

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

D. J.

Vol. 2 No. 5

January 29, 1983

A VICTIM OF ARMY HOLD-UP

The District Judge of Point Pedro, Mr. T. K. Thilakan was the victim of an Army intimidation and hold-up on the public highway in the North on the 17th January. The incident occurred at Nelliady Junction between 11.30 p.m. and 12.15 a.m.

Mr. Thilakan along with his wife was returning from Jaffna to his official residence in Point Pedro in his private car. His elderly driver was at the wheel and the acting arachchi of the District Court was seated in front. Mr. Thilakan and wife were returning from a party in Jaffna hosted by the Magistrate, Jaffna in honour of some judicial officers from the south who had come to Jaffna on a private visit.

Around 11.30 p.m. when the car reached Nelliady Junction, it was stopped by some armed personnel and the driver promptly halted. On being challenged, the driver and the arachchi both explained in Tamil that it was the District Judge and his wife who were in the car. But since they continued to adopt an intimidatory posture, the D. J. himself got out of the car, spoke first in English and then in Sinhala and told the man who looked like an officer that they were welcome to search the car if they so wished irrespective of whether he was D. J. or anyone else. An officer who was not in uniform told the D. J. in the same rude tone: How do I know you are District Judge? Show your identity card.

Curious onlookers who were returning from the late show at the nearby Mahatma Cinema were witnesses to the altercation that ensued. The District Judge and wife were held up for more than

half an hour, but the car was not examined at all.

SATURDAY REVIEW learns that the District Judge

had given a statement subsequently to the O. I. C. Point Pedro Police, Mr. Wijewardene, in open court setting out the incidents of the

night. Although certain Army officers had tried to persuade the officer involved in the incident to offer an apology to the D. J., SR

learns that the officer had refused. It is now believed that a formal complaint might be made to the Judicial Service Commission.

Viewpoint

"My military forces are now in the east and the north. There is military rule in these two provinces, each with a military governor, yes, I say they are military governors. With my army I will see that there is no repeated attempt to set up a different administration in these provinces".

These are famous words. Who said it, where, and when? Readers sensitive to the problems of the Tamils will be surprised to know that the author of the words is the late Prime Minister S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, and that the words were spoken nearly TWENTY FIVE years ago (on June 3, 1958, to be exact) and they were part of a characteristically pompous address made by him to members of the then Government Parliamentary Group after the race riots of May-June that year. So there you are, within ten years of the achievement of freedom for ALL the people in this country, the Tamils in the North and East began to be ruled by "military governors". That process of military rule never ceased, particularly in the north, any time, although there were interspersed periods of relaxation and severity off and on. People who talk of "Tigers" and violence in the north should not fall victims to the selective amnesia that remembers the consequence only

and not the cause. Repeated anti-Tamil riots, repeated acts of murder, arson, and looting, repeated abrogations of gentlemanly pacts by successive governments, repeated acts of State terrorism in Tamil areas, repeated pinpricks and humiliations of Tamils in their own traditional environs as well as in the south over a period of fifteen to twenty years led to the cry for Eelam and to the birth of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam movement. When Bandaranaike spoke those words and set up his military governors, in 1958, no one had heard of the word Eelam and the only Tiger the Ceylonese knew of was the fierce striped quadruped of the jungle!

And now in 1983, if a Tamil District Judge is stopped and harassed on a Jaffna highway by a gang of men whose only advantage was that the night was yet young as far as they were concerned, that they happened to have automatic weapons and the confidence that they are not accountable in these matters to anyone in the final count, it should not surprise anyone. SATURDAY REVIEW does not hold the view that a District Judge is entitled to any special favours. Every citizen is equal in the eyes of law and order, even one who presides over the law. But the simple question is, what wrong did this citizen of the North do to be barked at and bawled at and browbeaten by a bully on the public highway? Or, are we not supposed to ask these questions?

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

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EDITOR
S. Sivanayagam

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An Invitation to our Readers

This is to renew the invitation we extended to our readers in our Editorial column last week. Let us have your critical assessments of the paper—what you like about "SATURDAY REVIEW"

and what you don't, and why? You do not need to be very polite about it. Do you like the presentation of news and views in the present form or do you think it needs change?

How? A selection of interesting comments will be published in the special issue of February 5th which will mark the first anniversary of "SATURDAY REVIEW".

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Politics, it has been said, is the art of the possible. However much power the head of a government may possess constitutionally, in wielding it he has to take into consideration many factors and pressures; in other words, the leader cannot always do as he pleases. This becomes evident especially in the process of government formation.

President Jayawardene is today in the hapless position of such a leader: despite the vast powers at his disposal—he has been carrying the undated letters of resignation of UNP members since October 1982—the long-promised “reconstitution” of the Government Parliamentary Group and the formation of the new administration has still to be carried out.

The problem is that an acceptable formula for eliminating a certain number of MPs and filling their vacancies has not emerged despite weeks of intense backstage negotiation and intrigue.

At one time, there were press reports that all those members against whom various charges had been made would be dropped. This would have been a highly acceptable formula to the public—but certainly not to quite a few in the Government.

Neglect of the electorates

After a Committee was appointed to inquire into the charges, it was reported in the newspapers that the “only charge” against about 40 to 50 members concerned was the “neglect of their electorates”!

Now it has been proposed, again according to press reports, that about 21 members who failed to pull in more than 50 per cent of votes cast in their respective electorates during the Presidential poll would be dropped and by-elections held to fill the vacancies.

Personal loyalties

Even then problems may arise because some powerful figures stand to lose their seats if this formula is accepted.

Personal loyalty to the President is likely to play a major role in both the reconstitution of the UNP Parliamentary Group and the new administration. Mr. Jayawardene can be expected to retain some of the present members despite their poor record at the elections and bring in a number of others who have stood by him through thick and thin.

With regard to loyalty, there is this interesting passage from the President's biography by T.D.S.A. Dissanayaka:

“J.R. Jayawardene was unanimously elected President of the UNP on April 26th 1973. The Working Committee which took the decision was presided over by M.D.

Political Causerie

by

Gamini Navaratne

Banda who in 1972, had favoured the expulsion of J. R. Jayawardene. His name was proposed by N.H. Keerthiratne and seconded by A. F. Wijemanne who in 1972 had also favoured his expulsion.

fact, such opposition had come only from one member of the Working Committee, A.C.S. Hameed (UNP—Akurana), who had resolutely stood by J. R. Jayawardene.

“Of other UNP stalwarts,

flecting the former and conceding the absence of the latter. As the days rolled by, the stream of such visitors to his home and office increased; some came sheepishly, others apologetically and still others

President J. is not as free to act as some think he is

“M. D. Banda, N. H. Keerthiratne, A. F. Wijemanne, Jinadasa Niyathapala, C. P. J. Seneviratne, W.A.P. Ariyadasa, J. L. Sirisena, Dr. M. C. M. Kaleel, Montague Jayewickreme, Gamini Dissanayake and Jabir Cader then made speeches extending their good wishes and wholehearted co-operation to J. R. Jayawardene. However, in 1972 none of them had opposed the expulsion of J. R. Jayawardene when the issue was raised within the Working Committee. In

the few who had likewise stood by J. R. Jayawardene were Cyril Mathew, N. G. P. Panditharatne, Esmond Wickremasinghe, Sirisoma Ranasinghe, Douglas Abeydeera, S. A. G. Yapa, Shelton Jayasinghe, Col. C. A. Dharmapala, Festus Perera, P. D. Kulannatileka, Chandra de Zoysa and Paul Perera....

“Thus when those who had plotted to end his political life came to him with peace offerings he responded with cordiality devoid of trust, re-

brazenly performed somersaults....”

Politicians, if they are brazen, build up power bases to ensure that they are not easily dislodged from their positions. These power bases may be among the people at large, in their party, in Parliament and in the Government.

We have among us a handful of politicians who have over the years built up their support and image, waiting for the main chance, through patronage, by making alliances and

other means. They are certain to muster all the pressure they can when it comes to the formation of the new parliamentary group and the administration.

Caste and political blackmail are two other major factors that influence politics. Indeed, in ‘enlightened Sri Lanka,’ despite its high rate of literacy, etc., caste is still a dominant factor in society.

As for blackmail, there are some politicians who collect evidence of the hanky-panky deeds or other misdemeanours of rivals for use at an opportune time. Just as such evidence may be useful in depriving a person of some position or other, it may also be useful in obtaining position!

Some politicians are sometimes able to muster even foreign support for their cause. Suppose a leading politician is a good friend of a big aid-giver. He could use that influence to insure his political fortunes!

Undue time

and energy

In the particular situation that has arisen in Sri Lanka now, President Jayawardene is not as free to act as some of his ardent admirers think he is. He may have had a free hand if he had held a general election under the proportional representation system. Of course, there was the danger that he would have then lost the Government's more than two-thirds majority in Parliament. Still the nation would have been spared all the undue time, energy and money that is now being spent on Government-formation while the more urgent business of day-to-day government remains virtually paralysed.

Can we afford this luxury while the economic situation is getting worse and worse, with another devaluation of the rupee as the early warning signal?

‘New Statesman’ has a chuckle at Sri Lanka!

NEW STATESMAN, London, has a quiet chuckle at Sri Lankan Prime Minister R. Premadasa and the Sri Lankan Press in its latest issue of 21 January 1983. Its MISCELLANY column carries the following piece under the title: “Anything she can do...”

According to recent reports, our own dear Prime Minister can stop a penguin at fifty paces with one look from those laser-beam eyes. But she still has some way to go before she equals the powers of President J. R. Jayawardene of Sri Lanka.

Opening an exhibition a couple of weeks ago, the Sri Lankan Prime Minister, R. Premadasa, said that a big new archaeological find “was not surprising”, since “the present government, headed by President J. R. Jayawardene, is a just and righteous government. That is why we have been able to make this valuable archaeological find from the Raja rata”.

