

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

Vol. 3 No. 13.

12th May 1984

Fishy Business in Jaffna

Jaffna has been well-known down the ages for its plentiful supply of a wide variety of fresh fish at very reasonable prices.

Especially the crabs, the prawns and the cuttle fish, so loved by the folk in the South as well.

But right now, there is a scarcity of fish while the prices have rocketed.

The fishermen are enjoined by official regulations not to venture too far out into the sea.

Confined this way, their catch has naturally been poor.

About 500 boats (3½-ton capacity), which are used for deep-sea fishing, are not operating now. As a result, nearly 2,000 fishermen have been grounded.

MASTER MOVE

THE BELLS OF PEACE, read the SUN headline of 9th May, reporting the decision to launch an inter-religious campaign to promote communal harmony.

And there certainly shall be peace in our blessed land after the bells toll!

This and the poor catch possible close to the coast has affected the income of the fishermen.

This in turn has affected the re-payment of loans by them.

Due to the shortage of fish, the mobile retail van operated by the Northern Province Fishermen's Co-operative Societies Union has suspended operations.

According to a spokesman of the Union, there have been other repercussions as well.

The production of fish meal, an essential ingredient in making poultry food, at the Fish Meal Factory at Mandaitivu has dropped sharply.

This factory produces about one-third of Sri Lanka's fish meal requirements. There is thus a loss of foreign exchange too.

The drop in the supply of raw fish can be gauged from the following figures:

Production in Jaffna was 106,626 kilograms, valued at Rs. 134,516. In April, the

figures were 42,465 kilograms and Rs. 51,430, respectively.

The Ice Factory at 1st Cross Road, Jaffna, which produces ice blocks, has also been forced to curtail production.

In Jaffna people, who have been suffering for some time because of the shortages and rising prices of most essential items, now have to contend with a new problem.

Suffering appears to have become the badge of their tribe.

COPY DELAYED

The Competent Authority appointed especially to censor all items intended for publication in the SATURDAY REVIEW as well as his deputy were out of Jaffna for several days, resulting in considerable delay in the approval of copy for this issue.

We do not blame them in any way, for they have other and very often more urgent, business to attend.

But we ask the Government: how the hell are we going to keep to printing schedules in such circumstances?

SINHALA YOUTH'S THESIS ON N.Q.

At 25 years, Mr. Jehan Perera is one of the most remarkable young men in modern Sri Lanka.

His academic achievements, mental acumen and understanding of men and matters can be said to easily surpass those of most of our older and much-vaunted national leaders and intellectuals.

He has written an analytical article on the National question which we consider to be one of the best on the subject so far.

It was published in instalments in The Island, with certain deletions. We are publishing it in full in this issue as a special supplement.

A grandson of Dr. M. G. Perera, who was a UNP Senator, Jehan came to prominence as a tennis player, touring India, Pakistan and China as a member of the Sri Lanka Davis Cup and national teams in 1975, at the age of 16.

He was Educated at St. Joseph's College, Colombo ('O' Level), Aitchison College, Pakistan (Cambridge 'A' Level) and Harvard University (B. A. Hons. in Economics, Magna Cum Laude).

The academic awards he has earned are:

DIogenES MISSING!

Diogenes, who quite unwittingly found himself in Jaffna last week, is missing! We searched high and low for him but there is absolutely no trace of him. Can any reader help?

1972-76- Pope Paul VI scholarship for best student in Grade 8, St. Joseph's.

1976-77- Aitchison scholarship for academics and sports.

1978-82- Harvard scholarship and Deans list.

1981 - Honours thesis research grant (Harvard) to investigate ploughing technologies in Sri Lanka. Spent 5 months with farm families in Kurunegala and Anuradhapura districts.

1982- - Knox fellowship (Harvard) to study communal conflict in Sri Lanka.

He is now on deferred leave for this purpose.

WELL DONE

THE ISLAND of 10th May 1984, reporting the proceedings of the SATURDAY REVIEW case now before the Supreme Court, described it as a "Tamil weekly".

(See Page 3 for a report of the proceedings)

MOHAMED GOES INTO ACTION!

Transport Minister Mr. M. H. Mohamed was quoted in the Daily News of 8th May stating that he had decided to close down three of the four Transport Board depots in the North immediately, following the robbery of Rs. 78,000 from the Point Pedro depot by an armed terrorists on Sunday night.

The depots at Point Pedro, Karainagar and Kondavil will be closed and the buses transferred to the Jaffna Depot.

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Megalithic Burial Site at Anaikoddai

BY DR. JAMES T. RUTNAM
(President, Jaffna Archeological Society)

It is over fifty years since the first megalithic urn burial site in the Island was discovered at Pomparippu. Not much excitement was created by the discovery, as its significance was not known at the time. In the last fifteen years more megalithic sites have been discovered in the Island and their importance for the study of the early history of this country is beginning to be realised. It is not surprising therefore that the discovery of the first megalithic burial site in the Jaffna District in December 1980 has led to much excitement in that area.

The discoveries made by an archaeological survey team from the University of Jaffna during the first two weeks of December 1980 are indeed sensational. For a very long time nothing was known about the pre-and proto-history of the Jaffna District, and one had to be content with the legends of the Nagas of the Chronicles that passed for history. For the first time now a scientific study of the proto-history of that region has been made possible by the archaeological discoveries at the mounds of Anaikoddai, about four kilometres north of Jaffna town.

One of these mounds had been harbouring a veritable burial complex dating back to pre-Christian times, until it was laid bare by workmen removing earth to fill the Navanthurai Lagoon. It was at this point that a team from the Jaffna University had moved in to save some of the precious artefacts and skeletal remains from being subjected to a second burial in another place that was being reclaimed from the lagoon.

The discoveries include skeletal remains from extended burials and urn burials, iron tools such as spearheads and daggers, parts of copper rod, a large amount of black-and-red ware that is typical of megalithic sites in Sri Lanka and South India, Roman rouletted ware and even objects with

dateable writing, one of which goes back to the third century B. C.

There is a reference by the Dutch writer Valentyn to some finds suggesting a sort of Roman settlement in the first century A. D. in Mantai in Mannar, more or less comparable to Arikamedu on the opposite coast of South India. But the evidence now appearing is of very much greater significance, for they confirm the lurking anticipation a few of us have had, since the discovery in the twenties of the urn burials at Pomparippu, that there was a megalithic phase common to the whole of South India and Sri Lanka preceding the early historic period.

Looking back it would seem that we had treated the large number of discoveries in many parts of the country where evidence of a megalithic phase had been observed with very little appreciation, not to say indifference, of their far-reaching significance.

As far back as 1886 Ievers had found an ancient burial place in Gurugalhinna in the Anuradhapura district. This had been also noted by H. C. P. Bell in 1922. It was a megalithic site, but the report of further investigation by Godakumbura in 1965 has yet to see the light of day. Hugh Nevill is on record as having discovered a cinerary urn at Malikam Pitti in 1877. A. C. Hocart announced the discovery of the Pomparippu urn burials in 1924.

It will be sufficient here to note a few names of places where discoveries had been made of urn burials, dolmens, cists, extended burials, black-and-red ware etc., all pointing to a megalithic phase in Sri Lanka. These are, to be brief, the Gedige in Anuradhapura

Katiraveli in the Batticaloa district, Padavegampola in the Kegalle district, Gurugalhinna in the Anuradhapura district, Kokebe in the North Central province, Makewita in the Gampaha district, Ibbankatuwe in the Matale district, Okanda, Habarana, Tissamaharama, Asmadala, Mummaragoda, Itikala, Bambaragastalawa, Kudumbigala and Panamamoderagala.

Vimala Begly and others of the University of Pennsylvania did some excavation in Pomparippu in 1970. Begeley had estimated as many as eight thousand graves in the three or four acres that form the megalithic cemetery at Pomparippu.

Commenting on some of these sites, S. Paranavitana in his work entitled *Sinhala* published in 1967, wrote on page 7: "these megalithic sites and urn fields are found throughout the regions inhabited by Dravidian-speaking people. The burial customs to which they bear witness are referred to in early Tamil literature. It is therefore legitimate to infer that the people who buried their dead in dolmens and cists as well as in large earthenware jars were Dravidians".

(Continued on Page 7)

Words of wisdom

It requires wisdom to understand wisdom. The music is nothing if the audience is deaf.

— Walter Lippman.

There will be no war, if all people practice truthfulness, universal love, purity, mercy, contentment, self-sacrifice, self-restraint and tolerance.

— Sri Swami Sivananda.

The care of human life and happiness and not their destruction is the first and only legitimate object of good Government.

— Thomas Jefferson.

Democracy's real test lies in respect for minority opinion.

— Ellery Sedgwick.

I could never believe that Providence had sent a few men into the world, ready booted and spurred to ride,

and millions ready saddled and bridled to be ridden.

— Lord Macaulay.

Good and bad are always mixed up in this world. Nothing is absolutely good and nothing is absolutely bad.

— Sri Swami Sivananda.

A truth that is told with bad intent beats all the lies you can invent.

— William Blake.

Suspicion always haunts the guilty mind. The thief doth fear each bush an officer.

— Shakespeare.

The ultimate results of shielding men from folly is to fill the world with fools.

— Herbert Spencer.

A Government that is evil has no room for patriotic men and women except in its prison.

— Mahatma Gandhi.

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FOUND ON ROAD

The army authorities have informed the Government Agent of Jaffna that a National Panasonic Video Deck was found on the night of Monday, 30th April 1984 on Rasavinhoddam Road, near the railway crossing by an Army patrol. The owner is requested to contact Major Rajapakse at the Jaffna Stadium. Telephone 22805.

SATURDAY REVIEW CASE:

C.A. acted Arbitrarily Nadesan tells S.C.

Two applications in which several readers of the SATURDAY REVIEW complained about the closure of the paper on an order made by Mr. Douglas Liyanage, Competent Authority under Emergency Regulations and asked for relief and damages, came up before a bench of five judges of the Supreme Court, consisting of Justice D. Wimalaratne (President), Justice Percy Colin Thome, Justice Parinda Ranasinghe, Justice Abdul Cader and Justice Rodrigo, on 7th May and the hearing is continuing.

Mr. S. Nadesan Q.C., with Mr. S. Mahendran and Mr. S.H.M. Reeza, appeared for the petitioners. Mr. L. Sarat Silva Deputy Solicitor-General and State Counsel Mr. N. Y. Casechitty appeared for the three respondents—Mr. Douglas Liyanage, the Attorney-General and the Inspector-General of Police.

The first application (No. 85 of 1983) was filed by

Mr. K. Visuvalingam, Mr. M. Kanagarajanayagam, Mr. J. X. Philipupillai, Mr. V. Kanapathipillai, Mr. Gamini Navaratne, Mr. N. Kandasamy, Mr. Oscar P. L. Pereira and Mr. T. U. Cooray.

