

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

A Govt. re-think on the

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tough-line approach

in the North?

Is the Government re-thinking its tough line stance in the North? The burgeoning non-sectarian mass protests and demonstrations in the North and East demanding the release of Roman Catholic and Christian clergymen, a Jaffna University Lecturer and his wife and other detenus have begun prodding the Government into re-thinking its 'tough boy' stance, according to reliable sources.

These sources say the tough line publicly advocated by some Government front liners about crushing and burying the Tamil Eelam demand for all times and inviting the SLFP to join them in the undertakers' job, is actually a cover-up for this re-think, besides being a spur to the Sinhala masses to say "yes" to the referendum.

The handmaids for this officially sponsored covert operation are the mass media—especially the press—which have been assigned the job of trial and conviction of these detenus through innuendo, smear and vilification, these sources say.

There are also other very pressing reasons for the Government being forced to re-think its bully-boy attempt to demolish the Eelam demand, as otherwise they may only end up with a Pyrrhic victory, according to knowledgeable circles.

International funding agencies have already begun to tighten the screws on Ceylon. In this context, the mounting defence expenditure—particularly in the North—is becoming a staggering burden the

economy can hardly bear. Therefore, the only way out is to come to terms with the Eelam demand, whatever the ferocious postures in public.

How to get about it without loss of face is what the Government's present strategy is all about, political observers say.

According to them the 'National Government' strategy is President Jayawardene's favourite, as it has been all along. In recent press interviews TULF Secretary General and Leader of the Opposition, Mr. A. Amirthalingam,

has also cautiously welcomed the idea.

Political observers say neither the Government nor the TULF have initiated any moves in the direction so far but the basis could be the precedent set by the present Government when it pardoned the members of the JVP convicted for taking part in the insurrection of 1971 against the United Left Government.

The working out of such an understanding would mean an amnesty for the Tamil Eelam detenus now in custody, as well as those already convicted.

But, political observers underline, the condition for such an amnesty would be a guarantee by those freed that they will hereafter dissociate themselves publicly from those engaged in violent activities. This was the same condition laid down for the freed JVPers.

A firm Government decision on the matter will be taken only after the referendum on 22 December, SATURDAY REVIEW understands. Much will depend on the outcome of this, political observers emphasise.

Viewpoint

Not even the warmest supporters of the government can claim, even with artificially-induced cocksureness, that the government has managed to make any breakthrough all these years in its attempts to contain what it calls "terrorist violence" in the North. Why? There is that primary error, a serious political error, in the misreading of the very nature of what it thinks is TERRORIST violence. As to who is a "terrorist" sometimes depends on which side of the fence one is; sometimes it depends on how much historical sense one has.

Archbishop Makarios, the Greek Cypriot leader was branded a terrorist only twenty five years ago by the British government and was exiled to the Seychelles Islands. His solemn voice in soft tones, once spoke from the pulpit: "Cyprus has known many conquerors in the past. Now it is face to face with the last of its conquerors. Your church has preserved the flame of religion and nationalism through all these centuries. It will lead you yet to liberty and deliver you from foreign rule". To hear these words from the pulpit of a church was not even thought incongruous. Makarios even refused to condemn the ceaseless violence of his followers. He called the EOKA movement of armed resistance "Cypriot Freedom Fighters"! Well, history's verdict on this bearded prelate is now so totally different from all contemporary assessments from the wrong side of the fence.

Jomo Kenyatta, that great leader of African nationalism was once convicted by the British courts and imprisoned. Today's head of the Israeli nation, Begin, was once a "terrorist". There was an Indian, Lokmanya Tilak, an outstanding leader of the Indian nationalist movement, who was imprisoned for his alleged leadership of terrorists. In fact one of the popular "terrorists" of our time, PLO chief Yasser Arafat, today enjoys the diplomatic respect of President Jayawardene's government. So this hysteria against "terrorist violence" in the North fuelled by the Colombo Press is not genuine abhorrence of terrorism or violence. No Sirs, let us not fool ourselves on that point. Scratch the skin, and you will find the real thing—anti-Tamil racism!

The other reason for the government failure in the North is the unimaginative and bull-dozer approach to the problem on the part of the Police hierarchy. SATURDAY REVIEW is in a position to know that Police solutions to the problem have ranged from the pathetic to the foolish—such as "meeting terrorism with terrorism", "driving a wedge between the people and the terrorists" and even employing CLAUDETHINE methods (whatever that means) to suppress resistance. One welcome ray of sunshine in this dismal scenario-making is the more civilised, intelligent and, what appears to be, a more responsible attitude to the problem on the part of the Army officers. Some of them, according to known accounts, do seem to have the capacity to carry a head on their shoulders. The important thing is to learn to face a SYSTEM that has somehow got rotten, and cure it, not to develop hatred against a people or a race or even "terrorists"—who after all are only the symptom of the very rot that the system has bred.

Lawyers to meet Fr. Singarayer

Attorneys-at-Law S. C. Chandrasenan of Colombo and I. F. Xavier of Jaffna are expected to meet Fr. Singarayer, now held in detention at the Gurunagar Army Camp, Jaffna early next week. This follows Court permission granted for this purpose. This will be the first opportunity given to Fr. Singarayer to meet lawyers, since he was taken into custody nearly one month ago on the 14th November.

Walk-out

The IIIrd Stage of the Cement Factory, Kankesanthurai, which has become notorious for its record of worker fatalities and management problems has now run into another snag: seven Electrical Engineers who walked out in protest on the 2nd December have yet to return to work. Work has been hampered as a result.

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

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Protest from Hong Kong

The Centre for the Progress of Peoples, Kong Hong, has expressed concern over the arrests of Christian clergymen.

Here's the text of their appeal to President Jayawardene:

"We are concerned over the reported arrests and detentions of Fr. Singarayer, Fr. Rajanayagam, Fr. Sinnarasa, Fr. Soosainayagam, Fr. Kanagaratnam from November 13-16 by the police / army.

We earnestly ask your Excellency to ensure their physical security and their access to lawyers and other priests."

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Jaffna library partially restored : Mayor's thanks

"I thank all those who both here and abroad have worked indefatigably to collect the funds needed to re-build and re-equip the Jaffna Public Library burnt down on 1st June 1981 by the forces of law and order" said Jaffna Mayor **Mr. Rajah Visuvanathan**, speaking yesterday at the ceremonial opening of the re-built Northern wing cum Reference Section of the Library which will serve the needs of students pursuing higher

education and post-graduate education.

He thanked particularly the Tamil Nadu Government, the State Govt., of Alberta, America, the Indian Ambassador, the Yemen Democratic Republic and the World Christian Council of Churches for their generous donations.

He disclosed that up to now the Library has received over Rs.27 lakhs in cash, 35,000 books and Library equipment.

One U. N. P. man shot at, another resigns

Mr. S. C. Chandrasekaram, an active UNP worker and a former UNP Member of the Point Pedro Urban Council, was shot at by three youths who came on bicycles to his house on Friday, the 3rd December.

The 45 year old Mr. Chandrasekaram who was

placed second in the UNP list for the recent DDC elections, was talking to two others at his house verandah, when at about 6.15 p. m., the three youths walked in, and two of them fired at him. He was hit in his chest and stomach before he rushed to the back-yard of his house.

He was taken immediately to the Manthikai Hospital from where he was transferred to the Jaffna General Hospital that night. An emergency operation was performed and a shot was removed from his chest. He is reported to be out of danger now.

Meanwhile reports from Chavakacheri say that Mr. V. Selvaratnam, the UNP member of the Chavakacheri Urban Council had submitted his letter of resignation on Saturday (4th December) to the Commissioner of Elections and the Chairman of the Urban Council. He has also resigned from his membership in the United National party. He said that he took this step on the advice of his relatives.

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Who or what is a 'Naxalite'? The term came into prominence in the early 1970s when a pro-Mao grouping in North India began killing rich landlords and distributing the land among the peasants as part of a national liberation movement.

The name itself was derived from the hilly and remote Naxalbari area, north of West Bengal, which was regarded by the Naxalites as the 'Yennan of India.'

The movement was put down by the Indian Government with the utmost severity but one still hears of sporadic 'Naxalite activity' in some remote parts of North India. For instance on 11th November, 1982, 'The Times of India' reported that there has been "a spurt of Naxalite activities in Gaya district, in Bihar State. The district administration says there has been only 12 Naxalite murders in the past six months but unofficial sources put the number of landlords done to death by the extremists at double this figure.

By applying the term "Naxalite" to a supposed group within the Sri Lanka Freedom Party led by Mrs Srima Bandaranaike, the United National Party Government has gained plenty of propaganda mileage for this is a term easily understood by the media in the outside world.

The vital question is: Does such a group really exist in Sri Lanka?

