

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

Vol. 3 No. 11.

28th April 1984

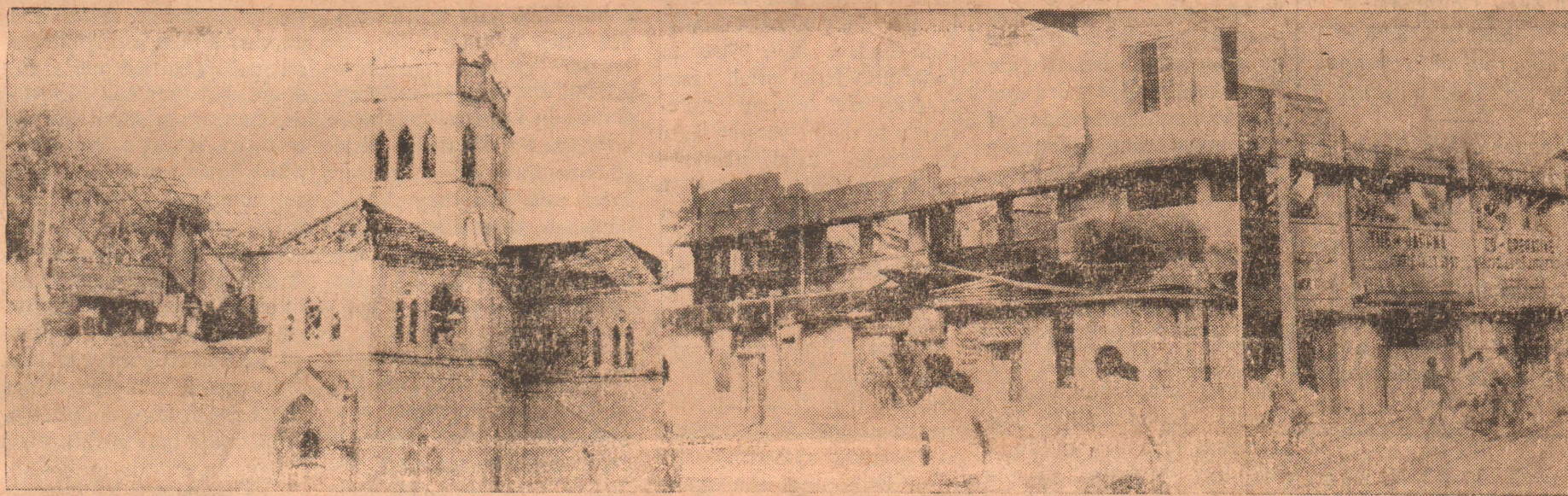
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SUN'S DAMN LIE!



Pictures show; The Army truck that was blown up on Monday 9th April, along Jaffna Hospital Road & the damaged Church of Our Lady of Refuge at 4th Cross Street.

We were wrong when in our last issue, under the headline "The Week of the Big Bang", we said that "The armed youths had presumably operated from the Church premises" (that is, the Church of our Lady of Refuge on Fourth Cross Street).

What we should have said is that the Army boys who were on the scene had presumed that the attackers had used the Church premises.

We were also wrong when we said in the Media Scene column that "not a single reporter visited the Peninsula to find out what exactly is happening there."

Two senior staffers of the SUN newspaper did visit Jaffna, accompanied by a cameraman, just after the sad events of 9th April.

But they appeared to have behaved like the proverbial Three Wise Monkeys, who saw nothing, heard nothing and said nothing!

They went back and reported thus (according to the SUN of 18th April), with photographs to back up their claims:

"This photograph tells the story of terrorist atrocity in Jaffna. A luxury coach belonging to a resident in the district was ordered at gun point to stop, passengers asked to disembark and the vehicle set on fire. Even the presence of the kovil in the background did not deter them from this despicable act.

"Contrary to propaganda in South India that a Catholic Church was razed to the

ground after the abortive terrorist attack on the soldiers, the Church is intact as the picture shows.

"Placing of roadblocks to prevent the movement of security forces has become a new terrorist tactic. Here is one such roadblock, moments after the Army patrol cleared it. Note the burnt vehicle in the background. The vehicle belongs to a Jaffna resident."

We have been under the impression that it is only in Communist countries that visiting journalists are taken on conducted tours. But this seem to be happening in Sri Lanka just now!

All we wish to say (under the strict censorship rules within which we have to function) is it that is this type of tripe that is dished out to readers by most of the Colombo-based newspapers, especially the Sinhalese newspapers, that it is so much more difficult to solve the National Question.

Last of all we want to say makes provided the Censors allow it that not even a thousand

7TH ANNIVERSARY

The seventh death anniversary of the Tamil United Liberation Front founder leader, Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam fell on 26th April. It went unmarked in Jaffna.

and Douglas Liyanages (with the 1962 coup conspiracy fame) nor a thousand Lalith Athulathmudaliges (with Oxford and Harvard fame) can stop the truth of what is happening in Jaffna getting out to the outside world.

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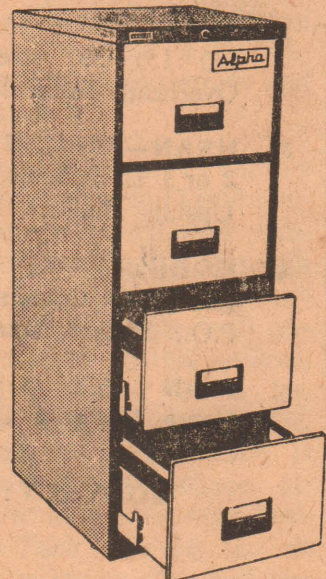
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Saturday Review

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P. O. Box 122
JAFFNA

Telegrams : SATVIEW

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Subscription Rates inclusive of local postage and foreign Air Mail Rate

Sri Lanka

Annual Rs. 170/-

Half-year Rs. 85/-

India

Annual Rs. 200/-
(Indian Rupees)

Singapore / Malaysia—
U. S. \$ 30

All other Countries

Annual U.S. \$ 50 or
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A MOMENT

WITH DIOGENES

"Diogenes", hailed a newspaperman on Galle Face Green "the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW has told his readers that there are many who want to know who Diogenes is. Would you like to announce who you are?"

"Not quite", replied the Master. "It does not matter who I am. I am a rambler. I am not an orator like Ananda Tissa de Alwis. I am a street walker. I have lived in many bodies. I have a few more lives to live in a few more countries. I am imperishable. I shall liberate myself from life and death. I am HE who liveth within all living bodies. I live in the good and in the bad, in the poor and the rich. I see everything with my 3rd eye. I understand everything. I understand that everything is nothing and the Truth is one."

Another newspaperman accosted the philosopher and asked him, "Will India invade Sri Lanka?" "Never, never, never", replied the Master, "she will exploit Sri Lanka economically. The business tycoons of India will buy up many of our local business interests and tip up with the commission agents here, "India is interested in Trincomalee and in the India ocean. I do not think she is really interested in the Tamils of Sri Lanka. Despite the Tamils of Indian origin begging for visas after all their sufferings in 1981 and 1983, they are not admitted into Tamil Nadu. If you have read Prof. Suriya Narayan's article published in the SATURDAY REVIEW, you will know that the expatriate Tamils from the plantations who have

obtained Indian citizenship have been left out in the cold without jobs, shelter or clothing. Tamilnad had done damn all for them"

"On the other hand, the political leaders of Tamilnad are gifting houses and smothering our TULF leaders with their lavish hospitality. They are welcoming them with their families and their relations, and looking after them. It is Parliamentary politics again. They are fattening the TULF leaders and treating them as their election mascots.

"While the Tamils in Sri Lanka are in danger and have lost lives and property in the North and South, their leaders have fled to India and from their sanctuaries are issuing statements to their people here to remain calm, like the pilot who baled out of a crashing plane, got into a life boat and radioed to the passengers. Keep calm, say your prayers, do not be worried I am out here in the life boat. I have radioed and appealed for help. Help is coming. If it does not, tomorrow the whole world will express sympathy for you. So saying the pilot sipped some cognac from the flask he carried in his pocket! Diogenes scornfully smiled.

"Master", asked the newspaperman, "Why did the President, then, say that if India invades Sri Lanka, that it will be the end of the Tamils?"

"It is a very dangerous and an altogether unfortunate statement for a President of any country to have made. I doubt he ever said it. I don't think he meant all that if he did say it," exclaimed the philosopher.

"But if he did say it, it is a pretty bad show.

"It is like Indra Gandhi saying that if Pakistan invades India, that will be the end of the 90 million Muslims living in India.

"It is like General Zia saying that if India invades Pakistan, it will be the end of all the Hindus living in Pakistan.

"It will be like Mrs. Thatcher saying that if the Irish terrorists try their pranks in England, it will be the end of all the Irishman living in England.

"I am sure he did not say it and if he said it, he did not mean it."

"But the Sri Lanka Association in London congratulates the President on that statement and one member even said that they should consider themselves lucky that they are living during J. R.'s regime", said the newspaperman.

"Of course, they are lucky living in England during this regime. This statement alleged to have been made is really unfortunate. Did the President mean that the Rule of Law will go haywire and the Armed Forces will be without discipline and out of control? It is an insult to our Armed Forces to think that, instead of fighting the invaders, they will turn their backs to the armed invaders and start gunning innocent unarmed Tamils. Surely not. Does he mean that he would be helpless? There is something wrong somewhere. I cannot congratulate him on a statement he could never have made in that sense. I have spoken enough. Don't take me seriously", so

saying, Diogenes stepped on the gravel path. But the newspaperman followed him.

"Master, I will ask you only two more questions. Please answer them. First, will the district development council solve the problem and, secondly, this is a question which will interest our football enthusiasts. What do you think of our Prime Minister shooting the only goal for his team two days ago?"

The Master replied, "First the D. D. C. would and could never have succeeded. The temporary truce was arranged like a marriage by two learned brokers. One was a doctor of laws and another a doctor of political science. Learned men, no doubt, but they had no experience, no wisdom and no maturity. It was a marriage which could never have been consummated. Both the bride and bridegroom had certain physical disability." But Wilson and Neelan were like two young unspoiled boys who did not know the facts of life and still believed that the stork it was that brings the baby to the door step. This union had to fail.

