

30/8/82

Headed by Rohana Wijeweera

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Viewpoint

JVP and the Jaffna Man

One swallow does not make a summer; neither can one evening in Chunnakam show up the political mood of the North. But nevertheless there are lessons to be learnt from the JVP performance in Jaffna last Wednesday.

One of the chief failings of the traditional Left has been that it contained far too many Marxist theoreticians! Theory certainly occupies a central place in Marxist party programmes, unlike in the case of the so-called capitalist-bourgeois parties. But an inordinate involvement with theoretical mumbo-jumbo can often be self-defeating in the hustle and dust and hurly-burly of politics and vote-catching—unless—the one golden rule is remembered: "If the facts do not fit the theory, let the THEORY go!". Alas, far too often our Marxist leaders had let the FACTS go! And so it happened when it came to a crunch, they had ended up in a complete clobber even to the point of hugging entirely un-Marxian ways out, like "the masala wadal line." The JVP under the leadership of Rohana Wijeweera has shown during recent years a remorseless pragmatism and a close-to-the-bone approach in contrast to the praise-worthy but romantic idealism of the small new Left parties, and the traditional Left during their burgeoning years. This pragmatism the hard-boiled Tamil in the North understands, even though the JVP's rejection of the Eelam idea and its nebulous stand on the right of self-determination and the National Question may displease many.

The late Dr. N. M. Perera who enjoyed greater personal acceptability in the North than many other Leftist leaders used to complain to his friends in the North, that while the Tamils applauded the courage of the then Left parties in voting against the "Sinhala Only bill" and their standing up for parity of rights on the language question, they had always voted with the "communal" parties when it came to elections. During the thirty five years since independence, the Tamils in the North and East had returned only one Marxist candidate once—the late P. Kandiah in Point Pedro. Even there, the popular and plausible explanation of his victory had nothing to do with Kandiah's Communism. His wife's appeal for "Thali-pichchai"—there can be no appeal more eloquent in the tradition-bound North than a wife begging for her right to the marriage-bond—was held out as the deciding factor in the victory. In fact, Jaffna's contribution towards the building up of the Communist ideology during the early years of the Ceylon Communist Party is substantial—more substantial as in many other matters in proportion to size and numbers.

But that is only Jaffna's special talent. The Jaffna soil can yield the most unexpected things like Grapes and Beetroots, but it can never yield a Marxist crop. Mr. Rohana Wijeweera looks the kind of man who can grasp that truth, which the traditional Marxist elders could not. One may set an iceberg on fire, but you cannot start a Revolution in the North!

shows its flag in Jaffna

Chunnakam, a market town seven miles from Jaffna City gave Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna an enthusiastic hearing on Wednesday 25th August at a public meeting which was probably the first open-air political rally in the peninsula since last year's ill-fated TULF meeting at Nachchimarkovil on May 31st 1981.

Despite the fact that the three main speeches were in Sinhala (interpreted into Tamil by JVPman Fonseka resident in Jaffna) and the market square only a stone's throw distance from the Chunnakam Police Station (known for its restive policemen), the decorated venue attracted a vast crowd and the meeting went on into the night. While a posse of about 15 policemen posted themselves at the junction seemingly busy on traffic duty checking passing vehicles etc., the patient peaceful crowd responded to the JVP thunder directed at the UNP and the SLFP, and an occasional swipe at the TULF, with claps and applause.

Chunnakam has been a traditional Left base with the LSSP having a foothold in it in the years past.

While the public rally took place in the evening the bearded, bereted Rohana Wijeweera along with party top notchers Lionel Bopage and Daya Wanninayake held a press conference in the morning, also at Chunnakam, where correspondents of the Lake House and Sun Group of publications were politely but firmly told to get out. Lionel Bopage took care to announce that this was not

a personal affront to the correspondents but it was a matter of party policy not to give interviews to the Lake House, The Sun and the Times Group of newspapers.



Rohana Wijeweera

In a relaxed but firm tone Wijeweera spoke first about the immediate political situation: "The UNP is unashamedly meddling with the constitution, trying to hold the elections before schedule because it fears that one year hence the cost of living would have risen to such an extent that the masses wouldn't vote for the UNP, and that the organizational strength and popularity of the JVP would have grown to such limits that elections would be a cake walk for the JVP. Though hitherto only the UNP and the SLFP had dominated the 35 years of parliamentary politics in Sri Lanka, they had failed the interests of the masses who are now looking for a new leadership and more pragmatic policy. The JVP vows to fulfil this need".

Though Wijeweera sounded generally optimistic, he took care to admit that while in the other 19 districts the JVP had established strong District Electoral Councils, in

Jaffna, Batticaloa and Vavuniya they had little support.

Carefully pruning his usually expressive hard-hitting adjectives, he reflected on his attitude to the TULF; "Though the TULF has shown disinterest in the Presidential elections, its explanations are vague and evasive. Recent events suggest that the TULF has established some understanding with the UNP, and the UNP is subtly using the TULF to get the traditional votes en masse to boost its slimming electoral prospects in the south.

The JVP trio was slightly unsettled when they were questioned about their vague and equivocal stand on the right of self-determination of the Tamils. It was Lionel Bopage who seemed the patient thinker and the "ideologist" of the JVP camp who ventured to offer a reply. Bopage who wrote and published a book on the National Question while he was in prison, said that though the JVP recognised the right of self-determination of the Tamils and their right to secede, yet the JVP wouldn't advocate separation as they firmly believed that the National Question should be solved under a united socialist Sri Lanka. Though they didn't support the struggle of the "Tigers" who indulged in "individual acts of terrorism" yet they recognised that as an oppressed community they had the right to retaliate. He also condemned the Government for its brutal treatment of the Tamil youth, and wished the

(Continued on page 12)

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'WITH THONDAMAN ON HIS RIGHT AND AMIRTHALINGAM ON HIS LEFT'

"Now that all the parliamentary democratic procedures have been violated and the country is heading towards a one-man dictatorship it has become necessary to defeat the United National Party even on the election front, though our Party has been stressing all along that the UNP cannot be defeated completely at

the elections alone" stated K. Senthivel speaking at a meeting of the Northern Region Committee of the Sri Lanka Patriotic Youth Movement.

Mr. Senthivel, who spoke on behalf of the Sri Lanka Communist Party

(Left) went on to stress that "it is the vital duty of all the progressive, democratic and patriotic forces of this country to defeat the UNP at the presidential election that has been planned by the government that is running the affairs of the country in a

fascist manner."

Pointing out that the "UNP rulers have forced our country into the shackles of neo-colonialism and destroyed the national economy and the living conditions of the people" he warned "if such a party and its leaders come to power again the country will face a dictatorial disaster". He urged all anti-UNP forces to put forward a common candidate to prevent this disaster." He added "President Jayawardene with Mr. Thondaman on his right and Mr. Amirthalingam on his left is making preparations to become President for another term. It is very essential that these tri-partite leaders be thoroughly exposed."

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Singapore World Tamil meet in June 1983

The Sixth International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies will be held in Singapore in June 1983, according to a 4-page folder containing a preliminary announcement issued by the Steering Committee, in Singapore.

The Announcement states the actual dates of the Conference will be notified later.

Delegates who wish to attend the Conference have to get in touch with THE JOINT SECRETARY, SIXTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE SEMINAR OF TAMIL STUDIES, ANNA ILLAM, 35 NORRIS ROAD, SINGAPORE - 0820.

According to the Announcement, the main academic area of emphasis will be Tamil Studies related to the South East Asian Region. Papers on Language, Literature, Society and History, Culture and Arts will also be presented at the Conference.

The Steering Committee has Mr. S. M. Vasagar as President and Messrs. M. S. Veerappan and T. Sivananthan as Joint Secretaries.

In Sri Lanka, the dates of dissolution of Parliament, filing of nominations and polling have generally been fixed by reference to the stars. This is because most politicians, more than most ordinary people, have an abiding faith in astrology. Right now, astrologers are having a whale of a time with many of the politicians in power and those aspiring to power consulting them about the elections.

In astrological circles, the prediction is that, with the movement of the Satan of the Zodiac, Saturn, into the 10th House on 5th October (the date is 29th October according to some calculations! — Editor SR) good times will dawn for some people and bad times for others.

I do not know anything about astrology, but 5th October is a date about which there appears to be special concern in both Government and opposition circles.

It is the date before which the Government reportedly planned to hold the presidential election.

Earliest date

is mid-October

It is to ensure that this could be done that the Government proposed to reduce the minimum time in which an election could be completed to three weeks. This proposal was abandoned when it was realised that it would most probably require approval by the people at a referendum.

The Government was thus left with the 46-day minimum time-limit within which a presidential election could be completed (with nomination day coming 16 days after the proclamation ordering the election and polling day to be not less than one month after nomination day.)

In the case of a parliamentary election, the nomination period lasts from the 14th to 21st day after the proclamation and the minimum time within which a poll could be taken is three weeks thereafter (42 days altogether to complete the election).

If the 3rd Amendment to the Constitution was debated as scheduled on 19th and 20th August and passed, then there would have been just enough time before 5th October to hold a presidential election.

But the fact that the Supreme Court's ruling on its constitutionality was received only on 23rd

August and the debate took place on 26th August has meant that the Government had to think of a new date. The Court could have taken up to three weeks from the date of filing of petition to make its determination. The earliest possible will now be in mid-October.