President Jayewardene is convinced there is an "anti-democratic, violent and Naxalite (anarchist) group within the SLFP, as he told the Government Parliament Group on 11th November, justifying the holding of a referendum instead of a general election. He identified the group as comprising "the SLFP leadership on 20th October."

Assassination

plots

He said, "I had information soon after the results of the Presidential election were announced on 21st October, 1982, that the group in the SLFP which led its Presidential election campaign and were in a majority in its Executive Committee (Politburo) had decided to assassinate me and a few other Ministers, Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, the Armed Services Chiefs, and others, do away with the Constitution and imprison Mrs. Bandaranaike. In other words, on the strength of their victory, establish a military government tearing up all constitutional procedures, as they announced at their election meetings. Their actions, which amount to a coup, are now being investigated by the Police...."

Political Causerie

by

Gamini Navaratne

The "plot" was to be activated "either in the event of SLFP victory at the Presidential election or in the event of a second counting of votes becoming necessary."

With due deference to the Intelligence Services of the Government, I find it hard to believe, on the basis of the "evidence" made public so far - mostly some election speeches and snatches of telephone conversations—that there was a "conspiracy" of the kind described.

mentioned as the big "conspirators." I find it laughable that such a set of people could have imposed their will on the Sri Lankan nation. I say this because for a coup to be successful it needs careful planning by a fairly large body of persons who, in addition, must be able to win over various sections of the community, particularly the Armed Forces and the Police. Could the persons mentioned have

UNP was allegedly planning to oust the Prime Minister, Mr. Dudley Senanayake. The "Dollar intrigue", as it was called, occurred shortly after Sri Lanka had signed the rubber-rice pact with China in the face of strong opposition by the US. Referring to this episode, S.P. Amarasingam in his book, "Rice and Rubber" said, "If the coup had succeeded, as it very well might have, we would have had a puppet government in Colombo ready to

about the likely involvement of the American agency in the killing.

In January 1962, Mr. Jayawardene, then in the opposition, alleged in Parliament that Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister without Portfolio and Parliament that Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister without Portfolio and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Defence and External Affairs in Mrs. Bandaranaike's SLFP Government, was planning to foist a dictatorship on the country with Army assistance, but he was not able to provide any proof.

A few days after this allegation, on 27th January, 1962, a full-fledged coup d'état planned by a combined Army-Navy-Police team was foiled at the eleventh hour!

All the conspirators were drawn from the elitist sect-

This Naxalite bogie is hard to believe

There could indeed have been violence had the SLFP candidate won, but this would have been sporadic and spontaneous, not organised, as various individuals and groups who had grievances against UNPers tried to take revenge.

The fact that various SLFPers had been designated for various posts if Mr. Kobbekaduwe became President is not a crime. In every country with a party system, the main opposition party has a "Shadow Cabinet" ready to take over in case it is returned to power.

The names of a son-in-law of Mrs. Bandaranaike (Vijay Kumaratunga) and a number of other persons have been

commanded such support? I doubt it very much.

The question also arises why the SLFP should stage a coup against itself, which is what the allegation ultimately boils down to.

It is well to remember in this context that, except in 1971, the threat to democracy in Sri Lanka has come more from the right-wing than the leftwing.

How many readers remember that the first coup threat arose in 1953?

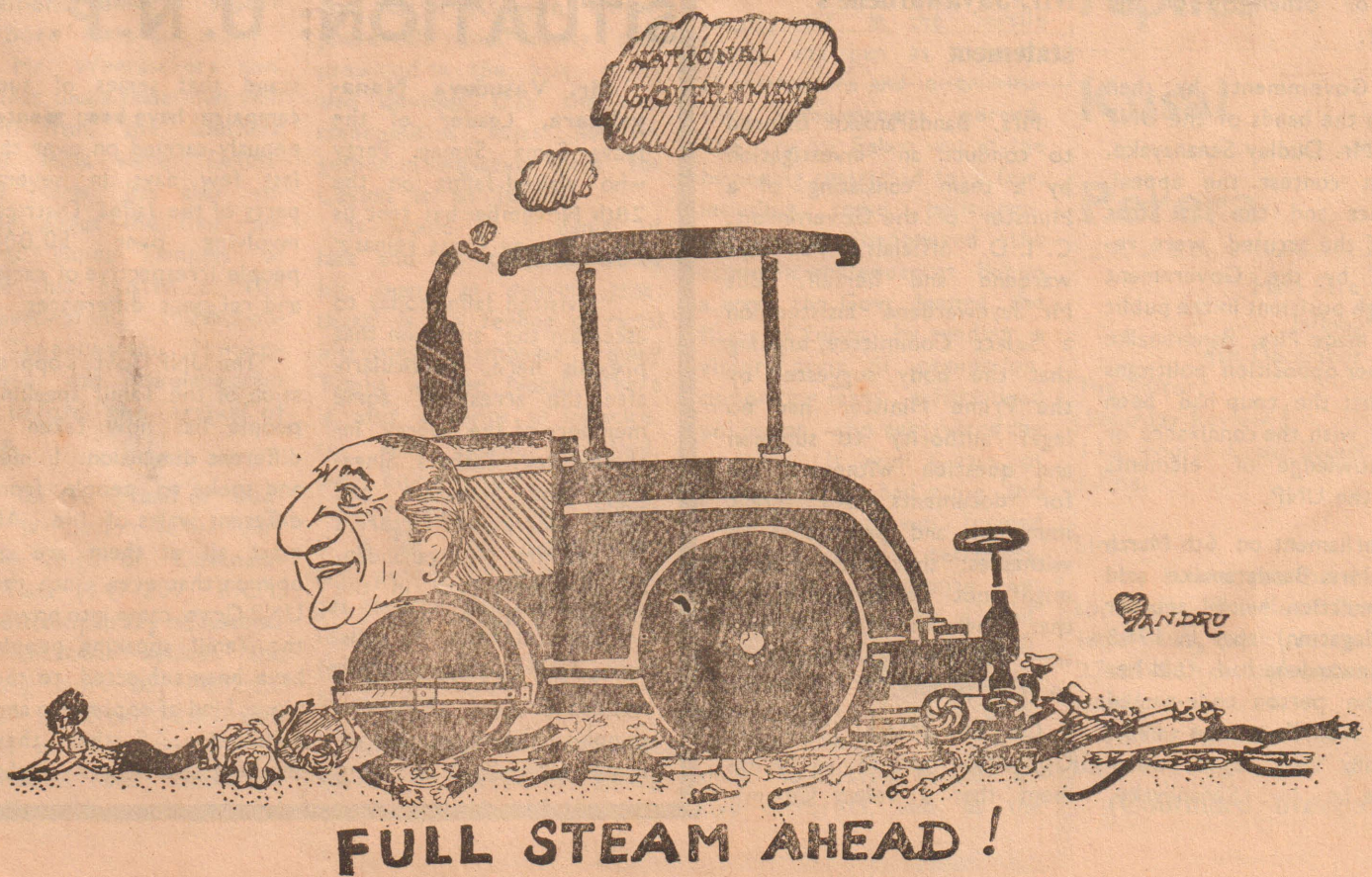
On 13th February, 1953, the then popular weekly "Trine" revealed that a pro-American group within the

cancel the China-Ceylon trade agreement and willing to make Ceylon a Yankee military and naval base."

The next time there was a coup scare in November 1958. Mr. Philip Gunawardena Minister of Industries, warned in Parliament that a high ranking police officer was masterminding a plot to overthrow Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike's Government and stop Sri Lanka's drift to overthrow Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike's Government and stop Sri Lanka's drift to socialism. The Prime Minister paid no heed to the warning and was assassinated in September 1959. In 1975, a "New York Times" commentary on Central Intelligence Agency activity world-wide, spoke

ions of society who as a class, had been afflicted by the changes that had occurred in Sri Lanka after the UNP's defeat at the 1956 elections and looked back nostalgically to the stability of the D.S. Senanayake era, the essential condition of which, according to a political commentator, was "the continuation of the fundamentals of the colonialist and semi-colonialist social, economic and administrative set-up even after the attainment of independence. Thus, in relation to the old UNP regime and the post-SLFP regime, the coup-conspiracy was "restorationist" in character but with a vital difference: the conspirators did

(Continued overleaf)



Political Gauserie -Contd.

(Continued from page 3)

not contemplate the continuation of the parliamentary set-up sponsored by the Soulbury-Senanayake partnership as the frame-work within which the new foreign imperialist-bourgeois partnership in Sri Lanka was to operate.

"The conspirators had no faith in democracy not because they were military men or policemen but because, as politicians, they saw precisely in "democracy" the source of political and social instability. Parliamentary democracy and stability (i.e. capitalist stability) could not, in their view thrive together in the conditions existing in Sri Lanka. In the interests of capitalist stability, therefore, they set out to destroy democracy."