"With regard to your second question, it was a splendid show. The week was a lucky week for our Prime Minister. He netted one million rupees and one goal. At 59, it was really great to have dashed through his opponents, got passed the full back and shot a goal, unless there was no opposition! It may be that, as on the floor of the House, he had no opposition from the city fathers on the football field! His stars are on the ascendant, I expect his next score to be a straight kick into the Presidential goal!"

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MORE ABOUT DIOGENES

The Editor,
Saturday Review.

Ever since you encountered Diogenes, several friends have asked me about this great man.

You had, of course given a brief account of him in your first edition after the ban. I happen to know something more about him, which is appended below and trust you will publish this for the information of those who may be interested.

S. Navaratnam

Lakniwasa,
Nallur.

DIOGENES—(412? 323 B.C.), a Greek philosopher.

A follower of the Cynic school of philosophy, Diogenes scorned pretense and unessential possessions. He kept only his cloak, purse and wooden bowl, declaring that the more a man had the greater were his wants. Seeing a boy drink from the hollow from his hands, Diogenes is said to have even thrown away his bowl. He supposedly lived in an empty tub and walked through the streets of Athens with a lantern in broad daylight. On being asked what he was looking for, the story goes, he replies, "I am seeking an honest man."

Alexander the Great is said to have visited Diogenes

at Corinth. When Alexander asked what he could do for him, Diogenes is reported to have asked him to move, since he was blocking the sunlight. Impressed with the Cynic's self-possession, Alexander cried, "If I were not Alexander, I would be Diogenes!"

Diogenes travelled to Athens, where he became a disciple of Antisthenes, founder of the Cynic school. On a voyage from Athens to Aegina, Diogenes was seized by pirates and sold as a slave to a wealthy citizen of Corinth. His Master was so impressed with his learning that he set him free.

THE LSSP STAND

Speech made by Dr. Colvin R. de Silva on behalf of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party at the All-Party Conference on the National Question.

This Conference took a long time over preliminaries, but we have got past that stage. We are now in the stage of facing up to the problem in respect of which we were invited to confer. That is the problem which most people are accustomed to call "the Tamil problem". It is my deliberate view that this is a misleading misnomer. The problem is more wide-ranging than this often-used term implies. It is also of a decisively different character from that which this unhappy term imports.

It is this misnomer which has led to the misconceived — even mischievous effort we have seen and, I hope, overcome of the self-claimed carriers of a specifically Sinhala consciousness to put the Tamil people in the dock via an effort to put the representatives of the specifically Tamil parties on trial at this conference. The pity of it is that in truth we are all on trial here, whether they be the national parties or the communal parties and organisations — the Government or the Opposition — all on trial in respect of the present parlous situation of our little and vulnerable country in regard to what is generally called the communal question.

That trial — the trial of all of us — is not, as some to have imagined, a question of rival interpretations of history, whether it be the history of our country under the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British imperialists or even the history of the Sinhalese, the Tamils, the Muslims and so on. We, the contemporary products of history, can leave that task to the historians. At this conference, we are concerned with the here and now, and with the morrow that is to follow: with comprehending the ills of today and discerning the means of engendering a better tomorrow. The facts of history — I repeat; the facts of history come into the picture only to the extent that they are relevant to that comprehension and that discernment. It is in respect of the comprehension of the present and the discernment of the means to a better future that this conference itself is on trial.

Permit me to say, Mr. President, that the actual task this conference has undertaken is literally tremen-

dous in its scope and proportions, in its meaning and significance, and in its possible consequences according as we accomplish our task or fail. The task we have undertaken is to find ways and means to enable the people of the many communities, especially the racial and the religious communities, in our country to live together in unity and common endeavour to better the condition of us all. Meetings as we do in the aftermath of the utterly inhuman, soul-searing, mind shattering, heart-rending and socially traumatic events of July 1983, which took the shape and content of a primitively barbarous onslaught on the Tamils in the Sinhalese areas of our country, the task may well appear insuperable even to those who undertake it. But undertaken it has to be if we are to survive as an undivided country within the framework of a single free, sovereign and independent state.

That is the meaning and significance of our task — a task the successful performance of which would ensure not only the survival of politically independent Sri Lanka but also the start of a fresh process of establishing mutual confidence among the communities which is the necessary cement of a united, undivided Sri Lanka. But if we falter and fail, the consequences can be too frightening to contemplate. It could be havoc — social, political, economic and cultural havoc such as will make the horrors of July 1983 seem a minor, if ignoble episode in historical memory. A havoc, moreover, which the Government of the day may well not have the means to bring under control because, as recent experience shows, the state's instruments of control may well get out of control themselves in such a situation. We had enough experience in those July days, and also before and since, that there are definite limits to the use of the police and armed forces in that type of situation. Should those limits be seriously exceeded for long, we have enough examples from other countries of the trends set going. I refer to the military take-overs in the name of law and order and the depressing repressive regimes that they introduce. Is it necessary to add that internationally, the havoc I speak of will destroy our image as a civilised people.

It is in shadow of these grim, dark possibilities that this conference has to seek a peaceful democratic way out

of the problem we have been summoned by the President to discuss. That problem is certainly not Eelam. All those here, without exception, have by what they have said here agreed that is not the problem we have to discuss. If it is to be expressed in terms of the Eelam demand, the problem we are discussing is how to fend off that demand, leaving it at worst to a lunatic fringe. Let it be added it is not terror laws or rule that will achieve this but wise, systematic and perhaps long-term political action.

The task here is to find the ways and means of mobilising the opinion and support in all communities of the large body of people, probably the large majority who stand between the two poles of majority and minority communalist extremism, wanting to live together in peace and amity in their common land. The measures that we decide on to solve our problem must have the acceptance of what I will call for lack of a better word this middle opinion in the country.

by Dr. Colvin R. de Silva

Such an approach to the solution of our problem calls for an outlook that flows from a recognition that the Tamil problem or the communal problem is a problem of the Sri Lanka nation and state and not a problem of just this community or that community. The crisis we are going through is a crisis of the whole nation and state, of our whole country and not just of a part of our country. That crisis is expressed in the need for the Sri Lankan state to hold down a whole area of our country and a whole section of its people by military force and state terror. It is no answer to say that state terror has been invoked by individual terror, that is to say, terror on the part of those whom the state seeks to overcome. It is far more important to find out how and why our state and nation have fallen into this situation. In other words, specifically, why the Eelam demand.

The answer to this question has been given authoritatively to this conference by the leader the TULF whose position is that he has adopted and pursued this claim constitutionally with at least the support of those who have consistently voted for his party. He says there were many and various reasons for this stance before July 1983

but that after July 1983 everything has got concentrated into the single reason that the Tamils of Sri Lanka have become convinced by their July experience that there is no other way than having a state of their own in what they regard as their homeland to feel and be secure in their lives, homes and property in Sri Lanka, which is their home country. He adds, however, if you can satisfy him and his party that a way has been found and will be implemented which will ensure Tamil people security of life, property and identity, as also of course the other amenities and rights which citizens of Sri Lanka enjoy, they will recommend to those that follow them and to the Tamil people generally the abandonment of the Eelam demand, and also join in implementing the agreement.

In my submission and in the opinion of the LSSP the position taken is fair enough and casts on this conference, including the TULF itself, the burden of finding the correct answer to that demand, arrived at in the light of the

interests of the Sri Lankan nation as a whole. That is our search and the LSSP has joined in this search as a party which holds two basic views in regard to the issue.

In the first place, the LSSP has always stood and never wavered in its position that Sri Lanka must remain a single country with a single state. Although it is not necessary for the argument I am presenting, I wish to tell you the two basic reasons why we have consistently taken this stand. One reason is that this little island of ours cannot be divided successfully into two viable parts; geographically or as economic entities. The other reason is that, if you divide Sri Lanka into even two tinier states, neither can be independent and both will fall into the maws of imperialism. In a word, our hard-won independence too will go with the division. Only one Lanka can be a free and viable Lanka.

In the second place, we hold as unchallengeable the view that the only way to enable all Sri Lankans to live together in peace, amity and progress in a single Sri Lanka and Sri Lanka state is on the footing that every Sri Lankan, whatever be his race, class, creed, caste or sex must have the same rights

and duties in relation to the Sri Lankan state. Given such equality of status being assured by law and ensured in practice, equality in the relations of communities will be naturally ensured.

In a multi-communal country the state must be organised in such a way as truly activates these principles. At the base of our national and state crisis in respect of communal relations is obviously the widespread acceptance among the minorities, and especially the Tamil minority which lives in considerable numbers in contiguous territory, that the state as presently organised does not serve the purposes it should serve, especially in the field of equality of status in relation to the state, the nation and the government. This is the true source of the Eelam demand.

There is, in the LSSP view, justice in the demand for the reorganisation of the state structure as we have it. The LSSP has long put forward proposals in that behalf which appear to be also relevant to the problem at hand in this conference. I therefore propose to outline these proposals.

These proposals proceed from two principles. The first is the desire of the people of Sri Lanka in every part of the country, to order their own affairs in their own localities, subject to the need to have an all-island government for all matters that require all-island consideration, decision, implementation and administration. With the objective of satisfying this completely democratic and natural desire we call for the establishment of elected Praja Sabhas which work on the basis of the principle of self management. The proposal could be substantially implemented by reviving the Village Committees with enhanced powers and enhanced freedom from Central Government control. The VCs are of course elected bodies with territorial constituencies, (The Praja Sabhas) The Village Council we contemplate will draw in other elements of the organised sections of the population without in any way imperilling the control of territorially elected representatives. The Village Council (Praja Sabhas) would undertake the development of their respective areas, levy, specified taxes, provide specified services now provided by the Government and so on. (So would the new VCs) While

(Continued on page 10)

Living in fear

The Editor,
SATURDAY REVIEW.

I wish to convey my gratitude to Mr. Chula Piyadasa for his lucid exposition in the SATURDAY REVIEW of 31st March, of the desperate state into which the Tamils living far and wide in this country have been driven into.

I wish to draw attention to certain malaise that has affected the Tamils living specially in Vavuniya and Jaffna. There is a morose feeling as if death is haunting their homes.

Parents with children in the prime of their life live in fear when their children set out from their homes for their normal duties. Till the children return home, you can see no smile on the mother's face. Women whose spouses are working far away live in isolation with a heavy hearts. Every minute they live in anticipation of something worse happening to their beloved ones who have left their homes to earn a living.