The Government would have had no problem if it had, like in the case of so many other bills, designated the amending Bill "urgent in the national interest."

let us examine what prompted the Government to think of advancing the date of the presidential election.

Mr. Jayewardene wants us to believe that it is in furtherance of the cause of democracy. "As a democratic party," he told the UNP Parliamentary Group "they believe in going before the people from time to time to get their opinion on the programme of work of the Government." (This from a leader who abolished byelections, which

with the worsening of the economic situation, the Government would be compelled to institute more harsh economic measures, including another devaluation of the rupee and the slashing of the subsidies on education, health, kerosene and other items.

The World Bank itself has warned that in 1983 Sri Lanka's foreign exchange reserves would be sufficient to meet only four weeks imports, while in 1984 there would be no

device!)

His argument for prolongation of UNP rule has been that six years is insufficient to complete the Government's ambitious development programme. "What is more important development or elections?", he has asked.

But he began to soft-pedal talk of a referendum after the Kalawana episode, when the Government did not follow-up the Supreme Court ruling that if it wished to increase the membership of Parliament by one member to 169 the people's consent would have to be obtained as their franchise was affected. This was after the results of the district development council elections revealed that it could get a negative vote, for any proposal to be deemed to have been endorsed by the people

Astrology, Stability and the politicians

Why did it not do so baffles me. Was it a concession to the demand in certain quarters, including the "Saturday Review", that debate on public issues should be "uninhibited, robust and wide open", that right conclusions are more likely to be gathered out of a multitude of tongues, than through any kind of authoritarian selection? I do not think so. Rather, the Government appeared to have thought it was on solid ground.

While any extension of the term of office of the President or the duration of Parliament requires the approval of the people at a referendum, there is no express provision in the Constitution regarding any reduction of the period.

What prompted the government?

That is why, an obviously exasperated President Jayewardene referring to the petitions demanding a referendum filed by the Civil Rights Movement and three other parties, told the United National Party Parliamentary Group on 19th August, "I could not imagine any person oppose holding an election earlier than the stipulated date." The problem is that some people have vivid imaginations!

Forgetting astrology and referendums for a moment,

before 1977 were a fair barometer of public opinion in between elections!) He added "Holding an early election would help to give more stability".

But these statements go counter to what he himself had said earlier, advocating a "strong executive, seated in power for a fixed number of years. . ."

Where is the fixed term and, therefore, the stability it secures, if the President is empowered to order an election any time after the expiration of four years in office?

President's boast

And what about Mr. Jayewardene's earlier boast that since, in the normal course, his period of office would have expired only on 4th February, 1984, six months after the expiry of Parliament's six year term he would still be President and, whichever party won the next general election, would chose the next Prime Minister and the Cabinet of Ministers?

Also, what more stability than to rule up to 1984 with such a preponderant UNP majority in Parliament?

Why risk an election, presidential or parliamentary, at this time? My view is that the UNP's popularity, which is steadily on the wane, will hit rock-bottom by next year when,

reserves at all.

The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and Western aid-giving nations led by the United States are clearly worried about the situation in Sri Lanka because the emergence of an anti-UNP regime could damage their vital economic, political and military interests. I believe that it is at their insistence that the UNP is trying a gamble.

Astrology and 1970 election

The Government's thinking after the Supreme Court's ruling appears to be to go ahead with the presidential election as early as possible and, if Mr. Jayewardene wins, hold a referendum to extend the life of the present Parliament instead of ordering a general election.

Mr. Jayewardene has been toying for quite some time with the idea of holding a referendum to prolong the life of Parliament. He has repeatedly said that, unlike Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, he would not extend the term of office of the President or the duration of Parliament without the consent of the people. (He conveniently ignores the fact that, elected in mid 1977 to a six-year term he prolonged his own stay for six more months through a constitutional

has to receive at least one-third of the whole number of electors, whereas at the DDC elections the UNP polled only about 31 per cent of the total number of registered votes.

Thus the UNP could think in terms of a referendum instead of a fresh general election only if Mr. Jayewardene wins the presidential stakes by a substantial margin. Will he? is the question, judging by the trends in the country.

To come back to astrology, the date of the 1970 general election was selected by Mr. Dudley Senanayake's UNP Government, reportedly on the basis of astrological advice. The result was a smashing victory for the United Front led by Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike. In 1977, her Government decided on the election date, reportedly on the same basis. We all know what happened.

This should be a warning to those in the Government who go by the stars. The planets have developed a new tendency to go out of alignment at inconvenient moments, thereby upsetting all the calculations of mortals, especially of politicians!

(Continued overleaf)

Political Causerie (contd.)

S. Nadesan Q.C. & Civil Rights

"Where were the Nadesans, etc., during the 'dark days' of 1970-77?" Mr. Jayewardene asked recently, implying that the persons he named were only now getting interested in the fundamental rights of the people. The Civil Rights Movement, of which Mr. S. Nadesan, Q.C., is a leading member, has given a fitting reply to the President. I should like to remind him that, as far as Mr. Nadesan is concerned, he has been concerned with fundamental rights for three decades or more. Remember the Rhoda Miller affair?

Briefly, Mr. Joseph de Silva married the American-born Miss Rhoda Miller in London in 1951. They had first met seven years previously in London, where Mr. de Silva had gone to study. Later, they had worked as journalists, in which capacity they

were in Poland from 1946 to 1950.

Back in London, they wrote a book "Peace on the Vistula" revealing what Poland had achieved under Communism. Later, they published, in Italian, another book, "Our American Friends", a history of American war-mongering.

They arrived in Sri Lanka in 1953 and, residing mostly in Kandy, engaged in various kinds of literary work, including preparing an English edition of their second book.

On the suggestion of some friends, who were interested in the worldwide agitation over the Rosenberg trial in America they prepared a summary of the court proceedings and put it into a short book, "The Rosenbergs—What was their crime?"

Mrs. de Silva, who still

held an American passport was awaiting the expiry of one year after arriving in Sri Lanka to apply for local citizenship. But on 17th March, 1954, a month before the one-year period was over, the couple was brought down to Colombo by the police for "questioning".

Then, while the husband waited at the police station the wife was suddenly taken away by car and bundled into a plane at Ratmalana without his knowledge. By the time he got wind of it and obtained a *habeas corpus* notice from a Supreme Court judge, she was in America.

All this was allegedly done on the instigation of the United States Embassy in Colombo by a UNP regime of which Mr. Jayewardene was a leading member!

It was left to Mr. Nadesan to take up the case in the Senate on a private member's motion. He made a blistering attack on the Government for violating the fundamental human right that a man and

woman shall live together, that the family is the unit of human society and that you cannot separate them without giving them a chance to be heard. (Senate Official Report, Vol. 5, pp Cols. 22-39, 46-55).

DECLINE OF SCHOOL CRICKET IN JAFFNA

by Victor Kiruparaj

Schools' Cricket behind the CADJAN CURTAIN has hit a new low in recent years. One does wonder why cricketing talent, available in great abundance in the North, should be allowed to dissipate in such a disgusting manner.

The writer could reminisce the days in early and mid-Sixties when the Jaffna School Cricketers were a force to be reckoned with and held their own against the formidable Colombo 'outfits'.

It was in the mid-Sixties when the Ceylon Schools' Zonal Cricket Tournament was in vogue, that the North Zone (Jaffna Schools) entered the FINAL to take on Colombo North Zone. On its way into the Final, the North Zone had to play Colombo South Zone (tipped to win the Zonal Championship) in a key semi-final tussle. It was in this engagement that the North Zone humbled the might of Colombo South Zone which had in its ranks such stalwarts as Thomians, Anura Tennakoon (later Ceylon Skipper), Sriyantha Rajapakse, Royalists S. Skanda Kumar, R. P. Liyanage, L. Thalayasingam and L. A. D. Sirisena and Peterites Peter de Neise and Tony Opatha. Others who played in this memorable encounter were M. Jayasekera, W. Wimalaratne and P. Jesudasan.

This in fact was the formidable composition of the Colombo South Schools—six of whom figured in the Ceylon PENTANGULAR (Mid Sixties) taking on Mercantile Services in the FINAL.

The North Zone was skippered by the dashing Centralite, Donald Ganeshakumar. Others who did service for the Jaffna Schools in that match were V. Gengatharan, A. Satcunarah, S. M. Abraham and S. Sivasothy (all from Jaffna Central), C. Sooriyakumar, S. Jeyanayagam, T. Vipulananthamoorthy and T. Vyravapillai (all from St. John's), S. Rajaratnam (St. Patrick's) and K. Nirmalan and a from Skanda Varodaya.

The match in question saw the North Zone collect 154 runs in the first innings and skittle the Colombo South Cricketers for a lowly 105—Peterite Peter de Neise being the top scorer with a gallant 31. Skipper Donald Ganeshakumar (4 for 25), C. Sooriyakumar (3 for 23) and K. Nirmalananda (4 for 38) proved to be Jaffna's 'wreckers' causing Colombo South's debacle.

In the Zonal Final, however, the North Zone (Jaffna) conceded first innings points to Colombo North Schools' Jaffna School Boy Skipper, Donald Ganeshakumar was unbeaten with a sparkling, 93 in the second innings.