Twenty four persons were finally made to stand their trial in the Supreme Court on charges of attempting to overthrow by force the legally constituted Government of Mrs. Bandaranaike. Eleven of them were found guilty and were each sentenced to ten years rigorous punishment and the confiscation of all property.

Privy Council appeal

But, on appeal, the British Privy Council set them free in 1965, on the ground that the special retroactive legislation under which the trial was held was "ultra vires" the 1948 Constitution because it was a "grave and deliberate incursion by Parliament into the judicial sphere." It did not rule on the guilt or otherwise of the accused.

The Government, by then again in the hands of the UNP led by Mr. Dudley Senanayake, did not contest the appeal. This fact and the fact that most of the accused were rewarded by the Government with high positions in the public sector, made Mrs. Bandaranaike and other opposition politicians claim that the coup had been planned with the connivance or the knowledge of elements within the UNP.

In Parliament on 6th March 1974, Mrs. Bandaranaike said (in connection with another coup allegation) that in 1968 Mr. Jayewardena had told her that the person code-named "Major Shelly" in the 1962 conspiracy was none other than the late Mr. Senanayake.

One of the accused was the same police officer referred to by Mr. Phillip Gunawardena four years previously. He is still alive and kicking and holding a very important security position. Another leading accused is also holding a high position in the Government. Another accused migrated to Australia; his ravishing daughter is married to a very important Sri Lankan's only son.

Then to refer to one more of the coup scares, on 3rd January 1974, Mr. Jayawardene, going on material said to have been supplied to him by an "informant", apprised the Governor-General of an alleged plot by the "Janavegaya group" to seize power, an allegation which he repeated in Parliament on 10th January, 1974, and elaborated in his speech on 6th March, 1974, demanding the appointment of a select Committee to conduct an investigation.

The gist of the allegation was that a "revolutionary group", consisting of "persons very close to the Prime Minister," planned to come to power with the help of "elements in the Armed Forces and the Police," in order "to enable her and this group within and outside Parliament to continue in power in the face of the grave economic crisis facing the country," a palace coup, as it were. Among the persons named as members of this group were Mr. Ratne Deshapriya Senanayake, Lt. Col. Anuruddha Ratwatte, Mr. & Mrs. Kumar Rupasinghe and Mr. Dharmasiri Jayakoddy. Some of the members were said to have "close links with the Chinese Embassy in Colombo".

Mr. Jayawardene's statement

Mrs. Bandaranaike offered to conduct an investigation by a team consisting of a Minister of the Government, C. I. D. officials, Mr. Jayawardene and herself. But Mr. Jayewardene insisted on a Select Committee, arguing that the body suggested by the Prime Minister had no legal authority to summon and question witnesses, call for documents and grant immunity and protection to witnesses; that such a body might not be impartial; and that, therefore, the investigation would not give assurance to the people.

On 6th March, 1974, the Opposition moved in Parliament that a Select Committee

be appointed to conduct an investigation. Proposing the motion, Mr. Jayawardene made a lengthy statement. In her reply, Mrs. Bandaranaike touched on all the points raised by the Leader of the opposition. The speeches during the debate on the motion make very interesting reading.



Mrs. Bandaranaike

On 23rd March, 1974, Mrs. Bandaranaike said that C.I.D. inquiries revealed that the four documents said to have been given to Mr. Jayawardene by his "informant" and tabled by him in support of his demand for a Select Committee were "forgeries." Investigations were continued by the Government but these led nowhere because of Mr. Jayawardene's refusal to co-operate unless a Select Committee were appointed.

It is significant to remember that this was the time that UNP, led by Mr. Jaya-

wardene, had launched extra-parliamentary agitation against the United Front Government, through "satyagrahas" and other means. Mrs. Bandaranaike said the allegation could be a cover for a right-wing conspiracy with the civil disobedience campaign designed to prepare the ground for it. What happened in

take stern action against those UNPers who are alleged to have unleashed violence after the 1977 election victory (after repealing the Act granting indemnity), those persons, who let loose a reign of terror in Jaffna on the eve of the district development council elections in June 1981, those persons who unleashed communal violence in August 1981 (including in the plantations), those UNPers (who have been identified) who attacked the Sinhala Bauddha Balamandalaya meeting in Colombo recently, and those UNPers who indulged in violence after the Presidential election.

Unless such action is taken, could some sections of the opposition be blamed if they regard the latest coup allegation as a cover for plan by the Government, while keeping the SLFP machinery effectively strangled, to distract people's attention from the looming economic crisis, instil fear in their minds about a "Naxalite" (that is, Communist) threat and stampede them into saying "Yes" at the Referendum by clever manipulation of the state-monopolised mass media?

After all, Adolf Hitler came to power by the most democratic of means popular consent! That is the lesson of history our people should not forget as they go to the polls on 22nd December, D Day, D for DEMOCRACY or Dictatorship?

VASU REPORTS ON JAFFNA SITUATION: U. N. P. HAS TO GO

Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara, Leader of the Nava Sama Samaja Party who visited Jaffna on the 28th November has sent us the following Press release:

"I visited Jaffna today to ascertain the situation that prevails here, particularly after the arrest of some members of the clergy including Rev. Fathers. Singarayar and Sinnarasa and Jaffna University lecturers Mr. and Mrs. Nithiyanandan, all of whom are in the custody of the Army.

"In the city of Jaffna I noticed protest satyagraha campaigns being carried on in different places. I under-

stand that series of such campaigns have been spontaneously carried on over the last few days in several parts of the Jaffna District, involving over 50,000 people irrespective of racial and religious differences.

"The UNP Govt.'s oppression of the Tamil speaking people has now taken a different dimension. I met and spoke to people from different walks of life. Almost all of them are of opinion that ever since the UNP Govt. came into power the Tamil speaking people have been subjected to the worst kind of oppression and humiliation. Further they also feel that there might

be a holocaust after the so-called Referendum on 22-12-82.

"We of the Nava Sama Samaja Party will campaign at the national and international levels to explain the plight of the Tamil speaking people. We will also explain that the working class in this country, the oppressed Tamil Nation and all oppressed sections in the South should combine their struggle to overthrow the UNP Govt. Unless the UNP is overthrown the oppression of the Tamil speaking people in particular, will, if not escalate further, at least continue for ever."

Tamil deaths and 'disappearances'

Select Committee Report was Tabled

Saturday Review in its issue of November 27, 1982, published a boxed item on page 4, under the headline: TAMIL DEATHS AND DISAPPEARANCES: WHAT HAPPENED TO THE REPORT? We referred to the Amnesty International Report for 1982 which said: "A Parliamentary Select Committee was set up in 1979 to investigate the reported deaths in Police custody of three young Tamils and the disappearance of three others.....After two years it had still not completed its report....." We posed the question: We are now in November 1982. What has happened to the Select Committee Report.

We are now informed by a member of the Select Committee that the Report has in fact been tabled before Parliament. The members of the Committee were: Mr. Lalith Athulath Mudali (Chairman), Mr. Jabir A. Cader, Mr. W. J. M. Lokubandara, Mr. R. P. Wijesiri and Mr. M. Sivasithamparam.

The Select Committee was appointed to inquire into and report on allegations made against the Police, following a communication addressed to President Jayawardene by Mr. A. Amirthalingam Member of Parliament and Leader of the Opposition on 24th July, 1979. The following is the text of the communication made by Mr. Amirthalingam:



A. Amirthalingam

The following is the text of the communication addressed by Mr. Amirthalingam to His Excellency the President:-

Parliament,
Colombo I,
24th July 1979

"A. AMIRTHALINGAM,
Leader of the Opposition
(Sri Lanka)
My No. LO/S-1
His Excellency

J. R. Jayawardena Esqr.
President,
Colombo.

Your Excellency,
Killings by Police in Jaffna
under Emergency

Jaffna is in the grip of panic and uncertainty as to what may happen at any time as a result of gruesome killing by Police immediately after the declaration of a State of Emergency. I brought these happenings to your Excellency's notice on the 14th evening through the telephone from Batticaloa and on the 16th afternoon in your office. Your Excellency assured that there was a report on these killings and that the persons responsible for it will be arrested and dealt with according to law. It is now more than ten days since the killings and nothing has been done to bring the offenders to book. In the meantime one more boy who was arrested, mercilessly assaulted and remanded has died in the Jaffna Prisons. Three young men, who were also arrested on the 13th night and who were reported to be in the Chavakachcheri Police, even to Your Excellency, are now missing. There seems to be some evidence that they have been killed by the police and their bodies disposed of, as was done during the 1971 insurgency. This brings the death total to six. I give below the names, particulars, the facts concerning the arrest

and subsequent killing by the Police:

(1) Kanagaratnam Visvajothiratham alias Inpam, Navaly South, 27 years, not married.