It will do well for those who are holding the reins of power to study, digest and put into practice this memorable couplet "As one lamp lights, another does not grows less. So nobleness enkindles nobleness".

It is one thing to preach the Sermon on the Mount the Hindu Dharma, the Holy Koran and the Pancha Seela but it is another to practise them in our daily lives.

N. Sivagnanam.
Vaddukoddai.

ESTATE CHILDREN

Editor,
SATURDAY REVIEW.

After the July riots, many people who were employed outside the Tamil areas said that they will never return to their original workplaces again.

But many of them, due to their financial and economic situations, have returned to their workplaces because they knew that all of them could not be posted to Jaffna.

The teachers, however, seem to be thinking that, because of the many Tamils schools in the North and the East, all of them could be accommodated in those schools. Few of them are prepared to serve in the estate schools.

If the All-Ceylon Tamil Teachers' Union thinks that the cause of the Tamil displaced undergraduates is reasonable and fair, the case of the school children in the estates is equally fair.

It is unnecessary to drag the Ceylon Workers Cong-

ress leader, Mr. S. Thondaman into this matter. The CWC would in any case have objected to the transfer of all the teachers from the estate because it is really concerned about its supporters.

In recent times, Mr. Thondaman had spoken not only for the other Tamils. He acted in a more responsible manner than some other "so called" leaders of the Tamils.

The Secretary-General of the ACTU has reportedly said that there was protection for Mr. Thondaman but who provide security for his union members!

This statement reflects nothing but the selfishness of a trade unionist who wishes to remain in his post for ever. The plea of the displaced teachers may be reasonable but again I would like to stress that the plight of the school children in the estate must also be considered.

KAY TEE

Dehiwela

'BE CAREFUL'

The Editor,
Saturday Review.

You have rightly commented about people "playing safe", especially the intellectual community. When they all chorused "be careful", they no doubt meant that you should be careful not about your personal safety in Jaffna, but about telling the truth to the country and the world. For when you tell the truth, they seem to think that you could well end up in some hell-hole. But unless those in public life tell the truth, they are doing a dangerous disservice to the people and history will, if not consign them to the dustbin, at least ignore them.

The plain truth is that we are a poor country, and the vast majority of the people, be they Sinhalese, Tamils or Muslims, are groaning under the weight of economic burdens. "How to live?" are the words on practically anybody's lips. The cost of living today crushes the downtrodden masses as never before; the gloom and despondency and deep sigh are all too common symptoms today. The fixed monthly wage-earners are perhaps the worst sufferers.

How can we overcome this situation? By continuing to borrow from the World Bank, the I.M.F., the A.D.B., the Aid Consortium, the U.S., Britain and what have you? In fact, the Minister of Finance the Ronnie de Mel boasted that

he was a better borrower than his predecessors in offices such as Dr. N. M. Perera and, Felix Dias Bandaranaike and that they would "see stars" considering the amount he was able to negotiate on one of his first trips around the world with the begging bowl!

We have spent too much time, frittered away our energies scarce resources, not only in unproductive ventures, not only in, say, under-utilisation of installed capacities on the production lines, but most tragically in creating deadly antagonisms, prejudices and hatred between the different communities. Posterity will never, never forgive those who wilfully or consciously contribute to the fostering of those traits in the common people.

We have seen racial riots after racial riots in this country resulting in colossal losses of lives, limb and property of the Tamil-speaking people. One will do well to remember that those who suffer from these periodic holocausts are not the Tamils alone. The Minister of Finance said that the July 1983 riots alone had set the country's economy back by at least five years. We can well imagine what all the earlier riots from 1958 onwards put together would have cost us.

Why was the ethnic problem allowed to drift and bedevil inter-racial relations in this country? Why was the solemn pledge of the All-Party Conference in the 1977 Election Manifesto shelved throughout the first full six-year term of the Government? Is not this the reason why a political solution has become so complicated and elusive?

Even at this very late hour, let there be a serious and genuine search for a solution to the National Question, and a war declared on the people's common enemies such as starvation, hunger, malnutrition, disease and the general conditions of poverty in this country.

V. Thirunavukarasu
Manipal North.

ANOTHER LEBANON

The Editor,
Saturday Review.

A long time ago a sage in the Bible wrote, "when the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong" (Eccl. 8:11)

This fully describes what has been taking place during

LETTERS

the last week.

The prevailing situation of anarchy among the people and the killings and burnings of the authorities are all tragic.

The delay in the bringing of justice and a settlement to the racial crisis is surely resulting in the increase of evil and a slide towards anarchy on both sides.

May this hasten the authorities to the realisation of the need to bring justice quickly, lest as the former M. P. Mr. Yogeswaran has put it, Sri Lanka deteriorates to a Lebanon of South Asia.

Noel Hoole

SALARY PROBLEM

Editor,
SATURDAY REVIEW.

The recent announcement of a substantial salary increase to bank employees has created a feeling of frustration among the state and corporation employees who had been virtually brought down to the level of utter degradation in the face of the skyrocketing cost of living.

It is not that I am rather envious of bank employees. On the contrary, let them have their increases but the state and corporations employees should also get their due share to maintain a proper balance in their earning capacity.

The tendency of the Government to play one section of the employees against the others would only create labour conflicts and disgruntlement, leading to the slowing down of the Government machinery.

Public servant
Jaffna.

This letter has been received by Swami U. E. Ramage in response to his letter published in the Saturday Review of 10th March.—Ed.

Dear Rev. Swami,

Thank you for the press cutting from the SATURDAY REVIEW which you sent me. It contains information not known to many.

Was this journal that was banned recently?

Expect you are in good health.

Sincerely,
T. B. Naranpanawa,
Hony. Gen. Secretary,
Buddhist Publication,
Society Inc. Kandy.

'SHAN IS WRONG'

The Editor,
Saturday Review.

Mr. N. Sanmugathasan is incorrect when he states that Mr. G.G. Ponnambalam also voted for Mr. D. S. Senanayake's Citizenship Acts which deprived the majority of the Tamil plantation workers of their citizenship rights.

The Act which deprived the Indians of their citizenship rights is the Ceylon Citizenship Act No. 18 of 1948 and the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress and its leader Mr. Ponnambalam vehemently opposed it and voted against it.

He only voted for the subsequent Indian and Pakistani Residents Act, which gave citizenship rights to those Indians who were deprived of their rights by the earlier legislation.

The Indian and Pakistani Residents Act was the outcome of the undertaking given by Mr. Senanayake to Mr. Ponnambalam that he would, in consultation with the Prime Minister of India, bring a bill in Parliament to give citizenship rights to those Indians who lost their rights as a result of the 1948 Act.

Mr. Sanmugathasan is again incorrect when he states that Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam was averse to any agreement with the left. I hope he has not forgotten the famous Yamuna conference held at the Colombo residence of the late Mr. H. Sri Nissanka which was presided over by Mr. Ponnambalam. As nothing had come out of this conference because of disunity among the leftists, Mr. Ponnambalam decided thereafter to have a deal with the United National Party.

Leftists had their hey day in politics in 1947 and there was every possibility of leftists coming to power at that time and to it was to explore this possibility that Mr. Ponnambalam presided over the YAMUNA CONFERENCE.

Leftists had to blame only themselves for not making use of the golden opportunity thrust upon them at that time and preventing the U.N.P. coming to power.

Appathurai
Vinayagamoorthy.
Kokuvil East.

(More Letters on pages 8&10)

Common Struggle Needed

(Continued from last week)

This was made worse by the fact that these workers were accompanied by the usual Indian Traders, money lenders and the rest of the parasites who were to exploit Indians and Sri Lankans alike. It is to the rapacity and inhuman exploitation by these Indian Traders and Money lenders that we must look for the source of much of the anti-Indian feeling which has unfortunately, been cleverly turned by designing politicians against the workers of Indian origin.

The problem of these workers cannot be just dismissed as a legacy from British colonial rule. It is true that they created this problem by bringing these unfortunate workers for their selfish ends and dumping them in the midst of the Sinhalese heartlands. But, it is equally true that the Sri Lankan landlords and capitalist class were willing partners to the immigration. This policy of importing immigrant Indian labour was supported by institutions like the first and second State Councils which passed funds to subsidise this immigration. Every bourgeois Sinhala leader, from D. S. Senanayake to S. W. R. D. Bandaranayake acquiesced in this. In the early 1920s, when the government of India threatened to ban the immigration of Indian labour to Sri Lanka, a delegation from the Ceylon National Congress went to Delhi to successfully plead against such a ban.

When finally, the ban did come in 1940, it was brought in by the Indian government and not the Sri Lankan government. That is why the Sinhala bourgeois leaders cannot wash their hands of this problem and Cuck these workers out like sucked oranges after they had contributed more than any other section of the Sri Lankan society to the prosperity of this Island.

If as Major Orde Brown had recommended in his report, the colonial government had not segregated these workers inside estate line rooms, they would possibly have integrated themselves with the Sinhalese population among whom they would have lived - just as the Salagama Community who were also South Indians who had come about two or three centuries ago from India but have today completely integrated with the Sinhalese.

During the Colonial days, the Sinhalese, the Ceylon Tamils and Indian Tamils were all British citizens and therefore, enjoyed equal rights except

that the Indian Tamils were not allowed to vote at the village committee elections. No one needed a passport or any other travel document to proceed to India. The problem of citizenship arose only after 1948 when Britain granted political independence to Sri Lanka. D. S. Senanayake's anti-Indian views sprang not so much from his national sentiments or prejudice but from his class perception that the overwhelming majority of these Indian Tamils were workers and therefore, they would turn left and against the right which he represented. In fact during the previous year's general elections to the first parliament the workers had proved just this. Apart from electing 7 members to parliament, 'through their own organisation, the Ceylon Indian Congress, who remained in the anti-UNP opposition, these workers had helped left or anti-UNP candidates to win in at least 11 electorates. To crown it all, at the first by-election to the Kandy seat in parliament, the Indian vote proved decisive in the victory of the anti-UNP candidate, T. B. Illangaratne Senanayake swore that it should never happen again.