External law students complain of 'let down'

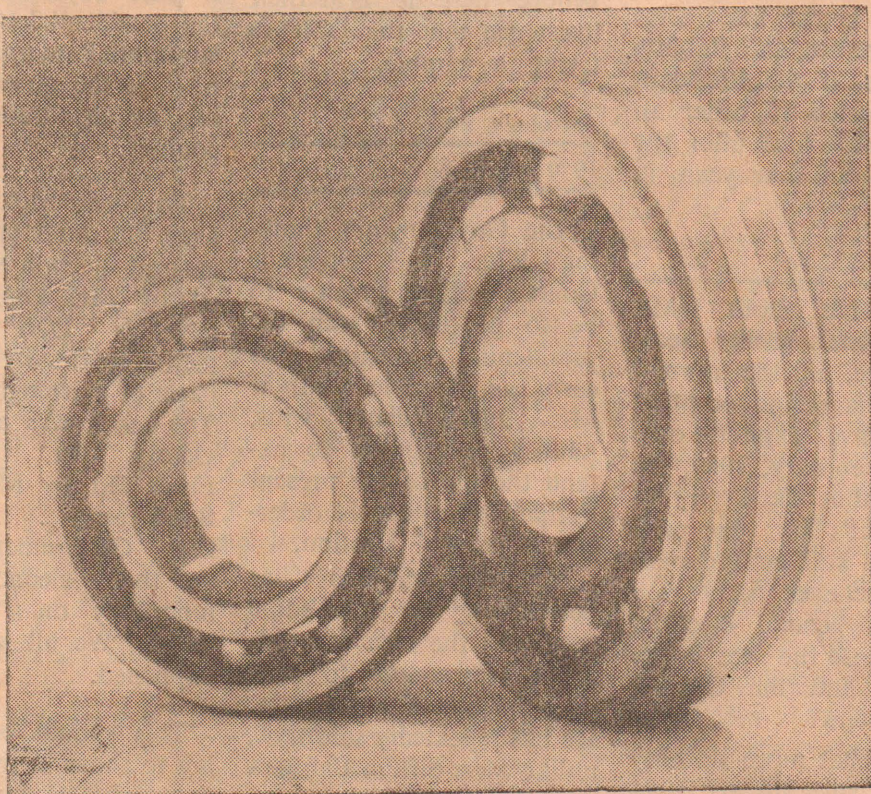
"The arbitrary change of rules by the External Examinations branch of the University of Colombo regarding the enrolment of external students for degree courses in the University, is opposed by all students", says a memorandum released by the Law Students Union affiliated to the College of Degree Studies, Jaffna. This memorandum was submitted on the occasion of their Annual General Meeting held on the 22nd of August, to the Chief Guest Mr. S. Aloysius, the Deputy Mayor of Jaffna, who assured the students that their memorandum would be submitted to Dr. Stanley Kalpage.

The Memorandum states: "As the 1980 handbook of

the University of Colombo stated that enrolment for external degree courses would be done from 1982 on the basis of a qualifying exam, the students had been preparing arduously for these exams, but suddenly the University has called for applications on the basis of the G. C. E. (A/L) examinations and forgotten everything about the qualifying exam, thus frustrating the students who had spent their valuable time and money in preparing for this exam."

The meeting was presided by Mr. A. T. Varnakulenthiran the Director of the Institute. The president of the Law Students Union, Mr. Pari-pooranam, and the Secretary Mr. V. Kanthan, too spoke regarding the problems faced by the external students.

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Foreign View

Meeting President Jayawardene in his bullet-proof Daimler

President Jayawardene has decided to change the Constitution and seek a new 6-year presidential mandate well before his term of office expires in 1984. Sitting in his bullet-proof Daimler, presidential pennant streaming, as it swept through the streets of Colombo, he said: "Why should the Sri Lankan President be ham-strung?"

The President explained his plans which his critics say aim to preempt the parliamentary polls, due next summer, and secure a further concentration of personal power.

THE AIR OF A

WEARY BLOODHOUND

Gesticulating khaki police hold back the noon traffic as his cavalcade passes. At 76, he has the air of a weary bloodhound, regarded by his supporters as a deft and astute politician, and by his opponents as an Asian Machiavelli. They also accuse him of trying to do a Singapore in Sri Lanka. With its "free economy" now shored up by foreign aid, its "tax holidays" for investors, and its cheap labour, they have a case. Mr. Jayawardene calls it a "peaceful and non-violent revolution," his critics prophesy increasing trouble.

Mr. Jayawardene was elected in the landslide of 1977, having announced his plan to move to a presidential form of Government. The process became law and the new Constitution provides that future presidents will be directly elected by all the voters.

It also provided that first, he should be chosen and confirmed in office by Parliament.

With a five-sixths majority for his right-wing United National Party in the National State Assembly, and absolute control over both—expelled party members lose their seats in

Parliament—he will get his constitutional amendment after this month.

The presidential election is likely to follow quickly perhaps in October. With the rice crop harvested and prices temporarily falling, the moment would be auspicious in a country where inflation has made standard food into luxuries, the welfare system has been severely pruned, and half the population of 15 million is on food stamps.

Mrs. Bandaranaike and her Sri Lanka Freedom Party were removed in the UNP's landslide victory of 1977. In 1980, she was deprived for seven years of her civic rights, for "abuse of power" under her leadership, and will not be able to stand in the elections.

She tapped her head when she referred to Mr.



'The air of a weary bloodhound'

on self-determination and with a growing freedom movement, is under army occupation. Mr. Jayawardene is under fire from—and has vigorously counter-attacked—militant Buddhist fundamentalists ready to "die in battle to save the Sinhala race and their

suit us." Under the 1978 Constitution the State has the duty to "protect and foster Buddhism"; yet Mr. Jayawardene, seeking to keep his balance, has been caught in the toils of Buddhist suspicions just at the time politicians in Sri Lanka must outbid each other as defenders of the faith in the search for Buddhist favour.

The argument that the thousands of monks in saffron, with their shorn scalps and folded umbrellas ought to be seeking Nirvana rather than a suitable political leader, gets short shrift from most Sinhalese Buddhists. So does the objection that they have profane interests unknown to the Buddha. Despite His tooth at Kandy and His footprint at Adams' peak, this is less a holy land and a chosen people than a cat's cradle of

down unemployment in Sri Lanka.

Mr. Jayawardene has a fistful of further constitutional and electoral changes behind his back. In the form of draft amendments they would knock the wind out of his opponents if they were to become law after a referendum.

They include a speeded-up election process with only a week allowed to the parties for nominations; the presidential power to dissolve Parliament twice in the first year if he does not like the electors' verdicts and the right to remain in office as President for a year, even if defeated.

His relatives head the Sri Lankan army and the Human Rights Centre. "We get no credit for running a democracy," Lalith Athulathmudali the Minister of Trade said He did not seem to be joking.

But with each turn of the screw Mr. Jayawardene is threatened with the same accusations of abuse of power as he levelled against Mrs. Bandaranaike. He even plans rules to disqualify all SLFP candidates who have contact with her during the elections. "Disqualification has to have some meaning", says Mr. Jayawardene. "It is unheard of, diabolical," says Mrs. Bandaranaike hand clamped to her forehead in a despairing gesture and relish in her voice at the rewards such harassment offers. "He is scared of my shadow" she added moments later, laughing.

Nevertheless, the combination of a liberalised economy and an undeclared war on the separatists is taking its toll on Sri Lanka's political freedom.

In the process, there is shrinking space not only for the Westminster model but for the Buddhist utopia.

(Next Saturday:

Tamil 'Tigers' versus the Army—Part 2 of David Selbourne's report)

David Selbourne

The Guardian, London August 11 1982

by

Jayawardene. "Something is going wrong with him" she said, "It is dangerous for Sri Lanka to be led by a man in his frame of mind."

He has just had to declare another state of emergency, the fifth since 1977, after fierce clashes between Sinhalese and Muslims 70 miles south of Colombo. In Sri Lanka, every communal riot threatens to spread like wildfire. Yet Mrs. Bandaranaike ruled for most of her time between 1970 and 1977 with emergency powers. Now her party promised that if it came back to govern, the Constitution, which is one of the spoils of office in Sri Lanka, would be "torn up in 24 hours."

But it would solve nothing. Sri Lanka is an island, riven by racial conflicts, principally between the majority Sinhalese Buddhists and the minority Tamils, mostly Hindus, and scarred by recurrent riots. The Tamil North now bent

lands" from Tamil "annexation."

They accuse him of treachery for his talks with the Tamil leaders on a modest degree of devolution. On his other flank, he is assailed by civil rights activists, often Christian—some of whom he accuses in private of being Communists—for the erosion of civil liberties and a Prevention of Terrorism Act which is said to be like the South African equivalent.

Fishing in these troubled waters, and despite her political disabilities, Mrs. Bandaranaike seems ebullient. She and her party are playing their Buddhist cards shrewdly, as the pace before elections quickens and the Opposition parties decide on their candidates for the presidential election. They include the veteran Trotskyite, Colvin de Silva but an agreed candidate seems beyond them. "The Buddhist clergy," she said, have come to me and said "Please find a candidate to

clerical intrigue and communal hatred.

Mrs. Bandaranaike's populist rhetoric challenges Mr. Jayawardene in earnest. She will have to stop speaking as soon as an election is announced, but until then she offers restored subsidies, economic self-sufficiency and tax controls on the runaway private sector. "Where would she get the capital from?" Mr. Jayawardene asks, "if she does not follow our policies?"

