has welcomed the initiative of the Citizen's Committee for National Harmony in devising measures for easing tension within the community and in helping to solve some of the problems that have arisen in the present crisis. The government has taken action to ensure adequate supplies of food and fuel not only to the North but also to other parts of the country according to official sources. The Sub-Committee set up by the Citizen's Committee for National Harmony to assist refugee camps appealed to the public for donations of food, clothes and toys. The situation in Batticaloa appears to be returning to normal after the strike of bank, mercantile and government employees last Thursday and Friday in protest against certain sections of police personnel earlier in the week, according to Army personnel; in Colombo the situation was almost normal yesterday except for some mopping up operations by the security forces who were rounding up criminal elements; over 190 IRC's and other criminal elements were rounded up during the past three days in some parts of Colombo; Tamil refugees

in the camps at St. Sylvester's and Trinity Colleges and the Ampitiyaseminary were moving to the Teacher's Training College at Polgolla yesterday. The MP for Mihintale has given notice of the motion in the NSA that early action should be taken with a view to granting an amnesty to those connected with the incidents of April 1971 who are still supposed to be in hiding so as to enable them to come into the open society without fear. Mr. Nissanka Wijeyaratne is the first Diyawadane Nilame to have conducted the Kandy Esala Perahera according to a schedule under a curfew—ST. The Cabinet has given approval to a series of far-reaching constitutional amendments to be presented in the NSA by the next month. The death-toll as a result of the current wave of violence have risen to 105; this figure includes looters who have been shot by the security personnel; according to police officials nearly 3,000 persons have been arrested for charges varying from curfew violence, murder, looting and arson; these suspects are remanded in the country's 13 remand prisons; a large quantity of stolen goods and valuables have been recovered by the police from various parts of the island. Over 25,000 persons are now lying in refugee camps in the country awaiting evacuation after last week's outbreak of violence. Very few incidents have been reported throughout the country yesterday and the general situation is well under control; the security forces were mostly engaged in flushing out operations resulting in large quantities of looted goods being recovered. The People's Bank has agreed to give loans to those persons who wish to purchase mechanised boats for the purpose of fishing—WK. The government is working out a rehabilitation scheme for all those estate workers and other people in the hill country who have been affected by the recent spate of trouble and who have been driven away from home. The free Air services for refugees has been suspended from yesterday. Sources connected to the PM have said that it is very likely that he would assume duties as President of the Republic. After a week the town was returning to normal; early yesterday morning right in the midst of the town, 25 shops were set on fire and gutted, and so all other shops closed; following this, the co-ordinating officer of the area has contacted the government and requested them to remove the curfew in Jaffna. A team from the defence Ministry will visit Jaffna this evening in an air force plane to investigate the fire which had broken out the day before yesterday—EN.

FOR THE RECORD

ON THE COMMUNAL CONFLAGARATION

Compensate victims of racial violence too

—Pieter

"The Communist Party demands that the Governments' decision to compensate victims of the violence experienced in the first few days after the general election should be extended so that victims of communal violence could also be compensated", General Secretary of the Communist Party, Mr. Pieter Keuneman said on Sunday when he addressed a conference of the Communist Party branch secretaries at Cotta Road. He said "the communal violence of the past few days can only evoke feelings of shame and alarm among all who value the good name of Sri Lanka.

"The Government's handling of the situation had been far from satisfactory. Some of the Government actions and most of its studied inaction seemed to be dictated more by partisan political consideration rather than its duty to maintain public peace and security. Certain actions, such as placing persons under so-called 'house arrest', appeared to have no basis in law."

Mr. Keuneman said that no one should imagine that once violence subsided, normality would be restored. Unless energetic action was taken now to solve the fundamental questions underlying the eruption of communal violence, there was a grave danger that a situation such as existed in Northern Ireland or in Cyprus would become "normality" in Sri Lanka.

It was also not enough, for the Government merely to reiterate its intention to summon an all-parties conference. It had the clear duty, before such a conference was summoned, to set out its own specific proposals on how the problem of communal relations could be solved, so that other parties and the people as a whole could consider those proposals. Only the ULF had made specific proposals on this matter, which were set

out in its election manifesto. Those proposals provided the last hope of solving the problem through negotiation.

"Sending Tamil refugees to the North and Sinhalese refugees down South was only a temporary means of giving both a sense of security. However, more and more frequent repetitions of this, without a real attempt at an overall political settlement, would only help to increase support for the erroneous demand that Sri Lanka should be divided into separate states."

Mr. Keuneman said all who wanted a United Sri Lanka to continue should guarantee that all its citizens, irrespective of race, should have the right to live and work peacefully and without fear in any part of the country.

—Ceylon Daily News
—27/8/77.

Problems of Tamils must be solved: Prins

Mr. Prins Gunasekera (former MP for Habaraduwa), General Secretary of the Sri Lanka Vimukthi Balavegaya in a statement, yesterday said that the Government should evolve a quick solution to the problems facing the Tamils. He states that the Sinhala people were not against the just grievances of the Tamils being redressed.

The present Government, he states, has won the confidence of the Sinhalese and the Tamils and had a good opportunity to evolve courageous and honest steps to solve this problem. Mr. Gunasekera also states that the recent incidents which followed an event at a carnival in Jaffna has taken a communal turn. They were however grateful that certain steps taken by the Government helped to prevent mass destruction of life and property. They would also thank the religious organisations and other volunteers who came forward to protect the lives of the Tamil speaking people.

They should all now strive to evolve a just solution to prevent such communal disturbances which had occurred thrice in the past 20 years. Upto now only temporary adjustments have been made without finding a permanent solution to the problems. No Government could henceforth turn a blind eye to this problem. The previous

Government after winning 120 seats could have solved the problem. However the leaders of the former government were not much worried about national problems.

Mr. Gunasekera calls upon the Government to stop the evacuation of Tamils to the North and the Sinhalese from the North to the other parts of the country. By that step the authorities were only unwittingly helping in the creation of a Tamil Eelam. He added that the Tamil residents outside the North should be afforded police and armed services protection with the co-operation of the Sinhalese people in the areas.

—Ceylon Daily Mirror
—28/8/77

Recent events must make TULF leaders think again

—Ceylon Communist Party

The Ceylon Communist Party hopes that the recent tragic events would make the TULF leaders think again, says the General Secretary of the Party Mr. N. Sanmugathasan in a press release issued yesterday. The following are excerpts from the release.

"The political bureau of the Ceylon Communist Party, which met on the 27th instant, reviewed the unfortunate direction which events in the country had taken during the past two weeks. What started as a confrontation between the police and a section of the people in Jaffna has been turned into another communal holocaust, second only to the 1958 events by designing communal politicians on both sides and by the excesses committed by the police in the North as well as their refusal to take stern and immediate action against offenders of the law in the South.

"While a detailed examination of the causes that led to these ugly events must await more time, we cannot gloss over some of the inflammatory speeches made in this connection. The speeches of TULF leaders have lacked statesmanship. Equally regrettable is the fact that the SLFP leader did not use the platform of the State Assembly

to condemn racial violence. The Ceylon Communist Party reminds the working class and revolutionary movement that it is always the first victim when communalism rears its ugly head and therefore calls upon it to fight back with all its strength every attempt to incite communalism and to protect all minorities living in their midst as a sacred task and thus slowly lay the basis for restoring the shattered national unity.

"As a party that has consistently opposed the demand for a separate state for the Tamils, we hope that the recent tragic events would make the TULF leaders think again. But we also call upon the Government to help in this process by granting the just demands of the Tamil minority and thereby restore national unity."

—Ceylon Daily News
28/8/77

CP (ML) decries violence

The Communist Party of Sri Lanka in a press release has condemned the recent incidents of violence and has called upon the working class and all patriotic forces to categorically reject the path taken by anti-people elements. The full text of the release signed by Mr. H. L. K. Karawita, member of the Secretariat of the Party reads:—

"The present communal disturbances and the resulting mindless acts of plunder, assault, looting and arson are inimical to the interests of the working people and the broad masses of Sri Lanka. They are yet a further manifestation of similar acts of vandalism and terrorism which erupted in the aftermath of the recent elections. The Communist Party of Sri Lanka (Marxist-Leninist) calls upon the working class and all patriotic forces to categorically reject the path taken by these anti-people elements.

"Despite occasional differences the Sinhala and Tamil speaking peoples in our country have lived together in harmony and close co-operation for centuries. Isolated conflicts such as the present one, have failed to drive a wedge between the working peoples of the various communities. The events

now taking place are not in the interests of the working class and are harmful to the forging of unity among the working people, irrespective of languages and religions.

"History has shown that communalism and terrorism have without exception helped the forces of reaction to consolidate themselves by causing divisions among the exploited masses. In Third World countries like ours, which are under the heel of neocolonialism communalism, is heightened by the failure to solve the day to day problems of the people.

"The CP (ML) draws the attention of both the Sinhala and Tamil speaking peoples to the dangers inherent in the division of the country. The unity and territorial integrity of our country must be resolutely maintained so that the interests of all the communities will be served. If these fissiparous tendencies continue there is the even greater danger that foreign powers may use our temporary differences to gain a stranglehold over the country to further their own selfish ends. This is not the time to lay blame or find scapegoats. We appeal to the working masses to oppose these anti-people developments and help in the efforts to reconstruct the base unity among all the people of our island home."