The second application (No. 6 of 1984) was filed by Mr. V. Kanapathipillai, Fr. Tissa Balasuriya and Mr. Manel Fonseka.

Two Violations

Mr. Nadesan submitted to Court that the order made by the Competent Authority violated two fundamental rights of the petitioners, namely, the fundamental right of equality under Article 12 of the Constitution and the freedom of expression including publication, under Article 14 (1) (a).

Counsel said that Article 12 clearly stated that all persons were equal before the law and were entitled to the equal protection of

the law and also that no citizen shall be discriminated against on the grounds of race, religion, language, caste, sex, political opinion, place of birth or any such grounds.

He submitted that constitutional guarantees of fundamental rights were directed against the State and its officers and pointed to the fact that Article 4(d) provided that "the fundamental rights which, were declared and recognised shall be respected, secured and advanced by all the organs of Government and shall not be abridged, restricted and denied, save in the manner and to the extent provided in the Constitution".

He said that on account of the President forming his opinion that there was "a state of National Emergency", he had, in pursuance of the Public Security Ordinance, framed a large number of regulations to ensure public security and competent

authorities had been appointed to make orders in terms of the regulations and implement them.

No competent authority can act arbitrarily or discriminate between one person and another in making orders under these regulations in the interests of public security. While imposing a censorship on practically all the newspapers in this country, the Competent Authority, for some inexplicable reason, has completely banned the SATURDAY REVIEW (in July 1983 which ban was revoked in January this year.) Accordingly, the SATURDAY REVIEW and its readers have been treated differently from other newspapers who were permitted to publish their newspapers subject to censorship.

"Such discrimination offends the principle of equality and equal protection enshrined in Article 12. Equal protection of the law is denied if in achieving a certain ob-

ject persons similarly circumstanced are differently treated by a law or an executive order and the principle underlying that difference in treatment has no rational relation to the object sought to be achieved by the law".

Counsel submitted that in the affidavit filed by the Competent Authority he had given no explanation whatever as to why, in exercising his discretionary power, he discriminated between the SATURDAY REVIEW and other newspapers.

"The burden is on him to give a rational explanation and in the absence of such an explanation the Court cannot but hold that the petitioners are entitled to succeed on the ground that Article 12 has been violated by his order".

Then counsel proceeded to deal with the fundamental rights enshrined in Article 14 (1) (a) regarding the freedom of persons to read any newspaper of their choice or contribute to its columns.

A Lady without identity

It was another dull, drab day in the insipid monotony of her life. After completing her chores, she felt hungry. So did the others of her family. Even the poor feel the pangs of hunger as intensely as the rich. The only difference is that the poor can do very little about these gastronomical urges.

Bare-footed, she plodded her weary way to the market to buy some bread. There were others like her. Unspoken sorrow and grief written conspicuously on their gaunt faces.

Then it happened — an erratic spray of bullets. People ran helter-skelter for cover. Mercifully, death was instantaneous. There they lay in scarlet pools all smothered to permanent silence. The victors had vanished.

After the signs of danger had disappeared, the inquisitive busybodies appeared like scared rabbits out of their warrens.

Numbered among the slain was that miserable wretch. A sodden threadbare saree covered her skeletal frame. Clutched in the palm of her bony hand were some coins — sufficient wealth for the pur-

chase of a pound of bread.

The great poet Thomas Hoon in his immortal "The Song of the Shent" wrote—
"But why do I talk of DEATH

That phantom of grisly bone
I hardly fear its terrible shape

It seems so like my own
Because of the fasts I keep

O God, that bread should be so dear

And flesh and blood so cheap"

Did she have a premonition of the end of all her sufferings? A Casuist, in the comfort of his armchair, may pontificate that since she really did not live, she did NOT die.

In active combat, the order for the snipers is to shoot anything that moves. The Instructor may add that if it does NOT move, it may be your own officer.

Is it difficult to differentiate between a particular species of animals and human beings? A demented mind with the malignant fever of revenge may imagine shoals of devils in the crowded market-square and crowded streets walking to and fro seeking whom they may devour.

Was this unfortunate woman a danger to anyone? Her own crime was that she was poor, powerless and unaware of the machinations of some who prostitute the law for their insane purpose.

The tragedy of being laid to rest unsung, unhonoured and unwept is bad enough. To be unidentified and unclaimed is worse. What does it matter? In life she received nothing. In death she can make a valuable contribution. The body can be relegated to the dissecting room of a medical college to enable our Medicos to enhance their knowledge of forensic medicine, add to the quantum of research or even satiate their intellectual curiosity. After all, the show must go on.

This is a sad simple story. But, who was this woman? Was she judged by the inscrutable standards of the elitish group resident in a particular postal zonal area of the Metropolis? As an official of the State disdainfully pronounced, "She was no lady; she was only a FISH-MONGER".

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'Why not appeal to Tamils too?

The following letter appeared in *The Island* of 4th May under the headline "Appeal to the Tamils, too."

Mr. Gamini Navaratne, Editor of *Saturday Review*, in his "Open Letter to the Sinhalese" (reproduced from the issue of 20th April) makes a fervent appeal to his brethren in the South not to seek foreign intervention in settling the internal problems in our land because this would lead to losing our independence. All right-minded people would agree with him that the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka is an internal affair and should be settled among Sri Lankans themselves. But has Mr. Navaratne forgotten that it was Tamil United Liberation Front leaders and the terrorist leaders of the North who constantly go to Tamil Nadu and seek assistance.

After there had been too much sabre-rattling from Tamilnadu, some Sinhalese organisations have appealed to the President to come into an agreement with China, the U. S. A., Pakistan, Bangladesh, etc., to resist and defeat any attempts by Tamilnadu invaders coming to assist the terrorists who are now being trained in South India.

It is natural for the Sinhalese in self-interest against such threats to think of such alliances. I think Mr. Navaratne's purpose of avoiding our country losing its independence as a result of foreign interference can best be achieved if he uses his influence with the Jaffna Tamils, whom he is working with, by appealing to them also not to seek intervention on their behalf from Tamilnadu, or any other part of India. If Mr. Navaratne's appeal not to seek foreign assistance is made to both Sinhalese and Tamils it will make sense.

If he appeals to the Tamils in the same way their would be a peaceful settlement.

D. Amarasiri V. Ratna Wattala.

IN SINHALA

The Editor,
Saturday Review.

I read and re-read "AN OPEN LETTER TO THE SINHALESE" in your paper.

I was more than happy to find that it had been reproduced in *The Island* of 20th April.

I hope that a similar letter will in the near future be published in all the Sinhalese Sunday papers. I emphasise "Sunday" since many readers have more time to study the media at the weekend.

To me and many others, including a legal luminary, the

letter expresses a plea for sane reflection. The letter carries an invitation for those of us in the South to visit Jaffna again and again and get to know its people, if we wish Sri Lanka to be a contented unitary state.

The letter is a plea for us to consider why Tamil youth abandon their studies and leave home to fight for a "separate state" and that only from 1976 onwards, 28 years after the dawn of independence.

Can this tragic situation not be traced to a history of broken promises, disillusionment and frustration. The most serious lapse dates back to the U. N. P. Election Manifesto of 1977 when a promise of a round table conference soon after the election was promised, but never held until it was too late.

Why is it that only the *Saturday Review* is subject to special censorship?

Dr. Florence Ram Aluwihare.

Colombo - 5

G. T. O. FUNDS

The Good Templar Organisation was introduced to Sri Lanka ten years ago by a group of Swedish people who have been working for world peace and fighting against alcoholism.

Fifteen G. T. O. branches were formed in Jaffna and they worked separately until 1978, when the Valanthalai branch urged that a federation be formed with the intention of campaigning against illiteracy, malnutrition and alcoholism. These branches were organised among the depressed class Tamils and the fisherfolk in the coastal areas.

The Swedish representatives who visited Jaffna gave some assistance to the branches to build up their organisations using the talents of the educated people among them.

One of the representatives, Mr. P. A. Anderson took a very keen interest to propagate the ideals of the G. T. O. through the branches.

But some of the representatives who came later were not so effective, partly because they were misled by certain members of the G. T. O. Federation.

In 1983, I was elected to the executive body of the Federation by our branch after which I observed closely the work of the Organisation. I found it was not as active as the Swedish people who donated the funds were made to think. A few individuals acting on behalf of it were using the funds without any reference to the branches and the main body itself.

Whenever the Swedish representatives were in Sri Lanka, the Federation always requested them for more funds by giving the impression that they had in hand many useful projects to raise the standard of living of the poor villagers, but many of them have ended as mere plans on paper with no material benefit to the common people.

For instance, in 1983, one individual began repairing two wells at Sampaloddai in Karainagar at that time some Swedish representatives visited the place and he was shown the work. Now I am told the work on the two wells has not been completed. These two wells are near the Valathali G. T. O. branch but we were not consulted either before or after the work was begun or when the work was being done. Part of the work was done on shramadana.

I raised this question at our branch meeting in the presence of the President of the Federation. The individual responsible said I was not entitled to ask the question. I raised it at Federation level but nothing happened.

On representations made by me to the Government Agent of Jaffna, the Federation was compelled to convene a meeting which was held on 11th December, 1983 and at which the G. A. himself was present.

The G. A. said it was important that the G. T. O. conducted its affairs democratically. It should scrupulously account for the funds it received. He asked for a comprehensive report of its past activities and to ensure that the records of the meeting and inventories of goods given to the branches be maintained.

I suggest that, in the interests of the people, the following be done.

From this year, the G. T. O. Federation must take full responsibility for the funds received from Sweden and disburse it by means of a joint account in the bank.

Construction work done by individuals in the absence of the Swedish representatives should be checked by the Federation and a report submitted to the general body.

Past records must be collected from the branches for our information.

V. Rattai

Secretary, Valanthalai G. T. O.

LETTERS

WHAT A WORLD!

The Ceylon Daily News of 13th April reported a UN official visitor, Mr. S. Duraisamy had found many shortcomings in the Maskeliya Hospital.

To cap it all, the DMO who was contacted by the newspaper is reporting to have said that there were on paper available even to write reports.

This situation is unbelievable. We are claiming to be having the best health services in our part of the world and we are having such a hospital also.

And that, too, in the three-member Nuwara Eliya constituency represented in Parliament by two Ministers and the Leader of the Opposition, who is an alternative Prime Minister and even a prospective President of our country!

One of the Ministers had taken upon himself the task of raising the standard of cricket in our country and had become the President of the Board of Control for cricket when there are very many others to do that job, besides a Minister being in charge of sports.

The other Minister is engaged in a tussle with the Government itself to get more wages for the Estate workers, which, by the way, is his duty as he had been sent to Parliament by these workers.

The third M. P. is more engaged in becoming the successor to the throne of his party.

Only the voters have no proper medicines or facilities in the Government hospital in their constituency. What does it matter? Why can't they go to the private hospitals?

Arul

Colombo - 13

NOT BY HATRED

The Editor,
Saturday Review.