In the matter of loyal press coverage too, the Sri Lankans can teach our own tabloids a trick or two. Earlier this month an arti-

cle on the children's page of the CEYLON SUNDAY OBSERVER (It is worse than what NEW STATESMAN thought. It appeared on the FOCUS ON THE ARTS page - Ed. SR) said that “the young ones of today should emulate this great man” (President Jayawardene). Why? Because he “is an embodiment of virtue and morality and possesses qualities and traits worth emulating. Intellectual curiosity and capacity, search for new knowledge, well-balanced education excelling in studies, sports, drama and

elocution, importance of team work, acceptance of victory and defeat alike, thoroughness in everything, religious education, honesty, fearlessness, courage, steadfastness and determination, simplicity in living, and concern for others, even for the lowliest, patriotism and national consciousness and emulation of great men in contemporary history”.

NEW STATESMAN adds the comment: “Clearly not a man to waste his sweetness on the desert air”.

The Media Scene

The "SUN" and the "DAILY NEWS" have run true to form in their handling of the Pulendran affair.

The day after K. T. Pulendran, the UNP Chief Organiser in Vavuniya was shot dead, the "SUN" (21 Jan), as expected, came out with a page 1 story headlined 'UNP Organiser's Killing, a Terrorist Execution.'

The 'DAILY NEWS' of the same date published a Page 1 story which explicitly ties up terrorists in the North with the shooting.

The 'ISLAND's report

Who killed Pulendran?

Do Police think differently from P.M., SUN and CDN?

(21 Jan) was a factual one, with no speculation about terrorist involvement.

The follow-ups are the most interesting part of the affair. The 'SUN' (22 Jan) carries a page 1 story which baldly announces that a Grama Sevaka and two others have been arrested in connection with the killing. No mention of names or nationalities.

The Page 1 'DAILY NEWS' report of 24 Jan. blandly tells its readers 'Pulendran Killing — two more nabbed'. The report mentions the total number of arrests as five but the suspects' names, designations and nationalities are not disclosed.

It is the 'ISLAND's' report of 23 Jan. which exposes both the 'SUN' and

the 'DAILY NEWS'. Its Page 1 story says Police sources think it was political rivalry which was the likely motive for the killing and adds that 4 suspects—2 SINHALESE and two Tamils—are in custody.

So now we can understand the 'coyness' of both the 'SUN' and the 'DAILY NEWS', their deliberate omission of names and na-

tionalities. After all the ballyhoo about Northern terrorists and executions, it certainly is embarrassing to have to admit that the Police think that the shooting was a "home-and-home" affair!

The strangest part was the funeral speech Prime Minister Premadasa delivered in Vavuniya on Sunday (23 Jan). According to newspaper reports he had said "By separating a man's soul from his body by violent means, no one could divide the country."

Hadn't the Police briefed the Prime Minister about the persons who they suspect are responsible for separating Pulendran's 'soul from his body by violent means'?

SUN and the Cosmos

"Mystery object seen falling in Kurunegala. Is it a part of Cosmos? Experts Rushed" screamed the Page 1 headlines of the 'WEEKEND' SUN (23 Jan), in a transparent attempt to aid and abet the Government's Soviet-baiting campaign. While mentioning that Dr. Granville Dharmawardene, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Authority, and other experts had helicoptered to the spot to carry out tests the report carefully (thoughtfully?) laid an escape route. The story ends, significantly enough, on this note: "Police however do not rule out the possibility that this could be a hoax."

Sure enough the escape route came in handy for the SUN the next day. The SUN of 24 Jan carried a page 1 report with the headlines: "Scientists Analyse Mystery object. Debris from Meteorite?" The first paragraph of the story runs: "The unidentified space object that caused a stir in Pitakande, Mawathagama on Saturday has now been tentatively identified as a fragment from a meteorite." But apparently the SUN wanted to eat its Cosmos fragment and have it too: for, alongside this meteorite story, it carried a picture of the "Young Discoverers" of the USO, with a caption which maintains the fiction that it's a fragment of the nuclear-powered Soviet Cosmos!

Ironically enough, that very day (24 Jan) the ISLAND—which like the DAILY

NEWS had missed out on the previous day-carried a front page picture and write-up under the headline "Did Cosmos Crashland here?" The report quotes Dr. Dharmawardene as saying that they can't establish what the object is until the tests are completed. He had added that although at the time of

testing there had been a slightly higher amount of radiation than normal in the atmosphere, there was no cause for panic.

It was left to the DAILY NEWS of the same date (24 Jan) to deliver the knock-out punch and have the last laugh. Its report, headlined "That Object No

Part of Cosmos", quotes no less a person than Dr. Dharmawardene who not merely rules out the possibility that it's a Cosmos fragment but also adds that Cosmos had not even entered the atmosphere at the time (Saturday 22nd morning) the "mystery object" is supposed to have crash-

landed in the Kurunegala District !!

Cynical readers who were looking forward to a repeat performance of the "Dutugemunu Ashes" episode are thoroughly disappointed that the whole affair has turned out to be a pus vaanam.

Bharati Day in New York

The Secretary of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Council, New York, Dushyanthi Nirmalan, writes:

January 17 th, 1983.

"Dear Mr. Sivanayagam, The Tamil Eelam Liberation Council held a major event in Nanuet, New York on Dec. 11th 1982 at the residence of Dr. W. V. Panchacharam to celebrate the 100 th Birth Anniversary of Mahakavi Bharathiar. The event was well attended by Tamilians drawn both from the Indian and Ceylonese community from the Tri-State area.

The occasion fittingly was geared to raise the consciousness of the Tamils present at this event to the life and work of Subramania Bharathiar who championed the cause of freedom in India through his poetic genius. The event began with Murali and Arabhi, children of Dr. and Mrs. Panchacharam who eloquently set the tone of the proceedings of the day. Praise in honor of Mahakavi Bharathiar were narrated by Murali Panchacharam and was ably support-

ted by Arabhi Panchacharam. Thereafter, there were many speakers who addressed the assembly, chief among them were Dr. Panchacharam, the organizer of the event, Fr. Anthony Thevathasan, Mr. M. K. K. Periasamy (Council member D. M. K. Tamil Nadu) and Mr. Edward Benedict.

All four speakers, charged with emotional feeling, echoed the present struggle of the Tamils in Ceylon with extreme clarity, and concluded that the Tamils will not rest until the goal of Tamil Eelam is reached. They also emphasized the fact that over 70 million Tamils in the world do not have a homeland and therefore it became the sacred responsibility of the Tamils all over the world in working together to achieve this end.

The concept of a multi-million dollar TAMIL CENTER in New York housing a library, auditorium, museum, school and a temple, mosque and a church (where prayers would be said in Tamil) was launched and the idea received a favourable response

from the audience.

On this day Mrs. Padmini Ramachandran, the Indian film idol, released the album THE STORY OF THAMIL EELAM PART 3. This record produced by the TELC, is a commemorative album of the first WORLD THAMIL EELAM CONVENTION held in Nanuet, New York.

The Liberation Council also took the opportunity to award two separate CITATIONS to KUTTIMANI and JEGAN for their heroic

services to the Tamil community. The plaques were received by Mr. M.K.K. Periasamy on their behalf to be forwarded to the members of their family.

A music recital of Bharathi songs by Kumari Radha Balasubramaniam and troupe and Bharatha Natyam by Kumari Mytheli Sreenivas concluded the event. The members of the Liberation Council met thereafter to discuss matters of a confidential nature relating to our struggle in Ceylon.

Kuttimani, Jegan Citation

Here is the citation in honour of KUTTIMANI and JEGAN:

"The journey of life is a reminder of the transitory character of our earthly existence. This quality of our lives is judged and measured not in terms of what we own, but by what we have done. Love is the law of life: Love is larger than life. Time moves, leav-

ing much of our assigned tasks half done or undone. What we are, is God's gift to us. What we become is our reciprocal gift to Him. The giver of life summons all, to the call of duty: To face awesome tasks, to carry out arduous challenges. In today's context, the spirit of our community which is in motion invites (Continued on page 10)

LETTERS

'Jaffna is so close to my heart'

Radio 3 EA,
35, Bank Str,
South Melbourne,
Vic. 3205,
Australia.
11. 01. 83

The Editor,
Saturday Review
Dear Sir,

I must thank Saturday Review for keeping me regularly posted here at Radio 3 EA about all the recent happenings and developments in Jaffna, which is so close to my heart. The most creative years of

my life—and among the happiest—were spent in Jaffna, when I was Government Agent there in the late sixties.

I notice that you have featured in recent weeks some reputable writers, who are based outside the peninsula. They, among many others who contribute to your journal, have helped to give its content depth as well as width, and an interest which extends beyond the regional field to the national.

With good wishes,
Vernon Abeysekera

Human Rights violations and social responsibility

P. O. Box 366,
Gaborone,
Botswana,
December 15, 1982.

Editor,
Saturday Review,
Dear Sir,

I read of the gruelling experience undergone by Rev. D. J. Kanagaratnam while in custody, through the columns of SATURDAY REVIEW. It is evident that the Sinhalese people are failing to be responsible for the harassment and torture of Tamils arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. This is a disturbing trend. The atrocities carried out on the Jews in the concentration camps in Germany by Hitler were not known at that time by many people in Germany. However this ignorance did not prevent the Germans from facing the disgrace of invasion and trials. The officers who carried out such atrocities were brought to trial in Nuremberg and death sentences were carried out. The excuse, "We carried out orders of our superiors" was not accepted for exoneration.

I hope the people in the south are aware of their responsibilities in this matter. May I also point out that apart from the consequence of inviting foreign invasion again, when Tamil Eelam becomes a reality a trial similar to the one at Nuremberg may await those responsible. In the eyes of the world Sri Lanka would like Germany under Hitler be disgraced as violator of Human Rights. The time is therefore ripe for the people in the south

to awaken to hard facts and see to it that their brethren in uniform serving in these camps adhere to the principles of human rights and the philosophy of Buddhism.