—Ceylon Daily News
28/8/77

Thwart anti-national plot by defeated factions

—TU federation appeals to members

The General Secretary of the Public Service National Trade Union Federation, Mr. Douglas Abeydeera, has appealed to all its members and fellow workers to shed all petty differences. He has also urged them to unite themselves to thwart the anti-national conspiracy hatched by defeated political factions and their henchmen to obstruct the forward march of the Government. For this purpose all workers should perform their duty with sincerity and dedication and keep watch on saboteurs.

The following is the full text of the message:—

The UNP Government headed by the Prime Minister Mr. J. R. Jayewardene has within one month of assuming office taken several noteworthy measures for the common benefit of the masses. Just as the Government got down to the task of redeeming its pledges to the people, unfortunate incidents have erupted in several parts of the country. As a result of various false rumours inhuman acts of sabotage looting and harmful acts are taking place under the guise of communalism.

It is evident that a certain group of people are trying to create dissension and trouble at Government departments and work places on the pretence of communalism. The attempt made by some defeated political parties with the concurrence of state officials and Trade union leaders loyal to them to create trouble by misleading and instigating workers can be identified as a conspiracy to obstruct the forward march of the UNP Government and sabotage the speedy plans it hoped to implement for the welfare of the masses.

Already these acts have occurred in some Government departments and workplaces. Instead of resorting to unpatriotic and wasteful activities, the working class which desires national prosperity, has given a massive victory to the United National Party to overcome the oppression and untold suffering experienced during the past period.

The UNP Government headed by the Prime Minister Mr. J. R. Jayewardene is ever ready to work for the benefit of the common masses. In order to enable the Government to perform that task, the working class should lend its unstinted co-operation. The only way we could achieve our common ambition is by helping this Government, which commands our full confidence to speed up its march forward.

We should never allow room for the conspiracy hatched by opportunist political factions who have already brought national destruction. We should never allow them to raise their heads once again. You should also keep a close surveillance on those Government servants who are trying to obstruct the Government by being pawns

in the hands of defeated political factions.

We therefore appeal to all sections of the working class to resolve to destroy this anti-national conspiracy by shedding all racial, class, caste, and other petty differences and uniting to perform each one's part of duty with sincerity and dedication.

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More religious bodies, TUs appeal for peace and amity

More religious institutions, welfare organisations and trade unions yesterday appealed to all concerned to co-operate with the Government in resorting law and order and to give assistance to those in need of care and protection.

'FOSTER BROTHERLY FEELING FOR CONUNTRY'S PROGRESS'

The Ven. Hadigalle Pannatissa Mahanayake Thera, Chief High Priest of Bharata in a message says: "If there are any shortcomings or problems between the Sinhalese and the Tamils these should be discussed and settled by peaceful negotiations. Hence all of us in this little island should foster brotherly feelings for the progress of our country. This is my kind appeal to all."

The Christian Workers' Fellowship appealed to all Trade Unions and progressive forces in the country to take all possible action to deal with the latest threat to the unity of the people. The statement said "The Fellowship warns the working people in particular that racism can only divide them and divert attention from their real problems and thus strengthen the hand of reaction in the country. It appeals not only to Christians but to all men of goodwill regardless of race and religion to join together purposefully in resisting these cowardly attacks and in affording relief to the victims."

The Union of Baptist Churches of Sri Lanka unanimously pledged at its annual conference its loyalty to the Prime Minister and the Government and decided to pray for the success of the Prime Minister's efforts to create a just and righteous society.

The Catholic Union of Sri Lanka has appealed to all citizens to co-operate with the government in restoring law and order. A press release issued by Mr. A. G. O. Perera, Acting President of the Union said: "An important step in this direction is to take positive action in each one's neighbourhood to inspire confidence and to allay fears. We also urge all citizens to refrain from careless talk and the spreading of rumours. Let them also avoid being misled by rumours."

The Secretary of the Ceylon National Integration Society Mr. U. L. M. Farook in a statement said: "If we do not settle the differences which arise among ourselves peacefully and in a spirit of an integrated nation, it is we and our children who are going to suffer in future. Therefore in our own interest and in the interest of our motherland, sooner the present tension and violence come to an end better it is for all. We appeal to all to think and act in terms of common interest and use all their influence to bring the present calamity to a halt."

The Lions International District 306 (Sri Lanka) has made an appeal to all Lions, Lion Ladies and Leos to help in the efforts to bring peace to the country. Following is the full text of the statement: "It is with a deep sense of responsibility that I appeal to all Lions, Lion Ladies and Leos to help in the efforts to bring Peace to our beloved land. In so doing we will only be exemplifying our commitment to promote understanding among peoples. It is with a justifiable sense of pride that I pay tribute to those Lions and Lion Ladies who have already played an active role in helping the helpless victims of this terrible tragedy. I am glad that we were able to help with a large consignment of clothes (over 1000 garments). May I therefore appeal once again to all the Lions Family to contact the State Officers in their area and offer their services so that Peace could come sooner. It was also suggested at a conference of representatives of voluntary service organisations in greater Colombo area convened by the Inspector General of Police, that clubs in the area should contact the Superintendents of Police and offer their assistance."

Mr. Abdul W. M. Ameer President of the International Islamic Institute in a message

states:—"At an emergency meeting of the International Islamic Institute it was decided to make an urgent appeal for communal accord and harmony and for the restoration of peaceful conditions in our beloved country."

"It is the duty of the Muslims to play their historic role as peaceful mediators to bring about better understanding between the major communities. It was further decided that an appeal be made to the leaders of all communities to make a concerted effort to settle the outstanding disputes and differences among them."

"We wish the Prime Minister Mr. J. R. Jayewardene and his Cabinet all success in his valiant efforts to restore normalcy and set Sri Lanka on the road to prosperity."

Mr. C. V. Velupillai, Administrative Trustee, National Union of Workers said "At this moment of national crisis it is heartening to note that organisations and public spirited individuals have come forward to assist the government and the law enforcing authorities in the speedy restoration of peace and harmony."

The Sri Lanka Jaycees have appealed to the youth in particular and the public in general to co-operate with the authorities and help restore law and order. It would be clear to any citizen that what is happening in the country is resulting in a loss to everyone in some way or the other. Thus, it is in the interest of every citizen to make even the smallest possible contribution to help restore normalcy in refraining from spreading or believing rumours."

The General Secretary of the UNESCO, Mr. Sri Lal Caldera on behalf of the youth of this country, appealed to all communities to foster peace and harmony for the general good of the country.

The Ceylon Federation of Labour has appealed to all progressive sections to exert themselves to re-establish conditions of communal amity in this country. It has urged the formation of peace committees in all work places and in the neighbourhoods to provide protection to all.

Ceylon Daily News
27/8/77

LETTERS

ON AND ABOUT VIOLENCE

Wanted A New Approach

Sir,

I refer to an Appeal signed by several Tamil citizens which had appeared in your journal. I have no doubt about the genuineness and sincerity of their words. But I fear that Statements and Appeals such as these could lead to a further worsening of the present situation. For they start off by saying that the Sinhalese and Tamils have lived together in peace for centuries. It would be correct to say that the Sinhalese and Tamils have lived together for the last few decades with the Tamils occupying the status of a frustrated second class citizenship, denied at all times natural justice, with periodic eruptions of violence such as the one happening now. No less an authority than the present Prime Minister has admitted this. And every signatory of this Appeal can from personal experience vouch that Tamils in this generation are being treated as second class citizens. By Appeals such as this they are asking for the *status quo* to be maintained whereby the Tamils in every part of the Island are to be pushed around, bullied, ill treated, prevented from securing employment, patronised, denied legitimate promotions and aspirations, and the protection of their persons and property.

The accentuation of the situation can be dated from the time that sole prominence was given to the Sinhala language and continued with increasing emphasis by every Government since. The fact that some Tamils accepting this situation have by hard work, thrift, competing in public examinations and by merit been able to secure good employment and property in predominantly Sinhala areas should not blind one to these hard facts. In more recent times discrimination against the Tamils has affected them in every field of endeavour, excepting among those Tamils who for one reason or ano-

ther were prepared to join up with the predominant Sinhalese politicians to obtain the patronage and favour of the State.

The truth is that this Island is populated by communal minded citizens and that beneath a thin veneer of reasonableness and tolerance there is a hard core of what has passed under the term "racial" prejudice. How else can one account for the fact that within hours of the "Reichstag Fire" in the Bazaar at Jaffna, all over the Island pockets of plunder and violence erupted quickly and became widespread unless there was a constantly simmering cauldron of "racial" enmity waiting for some event to boil over. Disgruntled political opportunists and criminal elements may have taken advantage of the prevailing unrest, but they could have done so only if the general peace loving population allowed them or turned a blind eye to what was so obvious at their front doorsteps.