It is a question which Mrs. Bandaranaike does not answer. Unruffled in his limousine, Mr. Jayawardene cruises the new union-free factories of his Free Trade Zone at Katunayake.

"They are all tailors shops" says Mrs. Bandaranaike, snorting. Not quite. There are garments, shoes, gems, a scatter of electronics, but it is the small beer and peanuts of a very miniature South Korea.

It is emigration to the Middle East, not development, which is bringing

Sir Jafna Pandranath

finds his tongue!

Who is, or who was Sir Jafna Pandranath? Nobody will know him because he is not a real person. He was a character in a play written by the famous Irish Playwright George Bernard Shaw!

The play in which Sir Jafna Pandranath appears as a character was written in 1933, but it is one of the least known plays of Shaw: a farcical political comedy in two act, its entire action takes place in the Cabinet Room in No. 10, Downing Street, Westminster, London — the official residence of the British Prime Minister.



Playwright Bernard Shaw

From the Bernard Shaw play — 4

(Continued from last issue)

BASHAM. Twenty thousand.

SIR ARTHUR. Well, twenty thousand. They dont stop functioning when Parliament is prorogued, do they?

BASHAM. No. At Scotland Yard we look to the Home Secretary as far as we look to anybody.

SIR ARTHUR. I can make myself Home Secretary. So that will be all right.

SIR DEXTER. Will it, ty George? If you and Basham dare to try your twenty thousand police on me, do you know what I will do?

SIR ARTHUR. What?

SIR DEXTER. I will put fifty thousand patriotic young Londoners into Union Jack shirts. You say they want discipline and action. They shall have them. They shall have machine guns and automatic pistols and tear gas bombs. My Party has the money. My Party has the newspapers. My Party has the flag, the traditions, the glory that is England, the pluck, the breed, the fighting spirit, One of us is worth ten of your half starved guttersnipes and their leaders that never could afford more

than a shilling for a dinner until they voted themselves four hundred a year out of our pockets.

SIR BEMROSE (carried away) Thats the stuff, Dexy. Now you are talking, by Jiminy.

BASHAM (taking command of the discussion coolly) You are all talking through your hats. The police can do nothing unless the people are on the side of the police. The police cant be everywhere: there arnt enough of them. As long as the people will call the police when anything goes wrong, and stop the runaway criminal and give evidence against him, then twenty thousand constables can keep eight million citizens in order. But if the citizens regard the policeman as their enemy if the man who snipes a policeman in the back is not given in charge by the bystanders—if he is helped to get away—if the police cannot get a single citizen to go into the box and witness against him, where are you then? You have to double your force because the police must patrol in pairs; otherwise the men will be afraid to patrol at all. Your twenty thousand have to be reinforced up to forty thousand for their own protection; but that doesnt protect you.

You would have to put two policemen standing over every able-bodied man and woman in the town to see that they behaved themselves as you want them to behave. You would need not thousands of constables but millions.

SIR DEXTER. My Union Jack men would keep order, or theyd know the reason why.

BASHAM. And who would keep them in order, I should like to know: silly amateurs. And let me remind you of one thing. It seems easy to buy a lot of black shirts, or brown shirts, or red shirts, and give one to every hooligan who is out for any sort of mischief and every suburban out-of-work who fancies himself a patriot. But dont forget that the colored shirt is a uniform.

GLENMORISON. What harm is there in that? It enables a man to recognise his friends.

BASHAM. Yes; but it marks him out as an enemy in uniform; and to kill an enemy in uniform at sight is not murder, it's legitimate warfare.

SIR DEXTER. Monstrous! I should give no quarter to such an outrageous piece of sophistry.

BASHAM. In war you have to give quarter

because you have to ask for it as often as to give it. It's easy to sit here and think of exterminating your opponents. But a war of extermination is a massacre. How long do you think a massacre would last in England today? Just as long as it takes a drunken man to get sick and sober.

GLENMORISON. Easy, Sir Broadfoot, easy, easy. Who is talking of extermination? I dont think you will ever induce respectable Britons to wear red-white-and-blue shirts; but surely you can have volunteers, special constables, auxillary forces.

BASHAM. (flinching violently) Auxiliary forces! I was in command of them in Ireland when you tried that game on the Irish, who were only a little handful of peasants in their cabbage patch. I have seen these things. I have done them. I know all about it: you know nothing about it. It means extermination; and when it comes to the point you cant go through with it. I couldnt. I resigned. You couldnt; you had to back down. And I tell you, Dexy, if you try any colored shirt hooliganism on me, I'll back the P.M. and shew you what Scotland Yard can do when it's put to it.

BASHAM. Liar! Now weve called one another names how much farther has it got us?

GLENMORISON. Easy, easy: dont let us quarrel. I must support the Prime Minister, Sir Dexter, to secure my seat in Parliament. But I am a Liberal, and, as such, bound by Liberal principles. Whatever we do must be done through parliament if I am to be a party to it. I am all for the new program; but we must draw up a parliamentary timetable for it. To carry out the programs will involve the introduction of at least twelve bills. They are highly controversial bills; every one of them will be resisted and obstructed to the very last clauses. You may have to go to

the country on several of them. The committee stages will last for weeks and weeks, no matter how hard you work the guillotine; there will be thousands of amendments. Then, when you have got through what is left of your Bill and carried it, the House of Lords will turn it down; and you will have to wait two years and go through the whole job again before you can get your Bill on the statute book as an Act of Parliament. This program is not a matter of today or tomorrow. I calculate that at the very least it will take fifty years to get it through.

SIR ARTHUR. And you think the world will wait for that, Sandy?

GLENMORISON (naively) What else can it do?

SIR ARTHUR. It wont wait. Unless we can find a shorter way, the program will be fought out in the streets.

SIR DEXTER. And you think that in the streets you will win? You think the mob will be on your side? "Ye are many; they are few" eh? The Class War! Well, you will find out your mistake.

SIR ARTHUR. I dont believe in the Class War any more than you do, Dexy. I know that half the working class is slaving away to pile up riches, only to be smoked out like a hive of bees and plundered of everything but a bare living by our class. But what is the other half doing? Living on the plunder at second hand. Plundering the plunderers. As fast as we fill our pockets with rent and interest and profits theyre emptied again by West End tradesmen and hotel keepers, fashionable doctors and lawyers and persons and fiddlers and portrait painters and all sorts, to say nothing of huntsmen and stablemen and gardeners, valets and gamekeepers and jockeys, butlers and housekeepers and ladies' maids and scullery maids and deuce knows who not.

(Continued next column)

THE DUKE. How true, Arthur! how profoundly true! I am with you there to the last drop of my blood.

SIR ARTHUR. Well, these parasites will fight for the rights of property as they would fight for their own skins. Can you get a Labor member into Parliament in the places where they are in a majority? No: there is no class wars the working class is hopelessly divided against itself. But I will tell you what there is. There is the gulf between Dexy's view of the world and mine. There is the eternal war between those who are in the world for what they can get out of it and those who are in the world to make it a better place for everybody to live in.

SIR DEXTER (rising) I will not sit here listening to this disgusting ungentlemanly nonsense. Chavender: the coalition is dissolved. I resign. I shall take with me three quarters of the Cabinet. I shall expose the shamelessly corrupt motives of those who have supported you here today. Basham: you will get the sack the day after the King sends for me. Domesday: you have gone gaga: go home to bed and drivel where your dotage can do no harm. Rosy: you are a damned fool; and you ought to know it by this time. Pandranath: you are only a silly nigger pretending to be an English gentleman: you are found out. Good afternoon, gentlemen.

He goes out, leaving an atmosphere of awe behind him, in which the Indian is choking with indignation, and for the moment inarticulate.

SIR BEMROSE. This is awful. We cannot do without him.

SIR JAFNA (finding his tongue) I am despised. I am despised. I am called nigger by this dirty faced barbarian whose forefathers were naked savages worshipping acorns and mistletoe in the woods whilst my people were spreading the highest enlightenment yet reached by the human race from the temples of Brahma the thousandfold who is all the gods in one. This primitive savage dares to accuse me of imitating him: me, with the blood in my veins of conquerors who have swept through continents vaster than a million dogholeslike this

island of yours. They founded a civilization compared to which your little kingdom is no better than a concentration camp. What you have of religion came from the east; yet no Hindu, no Parsee, no Jain, would stoop to its crudities. Is there a mirror here?

country and my race by remaining here where both have been insulted. Until now I have supported the connection between India and England because I knew that in the course of nature and by the justice of Brahma it must end in India ruling England just

SIR ARTHUR. Make my apologies to Sir Jafna if you overtake him. How are we to hold the empire together if we insult a man who represents nearly seventy per cent of its population?

SIR BEMROSE. I don't agree with you, Arthur. It is for Pandy to apo-

SIR ARTHUR. For Heaven's sake don't call him a native. You are a native.

SIR BEMROSE (very solemnly) Of Kent, Arthur: of Kent. Not of Ceylon. (He goes out).

GLENMORISON. I think I'd better clear out too. I can make allowances for Sir Dexter: he is an Englishman, and has not been trained to use his mind like us in Scotland. But that is just what gives him such a hold on the Country. We must face it: he's indispensable. I'll just go and assure him that we have no intention of breaking with him. Ta ta. Good morning, Duke. (He goes out).

SIR ARTHUR (rising and strolling round to the other side of the table like a cleaned-out gambler). That finishes me, I'm afraid.