If Pakistan had turned to India and vice versa for economic and military assistance, both countries will be well-stabilised and more progressive today without mutual distrust and fear. They would also not have drawn foreign nuclear giants on the side of each other.

Pakistan sought military

assistance to defend itself against India. Its position is worse today. It is now in danger of an attack both from India and Russia. We are told that Russia is amassing its troops on the Afghan border.

This should serve as a good lesson for little Sri Lanka which has allowed a small domestic problem to balloon into an international issue.

There is no better time for the Sinhalese and Tamil leaders to settle the ethnic problem than the holy month of May. The Holy One has preached that hatred is not solved by hatred but by Love.

D. J. Thamotheram

Colombo 6.

ARMS AND ALMS

The Editor,
Saturday Review.

It was reported in the press recently that 32 million dollars per hour are spent in the USA on arms while almost 34 million poor people in the USA are queuing up daily to get alms—a slice of bread and a pack of milk powder.

How much, one wonders, is spent on arms throughout the whole world for an hour and how many people are crying out for alms—just for a slice of bread or a cup of milk—every minute in the world?

But those who have the power to stop the production of destructive arms and also the power to provide more alms to the poor of the world do not seem to be much concerned about this. To them it seems to be just a difference in letters only—arms and alms!

Arul

Colombo 13.

BOTH CORRECT!

The Editor,
Saturday Review.

I am sending two clippings of pictures from two newspapers. One is from the SUN of 17th April which reported that the Church of Our Lady of Refuge was not attacked. The other is from the Daily News of 24th April, which reported that one cannon had been fired.

I would like to know which one is correct?

T. Sunder

Kollupitiya.

Exploring solution to the communal problem

The significance of communal identity

"Sinhala? Demalade? was frequently a life or death question during the July riots. It is a cruel epitaph to the hundreds killed that week in July. But it is also a testimony to the close physical similarity of members of these two estranged communities. My own reply that I was Sri Lankan did not answer the question. Neither did it satisfy the mob for, in that week of intense polarization of society, there was no room for a national identity that transcended communal ones.

The present state of relations between the Sinhalese and Tamil Communities have their roots in historical perceptions that first arose in the dynastic wars fought by feudal rulers based on the island and neighbouring South India; in the later period of Sinhalese contraction, these memories were resurrected and reinterpreted as the efforts of Hindu South India to absorb Buddhist Lanka; Communal grievances and fears came into focus in the heady period of transition from colonial-rule to self-rule; the competition for scarce economic resources and employment in the context of a stagnant economy led to the formation of communal interest groups that cut through class; government policies and communal riots institutionalized the communal divisions.

The communal conflict can be defined in terms as broad as is desired. However, the primary disadvantage of a broad definition that encompasses the economic, social, political and cultural dimensions is that it tends to lead to the confusion of issues having a vast range of possibilities, and hence to inaction. In Sri Lanka what obstructs the vision to a clear solution to the Communal problem is the almost undivided attention given to the clutter of history, real and imagined, and more recently the focus on statistical data. The thesis presented here is that amongst the economic, social, cultural, political and other factors that have contributed to the present explosive state of Sinhalese-Tamil relations, it is the psychological dimension of individual and communal identity

that takes primacy. Identity is at the heart of communal conflict, and around it crystallize the economic, social and other grievances.

Confronting a communal and regional problem of much greater complexity than that to be found in Sri Lanka, the Russian revolutionary leader and theoretician Lenin wrote "Why will you not understand the psychology that is so important in the national question, and which if the slightest coercion is applied besmirches, soils and nullifies the undoubtedly progressive importance of centralization, large state and an uniform language." The young Soviet state heeded Lenin's warning and today the Soviet Union has a federal system of government, no country-wide official language and a high degree of communal harmony.

The Sri Lankan experience gives substance to the view that communal conflict cannot be resolved into, and is harder to solve than class conflict. The class-based 1971 Insurrection was crushed in a week whereas Tamil terrorism is now in its ninth year, outlasting the government that stamped out the Insurrection. The reason for this is that at the heart of community is the subjective psychological dimension that is difficult to come to grips with as it revolves around often intangible factors unrelated to objective indicators and statistics. The landless labourer in Vavuniya has the desire to leave the ranks of the proletariat and join the landowner class. He will work hard to achieve this end, and there is every possibility that with his savings he will one day reap fields that are his own. But the Tamil farmer in Vavuniya does not desire to become a Sinhalese even though his Sinhalese neighbours in the district have access to larger and better-irrigated plots of land. He cannot and does not want to give up his Tamil identity, unlike the landless labourer who willingly gives up his class position, because he is proud of his Tamil identity and finds it reassuring to belong to the Tamil community.

Thus, communal conflict has occurred in economically developed countries (Canada,

Belgium), in less-developed countries (Pakistan, Zaire), in the richer regions of countries (the Basque region in Spain) as well as in the poorer regions of countries (Northern Ireland in the U. K.). Where communal conflict has become the focus of a society it has divided people and diverted them from more objective problems that may have a greater bearing on their material lives such as poverty and the unequal distribution of wealth. For instance, in 1971 although rural Tamil youth had grievances similar to the rural Sinhalese they did not join forces in the Insurrection because communal feelings that stemmed from di-

fferent cultures and interpretations of what happens. Thus, the victory of Dutugemunu meant the defeat of Elara; the period of Sinhalese decay in the Rajarata corresponded to the rise of Tamil power in the Jaffna peninsula; the historical privileges/rights of one community have smelled of discrimination to the other; democratic majorities to the Sinhalese has meant the despotism of a communal majority to the Tamils; and "terrorists" to the Sinhalese are "boys" to the Tamils. Such striking differences in perception are not limited to Sri Lanka. In Northern Ireland, for instance, when Catholics and

tolerant in ordinary life, united emotionally with hoodlums.

Communal identity is an extension of individual identity that gives people a sense of belonging. Identity, to quote the American social psychologist Erik Erikson, "is a process located in the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his communal culture." Apparent in the search for roots in Africa by American Blacks is the search for a communal past that will lend continuity to the individual life. Even a name can be used to associate an individual who can be anyone with a sense of belonging, of time and place, and with unique values and behavioural standards. Communal identity eases the problems of anonymity and weakness.

No community can maintain a viable identity without symbols and values that point to a distinctive identity. In 1981 even the armed forces stationed in the North recognised, unconsciously perhaps, the importance of communal symbols when they burned down the Jaffna Public library and destroyed statues of Tamil heroes and poets. Some symbols, language for instance, are relevant to differentiate between groups. Others, such as caste hierarchies, are meaningful only within the group and have little relevance to outsiders. When reinforced by a co-extensive history, language is usually the key marker of distinctive identity, and consequently is a focus of communal loyalty. In addition to its obvious role in communication, language has a powerful emotional aspect that stems from its particular sound and familiarity as the mode of conveyance through the centuries of the thoughts and experiences of the community.

The communal perception of language legislation

The power of communal symbols can be exploited to yield material benefits. In its struggle for political power, the newly formed SLFP reaped a rich harvest of communal votes when it skillfully

by **JEHAN PERERA**

visions of language and culture were more powerful than class-based feelings that stemmed from a common poverty.

The roots of communal conflict

There is a growing opinion that communal conflict cannot be solved and can only be managed. Let history be the arbiter of that question. The task before Sri Lankan leadership is to improve communal relations between the Sinhalese and Tamils to the point where the major thrust of state power and initiative can be released away from communal issues towards tackling the enormous problems of development, of creating a wealthy and just society. The first step is to realize that terrorism is but a symptom, a vicious one, of a deeper malady that afflicts the country that spawned it. The key to improving Sinhalese-Tamil relations is not to focus on merely wiping out terrorism, a symptom, but to get rid of the cause of terrorism.

The roots of communal conflict lie in the differing perceptions - of the Sinhalese and Tamils which arises from the fact of a separate Sinhalese identity that over the centuries grew and hardened in opposition to that of the Tamils. The fact is that the Sinhalese identity and Tamils speak different languages, and have

Protestants were asked whether they were aware of discriminatory practices, over 75% of the Catholics said yes while a similar proportion of Protestants said no.

Identity is inherent in the fact of being a someone. "Who am I?" has as its inevitable corollary "Who is he?" These questions and the existential anxieties they give rise to can be reduced in togetherness within the womb of community. In communal terms the questions then become "Who are we?" and "Who are they?" More by their actions than their words the Sinhalese mobsters with swords and firebrands in hand were asserting their awareness of identity, that they were Sinhalese and belonged to a community that had lost thirteen of its members to the Tamil collectivity. While at their deadly work the mobs cheered the passing convoys of the armed forces, who often cheered back, and made it known that they were destroying Tamil establishments as a gesture of communal solidarity and vengeance to retaliate the killing of the thirteen. In the communally sensitive and threat-laden atmosphere of that week in July communal pressures so escalated that individuals were emotionally impelled into aligning their behaviour with that of the community as a whole; Sinhalese, peaceful and

manipulated the customs, values and myths of the Sinhalese and linked them to economic and social grievances. The initial thrust of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike's campaign was class-based and was directed against the privileged position enjoyed by the English-educated elite. But rapidly the class component of his appeal was overshadowed by its communal implications and the language issue became a red flag to the communities. The clear basic of the SLFP's appeal lay in the elevation of the Sinhala language and the emphasis on the rights of the Sinhala-speaking masses. The power of community over economics can also be seen in the Tamil reaction. The Tamils decisively rejected the ACTC which saw in the language issue a question of discrimination in employment and education. In the wake of "Sinhala-only" they swung towards the FP, and later the TULF, which gave priority to Tamils identity and political autonomy as being of the foremost importance.

It follows that the most grievous blow to an united Sri Lanka that explicitly mobilized communal solidarity and support was that struck by the cry for "Sinhala-only." This election slogan which promised Sinhala-only in 24 hours hit deep at Tamil self-esteem and devalued the Tamil culture. "Sinhala-only" also made life in general that much harder for a non-Sinhala-speaking Tamil who no longer enjoyed the same rights as a Sinhalese in the transaction of business with the state which, to make matters worse, was taking over a growing area of what had been the domain of the private sector. In the struggle for education and employment being Tamil-speaking had become a grave handicap. But the Sinhalese perception was different; the majority community, hitherto suppressed, getting back its rightful place and past injustices were being righted.

Towards Tamil self-determination

Post-independence reality thus clashed heavily with the pre-independence perception of the Tamils regarding their equality of status as a major community alongside the low-country Sinhalese and Kandyan Sinhalese. The psychological adjustment to the fact of being a politically irrelevant minority was painful on its own merits. The attempt of the independent state to create a single political culture overriding communal cultures, yet drawing many of its symbols from the heritage of the Sinhalese community, such as the adoption

of the Lion flag the installation of "Sri" number plates and the colonization of the Rajarata, reinforced the sense of Tamil grievance. The evidence from a number of countries affected by communal problems indicates that feelings of political powerlessness and status deprivation are more closely related to communal action than economic constraints. Although communal leaders may make complete their case with reference to economics and figures, the core of that appeal remains psychological rather than economic. Thus, today, after 36 years of independence and rule by governments heavily accountable to a Sinhalese voter base, communalism has succeeded in turning the Tamil community into seeking the psychological satisfaction of self-determination even at great cost.