I have heard a Sinhalese describe how in the City of Colombo of a number of Sinhalese families living in a cluster down one of the streets having an isolated Tamil family living right in the center, during this curfew in broad daylight with all these families watching from the front gates, a mob enter this single household and pillage and plunder it and then walk out as brazenly as they entered in with every article in the house. "Did you," I asked, "or any other of the number that were watching offer even a token of protest, however ineffectual it may have been, against this act of lawlessness committed in front of your very eyes?" To which there was no reply.

I was discussing recent events with a Sinhala colleague when he said that one of the solutions to the present tension would be to restrict Tamils to 20% of all University admissions in keeping with their proportion in the country's population. To which I replied then that 20% only of the country's conservancy labourers should be Tamil. He accused me of being facetious, but when I went on to add that then 20% of the national investment should be directed towards the Tamil speaking areas and that 20% of the Ambassadors and High Commissioners, Corporation Chairmen and Directors, Bank Chairmen and that every fifth Inspector

General of Police, Army, Air Force and Navy Chief, Chief Justice, Governor of the Central Bank, President of the Nation and even Prime Minister must be a Tamil, he agreed that this would be reasonable and logical, but he wondered whether he would accept or tolerate such a position.

This is what I mean by "racial" prejudice, where the "rational" mind will always be overruled by the dark uncomprehending passion of bigotry. So when the political arm of the Tamils, the TULF (and there should be no mistake made about this, the TULF speaks for the Tamils irrespective of whether all the Tamils voted for the TULF or not, just as much as Mr. J. R. Jayewardena rightly says that he is the Prime Minister of the whole nation including those who voted for the SLFP) makes a statement it must be listened carefully and not labelled as inflammatory out of hand. As Amirthalingam pointed out when the Sinhalese talk of their rights this is termed nationalism; but when the Tamils talk of their similar rights this is termed communalism and inflammatory.

The myth that speeches of the TULF members especially Amirthalingam's are the sole cause of the present communal problem, a reason assiduously trotted out by very many Sinhalese including

Protect Our Tamil Brothers Buddhist Prelate Appeals

The Ven Kotugoda Dhammawasa Nayake Thera, Chief Incumbent of the Sri Dharmaparamaya, Mount Lavinia and Patron of the Sinhala-Tamil Friendship Association, has appealed for better understanding and closer friendship between the Sinhala Buddhists and their Tamil Brothers.

In a statement issued yesterday the Nayake Thera said Sinhala Buddhists and Tamils should work together to foster peace at this critical moment facing the country. He appealed to members of the Association to do everything possible to foster better understanding between the two communities and to provide protection and assistance to the refugees.

—Sun, 26/8/77

several members of the UNP has been demolished by recent events in Puttalam where the violence is between the Sinhalese and Muslims (not to mention the Puttalam deaths under the SLFP regime). These acts of violence cannot possibly be related to TULF speeches. And what about the 1915 and 1958 riots when there was no talk of Eelam. When Amirthalingam speaks of the desire of the Tamils to live as free citizens able to control their own destinies in the light of their cultural and religious traditions without fear or favour and achieve their innate potential then this legitimate cry from the heart must be heeded if we are talking of Democracy, Fair-play and Justice.

Mr. J. R. Jayewardene as all of us agree is an honourable man and when he says that he wishes to settle the Tamil problem we know he means it. But he is only one man and mortal at that. Even if he were to make arrangements today that were satisfactory to all, suppose for one reason or another he was no longer in power tomorrow, who would honour the promises? Or even if this UNP Government with its massive majority changes the present constitution to satisfy the Tamils what is there to prevent the next Government with a possible bigger majority undoing and taking away those provisions which seek to give all citizens equal rights and opportunities in the life of this country. All this has been pointed out time and again by the several Tamil leaders during this century and very ably debated by the TULF in the elections. The simple truth, as recent events so very clearly point out, is that the Tamils cannot stake their whole future on the promises of the Sinhalese people as a whole, leave alone the good faith of an isolated or single person.

This must therefore lead to the formation of some system whereby the Tamils have the fullest say in the control of their destiny within the shores of this island. By evacuating Tamils to the Northern and Eastern Provinces for their safety this Government like all other previous Governments has acknowledged these areas to be Tamil. By definition a Tamil area is also a place where a Tamil can live in peace without being assaulted and killed by a Sinhalese civilian for communal reasons with

or without Police or Military support. How much more blood has to be shed before a new approach to communal problems is adopted?

D.C.

Colombo.
10 September, 1977

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Get Back

Sir,

Reference your notebook appearing in your issue of 27.8.77, let it be clearly understood that the majority of the Tamils living in the Northern and Eastern provinces have voted to separate from the rest of the island. We are requesting the 58% Tamils living in the Sinhalese areas to get back to the Northern and Eastern provinces. Well, if they are not willing to do so, they are at liberty to integrate with the Sinhala people and live with them for good. Our decision to separate and form the State of Tamil Eelam is irrevocable as successive Sinhala Governments have compelled us to arrive at this decision. This will be achieved at any cost later if not now. There is now no question of looking back.

Who are these Tamil Residents in Colombo who have issued an appeal? They are not Tamils but Sinhala Tamils with vested interests in Sinhalese areas. We are not in the least concerned about them. They have been issuing appeals from time to time for the last 21 years, but they have not succeeded in preventing successive Sinhala Governments from discriminating against the Tamils in every way possible.

K. C. Adiappathan

"Advocate's Lodge"
Valvettiturai.

31st August 1977

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Is Eelam The Correct Answer?

Sir,

Is Eelam the correct answer? This is the question that is agitating the minds of all right-thinking Tamils most of whom have been living in Colombo and other areas in peace and amity with members of the other communities for a

considerable period of time. To get a correct picture of the problem, that calls for solution in the interests of national progress, it is imperative that all should realise that the democratic verdict of the people in the General Elections of July 21 was quite clear and unequivocal.

To say that the result was a landslide for the UNP would be a gross understatement. It was a roaring tornado that relentlessly swept before its fury every other party that contested the elections. The UNP that got almost 7/8ths of the seats in the NSA did not have in its manifesto the carving out of a separate Eelam state in the North and East for the Tamil speaking people.

Indeed it is the first article in the UNP's creed that every citizen of this country whatever his nationality, caste, creed or political persuasion has the inherent right to live in any part of the country (from Dondra Head to Point Pedro) in complete freedom and free from fear. It is this too, that got for the UNP a vast number of minority votes, which gave this party its resounding victory. The Prime Minister Mr. J. R. Jayewardene has dedicated himself to ensure that this is not merely an empty political shibboleth or vote-catching slogan.

It is intriguing that the TULF claims that its electoral victory of a mere 17 seats in a 168 member Assembly (and that only of the Tamil speaking electorates of the North) gives them a clear mandate to divide the country by setting up a separate state in the North and the east! The Tamils resident in the areas other than the North and East outnumber those who voted TULF. It is hoped that the TULF will even at this late hour pull itself out of this nightmarish morass.

Eelam could pay dividends as a tongue-in-cheek political slogan. This has apparently captured the imagination of the disgruntled and restless Tamil youth who propelled the TULF to parliament.

These youths, like most youths in other parts of the country, have been given an extremely raw deal by the bungling partisan policies and programmes of the previous government.

C. J. Anandappa

174, Hapugoda,
Kandana, August 31, 1977

Another Rumour

Sir,

Your analysis of the recent communal carnage is exceptionally realistic and should be read and digested by all Ceylonese.

However, I wish to place on record yet another rumour/gossip currently gaining ground amongst the middle class Tamilians. The source will perhaps remain a mystery as in the other instances.

The rumour is that, the UNP was never genuinely interested in solving the Minority problems. It was only with the express purpose of winning the Tamil votes in the Sinhala areas they showed some anxiety about this problem. Now that they have got a steam-roller majority, they do not want to de-stabilise their political position nor they wish to provide any political lever to the SLFP. The situation being so, the gossip peddlers state that the current communal carnage will be only a smoke screen to the UNP's withdrawal from their proclaimed position.

The believers of this hypothesis believe that a section of the UNP is behind the communal holocausts, backed by a section of the press and others. They argue that a section of the press deliberately played up the TULF leaders and focused public attention to their melodramatic statements and thereafter proceeded to provide an easy solution to this problem.

P. Suntharalingam

Kantharmadam,
Jaffna.
30th August, 1977

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Calling The Bluff

Sir,

The TULF leaders should be well advised to read your comments on the recent communal carnage. Perhaps someone should get a Tamil translation of your article for free circulation amongst the Tamilian youths in Jaffna, so that the violent lads behind the cadjan curtain may realise the gravity of the situation and behave themselves.

The recent loss of lives and property is a small price for what the Tamil lads are demanding. To lament over these incidences

is hypocrisy and certainly, the Tamils should be thankful for the majority community for the restraint manner in which they reacted. Look around the world for recent happenings in other countries where similar demands were made.