In 1948 he introduced the Indian and Pakistani citizenship Acts which prescribed such severe tests for Sri Lankan citizenship that most Indians failed to pass them. Thus they lost their citizenship and consequently the right to vote. At one stroke. D.S. Senanayake had won a bloodless victory and even the left was unaware of the magnitude of the defeat. The Ceylon Worker's Congress was unable to offer any successful form of resistance beyond some token Satyagraha. To its eternal shame, the left movement stood paralysed.

The Sri Lankan government had imagined that those Indian Tamils to whom they had refused Sri Lankan citizenship would automatically be taken back, in due course, by India, as its citizens. But Indian diplomacy, through the then Indian High Commissioner in Colombo, H. M. Desai, defeated this. India refused to accept them as its citizens and thus they become stateless, neither citizens of Sri Lanka nor of India, - eventually to ridicule as Kallathonies (people who came illegally by boat).

Despite several attempts, this problem continued to be a sore point in the relations between India and Sri Lanka. Then in 1964, Mrs Bandara-

naik, went to India and signed the Srimao-Shastri Pact. India agreed to accept 525,000 people of Indian origin as Indian Citizens while Ceylon agreed to grant Citizenship to a further 300,000 people. The fate of another 150,000 was left for future. Subsequently India and Sri Lanka agreed to share this half-half. The first point to note here is that by agreeing to grant citizenship to 300,000 people Sri Lanka indirectly accepted that the citizenship Act of 1948 had been unjust.

But the pact has not solved the problem in that the numbers had not been acceded to. Along with the natural increase there are now supposed to be nearly a million people of recent Indian origin who are stateless. At the New Delhi Conference, of the non-aligned powers last year, the President pro-

Under the British colonialists however bad their conditions were, these Indian Tamil workers had security guaranteed to them. Successive communal violence against the Tamils from 1958 onwards have now proved that they have no security anymore. Following the Communal violence of 1977 and 1981, several thousands of these plantation workers fled their plantations to settle in State lands in the north and the east. Several more thousands, estimated to be nearly about 180,000, had been uprooted during the 1983 communal violence and have fled to the same areas. Government propaganda tries to make out that some scheming people or organisations have organised this migration. Attempts are being made to evict these hapless workers from the lands in which they have settled. This is a

those plantation workers who feel that they can no longer expect any security in Sri Lanka, their wish to go to any country they choose must be respected.

In recent years, there has sprung up an agitation among the plantation youth that the Indian Tamils in the upcountry should also be considered as a nation. It is difficult to agree with this contention because except on very rare areas, these people do not live in a contiguous territory but only as interspersed minority among the Sinhalese. With the nationalisation of the estate, and the settlement of Sinhalese people, both as workers and peasants in their midst further complicates the matter and postpones the possibility of their occupying a contiguous territory, which is an absolute condition for developing as a nation.

But they must definitely be considered as a national minority group and be guaranteed definite rights as such. They must have the right to write to and get replies from government departments in Tamil. They must have the right to educate their children in Tamil. They must be allowed to own land anywhere and be eligible for any form of employment. To those people who are prattling about ethnic ratios, it must be pointed out that the people who are most discriminated against in education, jobs in government and corporations, are the Indian Tamils. But they can win these demands only in common struggle with the rest of the people of Sri Lanka.

(Concluded)

by N. Sanmugathasan

misled to abolish statelessness in Sri Lanka by giving citizenship to all stateless people. He must be made to keep that promise.

The Indian Tamil problem is not merely a national problem. It is a class problem because, the overwhelming majority of them belong to the single largest section of the working class of Sri Lanka. It was Nehru, when he came to Sri Lanka in 1940 in an attempt to solve this problem, who gave the reactionary advice to the leaders of the Indian Community here to form a separate organisation to fight for their interest. Thus was born the Ceylon-Indian Congress which, in turn formed the Ceylon Indian Congress Labour Union (now the C. W. C.) in order to attract the support of the Indian workers. Had this tragic advice not been given, the possibility existed that these Indian Tamil plantation workers would have joined common, class Trade Unions along with the Sinhalese and Ceylon Tamil workers. History could then have been different. Because it must pathetically be clear to any sensible person that without the unity of the Sinhalese worker and peasants and the Indian Tamil Plantation workers as well as the Ceylon Tamil workers and peasants, under a correct leadership, no revolutionary movement in Sri Lanka can ever succeed.

most inhuman act because their fear of returning to their former places of work is genuine and must be respected.

The present government clearly cannot guarantee the safety of the plantation workers. It should therefore legalise the land settlements of all those who fled after the 1977 end 1981 communal violence. In respect of those who were uprooted after July 1983, the government must give them land to settle down in the North and East where they feel secure. With regard to those who have remained behind in the plantations, the government must take active steps to guarantee their security, including their right to organise their own form of self defence. With regard to

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LAW & SOCIETY

Religions, customs and laws have maintained and sustained society. Religions and customs have made significant contributions to the law. In a complex, complicated, advanced, competitive society, however, religions and customs alone cannot establish and sure an orderly pattern of behavior among citizens anymore.

In a modern society, religions, sanctions and social ostracism have ceased to be that effective and meaningful. The sinful and the corrupt, the iconoclast and the violator of customs have today a place if not a high place in society which has now to mainly depend for its stable existence on the laws.

If we exclude the Islamic countries, by and large. It will not be far wrong to say that religions and customs outside what has got into the laws are fast losing their hold on modern society. On the other hand, humanism has not totally vanished from society nor have human values altogether disappeared. There was a time when people took religion and custom seriously and there was the rule of the Gods, the belief in the law of Karma and Rebirth together with the fear of social ostracism and public opinion. But now the law alone has its constant firmhold on the lives of individuals in their relation with other individuals and the State. It is the law that determines the rights and duties of citizens and it is the law alone that defines the rights and duties of the State.

The most important of the laws is the Constitution, which can be either written or unwritten. The constitution has a spirit and philosophy. It is meaningful both to the Citizen and the State. It is the Bible or the Gospel, so to say, for the citizens in their relation with the state and for the state in its relation and responsibility to the citizens. For the rest, a democratic society lives and moves within the laws. The quality of each society can be evaluated and assessed by the qualities of its laws.

On the other hand, laws are meaningless and of no use to state, society of citizen, if there is no rule of law. The laws must be obeyed and enforced. The laws must be obeyed not only by the ruled but by the rulers themselves. No one is above the law, Neither the citizen nor the ruler can take the law into his hands and no ruler can be a law unto himself. The state and society in a Republic are governed by the laws and not by men. The Rule of Law.

Respect for the law, Obedience to the law and enforcement of the law are the four corner stones in a stable society. In a society where there is breakdown of the rule of Law, besides the chaos and the confusion, there will be violence and destruction where might is right and the fittest survive. We are a society with a multiplicity and a multitude of laws and without enforcement and rule of law we can perish as a nation.

Due enforcement of the laws involves the guardians of the law, the Administrators of Justice, the rulers and the ruled. Each for their part must respect and obey the laws to avoid chaos, disorder, instability and injustice which will be the inevitable results if the enforcement of the laws falters and fails in any quarter. No man in a society is an island unto himself. In a multi-racial, multi-religion state no one race, no one religion is an island unto itself. Each one's unhappiness and misery will diminish the other when the law ceases to protect the individual and society, that society cannot hold itself together, it is the rule of law and the protection of the Citizens under the laws that hold society together. When there is no rule and respect for the law by the ruler and the ruled, society gets splintered into pieces. The nation and the state must be sensitive to the security and lack of security for all its Citizens. It was once said that if the smallest clod of earth is washed away from the shores of Europe, Europe will be that much less. It can truly be said that if the smallest clod of earth is washed away from the shores of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka will be that much less. We cannot meaningfully preserve our concepts of sovereignty and unity without knowing, cherishing and ensuring the dignity and security of every citizen and person in our country by the rule of law and the observance of the noble traditions of our religions.

Every citizen is involved in the law. He consciously and unconsciously participate in the working of the law and its enforcement. Our citizens even participate in the Administration of Justice when they serve on the Jury. The Jury System has ceased to exist in most of the countries in the 3rd world. Even India has not preserved that system any longer, but we can be proud that the jury system has been continued in Sri Lanka. It has worked well.

Every citizen owes a duty to the law whoever he is and he must obey and respect it. It is more dignified to be subservient to the laws of one's country than to be subservient to men. We must be inspired by the words in the epitaph for the 300 young spartans who died to a man at Thermopylan nearly 2500 years ago.

'Go tell the Spartans, ye that passeth by. That here obedient to the law, we be'.

It will not be too correct to say that the administration of justice is the sole responsibility of judges. The Public Servants also play a part in the administration of justice and the interpretation of laws in the first instance. In actual fact more citizens are involved in the administration of justice in public offices and institutions than in the courts. The laws delays are experienced not only in the Courts but also in Government Departments. Some of the decisions of the public servants cannot be questioned in a court of law except by way of a writ when there is a violation of the rules of natural justice or a refusal to perform a statutory duty. In this situation the Public servant has a responsibility to act in accordance with the law and not in accordance with the whims and fancies of men of power and influence. The public servants play a larger role in the development of a country. The responsibility of the Police and the armed forces is to preserve a stable society and guarantee the security and dignity of our people by maintaining the rule of law. There cannot be development in the midst of violence, stability in the midst of lawlessness, security in the midst of hate and discipline in the midst of corruption and falling standards.

Laws alone are sufficient. There must be love for the country, to the people and for humanity. There must be respect for the dignity of man. There are the written laws and the unwritten principles. These are the rules, standards and values. As the Roman poet observed two thousand years ago or more. Quid leges proficent Sine Moribus?

Of what avail are empty laws without values?

It is in the field of the administration of justice that the law has its full and final impact on society. The delays in the law can deny justice and effect the rule of law. The ruling power

of the law can be defeated by delays deliberate or otherwise. The understanding of the laws can be confused, the working of the law can be outwitted. Uncomplicated simple laws can be complicated and made complex. There must be no ambiguity in the law. The ignorance of the laws cannot be pleaded in defence. It will therefore be unfair by society to complicate and confuse the law and expect society to know the law in its complicated confused state.