There is a common belief that the Sri Lankan communal conflict is unique to the world. This is of course true, but only in a narrow sense because any investigation of communal conflict in other countries will show recurring patterns followed rather closely by Sri Lanka. Take for instance Pakistan. In 1948 in the Parliament of the newly formed state, Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan said decisively "It is necessary for a nation to have one language and that language can only be Urdu". The Bengali speaking people of East Pakistan united in protest. Although in 1956 the Pakistani government accepted Bengali as a second official language the damage had been done, and in East Pakistan the Bengali identity superseded the Pakistani one. The language issue created a frame of mind that persisted long after the Bengali language was elevated. The cost of 1948 was paid in full in 1971.

In the Tamil cry for Eelam are two intertwined themes. One is the struggle for liberation from poverty and misrule, the demand of a community possessing self-esteem to determine the course of its life; the other is a manifestation of separatist frames of mind, the ambition of those who seek a country to rule. The task of Sri Lankan leadership, before it is too late, is to unravel these and give priority to the realization of the former. For in this is the yearning of people all communities for a life of dignity and sufficiency. The private ambitions of the separatists can then be made to flounder, as they did in Quebec and the Southern Sudan. The goal of self-determination for the Tamils must not be seen as the break-up of Sri Lanka; neither as the seal on the es-

trangement of the Sinhalese and Tamils. Separation and the formation of a new state is but one form of self-determination. It may be hollow in reality as in the case of satellite countries. For instance, the Italian-speaking people in Federal Switzerland who constitute less than 10% of the population enjoy assuredly greater self-determination than the Poles in independent Poland. Thus, the goal of self-determination for the Tamils must be seen as the first step towards the rapprochement of the Sinhalese and Tamils as individuals, and as communities, enjoying equally the rights to language, to the protection of the state and to self-determination.

The key question today then is not whether the Tamils should have the right to determine the course of their lives, because in this democratic age which recognises inalienable and fundamental rights of all human beings it is evident they must, but rather given the geographical, economic, and political parameters what the most appropriate form that this self-determination should take. Before proceeding to an examination of this question it might be useful to reflect upon the experience of the Sudan which offers several parallel to the Sri Lankan case of sufficient importance to be worth considering. The final solution reached in that country is also instructive in the willingness and courage of the leadership of both sides to negotiate a lasting settlement.

Communal conflict in the Sudan

In the Sudan, as in Sri Lanka, the conflict was between the northern and southern parts of the country. To the north of the Sudan are the Arab states of Egypt and Libya, while to the South are the Black African states of Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya. In keeping with this geographical position the northern parts of the Sudan consist of Arabs and arabicized people who account for more than 12 m. of the country's total population of 18 m.; the South live approximately 4 m. Blacks who speak Nilotic languages and are adherents of Christianity and native religions. Thus, parallel to Sri Lanka, the north and south of the Sudan differ radically in language, culture and population.

With independence in 1956 the new state inherited acute antagonisms. During the colonial era the memories of the times when Arab traders from the north sold thousands of southern Blacks into slavery

were kept alive by the British administrators to facilitate and consolidate their rule, and by Christian missionaries who sought the salvation of souls against the competition of Islam. In this context, the newly independent governments policy of Arabization was resented by the southerners right from the start. But the policy reached fruition for the northerners and flashpoint for the south a mere 12 years later, in 1968, when a new constitution was adopted in which The Republic of Sudan was proclaimed a unitary state with Arabic as the official language and Islam the state religion. It was this more than economic deprivation that confirmed to the Black African south the disregard with which the Arab north held them, their language and culture, and cast doubts on their equal membership of the polity. Relations between the north and south plunged and led to the call for the complete secession of the south and the formation of the Independent state of Azania.

The Sudanese Solution

The deepening crisis prompted, in 1969, the granting of limited autonomy to the south. The package was based on the assumption that satisfying the economic grievances of the south within the existing political framework would suffice. It consisted mainly of measures for the economic development of the south and included the drafting of a separate southern budget.

However, these measures side-stepped the key demand for greater self-determination and failed to win the support of the south. The leadership of the Anya-Nya, the southern insurgent movement, in 1971 proclaimed the founding of the Azania Liberation Front. Civil war broke out. The government forces scored convincing victories in the initial open warfare, but when the Anya-Nya changed its tactics to that of guerilla warfare a situation of stalemate developed. Aware of the odds against a quick military settlement in opposition to an increasingly united south, and the sapping of the national coffers in one of the world's poorest countries, the Sudanese government put forward a new plan for a political settlement that envisaged regional autonomy for the south.

There was much agitation in the north over the regional autonomy plan which, it was feared, would ease the task of secession to the south. The argument made, ironically the reverse of that made in Sri Lanka, was that given the large size of the country and the poor communications network, regional autonomy would be de facto separation soon to be followed by the

real thing. Nevertheless, the military government led by General Nimeiry disregarded the opposition and stood firm. In 1972 representatives of the government and the Anya-Nya signed the regional autonomy agreement.

The communal problem in the Sudan has not ended, which gives substance to the view that communal conflict cannot be solved but only managed. There is dissatisfaction in both the north and south regarding the terms of the regional autonomy agreement. Nevertheless, the Sudanese experiment is of great relevance to Sri Lanka in demonstrating that a skilfully negotiated political settlement can diffuse secessionist pressures and give the political leadership another chance at building national unity upon a new foundation.

The American sociologist and former ambassador to Sri Lanka, Howard Wriggins noted that a significant aspect of politics in Sri Lanka lay in the intensify of feelings that could be mobilized around proposals that were left abstract and therefore ambiguous. His example was the debate over federalism in the wake of the FP's formation and electoral strategy. Because the call lacked precision opponents of federalism were left a free hand to play upon the fears of the Sinhalese and claim it would be the first step towards secession. The same lack of knowledge and fear exist today. Therefore investigating the regional autonomy agreement of the Sudan will provide exposure to a concrete and working agreement. The agreement can provide a outline of a model for Sri Lanka.

A Regional Autonomy Model

The main points of the Sudanese plan are listed below:

(a) Matters pertaining to defence, foreign affairs, trade and planning were assigned to the central government: all other matters relating to the southern provinces were placed under the control of the regional government which would have its own elected legislative and executive organs of power in the three southern provinces.

(b) All citizens of the Southern Region were guaranteed equal opportunities of obtaining employment and education and of engaging in trade.

(c) The southern legislature, by a 2/3 majority, could request the President of the republic to postpone the implementation of any central government legislation which, in its view, was harmful to the interests of the Southern Region.

(d) English was recognized as the main language of the

Southern Region and allowance was made for the use of any other language that could satisfy local needs; Arabic remained the official language of the country.

(e) The rebel armed forces of the south were incorporated into the Sudanese national army, and for the first 5 years the Sudanese Army stationed in the south was to be equally made up of northerners and southerners under the command of a southerner.

(f) The regional government was required to exert efforts to reinforce and promote the unity of the Sudan.

(g) The agreement was signed for an initial period of 10 years, and could be further extended depending upon its success. The agreement has since been renewed.

The capacity for reconciliation of the human communities must not be underestimated. Shortly before the Sudanese regional autonomy agreement was concluded few would have predicted that Sudanese President Nimeiry would tour the formerly secessionist regions to scenes of enthusiastic welcome, or that a year after the end of the bitter Nigerian civil war former Biafrans would travel with security the length and breadth of the Nigerian federation. Indeed there is no need to travel so far abroad for examples of reconciliation. In Sri Lanka the Buddhists and Christians live together harmoniously, yet a mere twenty years ago the hostility and suspicion that existed between the two religious communities seemed insuperable. The recognition on the part of the Christian churches of the inevitability of losing any serious confrontation with the Buddhists and the consequent willingness to compromise evoked shortly a generous response from the Buddhists and today the amicability of the Buddhist-Christian relationship is a model for the world. But it is important to note that the Christians unlike the Tamils, lacked a territorial base and the Sinhalese and Tamil communal identities cut across that of religion.

An opportunity lost

When in 1948 Sri Lanka's recovered the power to preside over their own destinies, the country could yet have been guided towards communal harmony. There was then a wider range of choice than there is now. In 1955 at the height of the language dispute Senator S. Nadesan noting the volatility of communal emotion when it touched upon issues of language and communal rights wrote "There are only two known methods of ensuring equality between the majority and minorities in a multinational state: one is the method of bilingualism,

the other that of federalism." Of the two methods it is the former that is the preferable solution to a national ruling elite jealous of its power at the centre. Until the general election of 1956 it seemed as if bilingualism would be the method employed. In 1944 J. R. Jayewardene had in the State Council, the then legislative body, sponsored a resolution that both Sinhala and Tamil were to be official languages while Prime Minister D. S. Senanayake in 1959 had asserted "Nor again should it be forgotten that our essential task is to create a nation, and that our people speak not one language, but two or perhaps three." But what actually happened is too well known to need any elaboration. In search of easy votes an opportunistic political leadership caved-in to the pressures of the lowest common denominator. The result: Sinhala-only in a unitary state in which communal identity took on surpassing importance.

Rejection and communal

Polarization

The rejection of bilingualism and the consequent growth of a Tamil communalism that fed a larger Sinhalese one has led the unitary state system that exists today to an impasse. If the state had recognized the right of every Sinhalese and Tamil to his own language the hardening of a separate Sinhalese and Tamil identity in the flamable role of ruler and ruled could have been stemmed. But the opportunity is now lost; what has been done cannot be undone. The communally polarized political system has made Tamil votes virtually irrelevant to the formation of strong governments which in turn are hostage to their Sinhalese voter base. This system of unitary government, wherein which two pacts negotiated by Prime Ministers were unilaterally abrogated and another one pushed through by the President was watered down in deference to Sinhalese pressures, stands discredited in Tamil eyes. Terrorism in the north which has a degree of support from the people of the area is the spawn of three decades of political neglect and communally perceived humiliations. The urgent task that faces the the country's leadership is to act decisively before the volatile situation in the country explodes beyond all control; it is to establish a new political framework which decentralizes administration devolves power to the people of the predominantly Tamil areas who presently have little say in the highest decision-making process. Even the highest of civil servants the IGP, the Attorney General and the Ambassadors to

mention but a few, are under the direct and absolute control of the Cabinet of Ministers which is the product of the political system. The solution is very clearly not to drift along in the present manner.

The present uneasy calm is but the eye of a storm that was triggered-off once by terrorism in July and can well be set off again. The existing situation where the government has lost control over the predominantly Tamil areas, highlighted by the remorseless killings and spates of bank robberies, cannot continue on an even keel without escalating into another orgy of violence. But given the constraints of the situation terrorism cannot be eliminated by the armed forces without the co-operation of the people of the area and the Government of India.