One has no alternative but to wonder whether the Tamils are credited with "morebrain" than they have. Surely, they are not so blind to the bold writing on the wall. The change of their party's name as "Liberation Front" does not make any difference. Tamils are essentially peace loving cowards. How can they fight a 'Liberation War' when a slightest noise at their doorsteps makes them shudder in fear and flee. How can they defend their so called "home-land" if they cannot get together to resist a few thugs of their area. Just imagine them fighting a 'liberation war' with an invading army ha..ha..The terrine of their "home-land" does not even afford a secure hiding place when their enemy decides to launch a land, sea and air attack. Imagine the so called "liberation army" with their verties tucked up marching on empty stomachs, even before they launch their attack, as they are purely at the mercy of their "enemy" for food and fuel supplies.

Brigadier Amir (don't imagine that you are Amin), it is high time you call off your bluff. The only fire power in your armoury is "Voice Bombs" which, when deployed has everytime hurt your own men, more than your opponents. Brigadier Amir, blow your bugle and command "right about turn and march forward". Don't turn back to see whether anyone is following you. I am sure there will be none.

Anton Rasiah

"Shanthi Pura"
Nuwara Eliya.
2nd September, 1977

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Politicians And Restraint

Sir,

All right thinking people of this country would unequivocally condemn the cruel carnage in the length and breadth of this country. This sanguinary situation in the country was partly aggravated by

the untimely utterances of the politicians of both communities.

The present Government under the able and wise leadership of Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, is earnestly endeavouring to remedy the ills that beset the Tamil community. He and his Cabinet colleagues have admitted with conviction and candour that grave injustices have been perpetrated on the Tamil community and the Tamils are smarting under a genuine grievance. They have also stated that the solution to this difficult and delicate problem is a necessary prelude to a good, peaceful and efficient secular Administration which is the beau ideal of any civilized Government.

The SLFP has not expressed any official disapproval or even made an unfavourable comment on the tangible steps taken by the present Government to end this perennial problem. The Left which had so corybantically espoused the cause of the Tamils, still adheres firmly in principle to the indefeasibility of Tamil rights. This has created a climate conducive to the solution of all salient differences between the two major communities that inhabit this island.

In this background the pronouncements of these politicians are far from being propitious. The refugee camps that denigrate the beautiful city of Colombo, are stark testimony to the tragic thoughtlessness and tactlessness of these politicians. The murder, mutilation, devastation and the in-effable and nightmarish anguish of these unsuspecting victims so unwittingly caught in the coils of passionate hatred and undisguised lust to loot is a grim reminder to us all. This may haunt the halls of deliberation and may tend to cloud the atmosphere necessary for the calm and dispassionate review of the problem. There is evidence that the baser elements in the country after venting their aggressive acquisitiveness against the Tamils are now seeking fresh and verdant pastures in the Muslim meadows. This can escalate into a national conflagration of unprecedented magnitude.

Such future incidents can hamstring the Premier and other responsible leaders from an objective appraisal and an expeditious and effective solution to the Tamil impasse. It is fervently hoped that

the politicians would be more circumspect in their expression of their views on matters which have an emotional undertone.

C. Aruchuna

Thambasetty,
Point Pedro.
22.8.77

Post-Election Violence

Sir,

The Editor's Note Book on the "Antomy of Violence" in the *Tribune* of July 30, 1977, correctly stated that post-election violence started in March 1965. I think it should be pertinent to consider why there was such violence even though on a mild scale in March 1965 and not before. It could not have been due to the fact that the winning party was the UNP thereby indicating that the incidence of thugery etc., are more rampant among the UNPers. If it were so there should have been even a milder form of violence after the UNP victory in March 1960, followed probably by retaliation against the UNPers in July 1960 after the SLFP victory.

In my opinion post election violence of March 1965, if it could properly be called violence—probably in contrast to *Ahimsa* and *Maitri* as understood locally—was the natural reaction of the victors to their political victory, at the General Election of March 1965 which confirmed the Electorates' support of the victors' constitutional victory in the Parliament over the famous motion of No Confidence on 1964.12.03 the political significance of which the defeated coalition government of the SLFP and the LSSP refused to accept at first, by trying all possible means—with fair and foul—like demonstrations by the supporters of the LSSP and the SLFP who to their party leader were "The People" to remain in power even after their defeat in Parliament. Even this mild violence cannot be condoned.

Post election violence of an alarming degree last month, in my opinion was also due to the fact that over the last few years people have inclined to be more violent in nature, and have tended to behave more like beasts than as human

beings, impulsive and unable to face defeat. Post election violence was, I think, another aspect of a major sociological problem.

Finally I consider that violence was greater last month because the majority of the victims from the defeated parties by some strange coincidence or by design appear to have been ready for violence than the victors—not the underworld elements mentioned by you, who started largely for jubilation.

U. Nanda

Batticaloa.
12.8.1977

Police Force

Sir,

In the light of recent events, no apology is needed from me, I think for reproducing the letter I wrote to some of the daily newspapers exactly four years ago and which the *Observer* of 18.8.73 carried in its columns under the title "Force of Law".

"There is frequent reference to heart-rending and alarming Police 'excesses' in the newspapers nowadays, arising out of several barbaric assaults on the public recently in different parts of the country, not a few of which appear to be unwarranted. Some Policemen seem to have descended to, the level of the common thug, not realising perhaps that by such atrocious acts they bring the entire Police Service into disrepute and even make it a laughing stock. What exactly does this word "excess" signify in Police jargon? Does it mean that Police Officers could normally use force on the public in the exercise of their duty provided it is not excessive? If so, who could determine its extent and how?

"To the best of my knowledge and belief, the law permits the reasonable use of force only to bring a criminal under control should it become necessary, and under no other circumstances. Every person apprehended by the Police for what in their considered and perhaps unchallengeable judgement is a transgression of the law, is not necessarily a criminal, and such a person is entitled to be treated with consideration as a human being, and not maltreated

as a denizen of the jungle, until he is produced before a Magistrate to be dealt with according to law.

"It would be useful for the public to know under what circumstances force could be used in an individual who is not a criminal whilst in Police custody, and whether there is a limit to it? The public would welcome elucidation from the IGP on this point through the press. He would be rendering a real service not only to the public but also to his officers by doing so. Merely stating that it is difficult to lay down a hard and fast rule in a matter of this nature would be unhelpful."

I consider that in the light of the current deplorable situation, the publication of this letter in your esteemed journal would be useful to the government. Should this catch the eye of the PM and prompt him to take steps to effect a change in the attitude of the Police towards the public (which is long overdue) he will, I am sure, earn the lasting gratitude of the entire nation and the admiration of friend and foe alike. The public should never be made to feel that the Police is their inveterate enemy—as the notorious Dowbiggin perhaps meant it to be—but as their friend, counsellor and guide at all times and in all circumstances. Could there be anything more desirable from the point of view of the public anything, more conducive to the welfare of a State, than healthy Police-Public relations? Should it not be a government's highest endeavour to achieve it in the interest of all concerned? Isn't it worth earnestly striving for? Surely it is not an insuperable task for a person with a will to succeed!

Any resort by the Police to "extra-legal" procedure, which is a transgression of the law, is deserving of the strongest possible condemnation. The basic function of the Police is the prevention and detection of crime and this function has to be performed in strict conformity with the law. The use of unnecessary force must be eschewed in this enlightened age and in a predominantly Buddhist country. It would, I think, not be inappropriate to reproduce herein the comment of the Basnayake Police Commission about the conduct of the Police:

"The Police do not enjoy the goodwill of the public. The public image of the Police is not at all what it should be. The fear of battery by the Police is in every citizen. Several cases of torture have come to light in the Courts. The Police have therefore, to win the confidence by a long period of correct behaviour before public co-operation can be gained. Their outlook and attitude of mind towards the public has to change. Courteous attention and civility must replace the rude and militaristic attitude that is characteristic of a Police station. No laws can effect the change. Even after public attention has been focussed on a number of incidents, the Police have belaboured the public; reports of Police violence still continue to appear in the press. We think that this attitude of mind is largely due to the fact that the machinery for investigating complaints against the Police at present is unsatisfactory and does not command the confidence of the public."

The pity of it is that no action was taken by the former government to remedy this unhealthy state of affairs, and the people have had to pay dearly for it.

Evacuees to be coaxed to return

Evacuees from homes in Colombo and the suburbs are to be coaxed to return home. Official sources said that efforts would be made to request evacuees who left their homes in fear to get back and resume normal life. They said that the various social service organisations have promised to help to resettle these families who were terrorised by the wave of violence in the past week. The police would establish temporary police posts in troubled residential areas to give confidence to the people who hurriedly left their homes in panic after incidents in the neighbourhood. Police sources said that closed houses were ideal targets for burglars who appeared to be exploiting the present situation. They advised people to keep houses occupied as much as possible.

—Ceylon Daily Mirror
28/8/77

The PM would do well to call for this report, peruse it carefully (if he has not done so already) and take appropriate action without fear or favour. The time is indeed ripe for such action, which the public will whole-heartedly welcome as a step in the right direction and at the proper season. Will the PM rise to the occasion?

C. E. J. Alles

113, Allan Avenue,
Dehiwala.
20.8.77

Mistake Or Bungling?

Sir,

Eversince the unprecedented electoral victory of the UNP last July, your journal has been pre-eminent in providing a balanced, objective and constructive assessment of the new Government's actions. It is in that context that I seek publicity for these views.