Yours faithfully,
Jacob Veerasingam.

Without fear or favour

7 Jalan 12/15B,
Petaling Jaya,
Malaysia
8th January 1983.

Dear Sir,

I would first like to congratulate the Editor and all the staff concerned in the production of the "Saturday Review". It contains sound viewpoints and very important

news which are anxiously read by the Ceylon Tamils who are permanently resident here but entertain some interest in the welfare of their kith and kin over there. Their numbers are, however, small but can be increased if they are regularly fed with home news....

It is my honest view that, if not for your paper, fortunately started in time, the Tamil community would have been driven into a worse plight. It has been the community's voice expressed without fear or favour and I hope you will continue to do so and thus watch the interests of the Tamils, more so in view of the dictatorial tendency of the Government after the results of the Presidential election and the Referendum have gone in its favour. May I appeal that your paper should try its best to forge unity among the Tamils from now on. I have always followed the Ceylon political news and have done something to keep it alive in this part of the world, whenever possible. With best wishes for yours continued success.

Yours faithfully,
A. Thambiah

'Only a weak government fears free expression'

No. 1, Station Road,
Katugastota,
12-1-83.

The Editor,
SATURDAY REVIEW,
Sir,

It was distressing, but not surprising to have read of the possibility of the axe falling on the "SATURDAY REVIEW". This axe has had a most subtle way of falling over a number of weeklies—the "Focus", Sathdina etc, and now seems to be spreading its wings in the direction of the "SATURDAY REVIEW"—the only existing English Weekly, that has deviated from the narrow path of journalism pursued by the so-called Free Press.

The role of the "Free Press" is degradingly unique. Its friends are the government's friends, and its foes are also the government's foes. For instance, when VIPs persecute a foe—the "Free Press" reinforces the attacks with all the resources it has, and when a friend of the government is

shown courtesy by the government the "Free Press" follows suit with concentrated effort.

Citizen Perera now finds himself completely perplexed for he was one who joined the band of protesters against the threat to the Freedom of the Press—years ago, led by these very people who now use all the power they can muster to throttle the free expression of the people.

However much the Free Press attempts to suppress news of public interest, truth has a way of finding its destination to the people, and however enormous the majority the govt. has, it is only a weak govt. that fears free expression.

If the axe were to fall on the "Saturday Review", it would be the removal of yet another right people have been entitled to under a democratic government.

Yours faithfully,
T. G. Edirimanna

'Essentially an economic problem'

Nelliady,
Karaveddy,
10-1-83.

The Editor,
Saturday Review,
Sir,

There has been a lot of epistolary polemics recently in the columns of your esteemed journal as to whether the Aryans or the Dravidians were the first settlers in Sri Lanka, as if the first settlers can assert and make a claim to the country exclusively as their own by prescriptive right. On the basis of this argument, the indigenous peoples of those African and American countries colonised

by the Western powers have a right to eject them. And further, a decision on this controversy, far from solving the inflammatory ethnic problems, will only escalate it and make it more complicated.

The immediate problem that stares us in our face is the recent estrangement between the two major communities and to explore the modus operandi to restore the status-quo-ante. The two communities, historically speaking, were living with fraternal cordiality till the advent of the British imperialists whose policy of divide et impera set them at each other's throat. There is hardly any

evidence of any confrontation between them even from the time Ven. Mahanama authored the "Mahawamsa".

Communal, racial or ethnic problem is essentially an economic problem and once the economic problems are solved, the connected problems will die a natural death as in the Socialist countries.

Why cannot our Sinhala and Tamil friends, give up this futile exercise and look to the Socialist countries and understand how identical problems have been solved there?

Thanking you.

Yours truly,
V. Mahalingam

'He was interested in everything everyone had to say'

6, Old Park Road,
Gurunagar,
Jaffna
18th January, 1983

Dear Sir,

On my return from leave, a large pile of "Saturday Reviews" awaited me. Reading through them gave me a clear picture of what has been happening during my absence. I have been looking for an opportunity to congratulate you on the high standard of your journal, but this is not the main reason for my writing.

I read with particular interest the tributes to Professor K. Kailasapathy, written by friends and colleagues

from some of the many aspects of life that he was involved in. I hope you will find space to add my own personal tribute to him.

I first came to know him on my arrival in Jaffna, 10 months ago. He was introduced to me as the Dean of Arts and Professor of Tamil at the Jaffna University campus, but my relationship with him developed much more along lines of friendship than purely professional discourse. A man of greater modesty and gentleness I have never encountered. I was only just beginning to be aware of the extent of his accomplish-

ment—he never referred to it in conversation. I have only been able to slowly glean this information from talking to people who have known him longer than I, or, sadly, through reading his obituaries.

Kailas was always excellent company. He was always interested in everything everyone had to say, but would make sure the conversation was kept lively by gently teasing people with an intelligent and perceptive sense of humour that was inimitable.

I remember him for stimulating discussions about the Tamil and English languages; for fascinating stories from the Mahabharata; for an unexpected passion for English war films and for crumpets!

I value the professional interest and support he gave me from the beginning; his concern and kindness towards a foreigner settling into a new environment; but perhaps most of all, I value the enthusiasm that Kailas and his family have given me for Tamil life and culture. I find it difficult to imagine life in Jaffna without them.

Yours sincerely,
Susan Boardman
ELT Consultant Palaly TC.

Resurrection of the Mahatma

THE CULT of Gandhi has had its share of ups and downs. Like Lenin, Mao and other messianic father-figures, the Indian Mahatma ('Great Soul') was canonised in his own lifetime, a hallowed symbol of political legitimacy even after his political writ had ceased to run. In Gandhi's case, the transformation of a once-powerful political dictator into a mystical and benevolent symbol of state ideology was aided by the essentially religious nature of his political appeal and the circumstances of his martyrdom. The post-independence years saw Gandhi given pride of place in a nationalist pantheon whose rites of worship were scarcely less elaborate than those of Hindu temple-deities. The only difference between the worship of Gandhi and that of Krishna was that it was officially practised and encouraged by the ostensibly secular Nehru government.

J.P.'s 'Total Revolution'

Under Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi, these ritual obsequies to the Mahatma became rare. Though not above playing on the coincidence of surnames, Mrs Gandhi's propaganda machine concentrated on the dynastic cult of the Nehru-Gandhis—the political succession of Sanjay and now Rajiv traced back to their Nehru ancestry. The neglected mantle of the Mahatma was left to Mrs. Gandhi's opponents, in the Gandhian 'Total Revolution' of J. P. Narayan, which precipitated the Emergency, and the Gandhian puritanism of Morarji Desai, who led the post-Emergency Janata government. Now that even these Gandhian veterans have vanished from the scene, Indian references to Gandhi would be far more likely to evoke the Prime Minister's heir-apparent, Rajiv, or her facetious daughter-in-law, Maneka, than the 'Father of the Nation'.

Mrs. Gandhi's involvement

Why, then, the official resurrection of the Mahatma's ghost, represented by the Indian government's patronage of Richard Attenborough's film and the massive publicity build-up? Indira Gandhi's involvement in the Attenborough project dates back 20 years to its inception but, it was only after her return to power in 1980 that she threw her weight full behind it, helped clear the bureaucratic hurdles in Attenborough's way and authorised the crucial government investment of £2.5 million, without which the film could not have secured international finance. By this time J. P. Narayan, the Mahatma's political heir and Mrs. Gandhi's arch-opponent, was dead, and the few surviving, first-generation Gandhians were in the political wilderness. With the

passing of Gandhi's apostles, the legend, in an uncontroversial, authorised version, could now be trusted to promote rather than subvert the image of Indira Gandhi's India.

To make quite sure, Mrs. Gandhi vetted the screenplay herself, as part of her bedtime reading, and saw the film before final excision. In his book on the making of *Gandhi*, Attenborough, who admits enthusiastically to being 'devoted' to Indira Gandhi, can find no higher praise than her certificate of authenticity. Attenborough's epic, in a dubbed, Hindi version, will soon be widely seen in India by a generation to whom the living Gandhi is as nebulous a memory as the Raj itself and the Gandhi they see will be a character as mythical and one-dimensional as the depictions of Rama, Krishna and other Hindu

certainly one virtue of which no one could accuse him. His particular brand of non-violence, his chief claim to sainthood, demonstrates how his fundamentalism always gave way to political expediency. Originating as an entirely pragmatic tactic for challenging South African pass laws, Gandhian passive resistance under the name of satyagraha or 'the path of truth' quickly became an organised religion with its own ritual and priesthood. Its religious rationale lay partly in the Christian concept of original sin and partly in orthodox Hindu rites of self-purification through self-inflicted suffering and renunciation. The curse of imperialism, like that of caste pollution, was to be expiated by ritual penance. The cult of satyagraha, so defined, rapidly grew to embrace strict vegetarianism, sexual

on the popular Hindu imagination and his own status as its supreme wizard and pontiff. Ranging from individual acts of purification, such as fasting, to mass direct action in the form of civil disobedience, satyagraha became one of the most exquisite forms of political blackmail ever devised. For all the rhetoric of non-violence, its chief sanction was the threat of violence, self-inflicted or otherwise; and it was a double-edged sword in Gandhi's hands. He used it to pressurise the Raj with the unspoken threat of potential mass violence as on the many occasions that he embarked on 'fasts unto death'.