He throws himself into the middle chair. Basham rises moodily and goes to the window to contemplate the street. The Duke comes sympathetically to Sir Arthur and sits down besides him.

'Is there a mirror here? Look at your faces and the faces of my people in Ceylon, the cradle of the human race. There you see Man as he came from the hand of God.....'

Look at your faces and look at the faces of my people in Ceylon, the cradle of the human race. There you see Man as he came from the hand of God, who has left on every feature the unmistakeable stamp of the great original creative artist. There you see Woman with eyes in her head that mirror the universe instead of little peepholes filled with faded pebbles. Set those features, those eyes, those burning colours beside the miserable smudged lumps of half baked dough, the cheap commercial copies of a far away gallery of masterpieces that you call western humanity, and tell me, if you dare, that you are the original and I the imitation.

Do you not fear the lightning? the earthquake? the vengeance of Vishnu? You call me nigger, sneering at my color because you have none. The jackdaw has lost his tail and would persuade the world that his defeat is a quality. You have all cringed to me, not for my greater nearness to God, but for my money and my power of making money and ever more money. But today your hatred, your envy, your insolence has betrayed itself. I am nigger. I am bad imitation of that eater of unclean foods, never sufficiently washed in his person or his garments, a British islander. I will no longer bear it. The veil of your hypocrisy is rent by your own mouths: I should dishonour my

as I, by my wealth and my brains, govern this roomful of needy imbeciles. But I now cast you off. I return to India to detach it wholly from England, and leave you to perish in your ignorance, your vain conceit, and your abominable manners. Good morning, gentlemen. To hell with the lot of yous (He goes out and slam. the door).

SIR ARTHUR. That one word nigger will cost us India. How could Dexy be such a fool as to let it slip!

SIR BEMROSE (very serious—rising solemnly) Arther: I feel I cannot overlook a speech like that. After all, we are white men.

SIR ARTHUR. You are not, Rosy, I assure you. You are walnut color, with a touch of claret on the nose. Glenmorison is the color of his native oatmeal: not a touch of white on him. The fairest man present is the Duke. He's as yellow as a Malayan headhunter. The Chinese call us Pinks. They flatter us.

SIR BEMROSE. I must tell you, Arthur, that frivolity on a vital point like this is in very bad taste. And you know very well that the country cannot do without Dexy. Dexy was at school with me before I went to Dartmouth. To desert him would be for me not only an act of political bad faith but of personal bad feeling. I must go and see him at once. (He goes very sadly to the door).

logize. Dexy really shares the premiership with you; and if a Conservative Prime Minister of England may not take down a heathen native when he forgets himself there is an end of British supremacy.

CAN ANY READER OFFER A THEORY?

The play goes on, but there is no need to take our readers beyond this point, because Sir Jafna Pandranath does not figure anymore in the play.

Can any reader offer a theory as to the Ceylonese whom Shaw had in mind when he created the character of Sir Jafna Pandranath?

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The Tamil people of Sri Lanka have been in the blind alley of political thinking ever since independence and this applies no less to the Sinhalese.

Where it was possible to act with foresight to preserve the Tamil tradition and cultural identity against any further alien onslaught, self-interest emerged the victor and fear took possession. In the grip of fear they surrendered critical analysis, the result being that the faculty of rational judgement was paralysed.

In the same way that Sinhala leaders banished reason, the Tamils too lost the clue to the middle way and politics became the Borgian conspiracy where safety was only for those who struck first.

Laws do not produce great events

Whilst a premium was placed on skilful insincerity the result was social disharmony in which selfishness took precedence. This was just what was needed for the newly-emergent privileged classes to justify their privileges and class interests. It was a situation fraught with great dangers to the rehabilitation of the Tamil people's culture along the lines of their most ancient tradition.

Where there was grave need for a vital change in the whole spirit of government to make the cultural revival secure, politicians offered mere palliatives—a law here or a law there. It has been rightly said that the mechanism of laws does not produce great events. It was therefore that the world's oldest grammar expostulated in Tamil -**Tholkappiam**- said that laws emerge when falsehood and detraction appear.

Serving an acquisitive society

People have lost knowledge of the inner spirit of government laid down in tradition whilst they blindly and through legal means want to establish a social order which impoverishes and degrades men.

We have also subscribed to a system of education which has produced disproportion and disappointment as well as blind subservience to the darkness inherent to it. It is a system serving the ends of an acquisitive society, no longer helping the people to make of themselves articulate and self-realising. By so-called literacy standards they are blind as bats

Where Tamil decline is most manifest

as the imagery in **Thiruarut-payan** brings out beautifully. They have failed to see the inner logic of man's own being in the midst of all the world's differences of perception. The Tamil language and culture offer that very perception which is distinct and apart from all personal limitations. They have lost sight of the ultimate reality which underlies and unifies the multiple things and events we observe.

Take for instance the craze for modern scientific education which seems to be the sole aim of the privileged, the mechanistic and organic view of the universe may be valid up to a point but not to surrender

the Tamilian way of life over many millenia. The distinction between working for money and accepting money (or its equivalent in order to be able to go on working at one's living is all that lies between the past and the present.

Leaders of today are victims of the mass mind fearful as they are of its mood where they see a challenge to law and order. The opportunities for well-being have dwindled to crazy limitations and ordered by only commercial instincts. The leaders themselves can only prescribe commercial dose which have passed all efficacy. The present irrationalities of the social order through-

system they accepted which requires a permanent reserve of unemployment. Its survival is in the power to make profit. Where the culture of the people should have remained the incarnation of their religion in which the whole social order once survived with wholesomeness and dignity the Tamils have taken to alien forms leading to boredom and despair. No longer for the greater part is the Tamil home the place where culture is cultivated and no contemporary culture can grow because the old roots are already dying.

Watching the political involvements of the people during the British period and soon thereafter, those

poured through the popular press of the time and disfigured its pages, seeing the dust and heat that was raised, the animosity and rancour that was engendered, the open abuse and vilification that befouled the air, we cannot escape the conclusion that, much as we suffer from the excesses and horrors of political controversy, our people of an earlier generation fared no better, that the epithet 'dirty' as applied to politics is no recent invention."

That was the beginning of political careers torn between self-interest and opportunism and which left the Tamil Tradition in the drains.

The Tamil language which is the greatest inheritance of the people has today given way to a sort of gibberish equally found in South India. This heartless change has brought cultural death. In this connection T. S. Eliot has made it quite clear: "It must be remembered, that for the transmission of a culture—a peculiar way of thinking, feeling and behaving — and for its maintenance, there is no safeguard more reliable than a language. And to survive for this purpose it must continue to be a literary language — not necessarily a scientific language but certainly a poetic one; otherwise the spread of education will extinguish it."

This is what exactly has happened to Tamil which is today no longer the language of culture, but of expediency. If the latter is the need we might as well burn all our Sangam literature and take to English as the most suited today for expediency.

By

C. Rajasingham

the balanced and fulfilled spiritual life which gave the Tamil Tradition its unique and unchallenged authority. To be lost in the superficial mechanistic appearances of everyday life is different from the multi-dimensional experiences that belong to a primordial tradition such as Tamil. The question has been asked by modern scientific writers, "Is modern science, with all its sophisticated machinery, merely rediscovering ancient wisdom, known to the Eastern sages for thousands of years?" (Fritjof Capra in "The Tao of Physics").

The tragedy is heightened when one observes how the whole of Sangam literature and poetry, so beautifully set and rendered to music, is alien to our education which parades as being meant to liberate the Tamil people. The leadership, an entirely political one, has accepted this nauseating spectacle of philistine literates coming out of colleges and universities for whom the West and all its allurements, contraptions devices and tricks-of-trade are second nature. The stricter disciplines involved in the study of Sangam literature as well as of the other 64 branches of study are no longer welcome though these constituted

out the country have caused much frustration. The attack may be said to have begun or is bound soon to begin upon the constitutive principle of social order in which discontent has risen.

Grievance has already become a philosophy of dissent aggravated even more by mass import of Western life styles. The Tamil man is a rudderless boat in the mid-ocean of political opportunity and crazy self-interest. Having lost the rudder itself when he abjured his past so readily, the disaster appears inescapable.

There is a conflict between the political sovereignty of numbers (another dirty concept of modern political thinking)—and the economic sovereignty of the privileged which threatens the foundations of law and order. Further the word power-politics which has become a national make-belief has taken possession of the Tamil mind as well. What remains is a profoundly individualistic outlook which brings to the surface only the sycophant and the hypocrite.

How easily the Tamils became part of the Island's alien cultural growth can be seen in the economic

who still care to understand the Tamil cultural inheritance, will find how much the alienation has gone. In his book on "The Life of Sir P. Ramathan" the author M. Vythilingam for example, has pointed out: "Wading through the voluminous and vitriolic correspondence and the reports of political meetings that

USAID Scholarships to 54

Colombo—The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has granted scholarships to 54 Sri Lankans attached to 25 state sector organizations and two private establishments, since May this year.

Among the grantees is Deputy Home Affairs Minister Percy Samarawera who will attend an agricultural policy seminar in the U.S. from September 20 to October 15, 1982.

The Finance and Planning Ministry's External Resources Division has been associated with the USAID in granting the scholarships. The grantees will be trained in Third World countries like India, as well as the U.S.