In its statement of policy pertaining to foreign affairs, the Government stands pledged primarily to defend the integrity of the country. Its first publicised initiative to that end has been so mishandled as to warrant comment. I refer to the reported expulsion order against two Soviet nationals allegedly under suspicion of interference in our internal affairs, and its subsequent revocation at the behest of CWC leaders.

The declaration that a foreigner is *persona non grata* is, conventionally, a deeply considered and definitive diplomatic action which does not lend itself to revocation. It is not to be confused, say, with the transfer of a public servant which is later altered from a sympathetic consideration of representations. In this instance, the initial order and its subsequent revocation place this country in a poor light, in international eyes, for it means that:

- either the initial order was ill-considered and hasty,
- or the Government gave greater weight to the mere word of CWC leaders than to the reports of its Intelligence Service.

In the first case, it must be said that a poor, small nation cannot presume to trifle thus with a Super-

power. In the second case, it must be said that a slur has been cast on the Intelligence Service which can only undermine its morale and efficiency. In either case, the national interest has been harmed.

In the context of the Dharmishta Society, the Government retained in their posts those high officials who stage-managed the previous Prime Minister's posturing on the international stage. It is to be hoped that they do not create for this Government an equivalent international image.

C. Samarasekera

107, Cotta Road,
Colombo 8.
7 September, 1977

SOMETHING TO BE PROUD OF

The Citizens' Committee for National Harmony

Formation of Neighbourhood Groups

A group of concerned citizens drawn from all faiths and communities in this country met under the chairmanship of Sir Senarat Gunawardena, President of the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress, to consider how best they could fulfil their moral and social responsibility at the present time of national crisis to help prevent acts of violence against innocent individuals and households. Among the various initiatives that were proposed, special emphasis was placed on the formation of neighbourhood groups which could be organised to control and prevent such violence. Many such groups have already been formed in different parts of the District of Colombo and the suburbs and have functioned effectively in safeguarding life and property. These groups have organised themselves to act together in an emergency and be responsible for the protection of the households which are being threatened with violence. At present the effort has been confined to relatively isolated groups. It is vitally necessary to extend this effort on a nation-wide scale to create a wide network of such neigh-

bourhood groups. This would have the effect of imparting the necessary confidence to each individual group and strengthening its capacity to preserve peace and create conditions for communal harmony.

The term "neighbourhood group" was selected consciously in order to indicate that this would be an initiative taken by small groups of households themselves living together and interacting closely within a limited area which has the character of a genuine neighbourhood. These groups would be acting informally and responding to their own deeply felt human concern for the well-being of their neighbours who through no fault of their own have become exposed to inhuman acts of violence. These groups should not be regarded as committees that are set up on bureaucratic lines. They should be created in response to a spontaneous desire for mutual aid within a community. The objective of this group would be not only the immediate one of taking responsibility for protecting the households which are exposed to violence but also a more fundamental task of demonstrating intercommunal harmony and the capacity of our people to live as a unified nation. The neighbourhood group would therefore be a focus for activities which will help to create conditions of communal harmony in which lasting and just solutions could be found to the communal conflicts which have disfigured this country since independence.

In implementing this programme for the formation of neighbourhood groups, the Citizens' Committee which met on 23rd August 1977 decided to call upon various voluntary agencies which have been active in the field of social welfare to participate in the programme. The programme has the support of the various religious organisations which will take an active part in promoting the formation of these groups. The religious organisations, the voluntary agencies and other individuals who have formed themselves into a sub-committee to carry out this Programme will get in touch with communities in their respective areas and help in setting up these groups.

A few guidelines for the organisation of the group are given below:

(1) **Leadership:** One or more persons who enjoy the respect of the community must take the initiative.

(2) **Territorial areas:** Each group should be limited to a specific and identifiable area, say, a lane, or a group of 50 houses—there should be not more than about 75 houses to each unit, as larger units will cease to have a genuine neighbourhood character.

(3) **Organisation:** Obtain assurances of commitment of 2 or 3 males and females from each household for specific duties to be performed as required. Aim at obtaining commitments from about 100 persons for each of 50 houses.

(4) **Functions:** The group should deploy its personnel according to certain well defined functions—

(a) **Information:** To obtain information about potential areas and likely sources of trouble. Combat rumours. Pass on valid information to action groups.

(b) **Patrol groups:** Each group of houses to have a patrol group. It would be useful to carry whistles, torches etc.

(c) **Public relations:** Maintaining continuing contact with Police, Service personnel and Members of Parliament. Establish links with neighbourhood groups in the vicinity and work out methods of mutual assistance.

(d) Groups of persons with influence in the area to arrange household visits where feasible to persuade the population in outlying areas to participate in the programme and allay and eliminate communal tensions.

Further information could be had from:

THE CITIZENS' COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL HARMONY

Hony. Joint Secretaries:

1. A. T. Ariyaratne
Sri Lanka Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya,
"Meth Medura",
77, De Soysa Road,
Moratuwa.
'Phone: 072-375

2. Rev. Fr. Tissa Balasuriya,
Centre for Society and Religion,
271, Deans Road,
Colombo 10.
'phone: 95425

POINT OF VIEW

Whither Sri Lanka?

by B. Mahendra

It is hardly possible to exaggerate the impact of the recent communal violence on the fabric of this country. Rarely in its recorded history—objective history, that is, not the perverted sort bandied about by all sides in Parliament—can the country have been face to face with a crisis of this magnitude. Many considered 1958 to have been an aberration, the result of the activity of unhinged minds; the economy then was sounder, no organised separatist movement existed and a recovery of sorts could be made. 1977 seems far different; the situation is grave because it transcends mere communalism.

Those of us who voted this Government into power did so in the hope that stability would in turn lead to progress and a new order would be established. It now appears that we did our job not wisely but too well. As in 1970 no responsible Opposition now exists, the pendulum now having swung to the other extreme. The government, provided with an unassailable majority, has been strangely disinclined to tackle problems boldly and has been dissipating its energies in seeking scapegoats. Official paranoia has been ascending alarming heights and far from engaging in some heart-searching at home, spokesmen for the government within and without parliament have indulged in innuendo and personal abuse, and action against dissenting individuals has been particularly vindictive and smacks of a witch-hunt. It is unnecessary to point out that this is far from likely to restore peace or goodwill, or even consolidate whatever democracy gained from holding the last elections.

About a year ago in these columns I described the *de facto* separations existing in the land owing to a breakdown in communication between Sinhalese and Tamils, especially the younger generation. Now the situation is compounded by the presence of refugees. What sort of United Sri Lanka are we to build if at every turn of communal strife Tamils have to be despatched



North and East and Sinhalese brought down South? It is the bitterest of ironies that the authorities who would fight to the death to stave off separation have had to oversee the evacuation of refugees in both directions. If the basic trust needed for the Sinhalese and Tamils to live together in any part of Sri Lanka is lacking what hope for unity do we have? One would have thought that a government which has received such overwhelming electoral support would have put statesmanship before politics and tackled this problem instead of frittering away time and energy in hurling abuse at its opponents.

It is clear that the economy has received a serious blow, one which it is in no position to withstand. There was precious little stability in the economy and civil violence has succeeded only in diminishing productivity still further. Some of the grander schemes to attract investment, both local and foreign, are in jeopardy and the extensive international coverage given to the carnage will almost certainly be as great a disincentive as the worst excesses of the SLFP regime. Foreign investors have little to play around with these days and an unstable volcano of a country is not likely to be an attractive haven.

The racial violence was tragic enough. But an even more disturbing development in recent times has been the total breakdown of law and order following the slightest provocation. At first it was post-election violence, a meaningless taking of revenge, against opponents, in which both major political parties have indulged. The situation today is such that at a drop of a hat—an election victory, a Police-civilian clash—the entire country erupts and the rampant indiscipline in the ranks of a segment of the security forces is conducive to a widespread conflagration.

The situation is made worse by successive governments which despite their frightening electoral strength have been unable, or unwilling, to take appropriate action promptly. In 1970 the victors beat up the vanquished as part of the celebrations, as a facious Prime Minister assured us. In 1977 the wrecking, looting and killing have taken place in the shadow of res-

tored freedom and a righteous society. Is the price of "democracy" "freedom" and "morality" to be the loss of liberty of the minorities, whether political or racial?

Meanwhile, one lives in trepidation because any future crisis may give vent to mass hysteria that will seek victims among convenient minorities. Furthermore, it is a sobering thought that the so-called guardians of law and order in all their armed splendour, have been singularly ineffective in quelling disorder begun, if not by their colleagues—we will leave that to the inquiring commission—by relatively unarmed mobs. It boggles the imagination how this indisciplined lot would have performed against any organized movement of armed individuals for, let there be no mistake, the indiscipline that manifested itself in the services being ineffectual custodians of the peace during the post-election period and after can only provide comfort to any organisation that has designs on the government.

If there is a silver lining in all this horrendous grey, it has kept outside our range of vision. The government to date has not shown, despite noble words, an ability to cope with fundamental issues. It has not guaranteed that it will consciously minimise the effects of its tyrannical majority—on the contrary, at least during the first month, it has repeated the mistakes and in some instances gone further than the SLFP-ULF brand of despotism.