Gandhian satyagraha, with its populist appeal, certainly marked an advance on the sterile constitutionalist lobbying of the past. But the basis of its mass appeal remained

belonged to the same urban, western-educated middle class as the rest of India's nationalists. The product of a *bania* (merchant-caste) family who were the semi-hereditary prime ministers of a princely state, he remained until the end a close ally of big business houses like the Birlas, who financed the Congress and his various other projects. His concept of trusteeship recognised feudal landlords, big business and even the princes as legitimate trustees of the nation's wealth and outlawed any talk of expropriation. His own campaigns on behalf of the under-privileged were not directed against their Indian oppressors, only against British capitalists and landlords. The cause for which he is best remembered, the uplift of Untouchables, never went beyond symbolic gestures. Gandhi re-named them *Harijans* or 'Children of God' and duly worshipped them; but he rejected their own efforts to organise politically, ignored the economic causes of their poverty and landlessness and even defended the Hindu caste system as an ideal division of labour, once purged of the taboo of untouchability.

Gandhi's conservatism was

35 years after the assassination of Gandhi, Richard Attenborough has produced an epic film on the Mahatma.

Zareer Masani puts this "addition to the Gandhi myth" into historical perspective.

By Courtesy: NEW STATESMAN, London.

du epic heroes in popular Indian cinema. The only difference is that Attenborough's hero owes more to New Testament assumptions of good and evil than to the robust antics of Hindu gods and goddesses.

THE WESTERN appropriation of Gandhi as a sanitised, Christ-like missionary is neither recent nor entirely spurious. Gandhi himself encouraged such associations in the course of his flirtations with Christianity and his close links with British Anglicans, Quakers, theosophists, vegetarians and pacifists. His pretensions to saintliness, however, were taken less seriously by Britain's more experienced colonial administrators, and with good reason. Christian ethics were only one strand of the eclectic, eccentric and entirely pragmatic political mish-mash which came to be known as Gandhism. The current spate of Gandhiana in the Western media, with its bland acceptance of the Mahatma as an Indian Messiah moving inexorably towards a pre-determined goal, is an essentially Eurocentric simplification.

Gandhi himself was fond of saying: 'Consistency is the virtue of an ass,' and that was

abstinence, the wearing and ritual spinning of khaddar (home-spun cloth) and sundry other purifying tests which Gandhi thought up along the way.

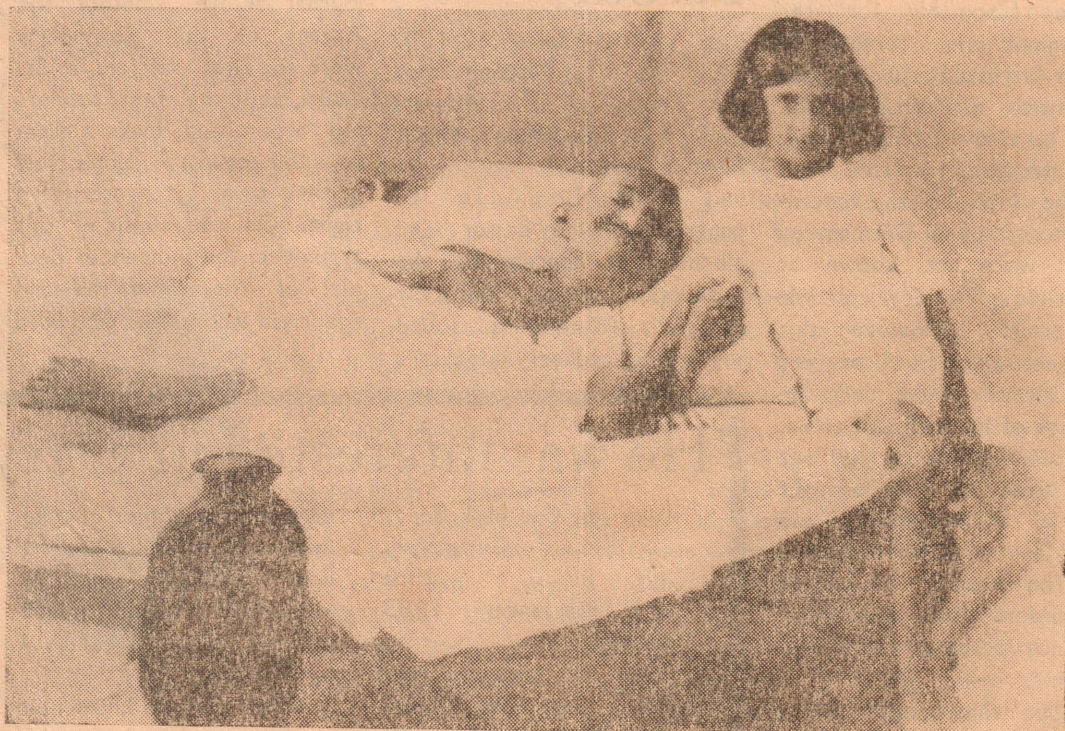
But underlying all this was a shrewd political rationale. By making passive resistance a magical ritual, closely identified with orthodox Hinduism, Gandhi both secured its hold

religious rather than political or economic. Gandhi's economic thought never developed beyond a Utopian form of agrarian revivalism which blamed the evils of modern science and technology for economic oppression, while exonerating India's feudal and propertied classes.

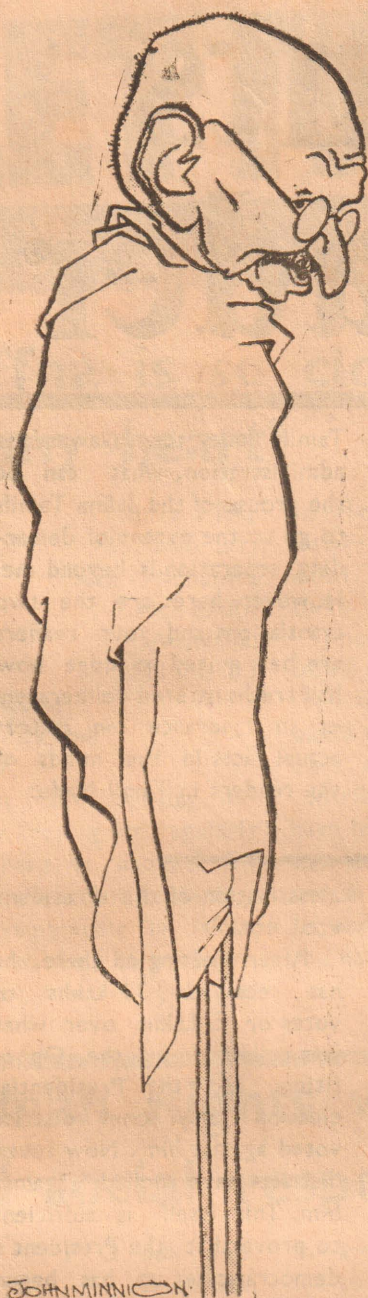
Gandhi himself, despite his peasant attire and revivalism,

epitomised by his use of the gospel of non-violence to justify collaboration with the Raj against those who challenged the social and economic status quo. Whenever his civil disobedience campaigns threatened to pass out of his own control into the hands of the left, Gandhi terminated them on the ground

(Continued next page)



Indira Gandhi in childhood - with the Mahatma



JOHN MINNICK

(Continued from page 6)

und that violence was creeping in. Though none of his three main campaigns won any tangible concessions from the Raj, Gandhi's rhetoric succeeded in presenting political defeat as moral victory and in endorsing a return to constitutional politics. In 1936, the Congress, with Gandhi's blessings, contested elections and formed provincial ministries under a constitution it had sworn to wreck. Predictably, the Congress ministries proved scarcely more sympathetic to economic reform than their loyalist predecessors, and the conservatism of their labour and agrarian legislation reassured even the British governors. While Gandhi condemned socialist organisation on class lines as inconsistent with non-violence, he defended the use of state repression, including police firing, by Congress ministries against labour and peasant demonstrations. In 1939, when the left under Subash Bose came near to winning the Congress leadership, Gandhi was not above using the most ruthless pressure-tactics to oust Bose as Congress President and hound him out of Congress.

IN RETROSPECT, the most negative aspect of Gandhi's

Resurrection of the Mahatma

legacy was the political tokenism and hypocrisy legitimised by his cult of poverty and his glorification of individual renunciation. As one of his more irreverent disciples remarked, it cost a lot to keep the Mahatma in poverty. His insistence on 3rd class rail travel meant that a whole carriage had to be reserved for him, while his dietary and other fads meant that only the very rich could afford to have him as a house-guest. The fetishes, which seemed forgivable eccentricities in Gandhi himself, became a calculated hypocrisy with future generations of Congressmen. In India today, a spotless Gandhi-cap and khaddar uniform are far more likely to evoke the whitened sepulchres of Congress corruption and intrigue than any commitment to non-violence.

The worst of the current, bowdlerised Gandhi myth is that its simplistic eulogy obscures the most relevant feature of Gandhi's political testament — his final dis-

illusionment with and rejection of the new political establishment he had fathered. If Gandhi was a hero, he reached tragic heights in the despair and isolation of his final months, just when his mission appeared to have been fulfilled. The personal tragedy of seeing most of his family reduced to neurotics and alcoholics by his own oppressiveness was mirrored in the carnage which shattered his dream of Hindu-Muslim unity in an undivided India. Watching the creation of Pakistan, followed by the first Indo-Pakistan war in Kashmir, Gandhi could not fail to be aware that his Hindu orientated, religious nationalism had contributed more than anything else to the alienation of the Muslim elite, led by Jinnah, from their previous Congress allegiance; while his social conservatism had barred efforts by the left to organise the Hindu and Muslim masses on a secular, class platform.

Gandhi's final months were also embittered by the know-

ledge that British withdrawal was not the result of successful *satyagraha*, but a pragmatic retreat from the impracticality of governing an increasingly violent and chaotic sub-continent, especially after the Indian naval mutiny of 1946. Disgusted by the scramble for office among power-hungry Congress politicians, and increasingly ignored by Nehru and other Congress leaders he had groomed, Gandhi took refuge in an anarchistic rejection of the new Congress Raj. He now turned to J.P. Narayan and his former socialist critics for consolation and advocated the dissolution of the Congress political machine, or else its conversion into a social welfare organisation. If he felt so betrayed by the false dawn of independence, one does not need to guess how 'the spirit of Gandhi' would have rebelled against those other Gandhis of today, with their sordid family intrigues, becoming the official custodians of his shrine.