Who is to blame?

Many Sinhalese hold that major part of the blame for the escalation of Tamil separatist demands and dominance of the terrorists in the north is to be apportioned to President Jayewardene. The reasoning is that had the President acted with greater forcefulness, at the beginning of his term of office in 1977, against the terrorists in particular and the Tamils in general neither the Tamil demands for a separate state nor terrorism would have reached the proportions they have now. But the facts are otherwise.

The demand for a separate State was first articulated by prominent Tamils, though on an individual basis, as far back as 1955. However it was only after the adoption of the first republican constitution by the SLFP government in 1972 that mass Tamil agitation began to crystallize around the concept of a separate state. This sentiment received authoritative confirmation in 1975 from S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, the leader of the TUF as the TULF was then known, in his victory speech after the Kankesanthurai by-election. The next year, in 1976, the TUF Members of parliament signed and brought a motion before the SLFP dominated parliament claiming that the results of the by-election represented a mandate for "the restoration of the free, sovereign, secular, socialist state of Tamil Eelam." Parliament rejected the motion, but no decisive measures were taken to eliminate separatist feeling. It was under an SLFP government led by people of the calibre of Mrs. Bandaranaike and T. B. Illangaratne that the TULF gathered strength for two years, and the precedent was set for leniency of treatment. Further it was under the SLFP government that the TULF campaigned openly at the

general election of 1977 on a platform of separatism.

Likewise, Tamil terrorism became a major national issue under the SLFP government when Alfred Duraipah, the SLFP Mayor of Jaffna, was gunned down by terrorists in 1975. This political assassination gave much publicity to the terrorist movement. But already in 1972 and 1974 unsuccessful bomb attacks had been made on the life of the Mayor. Again, on the first Republic day anniversary in 1973, 49 C.T.B. buses were attacked in Jaffna. 6 were burned and an attempt was made to derail a train.

Public opinion also holds that the reason for the dominance of terrorism in the Tamil areas is to be attributed to the government policy of keeping the armed forces on a tight leash. It is argued that if the armed forces were to be given extensive powers of search and arrest and of shooting at sight on suspicion that terrorism can be eliminated. Eliminate the terrorists who are a minority, then give some concessions to the peaceable Tamil majority and everything will be pretty much okay once again is the common follow-up to this line of reasoning. The success of the government in destroying the 1971 insurrection is often adduced as proof of the success of a policy of "bullets and carrots".

Such arguments, emotionally satisfying though they may be, are far from being applicable in a practical context to the communal conflict. On the one hand they disregard the geographical vicinity of an impassioned interventionist South India. On the other hand they ignore history and the experience of other countries faced with similar problems of a determined territorially based people.

Combatting territorial terrorism

The Israeli army in Palestine, the British in Northern Ireland, the Spanish in the Basque region, the Pakistani in East Pakistan, the Sudanese in the Southern Sudan, and the Nazi German Army in occupied Europe to mention but a few failed, or are failing, to suppress terrorism. This failure was not due, at least in the last three examples, to any constraints placed on the armed forces by their respective governments. It was due to the impossibility of eliminating terrorism and individual acts of violence without the active cooperation of the people of the area. Where well-trained armies failed it is not likely the Sri Lankan armed forces will succeed. In Sri Lanka, the people in the terrorism affected areas do not coop-

erate with the armed forces, not merely because they fear the wrath of the terrorists but also because they are alienated from the government and its armed forces. In fact the excesses of the armed forces in the north in the past years and the neglect of their duty in the South during the July riots have served to steel the Tamil consciousness into a unity that further violence can only harden.

There is another factor that militates against a military solution to terrorism. This factor is the present unwillingness of the Indian Government to prevent Sri Lankan terrorists from having refuge in South India after an attack or whenever the need arises. For instance, the terrorist suspects who escaped from the Batticaloa prison found unofficial asylum in India. Prabhakaran and Maheswaran can settle their quarrels on Indian streets, but the Sri Lankan armed forces have no access to India.

In 1971 the Sinhalese insurgents lacked both of these advantages. Instead they fought a predominantly Sinhalese army in open battle in rural areas that had produced children fighting on both sides. Poorly equipped, using wrong tactics and informed upon they were no match for the armed forces.

Malaysia of 1947 presents a case that differs fundamentally from that of Sri Lanka and the other terrorism affected countries mentioned earlier. Malaysia lacked a territorially-based anti-government population and a foreign haven for terrorists. The Chinese were mixed fairly evenly throughout the country and therefore the Chinese Communist insurgents did not have a Chinese home territory. Further, the Chinese community itself was divided. For instance, the wealthy and powerful Chinese business community was totally opposed to communism which sought to deprive the rich of their riches and equalize society. In this environment the government very effectively infiltrated the Communist Organizations using Chinese agents. In the neighbourhood of Chinese settlements, and often surrounding them, were Malay settlements which were hostile to the insurgents and offered information and security to the Malaysian armed forces. Similarly, Thailand and Indonesia were fully supportive of the Malaysian government. As a result the Chinese insurgents could not both attack the Malaysian Armed forces and hide.

A draconian part of the Malaysian anti-insurgency operation was for the armed forces to encircle Chinese

settlements near to the scene of any insurgent activity and shoot any Chinese suspected of terrorism. This course of action may well have hastened the end of the insurgency in Malaysia without causing a civil war or worse, but in Sri Lanka a similar action would in effect be civil war and worse. The Tamils have a home territory in which they are an over-whelming majority. The armed forces therefore would be surrounded by a hostile and fearful population. If the armed forces encircle a Tamil village in the north suspected of harbouring terrorists and shoot all suspects terrorists and enraged neighbours from the surrounding villages, which unlike in Malaysia will also be Tamil, will have no difficulty attacking the encircling forces from the rear. A military solution will inevitably lead to a bloodbath in the Tamil areas, and perhaps elsewhere, and will serve to give international legitimacy to Indian intervention. Avoiding this eventuality should be a national priority because any direct intervention by India would be gravely injurious to Sri Lanka's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Grenada could not resist the United States and it is fantastic to imagine that Sri Lanka can resist the might of India. It is also idle to imagine that the United States will wish to seriously antagonize, and risk a military confrontation of unimaginable magnitude, with India for the sake of Trincomalee harbour.

In Sri Lanka, then, there is no military solution to the communal problem. There is only a political solution that takes the fact of strong communal identities into account. The "front" is not the military battlefield; it is the mass rally and the negotiating table. It is not the courage of violent youth but the wisdom of political leadership that can pull together this impoverished country, so that the flower of Sinhalese and Tamil youth will not shed their blood in vain but unite in a common effort to better society.

The need for regional autonomy

There is a need for haste, for great urgency. Every terrorist attack against the lives of the armed forces in the north brings ominous rumbles in the south. Thus far the terrorist campaign has been limited to the predominantly Tamil areas, perhaps because the terrorists themselves fear the vengeance that can be wreaked against the Tamil community hostage in the Sinhalese areas. But how much longer will this avoidance of the south continue, and what will be the consequences of such an attack?

Where communal conflict has reached the point of violence and secession, regional autonomy formulas, which include federalism, have proved to be the only realistic solutions. Regional autonomy reconciles the state's principle of territorial integrity with the minority's principle of self-determination. It is the bridge between the Tamil demand for a solution as near as possible to secession and the Sinhalese demand that the solution be as far as possible from secession.

For the past several years the state has been unable to effectively govern the predominantly Tamil areas. Terrorism was originally limited to the Northern Province; now it has established itself in the Eastern Province as well. Civilians are murdered, state property is destroyed, banks are robbed of millions, servicemen are ambushed and this goes on every day. The government has much to gain and little to lose by giving autonomy to those predominantly Tamil areas in which its rule, even now, has practically ceased to exist. Emotion should not detract from a recognition of this fact. Even now the persistence of the communal problem and the demonstration of state impotence is leading to a dangerous perception, among Sri Lankans of all communities and social classes, of societal failure and loss of worth of all government.

The Tamil separatist leadership led by the TULF has made it clear that they are prepared to abandon the demand for a separate state if a viable alternative is designed and made available. There is a possibility that a solution that falls short of secession, even though backed by the TULF, might not satisfy some groups of terrorists. But by reaching a solution supported by the Tamil political leadership and ratified by the people of the area at a referendum, the government will, with the only means at its disposal, eliminate terrorism by depriving the terrorists of their two-fold prop: a cooperative population in their home territory and a haven in India. When Tamils are governing themselves in their autonomous region the terrorists will have to kill Tamils elected by Tamils if they wish to continue being terrorists. The Indian government has stated on several occasions that it will welcome a settlement acceptable to the Tamils. Indeed, India has a stake in a stable and non-aligned Sri Lanka that will not destabilize the region, and India itself, by becoming an arena

for superpower rivalry or cause passions in South India to reach boiling point and thereby endanger India's own fragile unity.

Among the political and economic gains brought about by regional autonomy would be the enhanced scope for participatory democracy that smaller government more sensitive to the needs of its constituents bring, as well as the opportunity to use competitive communal attachments in local initiatives to supply the driving force for national development. Yugoslavia is an example of a country that has emphasized local involvement that depends on communal ties in a federal system.

The major cost of regional autonomy would be the psychological one borne by the Sinhalese whose whole history and education have made them identify themselves, and the Buddhist religion, with rulership over the entire island. The loss of rulership over the Tamils and Tamil areas is a price that has to be paid for the unity and development of the country. It is a big price to pay, but it is not bigger than the lives and resources that are squandered everyday in the north, especially when it will not cost the Sinhalese any diminution of power over their own destinies in the Sinhalese areas and in the international arena.

But there is another psychological hurdle to be overcome in dealing with the question of regional autonomy for the Tamils. This revolves around Sinhalese concern over the fairness of competition with the Tamils on a basis of equality. Embedded in the Sinhalese Communal identity are two insecurity-generating perceptions that are a heritage of the past. One is the perception of isolation in the world; "the Tamils have South India, the Muslims have the Arab world, but the Sinhalese have only Sri Lanka". This perception was given substance recently in a speech by Mrs. Bandaranaike. The other is the perception of historical deprivation first brought to the mass Sinhalese consciousness by Anagarika Dharmapala. Taken together these two perceptions have led successive post-Independence governments to devise policies that favoured the Sinhalese. But in this bid to even the scales, the injustice done to individual Tamils has been all but lost sight of.

The debate over regional autonomy for the Tamils therefore is bound to reawaken the lingering doubts of the Sinhalese regarding their ability to maintain their position in the country, and the "fairness" of open competition with the Tamil region once Central Govern-

ment control over regional affairs is lost. But in 1984 these doubts are no longer valid. In many fields of endeavour the Sinhalese have produced leaders of world stature. In science there is Cyril Ponnampemura, in International economics Gamini Corea, Multinational business Upali Wijewardena, in Art Senaka Senanyake, in Law C. G. Weeramantry, in Social anthropology Gananath Obeyesekere and in Medicine Tony Don Michael to name but the most conspicuous. In 1956 S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike brought to the Sinhalese masses the consciousness of their political power which was used, among other things, to fashion crutches. But crutches if used too long debilitate rather than strengthen. Today the Sinhalese are the equals in ability to any other community, and they need not have doubts about their ability to compete.