The minority problem has obtruded itself but neither the Prime Minister nor his party, given an unprecedented mandate and professing to be both United and National, have faced up to the challenge yet. If statesmanship prevails there is no reason why a peculiarly human problem cannot be solved by human beings but, as it has so often happened, politicians can only make matters worse.

It is madness to divide this country but is it any less insane to have a semi-divided land indulging in periodic bouts of communal warfare?

RACE-MYTH & SCIENCE— I

Race—Prejudice And Reaction

by Dr. Arthur Weerakoon
B.Sc (Lond), Ph.D (Glasgow),
F.R.E.S. (Lond).

This article is an abridged version of a lecture Dr. Weerakoon first delivered in July 1956—a few weeks after the incidents on Galle Face Green when the Sinhala Only Bill was introduced in Parliament. The second and concluding part of this article will be published next week.

In the context of the race-hatred preached in 1958 by certain political elements in Ceylon, Dr. Weerakoon emphasised that the whole concept of race superiority is based on a myth.

This article was published in the *Tribune* in December 1958.

Near Maidanek, in Poland, the Nazis erected a vast community of destruction. Scores of buildings stood within a circumference of barbed wire, but of them all two have special interest. In one of these was found the store of clothes accumulated from the victims—a pathetic heap, which contained everything from men's suits to baby's shoes. The other building had three rooms. In the first of these the prisoners were made to remove their clothing; in the second they were passed under a series of shower baths; and in the third they were packed so tightly that no one could possibly fall. Three pipes led into this room from the outside, and there was a fourth aperture through which a guard might watch the happenings within. When the room was filled with perhaps two hundred persons, there suddenly came a shower of crystals through the pipes. On contact with the air these crystals generated deadly gases. Then the guard through his aperture had the duty, pleasant doubtless to him, of deciding at what moment all two hundred persons might be considered dead.

For a time the corpses were buried, layer upon layer, in enor-

mous trenches; but as the tide of battle began to move westward, the Nazis sought to remove all traces of their crimes. For this purpose they built a crematory, a series of five ovens, each just large enough to hold a human body. The bodies were shoveled in on ladles of precisely the right shape and size. At first the cremations proceeded slowly, because the ovens were not hot enough. But then Nazi "science" worked the oven heat up to 1,500 degrees Centigrade and the furnaces began to consume as many as 2,000 bodies a day. In this manner no less than 1500 000 people perished at Maidanek.

One evening when the furnaces were in full blast, a group of newly arrived prisoners came by. It was an error, for prisoners were not supposed to know of these events. By chance also the Nazi commandant was present at that moment. A woman among the prisoners, seeing thus suddenly the fate which awaited them all, shrieked aloud. The commandant ordered her to be silent, but hysteria had over come her. Then at a further command, two guards seized her and threw her alive into one of the furnaces. There was a flash of light as the hair caught fire, a last horrible cry. Then silence, the silence of fascist death.

What you have just read is an account of a German death-camp from a book by an American philosopher, Barrows Dunham, a book called "Man against Myth". The victims referred to in this account were members of various so-called "inferior races", the Poles, the Czechs, the Belgians, the Lithuanians, the Jews and the like, but mainly the Jews. All this happened over a dozen years ago; why bring it up now? There are no death-camps today; why bring this up now?

WHY RACIALISM? To answer that question we must go back in time to the period after the 1914-18 war. Germany had been badly defeated in that war and had been forced to accept a harsh and humiliating peace. In Germany poverty, unemployment and inflation grew apace. The Emperor and those capitalists who had led the country into the war were no longer in control. There was a republic with democratic-socialist parties in power, parties pledged to socialism, but hamstrung by their reformism and quite unable to do any-

thing to solve the country's difficulties. Communist parties had come into power in other countries; and in Russia seemed likely to succeed in putting the country on the highroad to progress and prosperity. More and more Germans were turning to the Communist Party of Germany and to its policy as their only hope of salvation.

This did not suit the German capitalists and war-mongers a bit, those who wished to build Germany up for another war, a war of revenge, but especially a war for colonial markets. The attention of the people must be diverted—but how was this to be done? The people must be led away from socialism; the people must be led to believe that some cause other than those pointed to by the communists was the cause of all their troubles; of their shortage of food, of their shortage of clothes, of housing, of employment and so on—but what other cause? Hitler, and Rosenberg provided the answer; the Jews.

There was already amongst the Germans, as indeed there is amongst many European peoples, a prejudice against the Jews; and this prejudice Hitler and Rosenberg decided to use. These men and their party—it is instructive that these fascists called their party a socialist party, the National Socialist (hence Nazi) Party—these people blamed the Jews for everything.

Germany had lost the war—that was due to Jewish treachery at the Front. Germany had been forced to accept a harsh peace and to pay vast sums of money by way of war reparations—that again was due to Jewish treachery, this time in the government that negotiated the peace. There was unemployment in Germany—that was because Jews had more jobs than their numbers in the population entitled them to; a Jew in office always favoured fellow Jews; kick the Jew out and there would be jobs enough for the true-born Nordic Germans.

The inflation that made it almost impossible to buy anything worthwhile with one's wages, the soaring prices, the fantastic rising cost of living, these too were the work of the Jews, of Jewish financiers in our banks, Jewish politicians in our government, Jewish traders in our shods.

The Jews! the Jews! the Jews! It is always the Jews at the bottom of everything, and when it is not the Jews then it is the Communists—who are mostly Jews anyway.

THE LIFE. It mattered not at all to these Nazi racists that there was no truth in any of this; it never does when one's purpose is to fan members of race-prejudice into a blinding, un-reasoning flame of race-hatred. So the lying propaganda went on, and gathered momentum as it went. It has always been thus. The Jews rejected Jesus Christ and crucified Him. They sacrifice little children at their Passover Feast and drink their blood. And now these filthy Jew—Communists want to nationalise our wives; and to make us all slaves of the state.

The Jews have always become a vile and filthy race, filled with all most disgusting qualities. They

New Body To Help Refugees

Tamils who were affected by the recent disturbances and who lost their property and valuables will be assisted by a newly formed "Helping Hand" organisation. At a news conference, three officials of the organisation, Mr. K. C. Nithyanandan, Mr. K. Kandasamy and Mr. S. S. Santirakasan, revealed the plan of action they propose taking. Speaking to newsmen at the Hindu College, Bambalapitiya, they said the organisation was non-political and would engage only in social service. The funds, they revealed, would come from the Government and voluntary bodies both local and foreign. It was revealed that there were about 40,000 refugees who had lost their properties and their positions. They said there were 1,800 refugees housed at Hindu College, Bambalapitiya, Saraswathie Hall, Kathiresan Kovil, St. Peter's College and St. Paul's Girl's School Milagiriya. The rest were housed in refugee camps all over the island. There were refugee camps in Kurunegala, Kegalle, Galaha, Kandy, Matale (the largest refugee camp) Galle, Matara and Negombo, the organisation revealed.

—Sun, 29/8/77

On Race Hatred

have always stood in the way of man's progress. But we Nordic Germans are a chosen race, chosen to lead the world. All mankind's greatest steps forward, the invention of the wheel, the invention of agriculture, all such inventions were Aryan inventions. And the Nordic Germans are the only pure Aryans in the world today. We are destined to lead the world; Deutschland, Deutschland Uber Alles; Yet at every step our efforts are frustrated by these Jews. Beat the Jews, shave their heads! Boycott the Jews! Kick them out of Germany! This is a Nordic country, this is a Christian country; Kick out these Jews.

This campaign against the Jews soon gathered support from the great German industrialists and landlords who found it an invaluable smoke-screen for their own activities—activities which were the real cause of the unemployment and the inflation and the poverty—and they contributed large sums of money to the Nazi party funds.

And also, more slowly but with steadily increasing force, it gathered support amongst the German workers and peasants themselves; sufficient support to sow confusion in their ranks and to help put the Nazi Party into power in 1933. Thereafter the campaign was stepped up. Jews were sacked right and left; even Jewish conductors of orchestras were not spared! Jews were debarred from profession after profession, from trade after trade. "Nordic" Germans were forbidden from living in houses owned by Jews, from buying goods in Jewish shops, from marrying Jews. Soon the property of Jews was confiscated.

The myth of the racial superiority of the Nordics and of the racial inferiority of the Jews was introduced into every aspect of life in Germany. Children were taught to make fun of, to jeer at and to assault Jewish children—on the principle that it served the Jews as they ought to be served, and at the same time trained the German children to be mainly, brave and sentimental.

German science was perverted; their anthropologists and sociologists demonstrated the pre-eminence of the Nordics in every field of human endeavour and the baseness and inferiority of the Jews and other non-Nordic peoples. When the Germans were defeated time and

again by Negro athletes from USA at the 1936 Olympics which were held in Berlin, these Nazi anthropologists worked out a neat little explanation to save their theory of Nordic superiority, animals they said generally run faster and jump farther than man, the negroes are sub-human, part man part ape; naturally they beat the Nordics at doing these things!