Some of our laws are the classical laws such as the laws of Evidence, Crimes, Contracts, Torts and so on which are scientific and based on reason and common sense. They conform to the science of law. There is a just scheme and pattern. They have stood the test of time. We may now call them in a sense the perennial laws of men. On the other hand, the other laws have been passed on the felt necessities of society. There is always a reason for such laws. Normally one would not expect such laws to be oppressive laws—for how can the representatives of the people in a democracy pass oppressive laws unless through ignorance or unless they have drifted far from the people

lation of other laws and it must absolutely and unquestionably be non-violent. The lessons of history however teach us that bad laws do not remain in the statute books of a democracy. Freedom of speech, freedom of the press and a strong opposition always creates strong public opinion to have such laws repealed or not to be passed at all. Such freedoms, however, must be expressed legally and constitutionally. The Civil Rights Movement in our Society serves as an ever vigilant watchdog to alert the people and Parliament against oppressive laws. It keeps an eye that never sleeps and an ear that is never shut to protect the constitutional and the human rights of the people. Humanism is above politics. It is imperishable in the nobler nature of man and this noble spirit of man can never be silenced or suppressed.

Society must never consider law as the business of Lawyers and the functions of judges alone. The laws are logical. The laws are simple. The law is commonsense. The law is purposeful for good or bad. The law is never an Ass. It can never be so when it is meaning-

by W. T. Rajaratnam

and they are passing them for some sectional interests? If oppressive laws are passed, it is a reflection on the society which has not been vigilant. Bad oppressive laws in a society are attributable to either the lethargy or the ignorance of an indifferent society. It can be said that a Democratic Republican society, if it is truly so, deserves the laws that get into its statute books.

Once such oppressive laws are passed, well the rule of law must operate and society cannot complain if such laws have to be obeyed. It will be an interesting question to ask whether bad oppressive laws must be obeyed. The rule of law demands obedience and a violation of such laws will have to be punished. On the other hand, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King believed in the philosophy of resisting such laws and seeking martyrdom. They hoped to prevail on the law makers by the soul force of those resisting and thereby overcome the laws. Resistance to such laws, however, according to their philosophy must not lead to a vio-

fully and purposefully passed in Parliament. How can it be transformed into an Ass thereafter?

For how can judges be wise if the law be an ass? And how can the law be an ass if the judges be wise?

The laws delays are proverbial. Delays defeat justice and upset if not overthrow the Rule of Law. Some cases have taken more than 10 years to reach a finality and even dismissed workers wait more than 10 years in many cases to get some relief, if at all, from the Tribunals. Society suffers. It is, harmed, harassed and hurt by such delays which cause frustrations, expense and impoverishment. Litigation and recourse to the Courts must never be a luxury which only the affluent can afford. There was for instance a case where a child was a ward of maintenance. The affluent defendant who denied paternity managed and manipulated to keep the record in the Magistrate's Court for a whole year and thereafter the matter rested in the Appeal Court for another 3 years awaiting a convenient date to suit (Continued on next page)

Security considerations in context of ethnic conflict

In an earlier paper the law and order situation arising from the 1983 ethnic disturbances was examined. The present paper is designed to examine security considerations in the context of ethnic conflict.

What is disturbing is that ethnic conflict, which first erupted in 1956 and 1958, has recurred with dismal regularity in 1977, 1979, 1981 and in 1983. Concurrently, Tamil attitudes in the North have disclosed a seeming determination to veer away from the unitariness of the State of Sri Lanka. Evidence of this lies in the desire for regional autonomy expressed in the 1960s, the drive towards federalism in the 1970s and the demand for separatism which is now being debated.

Parallel to these initiatives, there has developed a potent movement which has been described as "terrorist", because its activities have a recognizable terrorist character, directed as they are towards depriving banks and

other institutions of cash and jewellery and towards harming Government property and employees and even others, if they are Government sympathisers.

What is even more disquieting is the connection between the terrorists and sympathisers in Tamil Nadu which seems to have propagandist, political, economic and even military facets and which has certainly complicated an already difficult and complicated situation. One concludes that the recurrence of ethnic conflict in the foregoing context cannot therefore be wholly excluded.

Issues raised by the leaders of the Tamil United Liberation Front are central to the ethnic problem and demand urgent attention, although fortunately, the indications are that these leaders desire to settle such issues by negotiation. Given the stand taken up by them on separatism and the corresponding stand taken up by the Government that Sri Lanka is a unitary state which can on

no account be separated, the predominant issue that arises for settlement is that dealing with devolution of power, although there are specific issues — colonisation, education, employment and language which will unquestionably demand attention.

The solution of these issues which lie in the politico-economic sector, will not solve the altogether independent issue of security which has imperatives of its own.

On the one hand, the local authorities which could emerge would not agree to troops belonging to the Central Government being stationed in regions where they would wish to wield authority and this would point to the need for some arrangement to be made for the stationing of national troops in the discharge of a national requirement.

Position of Trinco

Trincomalee lies in this regard in a special compartment of its own, predictably enough, the indi-

cations are that Trincomalee and its environs will remain under Central Government control.

There are other areas of interest, notably Palaly Airport, particularly if it develops as an international airport. There is also Karainagar whilst there may be other areas.

On the other hand, the Central Government would not wish the local authorities to set up military units in order to deal with their security problems and indeed, the local authorities arguably would not have the inclination nor perhaps the resources to set up military units. It follows from these considerations that local security will have to be in the hands of a locally recruited Police force. This force in turn would preferably have to be armed, because it would be imprudent to conclude that, even after major issues lying in the politico-economic field are settled during the All Party Conference, such solution will be necessarily permanent and that no fresh problems will crop up, some of which would have security overtones.

The reports of terrorist activity are that it falls into two compartments. The first of these compartments involves those who are committed to the waging of a war of "liberation" and would wish to conduct their pre-

responsibility cast on the Armed Services of Sri Lanka to organise, equip and train themselves to deal with the forces now apparently being prepared for an armed struggle.

Security Problems

The second compartment involves the terrorists who are based in Sri Lanka and have conducted expeditions which have earned for them the description of "terrorists". There is no reason why the security forces should not deal with this form of activity, given upto date training, equipment and organisation for anti-terrorist activity, with emphasis on intelligence backing and on efficient security such as will defeat ambush and other surprise measures which, of course, are part of terrorist tactics.

Much of the activity of the terrorists also lies in their exploitation of what appears to be inefficient security arrangements in the institutions which have been robbed of cash and jewellery. The financial benefit to the terrorist is considerable in providing the wherewithal to finance his activities. There is a residual advantage to the raider in that the morale of the participant is raised whilst correspondingly, that of the defender is lowered.

Arising from this, there does seem to be a need for

Law and Society

(Continued from page 6)

the convenience of an expensive Counsel. In the meantime, the child died without ever enjoying the maintenance. In another case, the mother went to court to obtain the custody of her infant child who had been taken away from her by the father. The proceedings were delayed and the matter was not concluded for more than three years by which time the heartbroken mother died without ever being able to carry her child in her arms. Every such miscarriage of justice is a defiance of the Rule of Law which renders the administration of justice a farce.

There are many instances where the Constitution and the Law confers benefits and rights to the Citizens but what the legislature gives with one hand the bureaucracy takes away with the other hand. The law concerns everybody. It is also the concern of the state. There is no magic in the law. The law is everybody's business. It is not like medicine or engineering. We cannot have a seminar on some medical or engineering subject for persons who are neither doctors nor engineers. But a seminar on law or a legal topic is within the comprehension of non-lawyers. Legal hearing and

academic excellence must be encouraged. That is also necessary. Lawyers traditionally call each other learned but that does not mean that non-lawyers must have some inferiority complex and totally surrender the examination of the laws and understanding of them to lawyers and the views on the laws to judges. It is everybody's business to have an understanding and awareness of the law. Knowledge and learning carry a vast area of ignorance and imperfection whereas an awareness, an understanding and an interest in the law are unfailing guides to adopt a correct approach and sensitivity to the law. When the public get interested in the law, they will realise the inadequacy or the oppressive nature of some laws. They will agitate for reforms of such laws with greater interest than the lawyers. Even the Law Reform Commission will be activated when the public press for legal reforms.

In conclusion, we make the following observations about the law:

The Majesty of the Law is in its rule and enforcement and not in the pomp and pageantry of judges.

The beauty of the Law is in its simplicity.

The justice of the law is

in its sense of fairness to the social good.

The service of the law is in its concern for the citizen and the state.

These are truly the attributes of the law. With this in mind, we can say that the understanding of the law is as important as the knowledge of it. When the law is understood in its true nature and purpose—its majesty and beauty, its justice and service are revealed in all its serenity to be felt and appreciated by society. When it is administered however, without this understanding the law does not stand out in all its majesty and beauty in the eyes of the public. The law moves with the changing needs of society. All legal literature and learning however will continue to serve as a firm unseen foundation for the seen structure of the law with all its attributes to be appreciated and understood by the people for whom alone it exists. Let us someday in the far distant future, when we have ideal men in an ideal society learn to love our laws, love our country and love our people more than we love ourselves. For such a day to dawn, we need men more than we need laws.

by Maj. Gen. Anton Muttukumaru

Based on a paper presented at a seminar on "Security in a Multi-Ethnic Society" held at the Marga Institute.

parations for such war in South India.

Given the sympathy that exists in South India for the Sri Lankan Tamils, one finds that certain political parties of that region take the lead in assisting in the process of training the personnel who will participate in the eventual liberation struggle, even though the Central Government would be hostile to such arrangements.

What is disquieting is that, reportedly, many hundred Sri Lankan Tamil youths, the destruction of whose places of work and homes in the South of Sri Lanka have rendered them homeless and made them refugees, have decided to cross over to South India and have opted to join the liberation organisation. If these reports are correct, there would be a

the Government to undertake, as a matter of co-ordinated policy, a major initiative to deal with the security of installations which habitually amass large sums of money and valuables because it seems unwise to leave matters of major security in the hands of local officials in charge of vulnerable institutions. Whether this points to the creation of a special security service is a matter for the Government's advisers.

Terrorist activity arises as much from patriotic considerations as from political and economic frustration. Prima facie, if these frustrations are eliminated, there could be a transformation in the terrorist approach. It would be a gross simplification, however, to conclude that, even when the present (Continued on next page)

Security consideration ...

(Continued from page 7)
amity talks are successful from a conference angle, terrorism will ipso facto come to an end. That will happen only if and when the terrorists are absorbed into the community.