The state organizations to which many of the grantees are attached include: the Treasury, the Agricultural Development Authority, the Agrarian Services Department, the Irrigation Department, the River Valley's Development Board, the Mahaweli Authority, the Land and Land Development Ministry, the Survey Department, the Wild Life and Forest Conservation Departments, the Paddy Marketing Board, the Rural Industrial Development Ministry, the Auditor General's Department, the Greater Colombo Economic Commission and the National Housing Development Authority.

It is human nature, when one gets into adverse situations, to put the blame on the others. But such trait in human nature is definitely not one which helps the party that has fallen into adverse situations to get out of it or to make progress.

In human affairs, particularly in an open ended social system, any development is the result of the operation of a multiplicity of forces. Undoubtedly exogenous forces are there contributing to one's adversity. But to harp on those, i.e., the external causes of one's misfortune, is clearly not the path for remedying the situation. It is in some sense an escapism—escaping from admitting our faults, our mistakes, our shortcomings and our own misdeeds. In this connexion we can put forward a thesis which cannot be challenged. Very often it may not be within our power to eliminate or remedy the exogenous forces that contribute to our misery; but it is very often clearly within our power to correct our own faults, make amends for our misdeeds, and make an attempt to remedy our shortcomings. Hence to harp on the exogenous forces contributing to our misery, i.e., to blame the other fellow, would amount to avoiding the passout of measures that are within our power and to bewail about factors which are outside our control and outside our competence to remedy.

SALVAGING

THE MESS

This is exactly the case in respect of the plight of the Tamils today. It is relevant in this connection to recall to mind what Edmund Burke said of bureaucrats: they will fight to defend their mistakes as if they were fighting to safeguard their inheritance. This really holds good not merely for bureaucrats but for every one—the higher one's status, the more obstinately he will fight to defend his mistakes. The indisputable sign of greatness is one's willingness to admit one's mistakes. Gandhiji is a shining example in this matter. His frank admission of the mistake he did when his father was on the deathbed, his trip to the lodging of a prostitute and a whole host of such admissions in his autobiography, *Experiments with Truth* should really give a reader courage to admit his own mistakes. In politics, Gandhiji's action in calling off a civil disobedience movement

Language rights- an obsession

when it was proceeding at peak level stunned even Jawarhalal Nehru; reason: the creed of non-violence was violated because some ignorant volunteers had looted the house of a Zemindar. He called off his fast against the Rajkot ruler because all of a sudden he realized that he was not on the path of Ahimsa but Himsa. In fact this aspect of his character is made memorable by the phrase he used: that he had committed Himalayan blunders.

When one realizes that he is a fool, he ceases to be a fool from that moment.

lacies coined by modern historians. *Lump together and keep under the thumb was really British Imperial policy.*

Another basic fact that we should realize and observe as a guideline to our actions and conduct is this: If we choose to live with the Sinhalese in the same polity—and that is exactly what is implied in federalism—after the British quit, we ought not to rub and irritate the Sinhalese or try to be clever. We should endeavour to understand the why and the wherefore of the thinking among the Sinhalese which

Having stated these, let us now examine the concept of Language Rights to which we have hitched our wagon all these years. **There is no such thing as Language Rights.** There is only one fundamental right any group of people can claim and that is the right for self-government. Anything in the field of the use of a language is just a concession and can be withdrawn. Once the Tamils will to be in the same polity as the Sinhalese, they accept the principle of being governed by majority decision. (The word will in the preceding

by

Somasundaram Vanniyasingham

This is an old English saying pregnant with meaning. Let us therefore take courage and recognize the mistakes we have made in the past. Recognition of the past mistakes is an absolute necessity; otherwise we will not be able to give up the wrong track and proceed along the correct path.

We have committed a number of mistakes in the past but it is not the intention of the writer to list them—with the benefit of hindsight—or to find fault with the politicians who committed them. It is true that it was our politicians who led the nation along the wrong track but the Tamil public at large elected them, and what is more significant, re-elected them again and again. Hence the Tamil public has got to own these mistakes and take necessary steps to put the political wagon on the right track to salvage themselves from the mess into which they had walked during broad daylight.

LUMP TOGETHER

AND RULE

In the first instance certain broad and basic facts have to be recognized. That the Sinhalese and the Tamils happened to live under one polity, i.e., organized state, is the result of British imperialism. The notion that British Imperial policy was *divide et impera* is one of the biggest fal-

colours their attitude towards the Tamils. We cannot formulate our objectives and policies without taking into consideration the reaction that our policies and objectives will produce on the other side; that is fundamental if we want to live with the other party in the same polity. We should not overlook that the Sinhalese are painfully aware of the past history: how the Tamils invaded and drove them into the mountain fastness and Ruhuna and ultimately established a Tamil dynasty even in the Kandyan hills. In fact these experiences of the past have got into the bones of the Sinhalese.

In this context the federal demand with cantons at Hatton and Wellawatta and elsewhere was not only regarded as a clever ruse to have the cake and simultaneously to eat it, but also aroused deep suspicions among the Sinhalese. Let us not forget that a necessary pre-condition of federalism is the abiding and willing consent of the other party; but self-government, i.e., Eeylom, does not depend at least on the theoretical plane, on the consent of the Sinhalese.

The third basic fact that we should not overlook is this: If we want the Sinhalese to leave us alone—and that is the significance of Eeylom—we must learn to leave the Sinhalese alone. It is a pity that the Tamils did not observe this dictum.

sentence is a verb and signified: willingly to agree). The Tamils cannot be in the same polity with the Sinhalese and then demand concessions and facilities—much less rights—which are not feasible or workable. Language rights fall into this category, i.e., not workable not feasible.

But the right for self-government is a fundamental right and cannot be objected to by another group because it proceeds on the principle: "we leave you alone; you leave us alone". If the Tamils formulated their objective and demand as self-government, can President Jayawardene or Prime Minister Premadasa or, for a matter of that, any Sinhalese leader stand up before any audience—even a Sinhalese audience—and say: No; the Tamils have no right for self-government; self-government is the exclusive privilege of the Sinhalese; the Sinhalese have the right to rule the Tamils". Can any Sinhalese take up such a stand? Definitely not. It is a pity that the Tamil politicians—most of them are lawyers did not plead the cause of the Tamils properly; perhaps they did not want to put forward the correct plea; if they did put forward the correct plea, the matter must come to an early solution and they could not continue to make money in South Ceylon.

Can we not recall that when Mr. Navaratnam, former M.P. for Kayts, started to talk of Swaraj,

he was first silenced within the party and then thrown out in spite of his long years of loyalty to Chelvanayakam and his reputation of being the brain of the party. Instead of putting forward an irresistible claim for self-government (leave us alone; we leave you alone) the Tamil leaders put forward what they called the language rights—sometimes spelt out as parity of status for Tamil. Nothing called language rights can be claimed—much less parity of status. This is best illustrated by visualizing a particular situation. Mr. Tiruchelvam was in the Cabinet from 1965 to about 1970. When a Minister wants to put forward a proposal for action and secure Cabinet approval thereto, he submits what is called a Cabinet Paper and it is considered by the Cabinet. Could Mr. Tiruchelvam have put forward a Cabinet Paper in Tamil while the other Ministers put forward their Cabinet Papers in Sinhala? Could Mr. Tiruchelvam argue in support of his proposals in Tamil while the other Ministers talk in Sinhala? Can a Tamil officer, a Senior Government officer, write his minutes, observations or report in Tamil while the others write theirs in Sinhala in the same file? Will these minutes etc. be intelligible to one another? Is such a system workable; one cannot even think of such a system. Parity of status is arrant nonsense; something not workable.

PARITY OF

STATUS

Yet our politicians swore in thunderous tone that they would not rest before placing TAMIL ANNAI on the throne on a footing of equality with Sinhala. Handy Perinpanayagam, commemorated as an intellectual, put forward before Sir John Kotelawala at Kokuvil Hindu College, the question whether he (Sir John Kotelawala) will make constitutional provision to give Tamil parity of status with Sinhala and rolled the boulder down Kotelawala, whom no one will accuse of foresight or pre-science, in a mood of ecstacy said "Yes" in reply. What strange intellectuals we have had? What crafty politicians have we been lionizing?

(To be concluded
next week)

I read with interest M. S. Nathan's tirade against the dowry system. There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of the writer. But it is one thing to be aware of this canker that has eaten into the very structure of the Tamil community; and another to devise ways and means of rooting it out. I am not sentimental like Mr. Nathan. I propose to take a clinical attitude.

Dowry was once modest but over the past few decades it has assumed such proportions that none is able to bring it down to its original size.

The reasons are not far to seek. During the 'golden' period whose passing away Mr. Nathan seems to lament, ours was a predominantly agricultural economy. The gulf between the haves and the have nots was not wide. Land was available. Money was not the measure of things. Man was. His sense of values was fairly high.

CLIMBING THE SOCIAL LADDER

Then came foreign rule. The security government employment offered, the prestige that went with it and the prospect of climbing up the social ladder in a caste-ridden society attracted the Tamils.

Employment opportunities in Malaya too attracted many a Jaffnaman. The result was an affluent class that looked down upon the not-so-fortunate 'lower' class. In fact it was the latter that mattered in terms of national output. But no one was bothered.

FOREIGN BANK TRANSFERS

Till Independence this trend prevailed. Population, in the meantime, increased in Geometric Progression. Urbanisation was a prominent feature. Lands grew smaller relative to the population while the prices rose. Dowry became negotiable and the marriage broker a key figure in the Tamil community as perhaps never before.