Arrested at his house at 1 a.m. on 14-7-79 by a police party who had gone in a car. His body was found in the morning by the side of the Allapiddy Road. He had several burn marks and other signs of torture. He had been shot through the forehead but the skull had been broken subsequently and the brain matter taken out perhaps to remove pellets which may have been embedded there.

(2) Saravanamuthu Selvaratnam, 27 years old, married to sister of (1) in 1978 and has a three months old child.

He was a welder and had made all arrangements to travel to the middle-east for employment this week. Arrested along with (1) and the body was found in the same place. He had also been tortured and shot through neck but brain matter taken out. I attach hereto a photograph of the bodies of these two showing the mutilations and their injuries.

(3) Ramalingam Balendran of St. Peter's Lane, Navaly, 24 years old, unmarried,

Arrested shortly after 1 a.m. on 14-7-79 and taken along with (1) and (2). He is missing since then. It is now presumed that he had been killed by the Police and body disposed of.

(4) Sellathurai Rajeswaran of 24/1, Saddanathar Kovil Road, Jaffna, married.

Has one infant in arms. Arrested on the night of 13-7-79 by the Police. There is some evidence that he was taken to the Chavakachcheri Police Station and there assaulted and died. Body not recovered.

(5) Sellathurai Parameswaran of 24/1, Saddanathar Kovil Road, Jaffna.

Brother of (4). married to the sister of the wife of (4). The wife is expecting. Arrested along with (4) and taken to Chavakachcheri Police Station. No trace of him since. Presumed to have been killed by the Police.

(6) Aiyadurai Indrarajah of Jaffna, 19 years old.

Arrested by the Police on the night of 13-7-79 and taken to Chavakachcheri Police Station and assaulted there. He was remanded at the Jaffna Prisons and died there on 21-7-79. He had more than 33 assault marks on the body.

Besides these six persons, three of whose bodies were available and the bodies of the other three not traced, are other youth arrested by the Police and assaulted at Chavakachcheri is lying seriously ill at the Jaffna Hospital:

Jayendran alias Moorthy of Siva Vasa, Uduvil West, Chunnakam. He was also arrested on the night of 13-7-79 and taken to Chavakachcheri Police Station. He had seen Rajeswaran (4 above) beaten by Police and killed.

I wish to place on record another incident at Jaffna on 16-7-79 at 10 or 10-30 p.m. Two youths viz:

(1) Sabaratnam Sritharan (22 years) and (2) K. Vijayakumar were cycling along Sir Ponnampalam Ramanathan Road Jaffna, after decorating a temple. They were shot at by the Police who were passing along in a jeep and Sabaratnam was injured and hospitalised. The other boy was arrested and remanded. The Police tried to make out that the youths had shot at them. Fortunately the S.P. appears to have seen through the falsity of this story and released the boy on bail.

I have given above the incidents which have come to my knowledge. Unless the erring Police officers responsible for the gruesome killings are brought to book without delay the confidence of the people in the Police and the Rule of Law will be shaken completely. Terrorism and torture by the Police has been a fertile ground to breed terrorism. Now that special legislation has been passed to deal with terrorism I would appeal to your Excellency to do away with Emergency, misrule in Jaffna and restore the Rule of Law. There is fearful apprehension among the people of Jaffna that some big action and further terrorisation is being planned after the 26th. I bring these to Your Excellency's notice in the hope that redress will be given and further havoc stopped.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely,
Sgd. A. Amirthalingam,
Leader of the Opposition.

Gandhi film took 20 years to make

NEW DELHI:

Sir Richard Attenborough's movie on Mahatma Gandhi projects the relevance of Gandhi in modern times and does not deify him. Making this clear at a meeting with newsmen after a screening of the multi-crore Indo-British production, Sir Richard, hoped that after seeing the film people would not refer to "Bapu" in a glib manner or as a deity which he was not.

He told a crowded press conference after a press preview of "Gandhi" that the teachings and message of Gandhiji were more relevant to the world today. The film's world premiere was held here on November 30.

Sir Richard said he had accomplished his life's ambition by making a film on Gandhiji. "It has taken me 20 years. The project was cleared by no less a person than Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1963."


"I have taken a vow to be non-violent for the rest of my life," Sir Richard said. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi, had seen the film sometime ago and liked it, he added. He said he was not aware whether the film would be released in Pakistan or not. The movie, in the last scenes shows Mr. Jinnah giving an ultimatum to Gandhiji either to accept the partition of India or face a civil war.

Mrs. Correta King, widow of Martin Luther King, arrived here on a one-day visit as a **STATE GUEST** to attend the premiere.

President Zail Singh attended the premiere at the tastefully decorated Vigyan Bhavan here.

The premiere was a charity show organised by Columbia Pictures and UNICEF in aid of eradication and control of leprosy in India. The Vice President Mr. M. Hidayatullah was also present.

Continued from last issue



SAYING NO TO referendum

T. Subramaniam

was the temporary destruction of the Labour Party in Great Britain as an effective instrument for Opposition that contributed largely to the political failure of the immediate pre-war years. During this period the British political

that followed, he deserted his party and the Party suffered heavy losses and it could not strengthen its position till 1945. As I said earlier during the second world war because of the grave emergency a national Government was formed, but as soon as Germany was defeated the Labour Party, withdrew itself from the Government and an election was held; but in normal times there is no necessity for a national Government because if there is no Opposition there is no democracy. How can there be a national Government when there are differences on fundamental questions?

The idea behind is the Fascist one, the idea of the Corporate State. Instead of the body politic becoming a battle ground of particular interests why not view the State as an organism where everybody has a role to play?

newspapers are directly or indirectly under the control of the Government. The Governing party has all the facilities through the Radio, T. V., and the press to propagate its views. In no other democratic country in the world can one find a press so servile as in this country. Some newspapers have already been sealed. Propaganda is violence done to the mind. It induces the average individual to self-distrust: "Who am I to contradict so many?"

I do not deny that the people have a little freedom today. But one does not know when one will be taken into custody and kept indefinitely without a trial. Many party officials are under arrest. The fear imperceptibly grows that we are tending towards despotism. One must accept that in democratic States also there is much propaganda but, there is the free press and free discussion is allowed and that brings out the truth.

(2) The monopolist party. If elections are postponed the chances are that there will be only one party left and that party is the governing party.

(3) The facade legislature. Again if elections are postponed, Some of the members now in the Opposition may cross over to the other side. That is not all. The President can, at least in theory send home at the 144 members of his party and in their place nominate another batch to replace them. The word 'election' becomes a misnomer because the word implies a choice by the people, whereas the President nominates all of them. So what sort of legislature will it be?

(4) A large degree of centralization. It is hardly necessary for me to comment on this aspect. If it is not clear today, by and by it will be seen in all its rigour.

That is why it is said that frequent dissolution of the legislature and periodic elections marks the correspondence between the people and the legislature. Instead of the people electing their members the President appoints them as and when he chooses to do so; it will not be an elected Parliament, but an appointed one.

It has been frequently mentioned that during the last few days that the Op-

(Continued next page)

Jennings in his "Cabinet Government further says: A House in which the Opposition is small tends to become slack in its habits. Attendance becomes irregular. This disproportion of strength is so great that men do not take pains. There is an insufficient incentive to mutual understanding. The burden on the representative speakers against the Government is too great for them to do their work well. Strong enough in quality for several reasons also. For want of effective generalship, the Opposition case goes by default. The effective work of criticising the Government fails to be done. Because it so fails, the ears of the country do not listen to the proceedings of the House, and the educative force of its debates is lost.

More than this, a weak Opposition begins to lose confidence in itself. It loses its integration and becomes not merely self-critical, but publicly self-critical. The result is to transfer public interest from its function as an Opposition to the inferior problem of personalities involved in its internal differences. It becomes defeatist and even irresponsible; it loses what in a parliamentary system it is fatal to lose, the ability to take the offensive when the opportunity presents itself.

Good government & strong opposition

For every Opposition has to pass through two phases if it is to transform itself into a Government. There is the phase where it seeks to make the case against the Cabinet of the day. After a period, it is rare for such a case not to offer itself on solid grounds. But there is the second and more difficult phase, in which the negation of the first is transferred into the ability to convince the electorate positively not only that the Govern-

ment is a bad Government, but also that, for the sake of the country, the Opposition ought to take its place as soon as possible. No Opposition can produce that conviction unless its Front Bench has quality enough not only to take the offensive, but also to seem to take it on comprehensive and adequate grounds."

life was enfeebled by the Government's large majority and the impotence of the Opposition. The verdict of future historians about the present period in Sri Lanka's history will be extremely interesting, on the causative link between a weak Opposition and a despotic Government. There are other fea-

Why it is politically immoral - 2

This passage tells us clearly why the Opposition should be strong both in quality and numbers. Indeed it is of great relevance to our own situation. That is why the present Government does not like to have a strong Opposition because a strong Opposition can break the confidence of the electorate in the Government. Naturally the temptation to postpone the general election so that the present weak opposition may continue forever is great and cannot be resisted. How can an Opposition criticize responsibly if it knows or feels that it can never be more than an ineffectual minority, a voice in the wilderness?