This will in turn involve a host of initiatives. Initially, it will involve the grant of an amnesty to ensure absolution and remission of their enormities. Thereafter, there will arise the slow and difficult process of rehabilitation. Given their present avocation, it would be difficult to "place" them, although, having regard to their performance in matters of security and to some of the attributes they can claim to possess, there is some chance of their seeking enrolment in the Police Service which may be set up, always provided they measure up to the standards of loyalty that would be expected.

Job Opportunities

There will, of course, be a residue which the economy of the North and East may not be able to support. And yet, the effort has to be made, to find the employment opportunities in industrial and agricultural ventures which alone will wean them from their present existence as terrorists. Much will depend on the propaganda that will have to be undertaken to induce them to give up their present "calling", adopt something less destructive than terrorism and embrace something which will be of constructive benefit to their community.

It is obvious from the foregoing that the work of the Armed Services and the Police cannot come to an end in ethnic terms, even after the All-Party Conference comes to a successful end.

The size of the Services and Police and their deployment points to the need for co-ordinated effort between the Services and the Police in providing the operational efficiency in anti-terrorist activity. Given the secrecy with which the location of terrorist hideouts is safeguarded, and given the "hit and run" nature of their tactics, the need for co-ordinated intelligence activity, effective collation of the results of such activity and accurate inferences from such collation is obviously imperative, if such intelligence material is to be the basis of successful operational plans being drawn up by Service Chiefs and of ultimate operational policy being formulated by the National Security Council.

In assessing the efficiency

with which the Services have obtained information regarding the terrorists in the North, one is confronted with the assertion that the people in the North are unco-operative. There is more than one reason for this. For one thing, many people in the North adopt the political philosophy of the TULF, whom indeed they have voted into Parliament — namely, that what they want is the separate state of Eelam. In these circumstances the Government forces are only an "Army of occupation", to help whom could constitute an act of disloyalty.

Fear of Reprisals

There is also a nagging fear of reprisals from the terrorists if the individual turns "informant".

Side by side, is the more positive and current feeling in the aftermath of the July disturbances, that the terrorists are friends to whom they can turn for solace and comfort, now that they are merely refugees with only a bleak future except the possibility of helping to liberate the homeland.

There is additionally the harsh attitude of the serviceman who tends to treat the civilian as a terrorist or at best, a sympathiser of the terrorist. He has not yet adopted the policy of "winning hearts and minds" of the people with whom he works, against whom he has no grudge nor indeed against the terrorist, except when he is a transgressor of the law.

Given the problem of language will be a barrier till there are more Tamil speaking persons in the Services the process of winning the people over will inevitably be slow.

In the meantime, there is merit in the Government undertaking propaganda through the medium of the Tamil press, the issue of leaflets, guidance through leaders, which would be designed to publicise the need for the public to co-operate with the services.

Situation in South

If concurrently, the Services themselves can adopt attitudes in their public relations which will eradicate the fear of them the public now experiences, much of the "meeting of minds" which seems to be imperative, can be achieved.

Nor does the intelligence work of the Services and the Police end with activity

in the North and East. The events of July 1983 provide convincing proof that the deployment of gangs of thugs, organised as they were to identify with uncanny precision the Tamil locations to be attacked and to attack them once located with military efficiency, was unexpected and therefore left the initiative with the thugs. It follows from this that the actions of extremists in the South should be monitored as effectively as those of terrorists in the North.

Having said this, it is necessary to add that the security of the Sinhalese in the South is a matter of considerable concern which influences the attitude, certainly, of extremists in the South. These attitudes do not stem merely from hostility to the Tamil people seeking a separate state.

There is an additional and potent element in the ethnic setting, namely the position of elements in Tamil Nadu. This is not confined to giving moral support to the Sri Lanka Tamils in the form of resolutions passed in the Tamil Nadu Parliament, to organising hartals in Indian cities, and to giving sanctuary to Sri Lankans evading arrest. It spreads to material support being to terrorists in organising their training towards mounting the liberation of their homeland in Sri Lanka.

The move by Mr. Nedumaran to organise a march to Sri Lanka by some 6,000 Indians reported in the Press in 1983 was looked on with anxiety and concern by many Sinhalese people, because at the time this move appeared to have the undertones of an invasion of this coun-

try by an Indian "Force", and indeed was linked to the invasions by the Pandians and the Cholas in ancient history.

There is a latent fear in the minds of imaginative but unthinking extremists that Sri Lanka can once again be the object of Indian invasion. Given Indian superiority, the fear is that the Sinhalese people will be decimated because, unlike the Tamils who can find sanctuary in South India, the Sinhalese have nowhere to go to. Persons speculating on these lines can conceivably become a security risk. Such fears can certainly be allayed by judicious propaganda by the Government, whose security resources can be strained if such fears are not contained.

DOUBLE STANDARDS

The Editor,
Saturday Review.

The Cement Corporation and the Petroleum Corporation, both coming under the Minister of Industries, are adopting different standards in the pricing of their products, resulting in the Tamils being at the receiving end in both cases.

While the Petroleum Corporation adds its transport cost on its Colombo price (i. e. the point of production) to outstation supplies, the Cement Corporation deprives the people nearer the production site (the Tamils) the benefit of the location of the factory and, in the process, either makes a fat profit or subsidises the outstation consumers (the Sinhalese) at the expense of the Tamils.

The wilful failure to open port in the North and the neglect to develop the Trincomalee harbour by successive Governments and the concentration of Government-owned and private industries in and around Colombo all result in the Tamils being forced to pay more for any article, imported or locally produced. Yet the Corporation deprives the Northern Tamils the benefit of the only largescale industry in their midst.

Incidentally, the price of a locally produced bag of cement has been raised twice altogether by Rs. 27 after the last budget—inspite of the prayers and publicity that are being offered for the success of Prime Minister Mr. Premadasa's one million houses, the high cost of building has made a house beyond the reach of even

professionals like doctors and engineers, let alone the lower grades. Hence, while one should expect a reduction on the price of cement on which the Corporation is already making a fabulous profit, we are being saddled with a further 25 percent increase.

Is this an attempt at sabotaging the one million houses plan, or an indication

things means a heavy strain and severe drain on his thin and tiny purse. He finds life miserable and unmanageable with his meagre means.

Sambol had been the curry item which had been the cheapest imaginable. How it looks as if it is one of the costliest items. The price of the ingredients that go to make a palatable sambol has rocketed skyhigh. The price of coconut ranges from Rs. 7 to Rs. 10. The price of chillies has spiralled to a thrilling level. The price of onions has roared and soared to a meteoric level of Rs. 25 a kilo.

Just imagine the pitiable plight of the ordinary man, when even the "poor" or rather the rich or "costly". Sambol is beyond the reach of his hungry mouth. Pol-sambol plain tea had been the favourite combination of the ordinary garage worker of Panchikawatte. This convenient combination had made him content so far but now, A cup of plain tea is Rs. 1. A small dish of the "poor" sambol is Rs. 2. Hence the poorest breakfast costs him well over Rs. 6. Furthermore, a small piece of pittu is 75 cts. or Rs 1; kotthamba rotti is Rs. 2 for which the important ingredient used is Coconut oil.

Will the new Minister of Trade sympathise with us? Will he make amends to provide us relief and redress?

Bala Neeraja

Kokuvil.

LETTERS

of the financial bankruptcy of the Government, or an act of financial discrimination against the Tamils? If the last, it is such acts that have made the Tamils realise their helplessness in this land of their fore-fathers and driven them to the ultimate political demand.

K. Sivanandasundaram,
Point Pedro.

NOT EVEN 'POL' SAMBOL'

The Editor,
Saturday Review.

Things have come to a stage that even sambol (Pol-Sambol) which is said to be the poor man's favourite has gone beyond the easy and convenient reach of even the middle class. When things are bad and adverse even in the case of the middle class, what would be the position of the lower income groups; theirs will be a task so tedious and arduous. The meteoric rise in the price of

'THE WAY OUT'

(Reproduced from "Education and human rights in Sri Lanka" containing a selection from Mr. K. Nesiah's writings and addresses.)

The tragic happenings of August 1977 have deepened the crisis in Sri Lanka. It is a grave story that is now unfolding itself in the evidence placed before the Sansoni Commission—of widespread assaults and killings of Tamils, the looting and burning of their homes and shops, the humiliation of their women and the desecration of their temples. The essence of the crisis is that 30 years after reaching the gates of independence there has been a return journey to the nation state of medieval times.

An Indian Minister Mr. Asoka Mehta once said: "when a religious community a language group makes sovereign claims and reduces all other associations to the status of satellites democracy is destroyed"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

the nature of civil strife, and after the elections, political tension continues with probes and policy reversals. We readily disintegrate into our primitive groups.

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

In the next place, the free academic community should serve as the conscience of the nation; its positive function is to promote the freedom of ideas in a world where the state has at its disposal the means of

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

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

Besides, centralization is not consistent with the spatial dispersal of power. Laski argues that it makes for uniformity; it lacks the genius of time and place". If decision making has to commence in the small local community and flow from there

by

K. Nesiah

enslaving the minds of men. But, how can the university, which has lost its own freedom, serve as society's safeguard against the State; And, are all university men alive to this betrayal?

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

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

to broader levels the system of Proportional Representation, extended to local self-government, certainly goes counter to the concept that man "belong to a community and to a place".

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

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

of voting democracy, called by Madariaga as "statistical representation".

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

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

It is possible that all these who want in Sri Lanka a society based on justice, liberty, equality and fraternity will generally support the suggested new model of democracy. Equally, they may subscribe to the amendments to the draft 1972 Constitution proposed jointly by Messrs. J. R. Jayewardene, Dudley Senanayake and S. J. V. Chelvanayakam: (a) that there should be a 'bicameral' legislature; and, that (b) The President should be elected

(Continued on page 10)

THE LSSP STAND

(Continued from page 3)

we reject the D. D. C.s as useless and unworkable organisations we propose that, based on the same principle or concept of self management, these should be District Councils which should have wide powers. They could consist of representatives drawn from the local bodies of the district, being elected by these local bodies.

We also propose that adjacent DCs should have the right, by their decision and the decision of the people of the District the right to come together and form joint councils to run the common area. These could be called by any convenient name and have additional powers conferred on them.