'Regional parties are in no way Separatist'

Regional parties are in no way separatist. They actually represent the aspirations of the people of each state, Brigadier Sailo, Chief Minister of Mizoram said in Madras recently.

Speaking to Indian Express, Mr. Sailo — who is visiting Tamil Nadu and Kerala — asserted that the affirmation of regional parties was a national process since they could understand people at the grassroots level more than many of the national parties could because they had lost touch with the masses in some states.

Mr. Sailo stressed that regional parties were in no way secessionist and did believe in nationalism. "For example our party, the People's Conference, is fighting the insurgency more sincerely than the Mizoram Congress" he pointed out.

He said imposition of national parties through money-power and authority would not last long and would only rebound. The imposed Congress government in Nagaland would suffer a similar fate.

Asked what sort of central government would be possible

if each state was ruled by a regional party, Mr. Sailo said that such a process was evolving now, and the answer would crystallise much later.

He observed that regional parties had more relevance in south and north-east India than elsewhere. "If the national parties functioned more honestly, with the interests of the states' people in mind, they will also continue to grow". He reiterated that there was no threat to national integration from regional parties.

More Westerners take to Yoga

The number of people who have taken to yoga in the West has doubled in the last ten years, since it was found to be relevant to the western life-style, subjected to "hectic dispersal and schizophrenic tendencies", according to Mr. Bletz, general secretary of the European National Yoga Federation.

Mr. Bletz told Indian Express that yoga was never more valuable to the West, and had become very popular in Europe.

The European National Yoga Federation had about 5,000 recognised yoga teachers, each with about 100 students, he said.

The need for yoga was so great that it was sought after in big offices with time being allocated to it during the lunch hour or after office-hours.

The latest development in Europe was the entry of Christian Missionaries—priests and even nuns—who felt that Yoga was useful to develop a healthy body and depth of consciousness.

A peculiar phenomenon was that 80 per cent of teachers and students practising yoga were women, possibly because they see-

med to have more time for it, he felt. Most of the women were in the 30-40 age group, had various experiences in life and were looking for ways of better understanding and introspection.

Youth generally preferred sports to yoga, but in the last five years more of them were attracted to yoga, he said.

By and large, practising yoga was not a fad, Mr. Bletz insisted. It was sought to restore balance in a mechanical life. People wanted to know more about themselves and their relationships with others.

The way Yoga attracted people from different walks of life and religions, it could form the basis for developing "religious consciousness", whatever individual beliefs might be, he felt.

Mr. Bletz has been a Mahayana Buddhist monk since 1970. He finds no contradiction in following Buddhism and teaching and practising Yoga.

He has visited Madras each January for nearly 20 years to meet his guru Krishnamacharya, who runs a yoga "mandiram" in the City and Mr. J. Krishnamurthi.

763 Indian Films - a World record!

Despite all-round recession in the film industry, India produced 763 films last year to register a world record.

The figure also represents a new high in the Indian film industry, which produced 737 films during 1981.

According to official sources the number of "A" films went up from 202 in 1981 to 257 in 1982, while the production of films with "U" (Universal) certificates went down from 535 to 506.

Hindi films, which had been occupying the top position since the beginning of the

Talkie Era in 1931 but had lost that position to Malayalam movies in 1978, had come back on top in 1981. But Telugu films snatched the supremacy again last year, after a year's break, with a record production of 155 films.

Hindi was seven films behind while Tamil Cinema, which was leading in 1979, held the third place last year with 140 films. Malayalam, with 117, held fourth place, followed by Kannada with 51.

The number of films produced in these languages in

1981 were: Hindi 153, Tamil 137, Telugu 132, Malayalam 111 and Kanada 65.

Bengali cinema continued to hold on to the sixth position with 49 films in 1982 against 42 the previous year, while Gujarati films broke a two-year plateau with the production going up from 34 to 39.

The number of Marathi films fell from 27 to 24.

Assamese cinema succeeded in maintaining its status quo of five films, while Rajasthanese went up from two to three.

Ignorant comments by Tamilnadu reader

READER J.P.S.THURAI of
Fatima View,
Pandateruppu,
writes:-

The other day I happened to come across a Tamil periodical "Congress" of 15.01.83 which reproduces two articles, one the Editorial of 28.12.82 by the 'Thinakaran' of Trichy India, and the other a comment on this editorial by one Thurairajan,

also of Trichy.

These articles are really illuminating. Therefore I have translated them and am submitting to you for publication in your esteemed journal for the benefit of your readers. The originals too are enclosed.

According to some of Mr. Thurairajan's observations — (1) The Jayawardene Government with its preponderant majority (143/168) has been

magnanimous enough to concede two portfolios to Jaffna Tamils.

(2) The Government has made it compulsory that the Sinhalese MUST learn Tamil and the Tamils vice versa if they want employment under Government-

(3) Letters addressed to any Government Department are replied in the same language in which the comm-

unication is addressed to that Department.

(4) When Indian Tamils were stranded due to unemployment caused by the nationalization of the Tea Estates, Mr. Jayawardene found alternate employment to all those so affected and has kept them alive without any one dying of starvation etc., etc.

If things are so rosy for the

Tamils under the Jayawardene administration, what can be the grouse of the Jaffna Tamils to go to the extent of demanding separation is beyond me. However, here are the two translations and your readers are best suited to judge how half truths uttered deliberately or in ignorance can distort actual facts in the minds of the readers in Tamil Nadu:

'Thinakaran' - Trichy -
28-12-82 Tuesday,
Newspaper. Jayawardene's
Skinned Calf.

The results of the recent General Election in Sri Lanka are distressing. To whatever degree the others are affected we do not know, but we feel distressed for three reasons— firstly, because we believe in democracy and essential liberties; secondly, 'Sinhala theevu' (Sri Lanka) is in such close proximity to our own country; thirdly, the distress caused by realising that our brethren speaking the same mother tongue, Tamil, who live there, are going to be sorely affected.

Let us look around the neighbouring countries surrounding us. All these countries gained independence at about the same time. We see a 'Zia' in Pakistan, an Ershad in Bangladesh and a Jayawardene in Sri Lanka in that order.

Military Dictatorship is being studied as an art by Pakistan's Zia and under Ershad a peculiar type of khaki clad democracy is in operation. Is Mr. Jayawardene of Sri Lanka who started on the Indian method and immediately changed over to Bangladesh style, now treading the way in the footsteps of Pakistan?

There are many forces

which have for the past several years been straining their utmost to obstruct the roots of democracy being firmly planted in Sri Lanka. Hence when Mr. Jayawardene altered the "Government by Prime Minister" to that of government by President we did not complain, we did not expect that any damage would be caused to the democratic structure. We considered that the Government of the country was in the hands of the people in some form or other and that was sufficient.

We never dreamt that in Jayawardene's dark cavernous thoughts such hypocritic measures would lie dormant.

Today he has staged a bogus Referendum stating that he wants to revitalise a Parliament which was a mere corpse. In truth he has not revived it. We consider that he has killed the Democratic Cow's Parliamentary calf and is trying to draw his milk of authority from the cow by introducing a skinned calf stuffed with straw.

On one side the declaration of Emergency, on the other, imprisonment of some leaders of the Opposition Parties—threats of filing action implicating some others in false cases, introducing fanciful suspicions of plotting the

assassination of the President etc., etc.

After creating all these, he has received 31 Lakhs of votes or 5 Lakhs over what was collected by the Opposition. At the Presidential election only one district voted against him. Now seven districts have polled against him. This itself is sufficient to prove that the President's democratic set up has begun to fade.

Will the President be able to understand this? Will he who contested holding the Lamp as his symbol, put it out and make Sri Lanka a land of darkness?

N. Thurairajan,
Puththanampatti,
Trichy District,
28.12.82.

The Editor,
'Thinakaran',
1 Royal Road,
Thirichirappalli.
Sir,

The article published in your daily under the heading 'Jayawardene's Skinned Calf' conveys information which is far from the truth. The living condition of Tamils of Indian origin in Sri Lanka is quite different to that of the Jaffna Tamils living in the Northern districts.

All the Indian Tamil labourers are working in tea estates when the Sinhalese residents are predominant traders in small towns; hence the separate 'Tamil Nadu' call by the Jaffna Tamils can never be endorsed by the Indian Tamils at any time. If the land is divided, the condition of the Indian Tamils will severely deteriorate and could never be revived. As such if we the Tamils of India give moral support to the demand for separation made by the Jaffna Tamils we are doing the greatest disservice to our friends and relations.

Further "Equal opportunity for Tamil" the request which has been voiced since 1956 but rejected by successive

governments has at long last been recognised by Jayawardene who has given it legal status. The Jayawardene government has made it a routine to see that whenever a communication is sent to any Govt., Dept., in either Sinhalese or Tamil, the reply should be sent in the language in which the communication was addressed.

In order to obtain employment under Government the Sinhalese must learn Tamil and the Tamils must learn Sinhalese. The Jayawardene Government has made this compulsory too. It is impossible to give any greater status to Tamil than this by anyone.

It was surmised that after the recent Presidential election, there would be a horrible racial massacre and everyone expected that to happen. If that had occurred what would have been the fate of the Indian Tamils? It was Jayawardene who was responsible for seeing that such a thing did not happen and he protected us from this holocaust.

The trouble created by opportunists in this country would cause undue hardships to those Tamils of Indian origin who are living in peace and contentment at present in Sri Lanka. Therefore it will be a great boon if those in India in gen-

eral and Tamil Nadu in particular do not indulge in making comments on the Government.