To make a government good and just the Opposition must be strong. It is the opinion of historians that i

tures which have not yet seen the light of day. We are told that Singapore, a city-state, should be our model. Till very recent times Singapore did not have a single member in the Opposition. Now there is one, single solitary member and from the reports that reach us everything is being done there to make his political life very unpleasant.

In recent times there have been some talk about the formation of a national Government. The political history of Great Britain is a good guide to us and we can learn useful lessons from it. In 1931 because of a grave economic crisis a national Government was formed with Ramsay Mac Donald, the Labour leader, as Prime Minister. At the general election

Cooperate and become corporate. So the leader calls all parties to help him and there is no Opposition. In a liberal democratic State it does not work like that. The aim is the liquidation of the Opposition parties. Can thinking men with fundamental political differences cooperate like ants and bees?

I have said that this Government is tending towards totalitarianism. All political theorists accept that Totalitarianism has four main features. Let us see whether these four features are found in our country. (1) The use of propaganda in Germany Dr. Goebbels developed it into a fine art; the oftener a lie is said, the greater the chance of its being believed. Today almost all the

(Continued from Page 6)

position is anti-democratic, violent and Naxalite and that the S.L.F.P. is now under the control of the Communists. It is not surprising. Some years ago a Cambridge Don, Brogan, wrote a book with the title Political Patterns in today's World. In it there is a passage that is of great relevance to us today. May I quote him. "Nearly everywhere with the grand exception of India, emphasis is less on democratic institutions than on charismatic leadership, and there are some who would say that this is true of India as well after 15 years of Mr. Nehru (Though Nehru, it must be reiterated, owes his longevity to the will of the people, exercised through regular free parliamentary elections, not like so many dictators to organized plebiscites.....) The appeal of dictatorship would seem to be a response in tragic circumstances to a national instinct of self-preservation. Overwhelmed by events a government falters. Everywhere, it would seem there is the danger that in adversity recourse will be had to the man on Horseback, or in these days, the man whose intuition can tell him that his opponents are traitors, who carry communist party membership cards". No comment is necessary on what he says except that from Europe the tendency which he speaks of has spread to Asia also.

Unethical and Immoral!

At the very beginning of this article I said that this problem should be examined not only from the political but also from the moral angle. Let us do so now. Why do we say that obtaining consent from the people to extend the life of Parliament is unethical and immoral? Much has been written during the last few days about Referendum, that it is a perfectly democratic exercise, that it expresses the will of the people, that it is the most legitimate form of democracy and so on. In political theory it is usual to talk about the sovereignty of the people, the will of the people, the sovereign electorate, that the people are supreme.

This game can go on, for ever

Nobody questions the fact that in a political democracy the people are supreme. Otherwise it is not a democracy. Abraham Lincoln gave expression to it. But when we say we get consent from the people, the question arises consent for what? Can we ask for consent to do something wrong, even though it may be legal. I maintain

Even Adolf Hitler entrenched his dictatorship through a plebiscite

ptional circumstances such as war it is unethical and immoral to ask the people for consent to prolong the life of Parliament, even in war only for such time as is absolutely necessary as they did in Great Britain during the last war. Otherwise the Government can ask to extend not for 6 years but for 16 years. If the life of Parliament is extended now, the government will continue to have its two-thirds majority and the President before his term expires can again get Parliament to pass an Amendment to extend its life from 1989 to 1995. This game can go on indefinitely to the next century also, and it can be said "the people are with us, they want us to go on for ever without election."

There are some eminent political scientists who do not favour Referendums except when it is meant to obtain the consent of the people on some clear and simple issues.

The reason is that while in a general election people vote for a party considering the broad principles and policies of the party, at a Referendum a complex issue may be referred to them and the ordinary people may not have the capacity to understand the problem fully.

Even when speaking of advanced countries they say that complex issues should not be referred to people who are not articulate, to men who, sunk in ignorance and superstitions, pass the whole life in the daily struggle for a meal. What is urgent in the issue the government raises is not the single desirability of affirmative or negative response, that is, yes or no, but the much more complicated question of the desirability of a solution to a complex problem which may shake the very foundations of democracy as in the case with which we are confronted today.

It is one of the simplest of intellectual fallacies that the ordinary man can understand and solve a highly intricate and complex problem. We find that Mr. Thondaman and his organisation, the Ceylon Workers Congress, have asked their members, the plantation workers, to vote for the proposal of the government. Can any reasonable man say seriously that all these

tand the implications of the proposal for which they are asked to vote? What I say of the plantation workers is equally true of other groups also.

I have used the C. W. C. only as an illustration. Apart from the proposal of the government which we are considering now, there may be other problems which, from their very nature, require treatment by expert inquiry. Can such problems be referred to the indiscriminating and uninformed masses?



Hitler in a bullet-proof vest 1925

May I quote what Prof. Mc Iver in his book The Modern State wrote: "The will on which a government rests may be democratic; even oligarchic or plutocratic influences are powerful in creating it. It is quite possible that an interested minority may so control the avenues of information and suggestion that a majority will suffer persuasion contrary to their own interests. The decision of a leader may induce millions to support measures which they would have opposed if his prestige had been thrown on the other side. The will of the people rarely issues as a spontaneous expression. It is too inchoate, too inert. It must be focussed and established through an elaborate mechanism of organisation, and, of course, such an organisation is an agency of control as well as of expression."

This is exactly what is happening today in this country. Party papers seized, party officials under arrest, a servile press on its side, one party with

immense resources organises the machinery of propaganda and lets loose on the inarticulate people all sorts of fallacies, arguments and half-truths. It has been said that many beneficial acts passed by popularly elected legislatures if presented to the people in the form of Referendum, would probably be rejected.

Apart from the demerits and disadvantages as a political method the Referendum has, there is the question of moral responsibility, obligation and limitation. Consent is not enough. There is something more. A government should not refer to the people any issue that raises moral and ethical questions. If this government or any other government passes an Act disfranchising all the registered citizens of Indian origin and sent it to the people for approval and if the people consent to it, will it be regarded as moral or politically wise? I do not know what Mr. Thondaman will think about it, but I will regard it as highly immoral and imprudent.

So we come to the conclusion that simply because a measure has been passed by a democratic process, that does not mean that is the correct thing to do or that it is a moral act. After all, the land-owning aristocracy in Great Britain entrenched itself in power during the 19th century through democratic processes. That is not all. Dictators have come to power through democratic processes. On the death of Hindenburg, 2nd August 1934, Hitler by decree-Law merged the Chancellorship and the Presidency, and so became Fuhrer and Reichshanzler, and on 29th August 1934 a plebiscite ratified this change with an over-whelming majority.

A plebiscite was strictly not necessary, but the Fuhrer so loved his people. "The people themselves shall give this decision", said he in the Reichstag. In July 1935 the title was changed simply to 'Der Fuhrer'; it was announced that 'Chancellor' sounded like a functionary, whereas 'Fuhrer' indicated

the beloved leader of the people! He followed the democratic process to the very letter. Prof. Herman Finer in his book. The Future of Government' had written thus. "The non-responsible or dictatorial systems of government differ, however, from the old autocracies by the establishment of mechanism for the permeation of the whole body of the people, or as a Fascist political theorist has put it, by 'the identification of the people and the government'."

The dictatorial systems of our time have shown that such identification has been more concerned with contriving that the views of the people became identical with those of the government than to identify the government's views with those of the people. There is, therefore, created a machinery for discovering the opinion, for the destruction of opposition, at the earliest moment of exposure and then for the deliberate manufacture of opinion in order to secure civic obedience. This implies a permanent need for a political party enjoying the monopoly of power to the exclusion of all others, and an arrangement of propaganda or political education, strong, calculated, incessant. "So we find that not only in democracies but also in dictatorial regimes the so-called democratic processes are employed. These referendums or plebiscites in many cases had gradually led democracies to dictatorship. It is for the people to find out for what end they are used, but, unfortunately, the mass of mankind cannot do that.

Preaching atheism from a cathedral

Prof. Harold J. Laski acid comments "But this, it may be urged, better men's effort should be plainly revolutionary than that they should be able to pervert the constitution to their purposes. Atheism, after all, should not be preached from the pulpit of a cathedral." He certainly did not write about present day conditions in Sri Lanka, for he died long ago.

(Continued overleaf)



CONSENT DOES NOT MAKE AN IMMORAL ACT MORAL

referendum

(Continued from page 7)

Before I conclude I must write a few words about the two parties that are today in the Opposition, namely the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the Tamil United Liberation Front. The S. L. F. P. is lacking in the greatest of political virtues—unity. Rightly or wrongly, with reason or without reason, an impression has been created that it is an anti-Tamil, particularly anti-up-country Tamil party. It must make a determined effort to erase that impression.