Regional autonomy and secession

The Sinhalese fear that regional autonomy will someday lead to secession is speculative and is not based upon the experience of other countries. In no country in the world in modern times has regional autonomy led to separation against the wishes of the state. But interestingly enough where regional autonomy has been refused, as it was in Pakistan and Cyprus in recent times and in Great Britain at the turn of the century, separation has taken place. The fear that regional autonomy in Sri Lanka will be a further step to a separate state has as little validity as claiming that the TULF's electoral success in 1977 or the elevation of Tamil to the status of a national language in 1978 were steps to Eelam.

Like the Sudan, Canada provides an example of a country that successfully halted the slide towards secession by moving in concrete fashion to ease the language and status grievances of the minority, sometimes by over-compensating them. Canadian political and economic life has traditionally been dominated by the English-Canadians which has generated friction between the majority English and minority French-Canadians. In the early 1960s French-Canadian resentment, especially in the French-Canadian state of Quebec, manifested itself in terrorism. In 1968 the Parti Quebecois was formed with the goal of political independence from Canada in view. In 1976 the rapidly growing P. Q. defeated the governing Liberal Party in Quebec. In response to the mounting secessionist crisis the Federal government passed an official languages Act to make the delivery of

government services in both the English and French languages a reality. High-ranking federal government employees were obligated to learn French within a period of 2 years. Simultaneously, an informal programme was adopted to increase the representation of French-Canadians at the highest levels of Canadian Institutions. Finally, in 1980 the government of Quebec held a referendum to determine whether Quebecers were in favour of secession. 59.5% of Quebecers said no. This Canadian example clearly shows that the anxiety of the separatist leadership to secede and lead a new country is not necessarily shared by the members of the group concerned who prefer an honourable settlement within the framework of the existing, and familiar, country.

Regional autonomy formulas are not new to Sri Lanka. In 1957 Prime Minister and leader of the SLFP S.W.R. D. Bandaranaike negotiated an agreement with S. J. V. Chelvanayakam the leader of the F. P. This agreement, better known as the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam pact, was a comprehensive regional autonomy solution. In 1965, Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake, leader of the U.N.P. concluded a similar agreement with S. J. V. Chelvanayakam but both these agreements were not implemented due to the strong opposition to them in the south. Neither S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike nor Dudley Senanayake, two of the foremost leaders of the country and of the Sinhalese, thought that regional autonomy would harm the interests of the country they led and were responsible to. Rather they thought that regional autonomy was the best device to strengthen the unity of the country and its communities. But they lacked the courage and strength to implement their convictions. In 1984 it is now President J. R. Jayewardene's opportunity to make amends for the failures of 1957 and 1965.

Regional autonomy is not an impairment on the sovereignty of the country or of its territorial integrity. In dealings with other countries there will not be two or more states; rather, there will be one country, Sri Lanka. There will, for instance, be only one Sri Lankan currency; all citizens of Sri Lanka will have the perfect right to travel the length and breadth and of the country and settle down wherever they please; non-citizens will not be permitted entrance into the country except with the permission of the central government. Indeed, all powers vital to the preservation of

(Continued from page IV)

the country's integrity such as the armed forces, foreign affairs, external trade, finance and immigration will remain in the hands of the central government. Finally, if worse comes to worst and the autonomous region works against the interests of the country as a whole the central government can always intervene effectively as has happened rather frequently in India. Regional autonomy is as far from secession as the Sinhalese could reasonably want.

Regional autonomy also means that the people of the autonomous regions would decide for themselves what type of regional government they want and what their priorities are with respect to the allocation of resources. The regional government will decide, for instance, whether it wants to spend its funds, collected locally and allocated according to the constitution by the central government, on the construction of factories or dams, on subsidies or to repair roads etc. The regional government will have its own policies with regard to the educational and judicial systems and recruitment to the regional civil service. For law enforcement within the region it will have its own police force. Regional autonomy will provide the Tamils with as much self-determination as they can reasonably want.

The fear that granting the Tamil areas regional autonomy might spark of similar demands from territorially concentrated minorities, such as the Muslims in the Eastern Province and perhaps even by the Kandyan Sinhalese, is not based upon an understanding of the principles of decentralized government. Even if these groups should ask for autonomy at a referendum, Sri Lanka would not then be a vivisected aberration but would rather possess a decentralized system of government that brings democracy and efficiency closer to the people. There is an extensive literature that documents the advantages of decentralized as compared to centralized government where satisfying the genuine needs of the people is concerned. Regional governments, simply, are more accountable to the people of the region. When Switzerland with its population of 6 million can have 23 regional governments and Yugoslavia with 21 million can have 8, having 4 or 5 regions would not make Sri Lanka any sort of exception in the international state system. Indeed, as far back as 1925 S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike proposed that Sri Lanka should have 9 regional governments within a federal frame work.

The American political scientist Crawford Young has observed that "With few exceptions, the international

arena has been resolutely hostile to the fragmentation of its components". This is partly because separatism is a latent political option for dissatisfied territorial groups in every plural state. It is worth noting that in almost 75% of the countries in the World minorities account for at least 10% of the population, and in about 40% of the countries the population is divided into 5 or more significant communal groups.

Other than in South India the Eelamists have received little or no official response in their search for external support. In recent times Bangladesh, and the Turkish part of Cyprus, stand alone in having successfully separated against the resistance of the state. Here India, and Turkey, provided all the resources, including invading armies, normally denied to secessionists. Likewise secession can never take place in Sri Lanka except with the dire military intervention of India or a superpower.

A lesson from history that has particular relevance to Sri Lanka at the crossroads can be gleaned from events of a century ago in Great Britain, then the mightiest country in the world. Ireland was then an integral part of Great Britain. When William Gladstone took office as Prime Minister in 1880 in the midst of disturbances in Ireland he said "My mission is to pacify Ireland." He introduced a "Home-Rule" bill which in effect gave regional autonomy to Ireland. Its main provisions were to establish a regional parliament in Dublin to deal with internal Irish affairs and to leave control of foreign affairs, external trade and defence under the jurisdiction of the British government in London. The opposition under Lord Salisbury capitalized on British fears of the dismemberment of Great Britain. Because of the opposition generated by the plan Gladstone in 1886 called elections and said "Two plans are before the world. There is the plan of the government and the plan of Lord Salisbury. Our plan is that Ireland shall transact her own affairs. His plan is to ask for new repressive laws and to enforce them resolutely for the next 20 years." The appeal to chauvinism and caution won and the new government under Salisbury promptly introduced its policy of "whips and carrots". The Irish ranks closed, and terrorists became heroes and martyrs; governing Ireland became increasingly difficult. In 1920 the British parliament passed the Government of Ireland Act partitioning the country. In 1922 the Irish Free State was formed.

The history of recent times refutes the idea that regional autonomy is the precursor to secession. On the

contrary timely granting of regional autonomy has sufficiently allayed anxieties and altered perceptions that greater unity has been the frequent result. The Soviet Union, Canada, and Switzerland are but the better known examples; the success of regional autonomy in the Sudan, Libya and Nigeria are less well known. Thus, like Switzerland with its German, French, Italian and Romansch communal identities that find expression in the unity of federalism, Sri Lanka with its Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim and Burgher communal identities can develop its own regional autonomy solution that finally moulds a political identity capable of overriding the mutually exclusive communal identities.

The communal problem is liable to baffle those who investigate societal problems through economic analysis and common sense. Within this inadequate frame work the grievances of the Tamils are thought to consist primarily of employment and educational debilities which, however, are seen to afflict the majority of Sinhalese as well. This commonly-found view has hardened popular Sinhalese sentiment against the granting of concessions to the Tamils. But while jobs and university degrees are undoubtedly important to the Tamils, what has driven the Tamils to separatism is the communally perceived inequality of rights that has made Tamils as individuals unequal to the Sinhalese in the state influenced competition for employment, education and land. Communal relations have, in the years since Independence, travelled by default to a situation where self-determination for Tamils is the only way out of the present crises.

Today we in Sri Lanka are like that amazing bird, the ostrich, who buries its head in the sand when it hears the leopard's roar. For a moment, perhaps two, with its eyes closed it hears only a huffing and puffing.

There is a communal problem in Sri Lanka. The daily news, the tarnished international reputation of this once model island, the precious lives and scarce resources swallowed everyday bear witness to that fact. It is childish, and dangerous, to claim there is really no problem, or that the problem is unjustified, or that no solution can be found. Each one of those claims is an excuse for inaction. Reflecting on the French revolution, the 18th Century British political philosopher Edmund Burke said "A state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation." There is a solution to the communal problem, and it must be found before the Ostrich's fate befalls us.

O, INDIA O, LANKA

It is inescapable to the most outspoken critic the Government's policies that the nation has made rapid strides along the path of self-reliant development, notwithstanding the heavy odds we had to encounter.... The entire strategy of our economic development is to provide the Indian masses with a decent standard of living.

EIGHTEEN years ago in her first broadcast to the nation on January 26, 1966, as the third Prime Minister of Independent India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi had drawn a dismal picture of the prevailing state of the Indian economy. "The coming months," she had warned her countrymen, "bristle with difficulties. We have innumerable problems requiring urgent action. The rains have failed us, causing drought in many parts. As a result, agricultural production, which is still precariously dependent on weather and rainfall, has suffered a sharp decline. Economic aid from abroad and earnings from exports, have not come to us in the measure expected. The lack

deed a difficult year for India which had to face drought and the after-effects of a war. It also saw the devaluation of the rupee — a step that evoked strong protests from different sections of the populace which felt our avowed policy of self-reliance was being surrendered.

However, even in the aforementioned speech of Mrs. Gandhi one could notice certain striking features. "Nowhere is self-reliance more urgent than in agriculture," the Prime Minister had declared, adding: "and it means higher production, not only for meeting the domestic needs of a large and increasing population, but also for exports." She had advocated exploration of the "fullest possibilities of technological self-reliance" and called for instilling into the government machinery greater efficiency and a sense of urgency to make it "more responsive to the needs of the people." Above all, she had brought out her determination to face the challenges confronting the country in these words: "Let us not be dismayed or discouraged by these unforeseen

by Sumit Chakravartty

Some Sri Lankan leaders sometimes compare our country's "achievements" with those of India's implying that we have done better than our neighbour. They forget that our total population is only 15 million while India's annual increase in population is now 15.5 million.

of foreign exchange has hurt industrial production."