It is only after 1977, when Jayawardene came to power, the Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka are living peacefully and happily. The truth of this can be found out from our relations and friends who came from there.



"Mr. Jayawardene's
broad-mindedness"

You forget all these truths and hide them and write such headings and by such action you may cause untold hardships to the Indian Tamils residing in Sri Lanka.

Out of 168 members in Parliament, although there are 143 members in Jayawardene's United National Party, he has given portfolios to two Jaffna Tamils and another to

the Leader of the Indian Tamils, Mr. Thondaman. This itself shows the broad-mindedness of Mr. Jayawardene.

As Mrs. Bandaranaike's Government nationalised the Plantations, several thousands of tea estates were destroyed due to improper maintenance and with the result the Indian Tamils who are employed in them had to face a very intolerable situation as their living conditions were badly affected. All the employees who were thus involved were found alternate employment in other places and their lives were saved by Jayawardene.

Mr. Jayawardene whether in his Public or Private Life is beyond reproach. No one can make him look guilty. Whenever a Minister or Members of his party were charged with resorting to bribery or other illegal practices, he did not hesitate to expel them from the party and from parliament and these actions made him a pure gentleman and hence he has risen to a very high position.

The gutter parliamentarians of Tamil Nadu who have been for all time indulging in unparliamentary tactics can never understand Jayawardene and will never come forward to praise him.

Our Indian Tamils had been for several years dubbed landless people and did not have the right to go to other countries. Mr. Jayawardene has restored to them this privilege. The Indian Tamils now hope that Mr. Jayawardene would see that the landless position would cease and see that justice is meted out to them.

Several thousands of applications for citizenship rights were lying uncared for, several years. The Indian Tamils now know that Mr. Jayawardene is taking an earnest interest to see that all these applications are disposed of without delay.

Until now, no Government cared for the education of the estate children. It was Jayawardene who has taken the trouble to take over all estate schools under Government. The Indian Tamils are fully aware that his action would bear fruit very soon.

Taking all these truths into consideration, all the Indian Tamils who enjoyed the franchise voted en bloc for Jayawardene at the Presidential election and also at the Referendum.

Although some of Mr. Jayawardene's activities appear to be undemocratic, members
(Continued on page 9)

Dedicated to the late Professor K. Kailasapathy who suggested this topic.

Vanni - the eternal land

"Farming is no longer a way of life but a business" is offered as the ultimate accolade to farming communities in the USA. It is voiced in boring repetitiveness despite the fact that farming has been both, as are school teaching, feed selling, politicking, and gun running for the Mafia. People in every occupation blend the cultural and money-grubbing halves of their lives. Farming is no different.

Whenever I visited Rome I was reminded that "Rome is the eternal City". For me however Vanni remains the eternal land. Here the people have made farming a way of life which is appealing and enchanting to lovers of Mother Earth and unspoilt rural life.

Life revolves

round tanks

What is attractive is the farming life associated with the tank system for irrigation. There are many hundreds of tanks in the Vanni. People say when you are walking in Vanni either you are walking from a tank or across a tank or into a tank. The name of the tank is also the name of the village. For example Thandikulam is the name of a tank; it is also the village Thandikulam. Life depends on the tank. When it is full the whole extent under it is cultivated with paddy and people live happily. When the rains fail tanks do not fill up and they have a hard time and invariably Government assistance is sought. The same remarks apply when they have severe floods when tanks are breached and paddy fields are washed away. As life depends so much on the tank the people live near the tank—on high ground to be free from floods. There are few tanks where people do not reside close by—these are called thavady tanks. The people living in the adjoining villages cultivate lands under thavady tanks.

Till malaria was eradicated during World War II with the use of DDT, the population in the Vanni did

not increase. The lands they had were sufficient and paddy cultivation gave them a full life. But things changed in the forties and fifties. The population expanded mainly due to decreasing death rates and due to some movement of population into Vanni. The population which was below one lakh in the forties will soon reach the three lakh figure. The situation brought about some changes. Though the land under cultivation and yield rates increased the population expanded more. Paddy production was therefore not sufficient to meet the many demands of the people. Thus many farmers have taken to some garden cultivation with cash crops in addition to paddy to meet their cash requirements reserving most of the paddy for their own consumption.

What J. P. Lewis recalled

The charm of the Vanni people is their simplicity. They are a contented lot. They work very hard for the Kalapoham season including night watch for the crops from attacks by wild animals. The rest of the year they take it easy. They have their pilgrimages. Thanthorri Iswaran Temple of Oddusuddan, Amman Temple of Vattapalai and Naga Thambiran of Puthoor are some of the important places of pilgrimage. The last named temple is famous for curing snake bites. In every Vanni household they keep a little earth taken from the ground near the Naga Thambiran and when one is bitten by a snake they merely apply a little of this earth as a remedy.

J. P. Lewis, one time AGA of Mullaitivu, in the Vanni Manual describes an interesting experience when he was trying a case on circuit at Nedunkerni. Before the trial the Mudaliar was reading out the list of names of those who had

not paid the fines imposed on the previous occasion for some minor irrigation lapses. When the Mudaliar completed reading the list one person from those assembled brought to the notice of the AGA that though he had not paid, his name was not read out. The AGA mentions that this was typical of Vanni peasants' honesty.

the road. The only thing the peasant could do was to take shelter in a house close by. But he had a difficulty. There were only women in the house at that time and by local custom he could not enter the house. As the elephant was getting closer he shouted to the inmates that he would take shelter in the compound but not enter the

PERSPECTIVES

By

Nagamuttu

The writer was told recently of an example of the good code of conduct in the Vanni with regard to females. A Vanni peasant had gone to a village (Kulavisuddan) near Nedunkerni on business. When he completed his business he came to the Nedunkerni - Puliyankulam road to take a bus. It was getting dark and the bus was getting delayed. In the meantime a wild elephant came out from the jungle to

house. Fortunately at that time the expected bus arrived and the elephant went back to the jungle. The person who had this experience narrated the story to the writer at the very spot the incident took place a month earlier.

Though the Vanni people are simple folks they are conscious of their proud ancestry. They fondly remember their past leaders like Kulakottai Maharaja and Pandara Vanniyan.



Pandara Vanniyan
— a leader
fondly remembered

They are a grateful people true to their tank civilization. In spite of the vagaries of the weather and exposure to wild animals (to life and cultivation) they face life with a smile and confidence. How long this way of life would last, history can tell. Some areas in the world have a habit of absorbing some aspects of 'modern' life retaining their original life pattern. An outstanding example is the Island Paradise of Bali, which still preserves its pristine beauty and life style in spite of millions of tourists year in and year out. Having seen the Vanni life for over thirty years, the writer feels Vanni like Bali would retain its simple life and remain the eternal land of the writer and others like him who adore Mother Earth in her simplicity. (Vanni in this article is restricted to the present Mullaitivu and Vavuniya Districts).

Five Hindu temples are coming up in the U. S.

Five Hindu temples are to be constructed in the USA presently. Americans are taking the initiative in building one of them. Resident Indians are responsible for the other four.

Mr. V. Ganapathi, Principal, Government College of Architecture and Sculpture in Mamallapuram, has just returned from a visit to the USA, where he had been invited to tender advice. To him have been entrusted orders worth Rs. 5 crores for making temple parts in Mamallapuram.

The temples are for Mahalakshmi in Boston, for Muruga in San Francisco, for Siva in Hawaii and for Siva-Vishnu in Washington and in

Livermore, near San Francisco.

The Hawaii temple is being erected by an American, Sivaya Subramania Swami of the Kauai Adhinam. It is to have a vimana 60 feet high. The temple will all be of highly polished stone, and cement will not be used. It will be in the typical Chola Style. The founder says that this is to honour the Cholas for their contribution to Hinduism.

The big temple will have a gopura and prakaras. A Sivalinga will occupy the centre of the sanctum. Behind it there will be bronze images of Ardhanariswara and Nataraja and in front Vinayaka and Muruga. The total cost will be Rs. 10 crores.

The temple owes its origin to a dream, it is said, the founder had. He dreamt that near where he was living in Hawaii there was an image of Dakshinamurthi beneath a hillock. Forthwith he bulldozed the hillock and found the image. This will be installed alongside the linga in the sanctum.

The other four temples which Indians are building are all to be of stone. New building techniques are to be used. For example, because of the cold climate, the walls, the floors and the roof are to be insulated. The columns are to have a core of steel and a casing of brick.

(Indian Express)

Ignorant comments by Tamilnadu reader...

(Continued from page 8) of the majority community in general and the Indian Tamils in particular realise that his actions are all for the advancement of the country and welfare of the citizens. Therefore it is not surprising that the Indian Tamils are giving

him their whole hearted support.

Please keep your opportunistic Governmental activities in India or in Tamil Nadu.

If you unnecessarily criticise the Government of Sri Lanka and hide facts of our friends and relations there, you may

have to bear the consequences. Long live Jayawardene! May he prosper!

Yours truly,
N. Thuraiarajan.

NOTE BY EDITOR:

The "CONGRESS" from which Reader J. P. S. Thurai

has culled the above is the official Tamil publication of the Ceylon Workers' Congress. The Congress in publishing the 'Thinakaran' editorial and the Trichy reader's letter says in its own headline: "IT IS IGNORANCE TO COMMENT ON A NEIGH-

BOURING COUNTRY'S POLITICS WITHOUT COMPREHENDING IT FULLY." It is not clear whether the "CONGRESS" makes this reference in respect of the 'Thinakaran' editorial or the Trichy reader's comments. — Editor, S. R.

news BRIEFS

Jaffna: A verdict of homicide was returned by Mr. V. Jegasothy, Magistrate, Jaffna, into the death of Babukumar who was shot to death at mid-day at Chemmany Road recently. Babukumar, an escaped convict, was shot dead by unknown youths and a letter found near the body of the deceased claimed that the assailants were from Eelam Liberation Tiger Movement. Three bullets and eight small bullet pieces were found in the body with 18 gun shot injuries and 13 internal injuries, according to the report by the Acting Judicial Medical Officer.