"When a constitution confers on a single office almost dictatorial powers, particularly in a developing country, the holder of their office is a man with supreme self-confidence in his own capacity to lead and in the correctness of his and his party's appraisal of the country's needs. In a country where his opponents are in

disarray, it is he and not they who gains at least the passive acquiescence of the people. When the ranks of its opponents are divided a government manages to live long, it may even win an election by default. "These are words of wisdom gained from knowledge of what a great men had seen in many countries. As I wrote earlier Parliamentary government is party government. If there is only one party it leads to dictatorship. There should be another party which is capable of providing an alternative government which today only S. L. F. P. can do.

I have to mention a certain matter, that is that if some of our Sinhalese friends ask us on what moral grounds can Mr. Amirthalingam continue the function as Leader of the Opposition in view of the votes cast for the S. L. F. P. Candidate at the Presidential election. There

is no doubt that if a general election is held now, the S. L. F. P. will be, if not the largest party, the second largest party. But the election has not yet been held. Mr. Amirthalingam will gladly vacate his office when the election is held. This question should really be put not to us but to His Excellency the President. I accept that the leader of a regional party cannot be the leader of the Opposition.

Some people seem to think that the T.U.L.F. passes resolutions and then goes into hiding. Now we must thank Mr. G.G. Ponnambalam (Jr.) of the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress for bringing them out into the open, in making the T.U.L.F. leaders meet the people at least in seminars, if not in open public meetings.

It is my case that the General Election should be held before October 1983.

Lord Simon who later became Lord Chancellor of Great Britain in an address to the Empire Parliamentary Conference in 1937 said "Our parliamentary system will work as long as the responsible people in different parties accept the view that it is better that the other side should win than that the constitution should be broken." Let us not allow the constitution to be broken. Whether Referendum is a legitimate exercise is not the question. The question is whether asking consent to do something ethically wrong is legitimate. The performance of an act with consent, which otherwise is immoral, cannot make it moral. The extension of Parliament for two years without consent and extension of Parliament for six years with consent are on the same level because both are morally wrong and politically unwise. The lesson that history teaches us is where periodic elections end, tyranny begins.

These are days when some people bring back to memory the name of Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan. That venerable man, speaking in the Legislative Council in 1915 on the Riots addressed the Governor as follows: "Private friendships, Sir, has nothing to do with public duty. That is my creed, and this is a most uncomfortable day for me. I have been called upon to

do a duty that is most unpleasant, but which I must do at any cost, because the just cries of the people are dear unto God, and to the British throne and to you, Sir". If he were living today, what would he do? He would raise his mighty voice in the name of democracy, in the name of liberty, in the name of fair play and justice and in the name of moral and spiritual values and request the government to abandon their outrageous proposal.

Before I conclude I shall place before the Civil Rights Movement, the Centre for Society and Religion and other similar societies and movements for their consideration and action quotation from Prof. Herman Finer's book, "The Future of Government". "There is a danger to all democracies in the possibility of the emergence of a dictatorial policy, economic or military, but especially the latter, anywhere. Therefore, there must be established a World Convention arranging and guaranteeing by sanctions if necessary, the basic features of democratic government—the legislative and the executive formed and reformed periodically by universal franchise. The tired idea that in this age any nation may freely build or maintain a system of government which tends to war or to domestic brutality and brutalization is still held by many people and Statesmen. But it is untenable as allowing diphtheria and tuberculosis patients freely to circulate and ride in a bus." (concluded)

Upali Cooray reports to NEW STATESMAN, London, on

Sri Lanka crackdown on political opponents

On 22 December the Sri Lankan government will hold a referendum to extend the life of the present parliament for another six years. This will replace the elections due next June.

Sri Lanka's president, J.R. Jayawardene, has also now invoked 'emergency powers' to close down the Communist daily newspaper *Aththa* and four other papers. The Communist party's offices have been sealed, and scores of members of the Communist Party and the main opposition party, the SLFP, have been detained without charge.

The official reason for these actions is that the

government claims to have uncovered a plot by 'anarchist elements' in the SLFP to assassinate President Jayawardene as well as the SLFP's leader, ex-Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike, and her son Anura. The government argues that by postponing elections for six years it will give the 'legitimate leadership' of the SLFP time to put its house in order.

The government's concern for Mrs Bandaranaike is surprising: not so long ago it enacted retrospective legislation to strip her of her civic rights and prevent her from engaging in political activities for seven years, because of

decisions she had taken while she was Prime Minister in the 1970s.

A more plausible explanation for the suspension of democracy and the silencing of the opposition is that the ruling United National Party (UNP), which at present has over 80 per cent of the seats in Parliament, would almost certainly lose many of them if it had to face election next year. The UNP has already lost much of its public support in the past year, and this drop in popularity will be still greater when President Jayawardene introduces his stringent 'austerity measures' in the next

few months.

A confidential report prepared by the South Asia department of World Bank, which was presented at the Sri Lanka 'aid club' meeting in Tokyo in May, painted a gloomy picture of the island's economic prospects. It predicted that Sri Lanka's international reserves would be completely exhausted by 1984 without massive support from the IMF.

In previous years, the World Bank paid glowing tributes to the 'new and dynamic' policies of Mr. Jayawardene and the UNP. Foreign companies were off-

ered ten-year 'tax holidays' as an incentive to set up business in Sri Lanka. President Jayawardene's government also began to dismantle the welfare state by reducing subsidies on food, transport and domestic fuel. The value of the rupee was halved in 1977 and floated against hard currencies, resulting in a further depreciation of 25 per cent. To back up its economic measures, the government imposed severe penalties on workers taking strike action.

After its initial euphoria, having embarked on a massive capital spending programme—prestigious parliamentary complex, irrigation scheme, luxury flats—Jayawardene's government faced a liquidity problem, high inflation and an enormous foreign debt. In order to meet debt servicing charges and repayments of foreign loans, the government is now seeking to lease new-irrigated land to multinationals such as Nes-

(Continued on page 10)

LETTERS

The SUN & Racism

Milagiriya,
Colombo-4.

2nd December, 1982.

The Editor,
Saturday Review,
Jaffna.

Dear Sir,

As a Sinhala speaking Buddhist, I heartily endorse the view expressed by your editorial (27th November, 1982) about the 'Sun' newspaper and its racist attitude. The 'Sun' has cleverly fooled some to believe that it is a truly independent newspaper by exposing a few problems through Insight. But read its editorials, and letters to the editor, and its class interests and chauvinism are only too clear.

What is worse in their daily practice some of the major share-holders of the 'Sun' group of newspapers are the leaders of the "meditating" Bud-

dhist. But why do they do this? Out of interest for the masses of the Buddhists in this country? No, for their own individual, selfish salvation. They would contribute lakhs of rupees for Buddhist temples and meditation halls, but do they for once think that it is their duty first to strive for a decent existence, for all human beings, so that they can practice Buddhism. Can the beggar, the homeless led to near suicide with economic problems, mental anxiety, no help from the State, no access to political power, practice meditation? Private property, individual salvation, chauvinism in culture and following that racism is their creed.

I congratulate your paper for making this a public statement.

Yours truly,
Rohini Dias.

Are the Tamils to become extinct or assimilated

The Editor,
Saturday Review,
Jaffna.

Dear Sir,

Your reader Chandrasiri Weerasekera is, I fear, misquoting and distorting history in his letter appearing in the SATURDAY REVIEW of December 4th. According to B.H. Farmer's book, CEYLON A DIVIDED NATION.

"The Mahavamsa, in the first place, gave the Sinhalese a myth about their origin which, farfetched as it is, convinced them that they were a people with something special about them. The myth tells of an Indian prince, Vijaya, the grandson of a union between an Indian princess and a lion (hence 'Sinhala', the lion race)." It is said that Vijaya, after his adventures among the Yakkhas and Yakkhins, considered to be the aboriginal inhabitants of the Island, and forsaking his queen the Yakka princess Kuveni, sent a matrimonial mission to the Pandyan king at Madura. The Pandyan sent out his own maiden daughter with 699 maidens and many other attendants. According to Mahavamsa VII: 72-74 Vijaya all through his reign of 38 years sent to the Pandyan king an annual present of "a shell pearl worth twice a hundred thousand".

The eminent Sinhalese historian Paul E. Pieris has said in his book, NAGADIPA AND BUDDHIST REMAINS IN JAFFNA, "It stands to reason that a country which is only 30 miles from India and which would have been seen by Indian fisherman every morning as they sailed out to catch their fish, would have been occupied as soon as the continent was peopled by men who understood how to sail. I suggest that North of Ceylon was a flourishing settlement before Vijaya was born (emphasis mine)." Will Mr. Weerasekera concede that those fishermen who set off from the southern tip of India were "DAMILAS"? Pieris has also remarked about the five ancestral Hindu Temples of Ceylon that existed at Thiruketheeswaram, Munneswaram, Tondeswaram, Thirukoneswaram and Nakuleswaram long before the arrival of Vijaya.