After Independence and, in particular, after 1956, the Tamil community was severely hit. Merit ceased to be the criterion for University Admission and Government Employment. The drop-outs and the unemployed were marginalised. Logically the very few who managed to get the plums of government employment became the most sought after in the marriage market.

Dowry system: A symptom, not disease

By

S. Pathmanathan

During the last decade yet another avenue opened before the Tamils: Jobs in the Middle-East, the U.K., Germany and last but not least, in the ships. The result has been shattering. Contrary to the inland money-order economy that kept Jaffna going, foreign bank transfers have upset the Jaffna economy as no foreign power ever did. Land price has shot up almost ten times. Understandably bridegrooms are priced high. In fact our young men go abroad partly to earn dowries for their sisters!

But unfortunately no social critic can feel complacent that things are being sorted out—thanks to the Middle-East or Germany. What about those families who cannot launch a young man into the

foreign orbit? What about those spinsters who have no brothers to earn their dowries? A lopsided economy is what we have now—thanks to foreign remittances! As Mr. Nathan points out, marriage has become a remote possibility for a good number of our girls. Frustration, feeling of insecurity and a social stigma are the problems they have to cope with. I cannot understand Mr. Nathan's argument that the increase in the number of working girls has aggravated the problem. I know quite a number of working girls who earn their dowries. Some of them even support the whole family! Our young men too prefer working partners purely on economic grounds. But I am prepared to concede that a career is a consolation

for girls to whom marriage is a 'distant dawn'.

I am sorry I have to disagree with Mr. Nathan that our females who are victims of the dowry system tend to break loose from discipline and that a permissive society is in the offing. Far from it. The Tamil society will not tolerate transgressions of morality. Its hands reach farther than the hands of the Law. Mr. N. need not have fears on that account!

He is right when he says that the men are hypocritical and that the women should organise themselves and rise up against the dowry system which is the bane of the Jaffna Society. Public opinion? No, please. In our country public opinions are meant for public utterances. In priv-

ate, opinions differ—in matters of caste and conscience!

I am not in favour of legal sanctions. Certain laws are legal sanctions. Certain laws are honoured more in the breach! For example, with all the strictures against it, Bribery is rampant. There is an anti-dowry law in India's Statute-book but 'varadakshinai' too goes on unabated! Several young wives have even been burnt in India just because the promised dowries have not been given! Dowry is something which the parents give their daughters. It is very difficult to draw a legal line between what is voluntarily given and what is exacted from them.

I think it will be realistic to look at the system as a part of the economic and social structure of the Tamils which needs radical change. The rich are able to buy the qualified engineers, doctors and administrative officers—whatever the price. This then is the tragedy. Education has become a commodity which money can buy—where the marriage market is concerned. And the willingness with which the so-called intelligentsia allow themselves to be bought over! Alas! Do something about that, Mr. Nathan! The dowry problem will vanish into thin air!

LETTERS

'Gitanjali',
7, Gregory's Road,
Cinnamon Gardens,
Colombo 7.

Sir,

I was shocked and surprised to see the front page news item in your August 14, 1982 issue of the 'Saturday Review' with the headlines "Three decline offer of Vaddukoddai seat; T.C.man asks for time".

I contacted my husband who is out of the Island and I have been requested by him to contradict your news item.

Firstly, I would like to point out that there is no truth whatsoever in this news item and I feel that this was designed merely to destroy his reputation.

Mr. Kumar Ponnambalam left for Malaysia only on the 14th of August '82 at 12-30 p.m. by the Singapore Airlines Flight (same day your paper was released). He was available in Sri Lanka till then, and you

or your correspondents could have verified these facts from him before publishing this news.

You say "According to informed sources, a top TULF leader sounded Kumar Ponnambalam about this when they met recently in Colombo at a party thrown by the Embassy of a Middle East country. Kumar is reported to have asked for a week's time to consider the offer". This statement is a blatant lie, as Mr. Ponnambalam did not attend any Embassy parties during the last two months, he was never offered Vaddukoddai seat by any TULF leaders at any time and as such the question of asking for one week's time doesn't arise.

As this news item is very damaging to his personality and to the party he represents, I beg of you to be good enough to publish my denial in your esteemed journal. It will help to clear the confusion created by your news item.

Mr. Ponnambalam issued a statement to the Tamil daily newspapers regarding this rumour regarding the

Vaddukoddai seat and it appeared in the Tamil papers of the 15th and 16th of this month. Herewith I am sending the English translation of that statement. I will be grateful if you could publish this statement also in your paper.

Thanking you.
Yours truly,

Dr. (Mrs) Y. Ponnambalam
"Some newspapers are carrying stories to the effect

that Vaddukoddai seat has been offered to me. I do not know anything about this matter. Unless I am elected by the Tamil speaking people to represent them, I will not, under any circumstances, accept a parliamentary seat by nomination or by other means. So I don't care about the Vaddukoddai seat. I am very firm in that. I will not accept this seat even if it is offered to me".

Why drag Lord Vishnu into politics?

Pickering's Road,
Colombo - 13

The Finance Minister, Honourable Ronnie de Mel, is reported to have said, according to a report in the Island of 22-8-82, at a public meeting held at the Kohuwela junction on 18-8-82, that even Lord Vishnu cannot stop inflation.

Why is the Honourable Minister dragging Lord Vishnu into politics and financial management?

If the Honourable Minister cannot stop inflation or bring down the cost of living, let him say so. If he thinks that no other person in our country or in the world can bring down the cost of living, let him say that as well. That is understandable. But why does he want to say that even Lord Vishnu cannot do it?

Has Lord Vishnu announced his or his party's participation at the next General Elections?

—Arul

NEWS ROUND-UP

COURT UPHOLDS AMENDMENT

The Supreme Court has ruled that the third amendment to the Constitution does not diminish or vary the franchise of the people. In a 16-page ruling Justice S. Sharvananda, Justice B. S. C. Ratwatte, and Justice J. F. A. Soza rejected the petition and held that the argument that the President could have the advantage over proposed candidates by choosing the date of the election was not well founded. The Judgment states that far from alienating the sovereignty of the people the amendment seeks to maintain that sovereignty.

FIREARM THEFTS ON THE INCREASE

The number of firearm thefts has doubled this year as compared to last year. The weekly Police Crime Bulletin submitted to the Defence Ministry states that while 39 firearm thefts were reported between January 1st and August 23rd last year, 79 cases were reported during the same period this year. The majority of the thefts have been reported from the North-Central and the Southern provinces, while only 6 cases had been reported from the North.

Cases of highway robberies have also doubled. There were more than 70 cases recorded until August 23rd this year as compared to 30 cases for the same period last year.

PILFERY AT AIR LANKA

Several complaints of systematic pilfering of unaccompanied packages and gift packages at Air Lanka's cargo terminal in Colombo have been received. Baggages have been found forced open and the contents robbed. The pilferings are reported to be taking place before they reach the Customs or airport office, thereby causing loss of revenue as well.

PRIVATE PUPILS UP TO NO GOOD

Private candidates seeking admission to universities have been resorting to unscrupulous methods, according to the University Grants Commission. Incidents have been found where they had given false aggregate marks on the ad-

mission forms and false signatures of Principals and produced bogus Pupil's Record Sheets.

One student from Kurunegala had given his aggregate marks as 197 whereas he had obtained only 171. Two other students from Jaffna had also supplied bogus aggregates. In Badulla there were some applications with forged signatures of a Principal.

DUTCH WORKER'S FINE GESTURE

A Dutch factory worker Klaas Korpelaar, has gifted 10,000 Dutch Guilders (approximately Rs. 75,000/-) to support the struggle of 380 workers of the Paranthan Chemical Corporation who are on strike for the 9th month. Mr. Korpelaar who had met the General Secretary of the C.M.U., Mr. Bala Tampoe, in his home town of Utrecht in June this year is a member of a big Dutch Trade Union called Industriedond FNV. He says his gift represents six months' wages as a skilled industrial worker and half his entire savings. "The Dutch people are still in debt to your country" says Mr. Korpelaar, "because we had been imperialists in your country at one time".

INDIANS ALL OVER THE WORLD

Sri Lanka is one of the largest concentrations of people of Indian origin anywhere in the world according to the "National Herald", a weekly English newspaper. The paper reports that there are over 1,350,000 Indians in Sri Lanka of whom 433,000 have taken Sri Lankan citizenship.

Nepal heads the list with 3,800,000 of Indian origin with other large concentrations in countries like Burma, Malaysia and Singapore. People of Indian origin are also found in every part of the world including South Africa, Russia, Japan, Hungary and Iceland.

BEE'S HONEY AT MANNAR

It is now the traditional bees honey season in Mannar. Residents there go to the adjoining jungles and collect genuine bees'honey which is being sold at Rs.30/- per bottle.

FREE MEALS AT HIGH RISK

Members of the Police Force serving in the North are in for a special concession—all three meals will be served to them free! This is one of the many concessions offered to Policemen serving in the north, which is considered a "High Risk" area. Another concession will be that they become eligible for transfer outside once they complete one year of service in the North. Several Policemen who will avail themselves of this facility are due for transfer out of Jaffna from 1st September.

ARRESTED AGAIN AT MIDNIGHT

A resident of Chulipuram East, S. Chinniah, who was taken in by Army Personnel a week ago and later released has again been taken into custody on midnight of Saturday 21st. A. Kumar Sinnakuddy who was taken in along with Chinniah on the first instance is yet to be released.