Maharagama: A gang of three men armed with revolvers drove into a petrol shed at Maharagama in a hijacked taxi and allegedly robbed cash in Rs. 10,000/-. It was discovered that the taxi had been hired at Athurugiriya and the driver assaulted and tied to a tree some distance away. The gang which had driven off in the taxi had abandoned the vehicle several miles off Maharagama.

Nochchiyagama: Four armed men shot and critically wounded the Principal of the Galadivulwewa Maha Vidhyalaya in Nochchiyagama and escaped with Rs. 22,000/- being the teachers' salaries for January. The Principal was cycling with another teacher from the People's Bank at Nochchiyagama when he was attacked, according to the Police. The men were armed with swords, kris knives and a revolver. They had stabbed the victim on his head, according to the Police. The injured principal was admitted to the Anuradhapura Hospital in a critical state.

Colombo: Three armed gangsters got into the second class compartment of a Colombo bound Trincomalee train on the night of January 20th at Ragama and looted the passengers. While one of the armed men had held a barber's razor pressed against a passenger's neck and another kept watch over the people in the compartment the third man had stripped the passengers of all their monies and valuables. About 30 passengers are stated to have lost their belongings, including three German Tourists.

Maho: A girl of 18 years who lived with her father in the Udagama Model Village had been raped by six unknown persons according to the Maho Police. The girl is warded at the Maho Hospital. The culprits are missing.

Colombo: Six petrol bombs and other dangerous weapons were recovered from the premises of the Sri Jayawardenapura University following a search of the Stu-

dents' Hostels by the Mirihana Police. The Police believe that these six petrol bombs along with several knives, wooden clubs and sticks were stockpiled by the students. The University was closed early last week following clashes between students of the university and the villagers.

Madras: Film star Jayalalitha today scotched speculation that she had been chosen by the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M. G. Ramachandran as his political heir. It was a canard spread by the Opposition parties, she said.

The Chief Minister himself had denied that he had any idea of nominating anyone as his heir and had gone on record as saying that one should work his way up to win the goodwill and trust of the people, she pointed out.

Answering questions at the Madras Press Club whether she would contest an election or get through the 'back door', Miss Jayalalitha said she was a firm believer in democratic principles. She felt that one should enter the Legislative Assembly or Council with the support of the people. She did not like the idea of nominations

Vatican: After 20 years of painstaking revision a historic new code of universal laws for the Roman Catholic Church will be officially issued at the Vatican by Pope John Paul II.

The new code of canon law, the first overall revision of the church's rules of operation since 1917, is designed to guide the world's 700 million Catholics from conception to the grave.

Although the final draft has not yet been made public, those familiar with the latest drafts say the document streamlines church policies, stresses flexibility for national as well as local church, accords greater responsibility to the laity—especially women—and drastically reduces the number and severity of penalties imposed on offending church members. Other changes the new document is expected to make include abolishing restrictions in the 1917 code that forbids Catholics to join Masonic organisations and to choose cremation rather than burial.

Colombo: Sri Lanka's state of emergency lapsed at midnight on January 19th, 1983

three months after President Jayawardene imposed it following the election which returned him to power. Several Opposition politicians in the South who were detained under the Emergency Laws were released and two newspapers 'Aththa' and 'Suthanthiran' which were sealed also under the Emergency Laws are to resume publication.

Colombo: The National Film Corporation of Sri Lanka which derives most of its income by screening Tamil Films decided to import only 24 new Tamil Films in 1983 as against its original proposal of importing 36 new films. It is reported that the cut became inevitable in view of the prohibitive costs involved.

Under the new arrangement each of the 24 new Tamil films would be purchased at a cost of Sri Lankan Rs. 4,800,000/- (5 prints of each film). In addition, 40 re-issues of old Tamil films (3 prints of each) will be bought at a cost of Sri Lankan Rs. 4,000,000/-.

The Kuttimani, Jegan Citation

(Continued from page 4)

us to participate in a process that will provide us dignity to live as free citizens.

Men and women are called to acts of heroism, the drive to excel, to stand as symbols of courage and fortitude. Out of the inner resources, they draw on the fundamental capacity to dream, to create, to confront, to usher in realities that never were before. Such deeds open our minds to daring visions. The Tamil community is a people with pride. We are a people with a "Difference", and in defense of our inalienable rights, will even bear arms to protect liberty in its hour of danger.

Today's political climate is dismal. Nevertheless a world of such polemics has produced two heroes in the highest traditions of men and women who have preceded them. These are immortal treasures. Two, who have stood the test, even of torture. They have lived, and perhaps will die in order that others might survive. The lives of these two, whom we honour, will

Colombo: Mr. Selvarajah Yogachandran (Kuttimani) has resigned his Vaddukkoddai seat in Parliament to which he was nominated by the Tamil United Liberation Front after the death of the former M. P. Mr. T. Thirunavukkarasu. Mr. Yogachandran was nominated to this seat and his appointment was gazetted while he was under sentence of death. However he was not permitted to take oaths or sit in Parliament.

Anuradhapura: About ten families who are supporters of the SLFP have been forced to flee their village between Kekirawa and Maruthankadawela following attacks on their homes by armed thugs. Some of them have fled into the jungle and two persons have been seriously injured. It is reported that the supporters of the Opposition Parties who went to make complaints at Kekirawa Police Station were themselves attacked by hoodlums at the Police Station, while the police looked on heedless. In the village of Ihalakagama the homes of opposition party supporters had been looted and damaged. An armed Police Party had arrived too late to prevent the attack.

Colombo: Undergraduates of the Colombo University were baton-charged by the

police at Thurstan Road on January 25th following student protests. Tear gas also was used to disperse the protesters. Earlier a Police car was damaged allegedly by the undergraduates.

Colombo: A report in the "ISLAND" of Wednesday 26th January states that Sri Lanka's negotiating team led by Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel which had talks with IMF officials in Washington had agreed to a 16% devaluation of the Rupee. The 16% devaluation would be effected before the budget in March. This means that the U. S. Dollar which fetches Rs. 21.45 now could fetch Rs. 24.80 by March.

Jaffna: Two tourists from Tamil Nadu died on the spot and a third succumbed to injuries later when the minibus in which they were travelling from Jaffna to Trincomalee crashed into a tree at Kilinochchi, on 24th January. 13 others are lying with serious injuries at the Jaffna hospital.

The interests of the deceased persons and other stranded tourists are being looked after by Mr. Yogeswaran, MP. for Jaffna, Jaffna Mayor, Mr. Raja Visuvanathan, the Jaffna Lions Club and some Jaffna businessmen.

never perish, but will continue to live in the respect of their countrymen. These two Freedom Fighters — "TIGERS" — were born free, free to fight and fought gallantly to free whom they represented so well.

Today on the hundredth anniversary of the birth of the immortal Tamil Poet MAHAKAVI BHARATHIAR

who dedicated his life in the cause of independence, the **Tamil Eelam Liberation Council** cites and salutes KUTTIMANI and JEGAN, two of the finest sons of **Tamil Eelam**. We pledge to follow you both.

LONG LIVE THAMIL EELAM.

DECEMBER 11th 1982.

Boycott Independence Day Celebrations, says C. P. (Left)

Boycott the forthcoming February 4th Independence and Presidential Day Celebrations, says Mr. K. A. Subramaniam, Secretary of Sri Lanka Communist Party (Left) in a statement issued by the National Preparatory Committee of the Party.

The Press release containing the statement says: "In order to cover up and justify the government's political tyranny

and oppression and in order to give a democratic cloak to its future course of fascist dictatorship and thereby fool the people of this country and the people abroad, the Independence and Presidential Day celebrations are planned on a grand scale. All democratic and patriotic forces of this country should therefore boycott these celebrations."

Australian Catholic body sends protest

The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace of 2nd floor, 154, Elizabeth Street, Sydney, 2000, Australia, has protested to President Jayawardene against human rights violations against Tamils in Sri Lanka. The letter a copy of which has been addressed to Gen. Dennis Perera, High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in Australia as well, states:-

Your Excellency,

The Australian Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, as part of its work in support of human rights, has become aware of continuing human rights violations against Tamil people in Sri Lanka. These violations go to all human rights, including the right to life, itself, as set out by the United Nations.

The Commission has been advised of the arrests in November of a number of clergymen working with the Tamil people: Fr. Jeevendra Paul, Fr. Paul Nadchartham, Fr. Aparanam Singarayar, Fr. Reginald Rajanayagam, Fr. Sinnarasa, Fr. Soosanayagam and Fr. Donald Kanagaratnam. We have also been advised of the arrests of a number of leading mem-

bers of the Tamil Community: Mr. Eelavendan and Mr. Shanmuganatha Kurukkal Umakanthan.

We understand that these people have been charged with subversion-related activities and that many of them remain in custody.

We urge your intervention on behalf of those arrested or charged to ensure that their human

rights are respected. We ask that they be fairly tried in accordance with internationally accepted standards of justice. If there is no evidence against them, we ask that all charges be withdrawn and, if they are still in custody, that they be released.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Sidoti,
National Secretary.

Jaffna clergy will stand by the people, says Bishop

"At a time when moves are being taken to alienate the clergy from the people I am happy to participate in the silver jubilee of Rev. Fr. Anton Rajanayagam's ministry, and to praise his twenty five years of unstinted service not only in the Church but in the fields of Education and Social Action. Our clergy will always stand by the

people, whether in service to God, or Society, or why, even in Politics".