As for the spread of Buddhism in Ceylon it was during the reign of Devanampiya Tissa (247-207 B.C.), the contemporary of Asoka. The Mahavamsa relates the charming story of Mahinda, son of Emperor Asoka, who arrived at Mihintale when he encountered and converted King Devanampiya Tissa (mind

you 247-207 B.C.) and not 3 B.C.)

It is not everyone who has the gift of understanding the question of human rights. The phrase, "EVERY TRUE MAN OUGHT TO FEEL ON HIS OWN CHEEK THE BLOW DEALT TO THE CHEEK OF ANY OTHER MAN" is attributed to the Cuban patriot Marti and Che Guevara is said to have quoted this very often. How many of us are capable of reacting to injustice in this manner?

The Veddas, the Sinhalese and the Tamils are the three Primary Races of Ceylon. The first one is almost extinct. Once in a way we hear of Uruwarige Tissahamy, the Vedda Chieftain, going to Colombo to relate his tale of woe to the "MAHAHURA". Are the Tamils to follow in his footsteps until they too become extinct or assimilated?

Faithfully,
"Fiat Justitia."

An appeal for racial amity

Perera Lane,
Wellawatte.

The Editor,
Saturday Review,
Jaffna.

Dear sir,

This is primarily an appeal through your paper, to the government, and the people to make every effort to end the senseless violence and killings, that has now made the North, a land of terror to live in. This orgy of violence and bloodshed must be stopped. To do this, it is but common sense, that the causes must first be impartially probed; for dealing with symptoms can only lead to a cul-de-sac. In the search for causes, every effort must be made to stem the bitterness that is fouling the atmosphere of racial amity that prevailed in the past. It is also obvious that the two communities must live together in whatever form, for Ceylon is an Island.

It would be a denial of fact and no purpose would be seen in denying that, there is no feeling of racial bitterness, amongst many Tamils in the North. There is also a sense of injustice, to what extent justified, only humane and impartial inquiry can reveal. Hence it is for the Government and people of good will to get together and see how this feeling of resentment and bitterness in the North could be allayed.

While no useful purpose would be served by raking up the mistakes of the past

a government dedicated to "Dharmista", must correct whatever mistakes; there cannot be a true National Govt. without the loyalty and dedication of all its citizens. Racial bitterness and a feeling of injustice tends to beget violence provoking reprisals, and this can result in martyrs, however misguided. This is potentially dangerous, for such are not deterred by the penalties of the law. The intensity of feeling must indeed be high, if young men for no personal benefit submit to the fate of being hunted like wild beasts.

A majority to ride roughshod, hurting the self-respect of a minority, is hardly a humane way of tackling problems. Letting loose, uncultured, often brutal so-called guardians of the law, in the countryside, is hardly a way of endearing the government to the Tamils, for the policemen represent the Govt. This was apparent when Sinhalese policemen burnt down priceless volumes in the Jaffna Library. A minority is quick to resent domination and injustice, but on the other hand it will respect justice and fairplay, irrespective of politics. This was shown when a Sinhalese high official in Jaffna was able to win the co-operation, trust and respect of the Tamils, without in any way jeopardising his loyalty and duty by the Govt. It must be remembered that the incessant cry for Eelam was provoked by the poor statesmanship of governments both past and present. Racial animosities can to a great extent be overcome with justice and goodwill.

Although the demand for Eelam is anathema to the Sinhalese majority, posterity may well ask what action the government has taken to convince the Tamil masses, that such a demand is meaningless and unnecessary. The Tamil homelands are devoid of natural resources, and crops can only be grown with difficulty, so much so, that almost 90% of Tamil youth sought employment in the fertile South, and then as a result of restrictions and discrimination, employment abroad. The cry for Eelam was at the beginning restricted to a few, including some politicians, and many disapproved the economic consequences but in a way, the Govt. fanned the flame of Eelam by sending a virtual army of occupation, comprising many indiscipline policeman, who aggravated the situation. It was a case of giving a dog a bad name and hanging it. Thus was formed the core of the terrorists, for whom a policeman was like a red flag to a bull. Violence and killing erupted, resulting in wide spread retaliation by the police, often on the innocent. A few of those so harassed become active terrorists, and so the

sorry tale goes on unabated.

It is time that the Govt. reassessed its policy of tooth for tooth and eye for eye, by more enlightened statesmanship. It would be well to remember the law laid down by the Enlightened one for all humanity irrespectively. "Hatred ceases not by hatred but by love", and it is more realistic for those in power to do so.

Another most important matter is that the Govt. must not be backhanded for that can create even more suspicions, and destroy trust and confidence. Symbolic gestures which are largely meaningless, will only rouse greater resentment at hopes betrayed. It is not a way of gaining the trust of a people. Perhaps equally important is to keep renegade and turncoat politicians from having anything to do with implementations, for they can be far worse than majority politicians, and their good intentions are often suspect.

I would appeal to the President, to give even greater consideration to the present situation and defuse the potential dangers. His promise to visit every village in the North, is still only a symbolic gesture, and Tamils cannot now be blamed for disenchantment with such. Doubtless the President is governed by political reactions from the South, but even here, much could be done by the Govt. controlled papers to present the other point of view. Unfortunately, it is no secret, that the Colombo dailies present only biased and partial appraisals and news, thus preventing fair minded Sinhalese from a more just and humane appreciation of minority woes. The minority may be powerless, but need it be voiceless too?

M. Krishnapillay

G. G. P. (Jr)

replies

Kusal

Perera

Main Street,
Jaffna,

4th December '82.

The Editor,
'Saturday Review'
118, Fourth Cross Street,
Jaffna.

Sir,

May I have your permission to reply Mr. Kusal Perera's letter in your Journal of 27-11-82 through your columns.

Having got out to "put history straight" Mr. Perera
(Continued overleaf)

LETTERS

G. G. P.

(Continued from page 9) has not done so. So I am setting out to "put history straight" and emphasize that memories can "run from generation to generation."

1. The late Ponnambalam did not join the UNP Government. It was the ACTC that coalesced with the UNP Government of the day.

2. There was and is no Act called the 'Indian Pakistani Citizenship Act of 1948'. The Act which disfranchised the Indians was the Ceylon Citizenship Act of 1948. The ACTC was in the opposition then and voted against that Bill. Therefore, the ACTC and its leader did not help to disfranchise them and Mr. Perera's emotional rhetoric falls by the way side.

3. The Indian and Pakistani Residents Act of 1949 was a measure to enable most of those who had been disfranchised getting back their citizenship. ACTC was in the Government when this Bill was introduced. Indians were given time to apply. Thondaman and others called on the Indians not to apply and to fortify his call. Thondaman performed satyagraha with mat and pillows on the corridors of the Senate Buildings. With time running out fast Thonda-

man switched course and advised his people to apply. The resultant rush and panic resulted in thousands not filling their papers properly and their applications were rejected, but not before Thondaman and some others were able to obtain citizenship by applying!!

4. The so called "Indian Problem" did not pave the way for Federal Party being formed contrary to popular myth. The Bills concerning the Indians started in August 1948 and ended in February 1949. There were four Bills. If the ACTC or the late Ponnambalam played the dirty by the Indians those who ultimately formed the F. P. would have resigned from the ACTC in August 1948 not formed the F. P. in December 1949 even without resigning from the ACTC.

Mr. Perera has used very strong language in the penultimate para of his letter. For that reason I am sure Mr-Editor you will publish this letter. There is no act that the ACTC should feel shy about during its existence and there is no role that has been dirty or sinister in the history of the ACTC.

My late father acted quite honourably on the Indian Question. He tried his best to have the period of residence reduced from 10 and 7 years for unmarried and married persons to 5 years for both. But he failed.

Yours truly
G.G. Ponnambalam.

Cannot the Bishops condemn Govt. violence too?

37/1, Martyn Lane,
Jaffna.

The Editor,
Saturday Review,
118, Fourth Cross Street,
Jaffna.

Dear Sir,

This letter has reference to the statement issued by "the Catholic Bishops' Conference" appearing in "The Island" of the 18th of November 1982 and issued to the press through the Minister of State, Mr Ananda Tissa De Alwis. I hold no grudge against the Catholic Bishops, being a Christian myself. But what I was disappointed about was that the Statement was issued through the Minister of State. Surely,

we live in a secular state which provides Religious freedom to all, as it were, and I am sure an independent statement would have been less suspicious.