It will be noted that what the LSSP done in respect of these proposals is to effect a considerable devolution of power from the Centre to the periphery at the village, the district and the regional level. We have also observed the bed-rock democratic principle of starting power from the grass roots and moving upwards in link with the basic democratic mass. We do not seek to impose these institutions from above.

There are three matters which I wish to make clear about our proposals.

The first is that as I have already stated, they were not in fact conceived originally in terms of the communal problem. They were conceived and shaped in the perspective of the socialist society for which the LSSP stands and works, and the kind of state structure which socialism calls for in the light of the basic tenets that it is the masses moving through the class struggle who clear the way to socialism and build the socialist society. Accordingly, the state-structure of the socialist society has to be one in which the self-same masses participate directly in the state's functioning at every level, in such a way as both releases and harness their energies in all spheres of a people's development. It need therefore surprise nobody that proposals conceived and shaped in that way are found to be relevant and apt to the needs of contemporary Sri Lanka in respect of the communal problem. Socialism, of course, has no room for communalism. Socialism does not divide society that way but unites in.

The second matter I wish to make clear in respect of our proposals is that the District Councils we propose have nothing to do with the District Development

Councils which have been set up to by the present Government. The short point about the DDCs is that, in our view they do not represent any devolution of power from the Centre. On the contrary, they represent the direct intrusion or extension of the Centre's power to the periphery along bureaucratic lines which make a farce of the DDCs as a substitute for the old system of local government, especially the Village and Town Councils which were simply wiped out to clear the ground for the DDCs. In terms of local government, our proposals serve to restore and re-establish democracy in local government on the wider basis of the self management concept.

The third matter to which I must refer in respect of the LSSP proposals is that it is fundamental to them that the institutions contemplated at each level are to have in every part of the island the same powers and functions as in any other part. For instance, we do not contemplate any powers to the praja sabhas, the district councils or the regional councils that are special to the Northern and/or Eastern Provinces. They will be the same in the Southern or Western or Central or any other province. It is the same in respect of the right of district councils to come together to form regional councils. There is no reason why the various regions of our country and the people who inhabit them should not be enabled, within the single Sri Lanka state, to run as much of their affairs as bear a regional character in accordance with their traditions and genius. Incidentally, that is the only democratic way to hold our multi-racial and multi-religious society together as an organic whole.

There is of course the vital question of the powers or extent of power to be devolved from the Centre. I do not propose to enter on that here but would point out that the division of power between the Centre and the periphery is the basic matter facing us and will be the essential content of the ultimate decision of this conference, whatever the stage and time at which such decisions are taken. In regard to this admittedly thorny subject, I would remind you that this was indeed the content and purpose of the celebrated, though historically illfated Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact and the Dudley Senanayake-Chelvanayakam Pact. The great and vital difference this time

is that, through this conference, major political parties and also other organisations representing major religious and racial forces will be directly involved in whatever agreement is ultimately reached at conference. This will be a strong guarantee of the viability of the agreement and enable the government which has to implement it to go forward with confidence of wide support.

There are, of course, other questions, such as employment, the distribution of land etc. etc., on which we can make our suggestions in the course of committee deliberations.

But I do submit that the proposals I have outlined can provide a framework for the solution of the problem facing this conference, although we have not approached the proposals I have outlined from the point of view of communal relations. I wish also to point out that our proposals give every room for the smaller minorities in any area to establish a mutually satisfactory relationship with the majority in the given area.

May I just say one thing before I close.

The proposals of the LSSP for the reorganisation of the state structure are not put forward in solution of the communal problem but that problem, we believe, will certainly be greatly eased by what we propose, enabling passions to cool and tensions to subside, thus providing the situation for fresh advances by agreement in the field of communal peace and amity. I say this particularly because the LSSP does not believe that this kind of problem can be solved in a society based on exploitation of man by man. On the contrary, such an environment tends to exacerbate communal relations even in the rich countries as we see in Britain today.

But may I say, Mr. President that if we can ease tensions and cool passions to the extent that enables a fresh start in the effort to live and progress together as equals in a society of equals, then this conference can congratulate itself on having done a big job. May we achieve at least that success which should be well within our reach.

Way out

(Continued from page 9)

for a period of six years by an electoral college consisting of members of both Houses of Parliament and the members of the duly constituted local bodies in the country.

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

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

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

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

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

Given good will, a number of conventions may be agreed to, which will make the settlement an enduring one. Such as for example, that there should be office of Vice-President and a firm convention that if the President of the Republic is from one language group, the Vice-President should be from the other. Another convention, that members of the Central Cabinet, the Supreme Court Bench, State Corporations and other directive and consultative bodies should represent all regions in the country and both language groups.

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

Paradoxical as it may sound,

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

LETTERS

BENZ BONANZA

The Editor,

Saturday Review.

It was reported in the Press recently that the Government is to probe the case of the undervalued Benz cars of four MPs.

It was also reported that the undervaluing of these cars had come to light subsequent to another MP also having imported a Benz car of the same value, of over Rs. 225,000.

The four others are reported to have undervalued their cars within the limit of Rs. 150,000 permitted for the importation of cars by MPs.

To my way of thinking, the MP who gave the highest valuation should be honoured. At least, he should be rewarded for bringing to light the undervaluing of the other four cars.

One important question arises out of this episode. How did the Customs, which sometimes imposes high duties on any small items received by ordinary citizens even as gifts from abroad, fail to notice the undervaluation of the four Benz cars and how did they give clearance to those cars?

ARUL

Colombo-13

COMPENSATION

The Editor,

Saturday Review

I read with sorrow the terse communique issued by the Government on the recent incident at Chunnakam.

To assuage the sorrow of the bereaved and the injured, the Government should grant adequate compensation to the affected families.

Dr. E. S. Mahendrarajah
Matale.

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Big Brother Syndrome

Facts of geography are immutable. In South Asia, India is by far the largest nation. In size, four times larger than Pakistan. In population, eight times bigger than Bangladesh. Three out of every four South Asians live in India. In economic development, particularly industrialisation India is far ahead of the other South Asian six. In the eyes of neighbours, bigness make India look ugly. It is the bigness of the Big Brother who wants to unfold his hegemony over the small members of a regional family. "To live with a big neighbour (such as the US) is like sleeping with an elephant," cracked the Canadian Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau. The words are echoed in Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, not as a smart quip but in perplexity and fear.

The Indian elephant cannot transform itself into a mouse. If South Asia is to get itself out of the crippling binds of conflicts and cleavages, the six will have to accept the bigness of the seventh. And the seventh, India, will have to prove to the six that big can indeed be beautiful. The elephant may have to go about raising its trunk in salute to each of the six. But the gaze of the six is fixed not on the elephant's trunk, but on its gigantic feet.

Instead of lamenting India's bigness, the neighbours could try to understand the problems and handicaps of India's gargantuan size and population. If they look closely, with lenses bereft of the miasma of prejudice and fear, they will see India as it really is: not the Brobdingnag of *Gulliver's Travels*, but a huge land of a mass of humanity one-half of which is weighed down by ageless poverty, a nation whose preoccupation is, and must continue to be, with development of the deprived and the downtrodden rather than building up of military power. Until the smaller nations can regard India's bigness as an asset for the entire region there can be no significant cooperation amongst the seven.

PAKISTANI VIEW

"The sheer weight of India generates apprehensions of domination on the part of the other states of the region some of which are medium size states by world standards but pale into smallness in comparison with India," observed Agha Shahi, former Foreign Minister of

Pakistan, in his keynote address to the now well-known South Asian seminar held at Islamabad in February last. He added: "On the other hand, India itself seems to fear that the other states might 'gang-up' to contain what India considers its due role." Implied in this statement, which forms the quintessence of Pakistani elite perception of India, is a struggle between India and the six "lilliputs" over a role India is anxious to play, and which the six are determined to resist. What is that role? Hegemony, of course, the South Asians would exclaim.

There is a grievous lack of confidence among the South Asian seven. "While all countries of the region will have to make a contribution to the development of confidence in place of suspicion, it is not unreasonable to say that India as the biggest state shares the greatest responsibility," affirmed Agha Shahi. How does the elephant earn the trust and confidence of the

The Indian elephant cannot transform itself into a mouse. If South Asia is to get itself out of the crippling binds of conflicts and cleavages, the six will have to accept the bigness of the seventh. And the seventh, that is India, will have to prove to the six that big can indeed be beautiful.

sheep? By being gentle and generous, the sheep would say, by indulging us and hiding from our vision all the claws you have, by not baring your teeth for us to see and shiver. By giving us a little more than we may be able to give you for you have so much and we so little.

In the last few weeks INDIA TODAY spoke with a number of foreign policy decision makers in Delhi. The topic was the attitudinal divide in South Asia. Why must India be seen as the Big Brother? Do Indians lend their ears to the fears suspicions and angst of the South Asian neighbours? Do we attach any weight to what they feel and how they look at us? Is there anything we can do to remove their fears? To build trust and confidence?

Is India playing a leadership role in South Asia? What are India's expectations of the smaller neighbours? Do we want a cluster of subservient nations

around us? Nations submitting to Indian hegemony? If we are keen on regional cooperation, shouldn't we go more than half way to induce the South Asians to come to us rather than go away from us?

WORLD VIEW

The answers to these numerous other questions are the stuff of which the mosaic of India's self-image, the Indian images of neighbours, of the South Asian region, and of the world, are made. The Germans have a single word for all this: the Weltanschauung—world view or a nation's philosophy of the world.

The first thing that emerges is a throaty assertion that India is not a major power and does not act or behave or think like a big brother. No one can wish away India's bigness of size, population etc. If these are assets, these are also great liabilities. There was a time, in the halcyon days of what looks almost like prehistory, when India did

not fear invasion from across the Himalayas or from the vast blue span of waters of the ocean. Now India has to defend more than four thousand miles of land frontiers and three thousand miles of coastline.

India's neighbours are far from military dwarfs. China is, or is soon going to be, a major military power. It has nuclear claws. Having fought and lost a border war with China, India cannot let down its guard on the long and rugged Himalayan border.