Did someone claim that Jesus was after all a Jew? Rubbish! Nazi anthropological research has proved beyond any doubt that he was a true Aryan, son of a Nordic German soldier serving with the Roman army of occupation in Palestine, and of a Persian woman who had come to Palestine with a trading caravan from Persia. Did someone point out that Hitler did not have the fair hair, the blue eyes and the long head stated to be characteristic of the Nordics? And the truly great Germans like Goethe Kant and Schiller were similarly, quite non-Nordic in appearance? Perhaps they were non-Nordic in appearance—but that didn't matter; their souls were Nordic.

EXTERMINATION: Well, all this indoctrination with falsehood, all these discriminatory acts against the Jewish minority brought the German people—a people, mark you, as gentle as kindly and as intelligent as any other people—brought the German people to such a state of mind that they made no effective protests, offered no effective resistance when the Nazi erected death-camps and began systematically to exterminate, as we might exterminate vermin, first the Jews and later other non-Nordic people as well.

After all these non-Nordics were sub-human, and if they were inherently vicious and inferior, then what was so terrible about getting rid of them just as one got rid of other vermin? That is how it was done; that is how a decent humane people were perverted and led to behave like monsters; that is how they were led to take the road to Maidanek, to Dachau, Belzen, Buchenwald and all the other Nazi death-camps. And that is why it was done; for under cover of this hue and cry the Nazis neatly foisted a fascist dictatorship on the German people and halted their progress towards socialism.

There are no death-camps today; neither in Ceylon nor

elsewhere. But journeys do not begin at their destinations; and the road to the death camp is a long one. Before we begin erecting death-camps, this road will have led us to the perpetration of one absurdity after another, one atrocity after another. And to be persuaded to tread this road people must first believe in certain falsehoods of which one of the most important is this: that there are today different races of man, some of them superior to others intellectually and morally.

Certainly, there are no death-camps today; but equally certainly there is plenty of this race-prejudice, not only in Little Rock, USA but also in Britain, not only in South Africa but also in Ceylon. Most of us in Ceylon are convinced that the Sinhalese and the Tamils are two races, and that one is superior to the other. Which one is superior depends, of course, on whether one is oneself labelled Sinhalese or Tamil; and if one happens to be labelled Burgher one looks down on both the Sinhalese and the Tamils—and is looked down on by both of them! We haven't yet adopted all the stupidities of Apartheid but racial-prejudice has already retarded the progress of our country (and, last May, has already killed some of our people). That is why it has been necessary to remind ourselves of Germany so many years ago.

(To be Continued)

Maitriya

On the evening of 25 August one observed a touching gesture of love and consideration shown by some members of the Sinhalese Community towards the Tamil refugees camped at Saraswathie Hall at Bambalapitiya. Malathie de Silva, an artist and sculptor and Nirmala Chandraratne, grand daughter of the late Sir Ernest de Silva and children of the late 'Sheba' de Silva of Matara, accompanied by a British University Scholar, Dr. Jane Russel, unloaded a large car-full of foodstuffs for distribution amongst the refugees.

A BIRTH CENTENARY TRIBUTE

Dr. Ananda K.

Coomaraswamy

by Jag Mohan

The author has written a biography of Dr. Coomaraswamy to be published by the Publications Division of the Government of India and also the script for a 50-minute film tribute to his memory.

PREPARATIONS are afoot in Sri Lanka, USA, UK and of course, India for the birth centenary celebrations of Dr. Coomaraswamy since he was born on August 22, 1877 at Colombo. This year also happens to be the thirtieth death anniversary year of Dr. Coomaraswamy. He passed away, within a fortnight after his seventh birthday on September 8, 1947, at Needham, Massachusetts, USA. And the world lost a great man, who was considered in his life-time a Sage and a Savant.

Dr. Coomaraswamy was one of those rare Universal Men like Romain Rolland, Albert Schweitzer, Bertrand Russell, Rabindranath Tagore and a few others of this century. Coomaraswamy started his professional career as a geologist and the doctorate was conferred on him for his significant work in this branch of science, including the discovery of Thorianite. But, he turned his back to a lucrative career as the Director of Minerology, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and devoted his life to the interpretation of the Indian, Ceylonese, Javanese, Indonesian and Islamic arts and to the writing of art history.

This serious involvement with the art of the past enabled him to become a philosopher of aesthetics, both Oriental and Occidental. Finally, towards the end of his life, Coomaraswamy became the exponent of the Perennial Philosophy of Mankind. Thus, as one of his friends remarked, Coomaraswamy had a series of "avatars" one leading to the other.

DR. COOMARASWAMY was a man of two cultures in more than one sense. He was a man of science who took to the arts. When he

abandoned his career as a geologist, he did not spurn the scientific methods of enquiry. In fact he used the principles of "taxonomy"—of scientific classification advantageously in identifying and dating art objects and classifying art styles. He was also a man of two cultures in another way. He reconciled the Occidental and Oriental cultures of which he was an embodiment. It must be remembered that Dr. Coomaraswamy was born of a Tamil aristocrat from Ceylon and a philosophic minded woman from Kent, UK (Hence, his middle name, Kentish).

Dr. Coomaraswamy was the only son of Sir Mutu Coomaraswamy, a remarkable Tamilian from Jaffna in Ceylon. His forefathers were Mudaliyars from Tamil Nadu who had migrated from South India and settled down in Ceylon. Sir Mutu's father was a translator and his services to the British were such that he was honoured with the title of a "Gate-Mudaliyar". Sir Mutu was a scholar well versed in several languages. When he went to London during Queen Victoria's reign, he made a great impact. It is on record that Sir Mutu produced the Tamil play, "Harischandra", in an English version for the Queen, who was so fascinated by it that she kept a copy of the play by her bedside.

Though Coomaraswamy was born in Colombo, his mother took him to England when he was a few months old. And, when he was about a year old, Sir Mutu died. Lady Coomaraswamy decided to bring up her son in her own country. Young Ananda was sent to public schools and Wycliffe College. He had a scientific bent of mind and accordingly he was trained as a geologist. It was at the age of twenty-six that he discovered the land of his forefathers after his appointment as the Director of Minerology, Ceylon. He was in service for only four years and during that short period, the whole course of his life changed.

DR. COOMARASWAMY'S work as a minerologist took him to the remote corners of the island. His observant eye noticed the treasury of arts and crafts in Ceylon. Slowly he got interested in the craftsmen and the artisans. But he also found that due to British rule and imperialist policies, the indigenous arts

and crafts were deteriorating. Dr. Coomaraswamy was also under the influence of the Guild Socialists—especially of William Morris, the leading protagonist of workmen's guilds.

Coomaraswamy became a nationalist and took to "native" costume of dhoti, turban and even the "angavastram". He started the Ceylon Reform League and a magazine too to propagate his ideas. He was soon caught up by the nationalist surge in India. He made several visits to India, met the Tagores, (Rabindranath, Abanindranath and Gaganendranath) Nandalal Bose and others. He met Dr. Annie Beasant and he joined the Theosophical Society. After his induction into the Indian national movement, he decided to resign his job and become a freelancer.

During the years between 1907 and 1916, he made several trips to India. He wrote several booklets on the Swadeshi Movement and "National Idealism". He pleaded for an artistic renaissance. He wandered up and down the country collecting paintings, sculpture, art objects, artefacts and fine pieces at Indian crafts. He was no mere collector. He began a serious study of Indian art and its history, about which at that point of time there was much of prejudice and misinterpretation.

Dr. Coomaraswamy is today remembered for his pioneering work in making an all-round survey of Indian arts, including the performing arts and in writing extensively in various magazines. He also wrote voluminous books that gave a coherent view of the various schools of art and the various styles that evolved. Where he was great in his task was in his "syncretic" approach—the unifying approach.

Thus, for instance to understand the iconography of Hindu and Buddhist sculptures, Dr. Coomaraswamy undertook along with a friend, the translation of Nandikeswara's classic on Abhinaya. This book, "Mirror of Gesture", helped him to interpret the "mudras". Then Coomaraswamy made a special study of Bharata Natyam and even made a film over forty years ago. To interpret the Rajasthani paintings, he similarly went into a detailed study of the Bhakti

school of poetry as well as folk songs. He had to go into study of the Ragas for explaining the Ragamala paintings.

Dr. Coomaraswamy's services to Indian art were many. First and foremost he established that the evolution of the Buddha figure was out of native tradition and out of the Taksha figures and not because of the Greek craftsman, who had come after Alexander's conquest of India. At that time, there was a notion prevalent, that the Greeks modelled the Buddha after their own Greek gods. This was because of the hybrid art of Gandhara sculptures. Coomaraswamy stunned a conference of orientalists at Copenhagen with his well-documented thesis on the origin of the Buddha image.

Secondly, he truly discovered "Rajput" Painting. What is now known as Rajasthani and Pahari schools of painting used to be dubbed as Mughal painting till Dr. Coomaraswamy wrote his two-volume study on them. He distinguished these paintings from the Mughal paintings and then he classified them according to style and content.