So said the Bishop of Jaffna, the Most Revd. Dr. Deogupillai, in his chief guest's address at the function held to mark the twenty fifth anniversary in clerical service of Revd. Fr. Anton Rajanayagam, Rector of St. Henry's College, Illavalai.

Tamilnadu meeting on behalf of the hill country Tamils

A Conference to discuss ways and means of safeguarding the rights of hill-country Tamils in Sri Lanka, will be held at Periar Thid-dal, Madras, on 19th and 20th February.

The Tamil Eelam Friendship Association is organising the Conference.

P. Nedumaran, the President of the Tamilnadu Kamraj Congress, heads the Reception Committee which has already been set up. Representatives of various political parties have been co-opted to the Committee. Among the most prominent are: Dr. R. Janarthanam (ADMK), Thangabalu (Indira Congress), K. Veeramani (Dravida Kazhagam), K. Narayana Rao (Bharathiya Janatha), T. Pandiyan (Indian Communist Party), and T. P. Radhakrishnan (DMK).

The Conference is expected to urge the Government

of India to abrogate the Shastri-Sirima (Indo-Ceylon) Pact and not to enter into such agreements with any country in the future.

Rajah Visuvanathan, Mayor of Jaffna, has sent the conveners a message wishing the Conference all success.

Jaffna Soccer Scene: Indian Air Force men did everything but score

The Indian Air Force Soccer Stars, despite their dazzling display for a full ninety minute period, scraped through to a narrow 1-0 win over a third-rated Jaffna District Soccer Eleven, not the best the selectors could possibly have picked, in a friendly played last Sunday at the Durayappah Stadium, before a large and appreciative crowd.

The Indian Air Force men outclassed and outmanoeuv-

ed our local talent in every department of the game. Their perfect control, their uncanny anticipation, combined with their swift and purposeful raids, all delighted the local fans. They virtually wove patterns round our soccerites, ridiculing them during the entire first half. They did everything but score except the one converted off a flag kick in the ninth minute.

Jaffna appeared to play better in the second period

forcing themselves into the Indian territory on a few occasions. Midway, during this period, they missed a glorious opportunity to equalise. The Air Force maestros who dilly-dallied in front of the Jaffna goal mouth on a good number of occasions in the first period continued to 'err' in the second half as well. In this context one should not belittle the performance of the Jaffna custodian, whose anticipation and cool

headedness under incessant Air Force pressure was remarkable indeed. He contained their precise, purposeful moves, particularly the sharp and low 'crosses' with his spirited performance.

Mr. E. K. Kumariah controlled the game.

Mr. V. Nadarajah, former National Soccer coach who was the guest of honour, was introduced to the teams before the match.

West German university community calls for repeal of Terrorism Act

Catholic Students Community of Christian-Albrechts-University, Kiel, West Germany has sent an appeal to President Jayawardena calling for the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act with a copy to SATURDAY REVIEW. Dipl. Ing. Agr. Heinrich Terwitte, the President of the Community, has signed the letter, which states:-

"Your Excellency, We, the undersigned represent the 'Catholic Students Community' of the C. A. University in Kiel, West Germany, at which seventeen thousand students are enrolled. We enjoy the normal freedoms associated with a western democracy and rejoice in the democracy that has existed in Sri Lanka over the past fifty years.

"Unfortunately it has come to our attention that the minority group of people—the TAMILS—who have been discriminated against over the past twenty-five years, are being particularly suppressed under the present Government regime. With the aid of media coverage as well as through reports coming to us from such independent organisations as Amnesty International, Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality (MIRJE), International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) and the Civil Rights Movement of Sri Lanka, we have learnt the continual sufferings of the TAMILS and are appalled.

"We also deplore the introduction by your Government of the 'Pre-

vention of Terrorism Act' which has been condemned by international organisation such as Amnesty International as contrary to fundamental human rights, under which five priests were arrested last year, three of whom are still being held under custody. We earnestly call for their immediate release or that they be produced before a Magistrate under the normal law of Sri Lanka.

"We accept the right of the Catholic Church in Sri Lanka to share in the lives and sufferings of the TAMILS as well as to participate in their education and development, as they have done in the past as is the case in POLAND and NICARAGUA.

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

No food from outside

The Defence Ministry has refused requests made by lawyers S. C. Chandrasena and I. F. Xavier requesting permission to supply one meal a day from outside to Rev. Fr. Singarayar and Rev. Fr. Sinnarasa now under detention at Welikade. The requests were made following complaints by the priests that they were being consistently served bad food in jail.

"SATURDAY REVIEW" learns that all the political suspects from the south who were detained at Welikade under the Emergency Laws were given the privilege of getting meals from their homes. Suspects held under the provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act are obviously not extended the same privilege.

Frankfurt demonstration

The Workers Vanguard, the Marxist Working Class Bi-Weekly of the SPARTACIST LEAGUE of U. S. published in New York carries in its issue of January 14th, the following report:

FRANKFURT, West Germany — "Smash Anti-Tamil Terror! Free Kuttamani and Jeganathan Now!" chanted a hundred demonstrators here last month. They were protesting the latest wave of repression against the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka and demanding freedom for two young Tamil activists framed up as "terrorists", forced to sign confessions under police torture and sentenced to death. Scores of Tamil militants have been arrested and "disappeared" at the hands of the bloody Sinhala-chauvinist regime of Reagan-backed rightist J. R. Jayewardene under the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act and a permanent state

of emergency.

The December 19th protest, organized by Tamil exile groups, was joined by a contingent of the Trotskyistische Liga Deutschlands (TLD), German section of the International Spartacist Tendency (IST). TLD placards demanded "Immediate Release of Kuttamani, Jeganathan and Other Victims of Anti-Tamil Terror!" "For the Right of Tamil Self-Determination!" and "For a Sinhala/Tamil Workers and Peasants Government!" The Spartacist sign in Tamil read: "Tamil Workers Key to Indian/Lankan Revolution!" Other TLD slogans included "Political Asylum for Tamils! Stop the Deportations!" "U.S. Imperialism: Hands Off Trincomalee, Diego Garcia! Defend USSR/Vietnam!" and "Workers—Sinhala/Tamil, Men/Women: Build the Bolshevik Party!"

The Red flag outside President's house!

There is a red flag outside President's House in Colombo.

It has been there for many past moons and, judging by the way things are done in our blessed island, it is likely to be there for many moons to come.

The flag, attached to a stick, stands on the pavement at the corner of Janadipathi Mawatha and Sir Baron Jayatilaka Mawatha.

Red is always a sign

of danger. This flag, even though in tatters now, is to warn pedestrians not to fall into a drain running under the pavement.

One of the stone slabs covering the drain is broken and the drain itself is clogged.

None of those in charge of highways or drainage appears to be travelling on foot these days. Otherwise, how could a simple thing like replacing a stone slab remain unattended for so long?

Big protest march by Students in Jaffna

The biggest protest march in Jaffna in recent history was held on Wednesday, when thousands of students, of both sexes, from the University as well as schools, marched through the Town, demanding the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the release of the arrested clergy, students and teachers.

The protest march organized by the Student Council of the University of Jaffna, began at two different points. The first group which started at 8 a. m., at the Canagaretnam Madhya Maha Vidyalayam proceeded to St. John's College

and Chundikuli Girls' College where hundreds of students joined the march, and later moved to St. Patrick's College and Holy Family Convent where there was a more spontaneous and wholehearted participation. Then the march proceeded through the Main Street to the Vembadi Girls' College, blocking the traffic for an hour.

The second procession which began at Kokuvil Hindu College, picked up supporters from Kokuvil Technical Institute and proceeded to the University.

The students who carried

huge placards spiritedly shouted "Can confessions under torture be treated as evidence?" "Release the Clergy." "Repeal Prevention of Terrorism Act immediately." when they reached the Jaffna Bus Terminus. Though the march was very vociferous, yet the students saw to it that it was conducted in an orderly way.

The students of the University boycotted lectures the whole day. Members of the Student Council told *Saturday Review* that they intended continuing their strike, however long, till the government responded to their demands. They said the reason for this renewed protest by the students was that they had information that clergy had been tortured while in custody.

U. S. political aid : VOA sees no usefulness in benign authoritarianism

The "SATURDAY REVIEW" (22 January) report that Sri Lanka is likely to qualify for U. S. "political aid" as well is confirmed by the following Voice of America commentary on what it calls "The Democracy Programme" but which critics have said would be an instrument for open American interference in developing countries such as Sri Lanka:—

"This year, the United States is trying something new in our relations with other countries. It is an effort to encourage the development of democratic ideas and democratic institutions around the world.

"But this is not only an effort of the U. S. Government. Many of the ideas and the specific projects will be co-operative efforts involving institutions, such as the two major American Political parties, various Trade Union Groups and friends of Democracy around the world.

"We hope through this programme to make other people familiar with a political system that is based on a practical view of Human Nature. Any political system that is going to work must deal realistically with human desires, both material and spiritual.

"Even those of us who are not great thinkers know that people everywhere hope for a more affluent life. It is just as clear that people everywhere also have a desire for personal freedom. They want to make their own choices about how to live their lives.

"It may be theoretically possible for some benign authoritarian system to achieve these goals. But in the real world, that rarely happens, if ever. In practice, and throughout history, the only political systems that have been able to provide both affluence and freedom have been those where the governed freely chose leaders, where Policy reflected

the broad will of the majority and where political protections existed to safeguard minority rights.

"The United States is indeed a great power, but our political ambitions are actually rather modest. Our system is still dedicated to what we see as those two main tasks of Government: to allow people to develop materially and to protect their personal freedom of choice. The old empires of the past were built on exploitation and international expansionism. So are the new empires of the modern era.

"But it is our belief that the world does not need to work that way, that people and nations can achieve their ambitions—large and small without preying on others. The democracy programme is intended to help those in other countries develop the ideas and institutions that will make that kind of life possible not just for a lucky minority, but for people everywhere in the world."