RAMAKRISHNA JAYANTHI

A three-day Ramakrishna Jayanthi Celebrations will be held in Jaffna beginning tomorrow, the 29th. The first day celebrations will be held at Ramanathan College; the second day's at the Veerasingham Hall and the third-day's at Kokuvil Hindu College.

BOY REPORTED MISSING

A 10-year old boy Mathurai Veeran ('Kalai') who was an employee at a shop close to Nallur Kandasamy Temple is reported to be missing since the day of the Nallur Chariot Festival, according to a complaint made to the Police.

SMUGGLING FOILED

A fine of Rs.10,000/- was imposed and a mechanised boat worth Rs.50,000/- was confiscated following a smuggling attempt of 700 yards of imported textiles to India. The smugglers were apprehended by the Army Personnel at Valvetiturai.

'PITTU' MOULD FROM PALMYRAH

A "Pittu" mould made

out of palmyrah leaf was one of the exhibits at the Palmyrah Development Board Exhibition held in Mandaitivu recently. Visitors to the Exhibition expressed pleasant surprise at this novel mould turned out by S. Tharmarasa. It was found to be not only cheaper than the traditional bamboo mould but even more functional and better looking.

1ST CLASS HONOURS AT OXFORD

Miss. Revathy S. Mahendran of St. Hilda's College, Oxford University, was adjudged worthy of First Class Honours, by the examiners, in the Zoology Final Degree Examination, held in the Trinity Term 1982.

As a result of her brilliant success, she has been offered a further scholarship by the London Cancer Institute, Surrey, to do Research in Breast Cancer, from October this year. Revathy is an old girl of Vembadi Girl's High School Jaffna, and of Haverstock Comprehensive School, London.

FATHER OF 4 TAKES HIS LIFE

C. Pathmanathan of Rathinapuram, Kilinochchi, a father of four children took his life by swallowing insecticide. It was stated at the inquest that the 32 year old Pathmanathan was distressed because he was unable to pay off his heavy debts.

LORRY HELD UP AND ROBBED

Rs. 40,000/- worth of articles were robbed at the Puttalam 5th mile post from a lorry proceeding from Anuradhapura to Colombo last Monday. The robber gang consisting of six men were stated to have been armed with guns and knives.

MRS. GANDHI DUE IN SEPTEMBER

Prime Minister of India Mrs. Indira Gandhi, is scheduled to visit Sri Lanka by end —September to participate in the Asia-Pacific Population Conference. The Conference which is to be opened by President Jayawardene will be held from 20th to 29th September. According to tentative arrangements Mrs. Gandhi is expected to be here for 3 days from September 19th. About 400 representatives from the 29 countries will participate.

'STAND UP AGAINST INJUSTICE'

"Every Christian should stand up for justice and should work untiringly towards achieving it", said Rev. M. Selvaratnam (Karavaiyoor Selvam) at the 43rd Annual Celebrations of the Christian Seva Ashram, Chunnakam. He said it was the duty of every Christian to lend his voice against injustice whenever and wherever it is directed against human society.

POLICE THUGGERY AT POINT PEDRO

A jeep load of Policemen were alleged to have assaulted the Head of the Amban Gramodhaya Sabha, Mr. Karthigesu, at the Point Pedro Bus Stand on Friday the 20th. A telegram of complaint was sent by the Government Agent, Mr. Devanesan Nesiah, to the Assistant Superintendent of Police, Kankesanthurai. More reports of such indiscriminate assaults at the Point Pedro Bus Stand have been reported.

T. U. L. F. M. P. FOR ROME CONFERENCE

Mr. V. N. Navaratnam, M.P. for Chavakachcheri leaves for Rome on September 2nd to attend the Working Committee meeting and the General Sessions of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference. En route he is expected to stay over briefly at Madras, New Delhi and Germany.

Death of Peter Somasundaram

The death occurred on the 16th of August of Mr. Peter Somasundaram, a former Member of the Municipal Council of Jaffna, a former teacher of St. John's College, and lately an active member of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Front. In 1961, during the Satyagraha campaign when most of the leading politicians were under arrest, it was Mr. Somasundaram who continued the campaign courageously further.

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

U G C man brought off his high horse

A topflight member of the University Grants Commission who usually rides a high horse was, figuratively, yanked off it recently.

The come-down took place when the UGC met the Council of the Open University.

The top-notch—who is more at home dealing with the physical world than in the world of human relationships—had just begun a harangue about the debit side of the Open University, after a brief reference to the credit side, when he was stopped dead in his tracks by a Council member. "Please remember

you are a guest here and have no licence to insult us" said the member, who also demanded an apology and the withdrawal of certain remarks.

The UGC member who couldn't bear the thought of swallowing his peacock pride chose to stalk out of the meeting rather than tender an apology.

Ironically enough, the Open University Council member who stood up for the autonomy of his institution is the son of an Education Minister (he has now attained Nibbana) who saw red whenever he heard the words 'University autonomy'.

Voice of America to get expanded facilities

The Voice of America, which has been operating from Sri Lanka since 1951, is to be granted expanded facilities—another quid pro quo for continued American aid.

At present, VOA operates one 100-kilowatt transmitter from Seeduwa. The United States Government is now seeking to establish six 250-kilowatt shortwave transmitters, either at Puttalam or at Muturajawela, to receive broadcasts direct from Washington

via satellite and relay them to Asian, African, West Asian and European countries.

In return the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation is being offered a 100-kilowatt transmitter as a gift, annual rental at Rs. 500 an acre for the land leased for the station and training facilities for Sri Lankans in broadcast technology.

A draft agreement granting the expanded facilities for a 20-year period, with option to renew it for a further ten-year period, is ready for signature.

The only hitch is that quite a number of countries, especially in the non-alignment movement, may not take kindly to Sri Lanka being used as a base for American propaganda. For Sri Lanka will have no control over what is beamed by the VOA transmitters.

Human Rights lawyer here

The well-known Colombo attorney-at-law, Mr. V.S.A. Pullenayegam is now on a short private visit to Jaffna. Mr. Pullenayegam who is a dedicated human rights lawyer has been heading the legal teams in several of the cases where Tamil youths were victims of arbitrary arrests and detentions.

Uneasy truce at Sirupiddy after rural strike march

An uneasy truce now prevails in the village of Sirupiddy, about ten miles off Jaffna, between landlords and agricultural workers who have been on strike for nearly two months.

The ceasefire was finally negotiated a few days ago by Kopay MP M. Alalasundaram and the Asst. Government Agent of the area after several of their previous attempts to bring about a settlement failed—because neither the landlords nor the Police turned up for the conciliation talks.

The *Saturday Review* learns that what finally pushed the landlords to the negotiating table was the recent march—organised by the Rural Workers and Peasants Front—from Sirupiddy to Vempirai in a show of worker power.

About 200 rural workers took part in the march aimed at showing the milit-

ancy of the strikers and evoking the sympathy of the workers in Vempirai a few of whom blacklegged for the landlords of Sirupiddy, according to Mr. P. Jeevaratnam, Organizer of the Rural Workers and Peasants Front.

The strike in Sirupiddy was allegedly sparked off by

a landlord's assault on a young woman worker. Fellow workers who came out on strike demanded an eight hour work-day and reasonable wages. They also demanded an end to the practice of serving tea to them in coconut shells and food on makeshift palmyrah leaf plates.

J. V. P. shows its flag.

(Continued from page 1)

Prevention of Terrorism Act was repealed.

Finally, after the air had changed from one of uttering propagandist slogans to a more personal atmosphere, Wijeweera was asked what he sincerely felt about JVP's chances in the forthcoming elections. He said "The duty of the revolutionaries is only to proceed

with the struggle. It was the people who faced the choice of voting or not voting for us. Though I can't say that we will win the elections, I am sure that we would make such a powerful impact, that at least in the coming years the masses would learn to trust us. So whether we win or lose the coming elections, it is a valuable and necessary experience for the Party."

New archaeological sites discovered from Mantai to Poonakari

An archaeological survey carried out recently along the sea coast and in the interior between Mantai and Poonakari has revealed several archaeological sites including a few prehistoric microlithic sites, the *SATURDAY REVIEW* learns.

The survey—a follow-up of the Mantai expedition undertaken last month by a joint American-Sri Lankan team—was arranged by the Asst. Commissioner of Archaeology, Mr. Siran Deraniyagala and conducted by Mr. P. Ragupathy of the University of Jaffna. The staff of the Dept.

of Archaeology and students from the University of Jaffna helped in the survey.

The *SATURDAY REVIEW* understands the distribution of the prehistoric microlithic sites extend as far north as Poonakari.

A member of the archaeological team told the *SATURDAY REVIEW* that thirty three archaeological sites have been located along the sea coast and in the interior between Mantai and Poonakari. The survey covered parts of Mannar, Mullaitivu and Jaffna Districts.

The pottery mounds discovered along the sea coast may help archaeologists to reconstruct the early coastal trade routes from Jaffna to the south of Sri Lanka, the source said.

One of these mounds, the *SATURDAY REVIEW* learns, contains early pottery, like carinated black and red ware sherds.

The sites discovered in the interior are, mainly, structural remains. Archaeologists are hopeful that the location of these sites will yield clues about the settlement patterns of the region during 'historic' times.