In the last decades of the century the Indian Ocean has emerged as a dangerously hot theater of naval confrontation between the US and the Soviet Union. The US is rapidly militarising the Indian Ocean region around India. There is deep, if still muted, strategic cleavage between the US and India simply because India is a puzzling vacuum in the American strategic map of the world. There is no direct conflict between the world's

two largest democracies. But Americans see India as a barrier if not a barricade, to the expansion of this power and influence Asiawide.

Now that the US has strung together a chain of military bases around India and is going to make the island base of Diego Garcia headquarters of the awesome Rapid Deployment Force, how can India help being "encircled by a power that is not and has never been exactly benign towards us?" How much of our resources can we spend on defence anyway without facing a storm of criticism from our own elite, asks a foreign office official. We are now spending 16 per cent of the revenues of the Central Government on defence, and a mere 3.5 per cent of our GNP, one of the very lowest in the world. And even for this we are being taken to task by many intellectuals.

TRAFFIC SITUATION

By what standard is Pakistan a "small" nation? Asked other officials. It has 90 million people; in size it is one of the 25 largest countries in the world; it has a standing army of half a million, roughly one-half of the size of the Indian army, though the frontiers it has to defend are not more than one-sixth in length of India's land borders. In a future war, Pakistan could destroy much of what India has built with the sweat and blood of its own people. Pakistan's defence has been consuming 8 to 10 per cent of the GNP and the lion's share of the revenues of the Central Government. Indeed, between 1950 and 1970, the military ate up 65-70 per cent of Pakistan's tax revenue: in 1965-66, it was an incredible 112 percent! There has been no let up in Pakistan's defence expenditure whether it is ruled by the military or by a civilian regime.

What has this high rate of military spending given Pakistan, ask Indian policy planners. Their answer: insecurity, internal as well as external. If Pakistanis have developed a small-nation mentality, it is because of their tragic failure to put together a state that represents the will and the aspirations of the people. Fear of India has taken Pakistan to distant shores in search of friends and allies; it has tried numerous pacts and alliances. The tragic results are writ large on the pages of Pakistan's contemporary his-

tory. Why didn't Pakistan try the only policy that would have served its true interests? Why didn't it turn to India in a spirit of friendship?

Because of the deep cleavages and conflicts built into the genesis of India and Pakistan, of course. But, several Indian policy makers stressed, in spite of these cleavages and conflicts, it was not India that made war on Pakistan; it was Pakistan which invaded India in 1948, 1965 and 1971, as Pakistanis themselves concede.

In the 1980s, Pakistan finds itself pitted on behalf of America against the USSR. In a vain glorious stand against the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan, Pakistan has made itself a front-line state. But have all the F-16s and other advanced American weapons given Pakistan a sense of security? Or pushed a single Soviet soldier out of Afghanistan? Is the Pakistani predicament of India's making? Why blame India for all the follies and blunders of your politicians, generals and diplomats?

INTERNAL PROBLEM

Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal, Indian officials remarked, have had minor differences with India. But, never, until now, did these nations pose a potential security problem for India. The Tamil-Sinhala conflict is not India's creation; it is a Sri Lankan problem which the Sri Lankans themselves must resolve if their beautiful pearl-shaped republic is not to be torn apart. Why wasn't there an acute Sinhala-Tamil conflict in the '60s and '70s when Colombo was trying to build a welfare democracy with socialistic contours? Can the Lankans divorce the current ethnic explosion from the domestic and foreign policies their present government has chosen to pursue? In any case, hasn't India behaved during the entire period of this conflict with ample restraint and rectitude.

India's interest lies entirely in the Sinhala and Tamil communities of Sri Lanka resolving the conflict through peaceful negotiations, say officials. India has been trying to help in this process and the Indian effort has won the praise even of General Zia-ul-Haq. India is totally against outside intervention in this tragic business. Each and every Lankan leader knows this. Still they

(Continued on page 12)

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

Quotable Quote

We are republishing this item because certain vital words somehow got omitted in the version published in our last issue. The omitted words are in bold type.

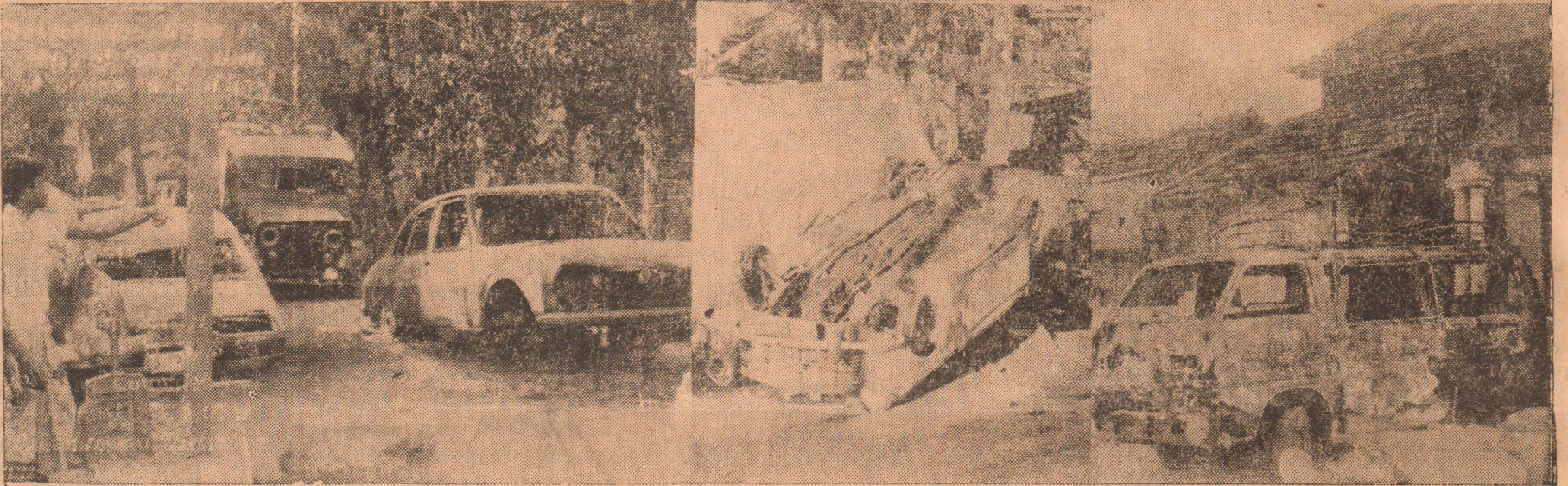
The following is an excerpt from an interview given

by President Jayewardene on 7th April to the Editor of "India Today," Mr. S. Venkat Narayan.

Q. Some people are asking you to sign a treaty with a big country?

A. I am not for it. The worst India can do is to invade us. If they invade us, that is the end of the Tamils of this country.

(The Island, 16th April)



Some of the vehicles that were burnt in Jaffna area on 9th April

Food and Fuel problem in Jaffna

The Co-operative Wholesale Establishment (CWE) will rush essential food stocks to Jaffna before the end of the week.

This move comes in the wake of a directive by the Minister of Trade Mr M.S.

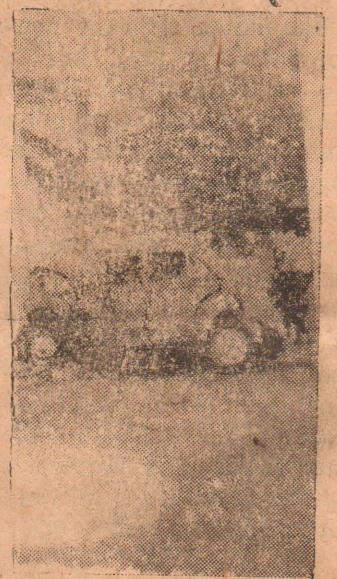
Amarasiri to stock all co-operatives in the Northern districts with essential food-stuff to prevent black marketing.

Mr. Amarasiri discussed the food situation in the North with the Minister of

Regional Development Mr. S. Rajaduri on Monday. Mr. Rajaduri had informed the Trade Minister that essential food items were in short supply in the area.

Meanwhile, Mr. Rajadurai also met the Petroleum Cor-

poration Chairman Mr. Daham Wimalasena to discuss the possibility of moving out stocks of kerosene and petrol to Jaffna other than by train. The railway has stopped all trains services beyond Killinochchi. (Sun, 25th April 1984)



BIG BROTHER...

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talk about Indian "invasion," of Indian "support" to Tamil Tigers. Can the Sinhala leaders resolve the conflict without India's help?

"The problem is", said one source, "the South Asian neighbours have been looking away from the one geographical area to which we all belong. Regimes alienated from their own people, unable to rule with a popular mandate, seek the protection of the US. The present American Administration sees to know only the logic of arms. They are willing to arm these regimes ostensibly for nation-

al defence but actually for the defence of regimes infirm and seriously sick. Our neighbours accuse India of Big Brotherism. But when exactly and how has India acted like Big Brother? It has, of course, tried to defend vital interests. But, say officials, "We have always gone to the limit to accommodate the genuine interests of our neighbours."

More than one of the decision makers interviewed conceded that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi might have a "certain style" of diplomacy and political rhetoric that some of the neighbours found "at times abrasive". But she has never re-

fused to deal with any South Asian regime. She was generous to Pakistan at Simla - a fact that has received less recognition in the world than it deserved. One of the officials predicted with a flare of optimism that the time would come when the South Asian nations, specially Pakistan, would turn inward, to where they actually belong. Pakistan had tried to turn westward, hoping to earn a West Asian identity. It didn't work. Sri Lanka wanted to turn to ASEAN, but was turned down. Bangladesh tried likewise with similar disappointment. Now Sri Lanka and Bangladesh are trying to hang on to the martial coat-tails of Uncle Sam. "But we need not be impatient. Maybe, in the next ten years, everything will change. South Asians will return to South Asia. When they do they will not find India wanting in any respect" said a foreign ministry official. Big would then look beautiful. (Courtesy India Today, 30th April issue).

Yet Another Accident

A naval officer attached to the Karainagar Navy Camp accidentally triggered off his machine gun and injured three other navy officers on Saturday evening.

The accident had occurred while the officers were

passing Ponnalay in a convoy.

Officers who suffered injuries on the head, face and legs were immediately removed to the Jaffna Hospital. They had undergone minor surgery and are reported to be out of danger. (Sun, 23rd April 1983)

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