Besides, Dr. Coomaraswamy wrote those monumental volumes on the "History of Indian and Indonesian Art", "The Dance of Shiva" and much earlier, "Medieval Sinhalese Art". In fact, he is credited with over 330 publications ranging from tomes to monographs, from translations to critical assessments, from book reviews to polemical attacks. Each and every one of his writings was marked with erudition, with quotations from diverse sources in half a dozen languages, in which he was adept.

With the passage of time, he became more and more, philosophically inclined and he found that through history ran the parallel strands of philosophy which had much identity and unity. Thus he was led to the Perennial Philosophy.

It must be recalled that Dr. Coomaraswamy was requested to organise the Fine Arts section of an exhibition of arts and crafts which was held at Allahabad in 1911 by the then British Indian Government. In the course of his travels for collecting the exhibits Dr. Coomaraswamy became a collector himself. And at one time,

he made an appeal to Indian nationalists that if a building could be given to him, then he would donate his entire collection and that he would run the museum. He wanted Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, the founder of Banaras Hindu University to pay heed to his request. But deaf ears were turned to him.

Oddly enough about this time, Denman Rosa, a trustee of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, USA was here in India and he met Dr. Coomaraswamy. With the usual flourish of an American collector and philanthropist, he thought over entire collection of Dr. Coomaraswamy and appointed him as the Keeper of Indian and Muhammadan Art at the Boston Museum. Thus, Dr. Coomaraswamy left India in 1916 unfortunately, as a frustrated and disillusioned man. For 30 long years he stayed in Boston and became one of the Oriental "pandits" among the Boston "Brahmins". What was India's loss was America's gain. All the same, Dr. Coomaraswamy never lost interest in India. It was his spiritual home.

IT MUST BE RECALLED that when India attained independence, Dr. Coomaraswamy presided over a meeting of Indians and he raised India's Tricolour. Soon after his seventieth birthday celebration took place with testimonial dinner. About this time in the course of an interview and in the course of a letter to a friend, Dr. Coomaraswamy, revealed that it was his ambition to return to India to spend the days of his "Vanaprastha" in a remote place somewhere near the Himalayan foothills.

Even while he and his wife, Dona Louisa (an Argentinian photographer and art lover), were preparing themselves to return to India, Death snatches him on September 8. One moment he was alive in his garden and he was about to see some paintings which a friend had brought. And the next moment he was dead.

Twenty years later his widow, brought Dr. Coomaraswamy's ashes to be immersed in River Kelaniya in Sri Lanka and in the Ganga in India. It was as a lone pilgrim that she came and visited place, mentioned by her husband and by her only son, Rama Ponnambalam, who is a practising doctor at Deerborn,

USA. It is to be noted here that Dr. Coomaraswamy who was a vegetarian all through his life, wanted his son to be so. And he had sent Rama when he was young to India for a short stay at Gurukul, Kangri.

Scores of indologists and art historians have written extensively about service rendered by Dr. Coomaraswamy to Indian art but there is no space to quote them here. Suffice it will be to quote what Rabindranath Tagore and Dr. Sarvapillai Radhakrishnan had said of him.

Tagore wrote of him thus: "Whatever we call him—an art critic or a historian or even a scholar—we find something is left over, some thing in his work, which in the last analysis is undefinable. Dr. Coomaraswamy exceeds all our definitions. All our definitions fall far short of his actual work. He is always something else."

And Dr. Radhakrishnan acknowledged his indebtedness to Dr. Coomaraswamy: "I had been a student of Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy's writings for many years and had the great pleasure of meeting him at Boston in 1946. Among those who are responsible not only for Indian renaissance in the world, Dr. Coomaraswamy holds a pre-eminent position."

—Courtesy: Socialist India

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NEXT WEEK

① NIGHTMARE IN JAFFNA

① IS EELAM VIABLE? —2

① RACE-MYTH AND SCIENCE —2

① CURRENT POLITICAL TRENDS

Confidentially

Is Eelam Viable?—1

IS IT ANY SURPRISE that *Tribune* should have been bombarded in the last fortnight with one question from a large number of our readers from the North, East, Colombo and elsewhere! IS EELAM VIABLE? IS IT AN ECONOMIC PROPOSITION? That from the letters we have received it is clear that hardly anybody has given serious thought to this matter? That in the first place the territory of Eelam has not been properly defined and that it is therefore not possible to answer the question satisfactorily? That the TULF speak about the Northern and Eastern Provinces as the "homeland of the Tamils"? That this cannot provide a complete answer because there are areas in the Northern Province (eg., South Vavuniya) and several areas in the Eastern Province (Seruvavila etc.) where the Sinhalese are in a majority? That in these two provinces there are also a whole number of areas from Mannar to Batticaloa where the Muslims predominate? That it is inconceivable that the people in these areas will want to be incorporated into a Tamil Eelam? That many find an easy way out of the dilemma by asking for the restoration of the territory which was the Tamil Kingdom when the Portuguese first arrived in the island? That any serious political observer will admit that this kind of demand harking back to a misty past to create boundaries can be only considered an emotionally romantic anachronism? That as between sovereign states the demand to revise boundaries in accordance with something that had existed many decades or centuries earlier is described by a dirty word "revanchism"? That the situation in the island of Ceylon has changed after the time the Portuguese arrived in the island? That it is not realistic to ask for a determination of a separate state on boundaries that are supposed to have existed prior to 1505? That in any case, the question of drawing boundaries is academic at the moment because the Government of Sri Lanka and the Sinhalese have not conceded the demand for Eelam as a separate

state (and will not)? That *only after* the establishment of a separate state has been agreed to by the Sinhalese does the question of boundaries arise? That the question of boundaries will arise *either* when the Sinhalese agree (by persuasion to Eelam or the Tamils are the victors in a fratricidal war? That there is not the slightest chance now (or in the foreseeable future) for either the Sinhalese to concede a separate sovereign Eelam or for the Tamils to win a war and compel the Sinhalese to concede it? That a struggle by ahimsa and peaceful satyagraha to carve out a separate state is only a fanciful dream of demagogues who do not mean what they say? That a separate state cannot be won by a satyagraha and ahimsa? That it is inconceivable that the 1½ millions of Ceylon Tamils can possibly win a war of attrition to force the Sinhalese to concede a separate state? That no foreign power is ever likely to help the Ceylon Tamilians to fight for a separate state? That some dream that in some distant future a separate Tamil Nadu and a greater Dravidastan will help a sovereign Tamil Eelam to come into existence in Sri Lanka? That it is foolish to speculate or depend on what a separatist sovereign Tamil Nadu (which has not yet come into existence and which is not likely to come into being ever) will do to help the Ceylon Tamils to form a separate state? That it is realistic only to take into consideration the immediate possibilities? That in the absence of a separate state being conceded or being won by force of arms it is a futile exercise to discuss the boundaries of Eelam? That in the absence of a defined territory it would not be possible to make a scientific determination of the viability of an area which is only a mirage-like dream?

IS IT NOT TRUE that pragmatic realists among the Tamils (with common or horse sense) consider that District Councils or Regional Councils which coincide or incorporate the "traditional homelands" of the Tamils constitute the best way of safe-guarding the self-respect, dignity and integrity of the language, culture and civilisation of the Tamils in Ceylon? That such distinct or regional councils with adequate autonomy to safeguard Tamil rights has been considered by many as the best way of preserving the identity of

the Tamils in the multi-racial, multi-linguistic, multi-religious and multi-caste state of Sri Lanka? That the Federal Party had unfortunately mixed its "federalism" with propaganda slogans of independent sovereignty (Tamil Arasu)—no doubt for electoral success and bargaining—and many times missed getting either Regional Councils (of the abortive Bandaranaike/Chelvanayakam Pact) or the District Councils (of the ineffective Dudley Senanayake 1965-1970 Government)? That on each occasion extremists and chauvinists among the Sinhalese were able to torpedo the regional or district council by raising a hullabaloo about "Tamil Arasu" which they said sought to divide the country? That "Tamil Arasu" was a rhetorical emotional slogan that had made any settlement impossible? That when the Sinhalese were in a mood to agree to regional autonomy extremists and chauvinists among the Tamils (fearing an electoral challenge from more realistic and pragmatic Tamils) launched the cry for Eelam? That *Tribune* had warned its readers about the dangers of this slogan of Eelam? That *Tribune* had also pointed out that it was the built-in chauvinism of the United Front government (including the LSSP and CP) that made discriminatory practices like standardisation a way of life that enabled Tamil chauvinists to raise the slogan of a separate state?

That in the atmosphere of discrimination, Tamil extremists had also raised slogans about the boundaries of Eelam which has played havoc as recent events will show? That from pre-election platforms in recent months these Tamil fanatics had talked foolishly about getting every Sinhalese out of the Northern Province and pushing the boundaries of Eelam well past Medawachchiya and other places? That such speeches were made use of by Sinhala extremists to mount attacks on the Tamils in the whole of the North Central Province and elsewhere? That when the trouble had erupted the vast majority of such Tamil slogan-shouters in the so-called border areas had fled pell-mell to the safety of the peninsula leaving the poor Vanni Tamils to face the music alone? That this attempt to define the territory of Eelam by slogans on election platforms has only brought disaster?

to be continued

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