What is more, she had in the same address referred to the "disconcerting gap between intention and action" in economic development as in other fields of national activity. She had spoken of the disruption of the process of formulating the Fourth Five-Year Plan due to many uncertainties including that of foreign aid. While underscoring the need to import "large enough quantities of foodgrains" to bridge the gap between demand and supply, she had frankly stated: "We shall try especially to meet the nutritional needs of mothers and children in the scarcity-affected area to prevent permanent damage to their health. We cannot afford to take risks where basic food is concerned." She had also conveyed our sense of gratitude to the US for its "sympathetic understanding and prompt help" in this area.

Nineteen-sixty-six was in-

difficulties. Let us face them boldly. Let us learn from our mistakes and resolve not to let them recur."

It is true that even after 18 years we have numerous problems besetting us, not all of which originate from extraneous factors. Nonetheless, it is inescapable to the most outspoken critic of the Government's policies that the nation has made rapid strides along the path of self-reliant development notwithstanding the heavy odds we had to encounter along our chequered course. The results are there for all to see unless one is so blinded by the glaring floodlights of subjectivism as to thwart any worthwhile objective analysis. It is quite a different matter for those who affirm that the progress recorded did not match our potentialities which could have been effectively harnessed through a complete overhaul of the existing system. But even they are not prepared to accept the hardships such a total dismantling of the

(Continued on page 6)

O, INDIA! O, LANKA

(Continued from page 5)

structure would entail. And they too have to grudgingly concede that the magnitude of our economic advance has been literally outstanding when compared with other developing countries of the Third World that have opted for the same socio-political-economic system which is in vogue in India.

Economy Looking-up

As in 1966, we have had to bear the brunt of natural calamities in recent years as well. The drought of 1982 was considered the severest in recent times. If we had been at the level of 1966 its effect would have been definitely disastrous and consequences far-reaching. The strains it generated were inevitable but the economy has successfully weathered them. Foodgrains production did slump to 128.4 million tonnes in 1982-83 registering a decline of four per cent, but the figure could have been far less in case the general state of the economy had not been sound. And within a year if the agricultural output is expected to exceed 142 million tonnes recording a nine per cent rise, the credit should not go only to the excellent monsoon we have experienced. The steps taken to enhance production—the growth of irrigation potential (estimated to increase by 2.37 million hectares by the end of the current financial year after a 2.34 million hectare increase in 1982-83), expansion of high-yielding varieties programme (expected to cover 52 million hectares in 1983-84), rising fertiliser consumption (anticipated to be much above the 1983-84 target)—have also substantially contributed to the success.

In the sphere of industrial production the growth being tardy in the first half of the current financial year, the overall rise in output is likely to be 4.5 per cent in 1983-84. This no doubt falls short of the eight per cent target we had set for ourselves in this sphere, but it should not be forgotten that in certain sectors like textiles, engineering and cement the performance has been noteworthy. Nor should one be oblivious of the steady increase in the output of indigenous crude oil from 10.5 million tonnes in 1980-81 to the estimated 26 million tonnes in 1983-84; the substantial rise in coal production from last September is expected to elevate the 1983-84 figure to around 140 million tonnes; and the enhancement of power generation in the first nine months

of the current financial year by about five per cent over the corresponding period in the previous year.

As a result of these achievements, a six to seven per cent growth rate of the Gross National Product (GNP) in 1983-84 is likely. Whereas the GNP had risen by only 1.8 per cent in 1982-83, this year's performance will raise the average GNP growth rate in the first four years of the Sixth Five Year Plan to around 5.4 per cent. This is indeed remarkable especially at a time when growth rates have been low the world over.

Balance of Payments

Our external payments position has become brighter with the decline in the trade gap for the second successive year. In the April-October time-span last year our exports (excluding oil) rose by 9.9 per cent as the value of our imports (net of oil exports) was reduced by 2.5 per cent compared to the same period in the previous year. The policy of export promotion and import substitution—launched sometime back—seems to be yielding dividends at this stage. The flow of funds from Indians abroad has recorded marked increases as well. And the liberalised scheme of portfolio investments by non-resident Indians has been found to evoke pronounced interest among persons of Indian origin in different parts of the world, while in practical terms too the NRIs are coming forward to help boost our foreign exchange reserves through such investments which, despite the heated controversy in a section of the press and among certain industrialists, are not being allowed to disturb the existing framework of our mixed economy.

Exchange Reserves

One of the major developments in the economic field of late is the notable increase in our foreign exchange reserve (which were depleted sometime ago) thereby enabling India to take the voluntary decision to forego the last instalment of the Extended Fund Facility with the International Monetary Fund. When we were compelled to go in for the IMF loan totalling five billion Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) mainly to tide over the constraints caused by our mounting oil bill, many an economic pundit began to decry our political leadership for having "mortgaged our sovereignty". Unruffled, our eco-

nomics planners and administrators silently worked out feasible schemes to meet our requirements in such a way as would help up to pursue our self-reliant course without acceding to the IMF dictates. The very fact that we have been able to manage our economy in a period of crisis without drawing the remaining 1.1 billion dollars of the total loan extended to us is a fresh testimony of India's resilience that has belied all the grim speculations of commentators residing in ivory towers. The decision has been hailed in diverse quarters as a step facilitating the IMF to assist other developing states and is fully in conformity with India's stature as the leader of the non-aligned world.

The 20-point programme with its accent on the drive against poverty is being translated into reality with the objective of improving the conditions of the rural poor. Lately five zonal committees have been set up by the ruling party at the Centre to supervise this work in the various states. In some parts of the country as Orissa the implementation of the measures embodied in the programme has been carried out fairly vigorously while in other parts the pace of their execution has fallen short of the expectations. And yet, the overall progress in this regard is indisputable. According to available statistics, nine million rural families (including 3.2 million families belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) have been assisted under the Integrated Rural Development Programme in the first three years of the Sixth Five-Year Plan and in the current financial year another three million families are being helped. The National Rural Employment Programme too is being executed successfully to generate new employment opportunities in the rural areas. On 15th August last year a new Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme was launched by the Prime Minister spurred by the positive outcome of a similar project in Maharashtra and Rs. 6,000 million have been allocated for it. Simultaneously 2,50,000 educated unemployed have been rendered assistance in 1983-84.

No Complacency

These positive developments should not, however, lead to any sense of complacency. This is precisely because the negative trends have not been eliminated as yet and may manifest themselves in the alarming price rise.

The annual rate of inflation has crossed the double digit figure to reach 10.4 per cent on 7th January this year. There is every reason to believe that this is the result of the delayed impact of the drought which was responsible for the low output growth in 1982-83. It is also to be realised that our economic achievements based on self-reliance, however noteworthy in the context of the country as a whole and in contrast to other newly liberated developing nations as ours, are of a modest nature in the long run thereby necessitating utmost vigilance to avert any form of slideback. Moreover, there is no gainsaying that the economic progress attained so far is being overshadowed by the heavy burden imposed by rising prices on the common man in general and the housewife in particular.

What is reassuring in this backdrop is that instead of concealing the negative factors like the rising curve of inflationary pressures the Government has openly expressed concern over these phenomena. This is illustrative of its realisation of the havoc such developments can engender and its eagerness to counter them before they get out of control. Its evolution of a package of anti-inflationary proposals after consultation with all concerned thus deserves close attention. This package consists of expansion and reinforcement of the public distribution system; incentives to enhance both agricultural and industrial production; timely augmentation of domestic supplies of foodgrains like wheat and essential commodities like edible oil through selective imports; vigorous procurement drive; enforcement of fiscal and monetary discipline aimed at reducing the excess liquidity in the system. Simultaneously measures are being taken to control the private sector, improve the public sector, curtail expenditure, increase efficiency and ensure full utilisation of capacity in large undertakings and plants.

The entire strategy of our economic development is to provide the Indian masses with a decent standard of living. This is doubtless a stupendous task in itself but one which has to be carried out with unwavering steadfastness. It is heartening to find our leaders conscious of the miles left far us to traverse before we can transform the life of the Indian people and make them genuinely prosperous. Mrs. Gandhi has, at the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Institute of Economic Growth in New Delhi on 16th November last

year, revealed this awareness with characteristic candour while projecting the perspective of tackling the problem of poverty vis-à-vis development.

"Poverty", she observed, "is the most degrading experience of human existence—an intensely moral question. Growth by itself does not end poverty, it is the manner in which we plan to grow that matters. Hence in my mind there is always the question of what is to be done to break the moulds within which poverty grows... There is not much purpose in the debate about how many have been lifted above the poverty line, or how many remain below it. Those who visited the countryside cannot close their eyes to the considerable achievement. There may be short-comings in our performance and we don't deny them. These are unavoidable in such a new and so vast an experiment. We do still have a long way to go, and the removal of poverty has to be the main plank of all our future planning. However, as we go along we find that development itself breeds dissatisfaction, and desire for more".

Our ceaseless pursuits over the years for a better India have resulted in this vital success: the awakening of the bulk of our downtrodden populace, mostly in the rural areas, through the process of economic development. This more than anything else, merits special mention as its significance cannot be overestimated.

(From India & Foreign Review
15th March 1984)

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THE CRISIS IN AFRICA

"The economic survival of many countries in Africa is now at stake. Unless the international community responds urgently and adequately, the consequences for Africa would be very serious and equally serious for the world as a whole." UN Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, was speaking at a special meeting in New York on the economic and social crisis in Africa, on his return from an extensive visit to West Africa taking in Benin, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo and Upper Volta.

The Secretary-General had flown over large areas of agricultural and grazing land devastated by the relentless advance southward of the Sahara desert. Total figures of drought victims are hard to obtain because, at the official level, the problem has been kept low-key. There is no doubt, however, that it has brought extensive loss of human life livestock and crops throughout the continent, affecting a total of 24 Eastern, Western and Southern African countries.

The persistent drought is exacerbating Africa's food

shortages. At the beginning of this year, FAO warned that without a massive injection of food and agricultural assistance, the spectre of hunger and starvation would continue to hover over the heads of 150 million inhabi-

ting business, industry and public services. In their search for electricity substitutes for such daily chores as cooking, city dwellers have resorted to cutting down live trees for firewood, thus undermining

Mozambique, and UNDP supported projects aimed at providing water for household use, livestock and market gardens in rural areas. A case in point is the project in Mali under which over 548 boreholes were drilled, providing pure, clean water for some 135,000 people, and several drilling teams were trained, each capable of drilling 80 new wells a year.

In response to the Secretary General's call for greater media attention to the African crisis, a Journalists Travelling Seminar to drought-stricken areas was planned for late March by the United Nations system. Its purpose was

to provide senior media representatives from Europe, Japan, the United States, Africa and the Arab world with a first-hand view of the critical situation and the international relief rehabilitation efforts under way.

A group of six international journalists visited Zimbabwe and Mozambique, and six others went to Senegal, Mali and parts of Mauritania. The seminar concluded with a Round Table on 1 April in Paris, at which the two groups compared notes and provided a feedback to the United Nations system on the situation in the areas they visited. (Courtesy "Development Forum" New York.)

by **Djibril Diallo**

tants of the most seriously affected countries. Cereal production in the drought-ravaged Sahel, for example has dropped almost 18 per cent since 1981, and over 50 per cent of Lesotho's 1.2 million inhabitants are reported to be in need of emergency food supplies.

Drought also creates other longer term economic, social and political problems by reducing economic activity and increasing unemployment. The water level behind Ghana's Akosombo dam in the Volta region has fallen to such a low level that hydro-electric service to the country as well as to neighbouring Benin and Togo has to be reduced to three days a week. Similar power cuts are disrupting life in many African cities, severely affect-

government programmes to combat desertification.

Because of water shortages, the rural population is having to compete with livestock for whatever muddy water is left in small pools, thus increasing the risk of contamination. Diarrhoea, cholera and tuberculosis have swept through some of the affected countries, killing their weakened inhabitants. Streams of people unable to eke out a living in rural areas are bringing further headaches to Africa's already overburdened cities.

The United Nations response to the request of governments for relief / rehabilitation includes WFP emergency food supplies in countries such as

Megalithic Burial ...

(Continued from Page 2)

He continued on page 9: "The few megalithic monuments and urn burials discovered in Ceylon are obviously an overflow from South India.

We have now discovered that these are far from being "few", and with further study are also compelled now to accept that they are not an "overflow" South India but part of a single matrix of culture and identity that bound South India and Sri Lanka together in the past. While Paranavitana had chosen to call the bearers of this culture Dravidians we would prefer to avoid names for the present and to confine our attention purely to scientific study free of political chauvinism or religious fanaticism. Is there much point in wanting to know in the present context which came first, the chicken or the egg?

The University of Jaffna an excellent staff of historians and archaeologists, led by an indefatigable scholar Professor K. Indrapala who is also the Director of the Evelyn Rutnam Institute

for Inter-Cultural Studies in Jaffna. A senior lecturer, S. K. Sitrapalam, has now gained a doctoral degree in Archaeology, having earlier obtained a first in the Master's Degree, at the University of Poona and young P. Ragupathy is already an M. A. (Archaeology) in the First Division from the University of Mysore. They have a set of keen and diligent graduates working along with them.

These scholars seem to attach great importance to the discovery at Anaikaddai Jaffna seems to have shared a common culture with Tamil Nadu in the pre-Christian and early Christian centuries. Roman rouletted-ware has been found at such sites as Uraiyur and Kaveripatinam in Tamil Nadu, and its presence at Anaikaddai shows that Jaffna too was, as Warminster had observed in 1925, in its own way influenced by the Roman trade with Tamil Nadu in the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

The excavation at Kantarodai in 1970 had exposed megalithic cultural artefacts, specially black-and-red ware,

in the earliest phase of that site, dating to the 2nd century B. C.

One noticeable fact at Anaikaddai was the discovery of a large number of potsherds with graffiti marks comparable with those of South India. No Buddhist, Jain or Brahminical influence is revealed by any one of these finds. The Pomparippu finds compare in some cases with those at Adichanallur in the Tinnevely District, which some date as early as the 9th century B. C.

One is reminded on this occasion of the prophetic words of Dr. Paul E. Pieris, when he declared publicly at a meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society as far back as 1919: "I hope the Tamil people will realise that in truth there is buried in their sands the story of a much more fascinating development than they had hitherto discovered...for, 2000 years ago, Jaffna was an important and flourishing district. Coins in abundance have been discovered indicating a flourishing condition of Commerce not only in Roman times but far anterior to that."

Burden of arms

"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies, in a final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, from those who are cold are not clothed." Swedish Under-Secretary of State for Disarmament Inga Thorson quotes General Eisenhower on the relationship between arms spending and development in opening her study on the subject in the latest IDOC BULLETIN, which takes *Disarmament and Development* as its theme.

The special issue, No. 8-10 1983, published in collaboration with the Non-Governmental Liaison Service (Geneva) illuminates several angles on the subject of disarmament/development and contains the first comprehensive bibliography of IDOC's resources on the subject, including much material used in the compilation of the Thorsson Report.

Thorsson's study, prepared for the 1981 UN Special Session on Disarmament and Development, says the arms race deflects 5-6 per cent of the world's resources from socially useful ends and has an adverse effect on the distribution of the other 94 or 95 per cent.

The galloping increase in arms spending in the North is no revelation, however disturbing. Less well known, and equally important, is the startling upturn in military expenditure in the developing countries, revealed here in some detail. "The military burden in some developing countries in terms of the share of GDP is much higher than that of the major military powers," according to the report which warns that without a radical turnaround in spending priorities, the 1980s will see smaller econo-

mic growth than previous decades, with serious consequences for the developing countries.

Jose Antonio Viero-Gallo contrasts post-war detente with more than 120 conflicts over the same period in the South and maintains that the equilibrium between East and West is illusory. "How long can the countries of Europe, the US, and the USSR keep themselves out of the hurricane?" he asks. He goes on to criticize the apparent insularity of peace movements in the North, claiming that their demands for peace are really pleas to be allowed to *live in peace*, and that they are not sufficiently mobilized against crises outside Europe and the USA. He asserts that "disarmament and alternative development imply one another".

However, a contrasting argument comes in an article by former NGLS (Geneva) intern, Douglas Cohen who warns of the perils involved in marrying the two issues too closely together. He shows that despite the intimate link between disarmament and development so frequently mooted within the UN and other concerned groups, the relationship "is one that must be constructed politically, and not one that is pre-given by economic forces." "Even if the political will to disarm exists, it will not necessarily result in a drive for development" he claims.

Cohen also asserts the need to bring security into the disarmament / development balance, pointing out that the relationship's success is to some extent dependent on valid assurances to the superpowers of continuing military stability. (Courtesy "Development Forum")

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

WELL SAID, LALITH

National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali told newsmen on Tuesday that his responsibility was to fight the terrorists and not the Tamils.

"If the task set for me is to fight the Tamils, I would not have accepted it. Some others would have to be found to do that job", he said.

Mr. Athulathmudali said he was dinning into the minds of the Services, the police and the Sinhalese masses that the fight was against the violent terrorists and not against the Tamils.

"Tamils suffer from many problems. We are trying to sort them out politically", he said. (Daily News, 10th May).

KEEPING THE POT BOILING

The following comment appeared in the "Forward" of 1st May:

President Jayawardene's speech at the UNP's Borella meeting and, even more so, his appalling interview to India Today have strengthened suspicions that, far from working purposefully for a political settlement of ethnic problems, he is merely keeping the ethnic pot boiling for his own and his Government's purposes.

When he suddenly adjourned the Round Table Conference for six weeks, his spokesman, Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, told the media that the long adjournment was to allow time for legislation to be prepared to give effect to the two items of consensus that the RTC had arrived at. But though five of those six weeks are now over, no instructions have still been issued to the Legal Draftsman to start drafting.

Instead the Government has used the recess to appoint Mr. Athulathmudali to the new post of Minister of National Security, and to start a major military offensive in the north.

Although the declared aim of this offensive is "to flush out the terrorists" its main victims have, by all accounts been uninvolved civilians.

Army excesses have given a new dimension to the already complicated problem in Jaffna by involving a section of the Catholic population of the North in the clashes that took place over the New Year. The bitterness among the Catholics can be judged by the statements to Reuter by Jaffna's Roman Catholic Bishop Deogupillai: "It is the Army who is terrorising our people and not the terrorists."

In addition, a virtual economic blockade of Jaffna by land and sea has come into force.

Food, fuel and other essential supplies are not getting

WITHOUT LOVE FROM THE CENSOR

For the edification of our readers, we publish below the communication that we receive monthly from the Competent Authority regarding the special censorship imposed on the SATURDAY REVIEW.

"By virtue of the powers vested in me by Regulation 14(1) of the emergency (miscellaneous provisions & powers) Regulations No. 4 of 1984, I Don John Francis Douglas Liyanage, Secretary to the Ministry of State, appointed to be Competent Authority for the purpose of Regulation 14, being of opinion that it is necessary for preventing and restricting the publication in Sri Lanka, and or the transmission

from Sri Lanka to places outside Sri Lanka, of matter which would or might be prejudicial to the interests of national security, the preservation of public order maintenance of supplies and services essential to the life of the community, and matters inciting or encouraging persons to mutiny, riot or civil commotion, do hereby direct that all material, which term shall include articles, comments, news items, pictorial representations and photographs, to be published in the 'SATURDAY-REVIEW' should be submitted to the Government Agent of the District of Jaffna and his prior approval for publication obtained before any such material is published in the said newspaper. I further direct that material which has not obtained the approval of the said Government Agent in the manner aforesaid shall not be published in the Saturday-Review.

D. Liyanage

Foreign Sub. Rates

We should have increased the SATURDAY REVIEW subscription rates to foreign countries with the last revision of postal rates, but we did not. This has had serious repercussions. Foreign readers will understand our predicament from the example cited.

Today we are spending Rs. 9 on postage on each copy sent to Singapore, and with the cost of the paper, we should recover at least Rs. 12 from Singapore readers. But I find we are recovering only Rs. 6.77 on a copy.

We have no alternative but to revise the subscription rates to all foreign countries and the revised rates will come into immediate effect.

General Manager
Saturday Review.

through as lorry traffic has virtually ceased and the trains run irregularly up to Chavakachcheri only.

Fish is in short supply as fishermen do not go to the sea, fearful of the Navy's new *cordon sanitaire*. As most of these fisherman are also Catholics, bitterness among the religious community is at its zenith.

Although the curfew is officially only in force in Jaffna's Municipal area, it exists in practice all over the Peninsula

Minister Lalith Athulathmudali, who masterminds the military offensive, has been at pains to insist that this does not signify that the search for a political solution has been abandoned, or that the Government is once more seeking a "solution," through military force.

He has argued that this "flush-out" operation is necessary to make a political solution possible.

But all that the operation has produced so far is needless civilian deaths and the hardening of bitterness among the Tamils. This is, needless to say, not conducive towards a political settlement.

CURFEW OFF

The night curfew, which was imposed within the Jaffna Municipal limits with the outbreak of violence on 9th April, was allowed to lapse with effect from 9th May.

How about lifting the special censorship imposed on the SATURDAY REVIEW as well?

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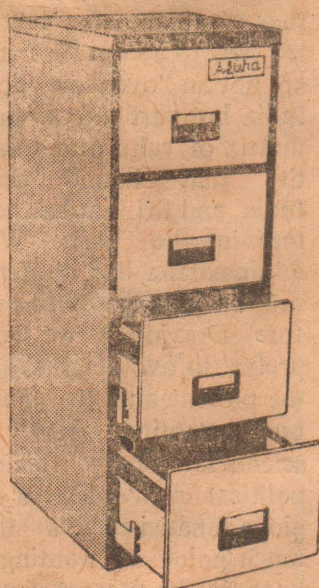
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