Concerning violence as deemed condemned, I would like to ask the Bishops to study their own Church History which will readily show that it has been one of bloody violence. Either the Church was at the receiving end of Violent acts or silent on-lookers of violence or active participants of violence, throughout different phases of history.

Violence falls into two categories - Active and functional. The latter leads to the

former. Functional violence are atrocities committed by the State or Government in the form of Capitalism which causes glaring disparities among people, suppression of freedom of every form, Racial discrimination etc. These frustrations of the people lead to active violence that is so evident and very natural. Hence the Bishops would do well to condemn violence of the Government which reduces people to objects.

Thanking you and with all good wishes,

Yours Sincerely,
O. S. Thayalarajah

Condemned even before the trial

9, Vivekananda Avenue,
Colombo 6,
6-12-1982.

The Editor,
Saturday Review,
Jaffna.

Sir,

THE ACCUSED PRIESTS

It appears that the Priests accused of complicity with the Terrorists in the North have been condemned even before their trial!

It is an accepted prin-

ciple of Justice that a person is not guilty unless and until he or she is proved guilty.

What was the purpose of the recent fast and protests in Jaffna? The Catholics and non-Catholics of the North were demanding the trial of the accused priests under the normal law of the land and then under the Terrorism Act, if found guilty. Is there anything wrong in the demand?

The priesthood of any Religion should be protected

from unnecessary humiliation or ignominy. If found guilty of any offence against the state or Religion, such Priests should be **dis-robbed** and then treated as any other criminal.

I hope you will publish this letter in the interests of unbiased Journalism and the interests of the Island's entire priesthood — Hindus, Catholics, Muslims, Anglicans, Protestants, and Buddhists.

Yours faithfully,
D. J. Thamotheram.

Crackdown

(Continued from page 8)

tle and British American Tobacco.

However, the World Bank is insisting that much more drastic measures must be taken. It is demanding a further devaluation of the rupee (to which President Jayawardene has already agreed), a credit squeeze and reduction in the money supply, and further cuts in subsidies and government spending. This is a tall political order for a government that has already dismantled most of the welfare state which was built over three decades.

But President Jayawardene is determined to carry out the World Bank's 'recommendations', however great the popular opposition. Hence his crackdown on political opponents. Having come to power promising 'a just and righteous society,' he is now well on the way to creating a 'guided democracy' in the mould of Marcos's Philippines and Suharto's Indonesia.

Violation of the Referendum Act: Why cannot the Police move in & act?

All over the countryside, the Lamp symbol with a cross marked against it has been put up in public places in gross violation of the Referendum Act.

Why is the Police inactive, when it is their clear duty to prevent such contravention of the Law? Orders from above? From whom? Who is above the Law?

Far better to make an amendment to the Act by repealing this section than make the Law look a silly ass.

Here, for the record, is the relevant section in the Referendum Act.

50. (1) During the period commencing from the date of publication of the Proclamation and ending on the day following the day on which a poll is taken at a Referendum, no person shall, for the purpose of promoting a Referendum, display-

(a) in any premises, whether public or private, any flag or banner; or
(b) any handbill, placard,

poster, drawing, notice, symbol or sign on any place to which the public have a right of, or are granted, access except in or on any premises on any day on which a meeting to promote the Referendum is due to be held in that premises; or

(c) any handbill, placard, poster, drawing, notice symbol, sign, flag or banner, on or across any public road; or

(d) any handbill, placard, poster, drawing, notice, symbol or sign in or on any vehicle.

(2) Every person who contravenes the provisions of sub-section (1) shall be guilty of an offence and shall, on conviction after summary trial before a Magistrate, be liable to a fine not exceeding one hundred rupees or to imprisonment of either description for a term not exceeding one month or to both such fine and imprisonment.

(3) Every person who attempts to commit an offence specified in this section shall be liable to

the punishment prescribed for that offence.

(4) Every offence under this section shall be a cognizable offence within the meaning of the Code of Criminal Procedure Act, No. 15 of 1979.

(5) Any police officer may take such steps, and use such force, as may be reasonably necessary for

preventing any contravention of the provisions of subsection (1) and may seize and remove any handbill, placard, poster, notice, drawing, symbol, photograph of a candidate, sign, flag or banner used in such contravention.

Main Street,
Trincomalee,
6-12-82.

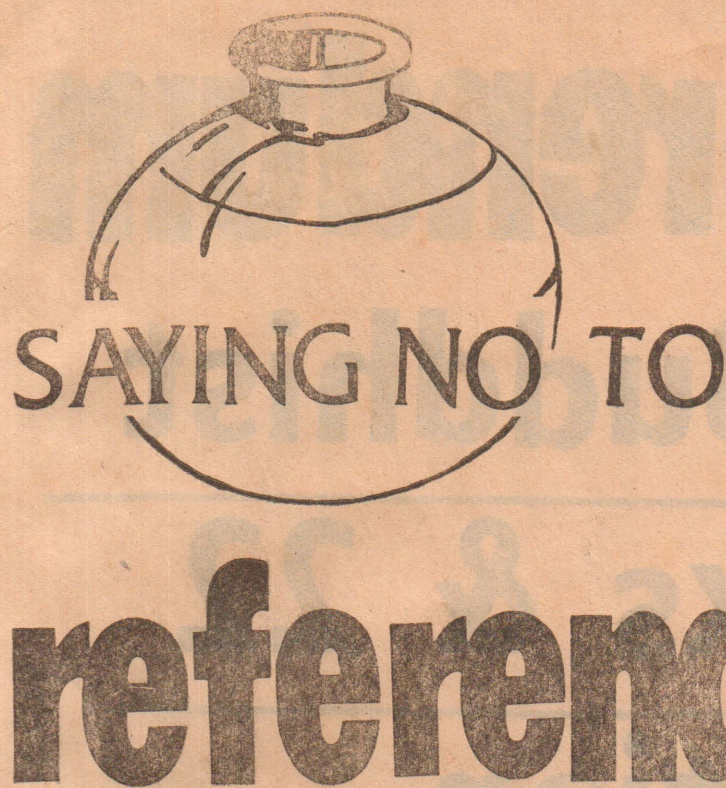
In your last issue while describing the protest marches and fasting in various centres all over the Northern and Eastern provinces, Trinco had been left out. You have taken Jaffna, Nallur, Kilinochchi, Mannar and Vavuniya one by one in detail but not even a city in the East. Some of our elderly people commented that S. R. made this omission because of Mr. Kumar's participation. Even the Daily News of December 1 flashed that 'about 500 people fasted at St. Mary's Church. Trin-

co M. P. R. Sampanthan and D. D. C. Chairman A. Thangathurai were present. Police said two Catholic Priests, Tamil Congress leader Kumar Ponnambalam and Motilal Nehru also joined the fast'. I don't think S. R. did this purposely but it's a technical mistake and I hope you will provide a few inches of space in your next issue for this.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,
T. M. S. Rasakoon.

Note by Editor: S. R. regrets the omission and thanks Reader Rasakoon for bringing it to our notice.



SAYING NO TO referendum

A variety of reasons is being trotted out in defence of the coming Referendum by protagonists of the Government. Ingenious theses are sprung on unsuspecting audiences in town and countryside. No holds are barred in this free for all of sometimes irresponsible oratory and verbal prestidigitation which seeks to bamboozle the voter, confuse the issues, and dismember the opposition. In the cut and thrust of debate, argument and counter-argument on the pros and cons of this unique appeal to the people it is important to clear the air on a few vital issues. These salient implications of the crucial December 22nd vote, in my mind, go to the heart of the matter and should concern the voter most.

1. It is naive to pretend that, if the Government obtains the power to

extend the life of the present Parliament for a further six years from August 1983, a General Election will be duly held in 1989. This will depend on the views of whoever is President in 1989, and whatever new amendments are made to the Constitution with his permanent steam-roller majority.

2. The President has expressed his optimism of being around in 1989. But everything under the sun is transient, nothing is permanent—not even the hopes, aspirations, beliefs and dreams of Mr J. R. Jayewardene, who had assured us time and time again (up to October 22, 1982) that he would not postpone elections by a single day!

3. It is hard to accept the position that the 1978 Constitution intended the device of a Referendum

to be utilised for the extension of an expiring Parliament. Difficult to stomach too, is the idea that 168 M.P.s elected under the 1972 Constitution on an old system of voting should delay the first elections under the new Constitution for the entire period of the new Parliament! A new Parliament was to have consisted, in fact, of 196 representatives elected through a new system of proportional representation on a district basis!! Still

worse, the M.P.s who resolved to do so had already become disembowelled ghosts, having performed a collective act of involuntary suicide.

4. Even the Supreme Court expressed some doubt (dividing four to three) on the constitutionality and legality of the Fourth Amendment. Its determination is now being questioned on legal grounds. Doubts have even been expressed in a separate action before the Supreme Court on the validity of the Referendum Bill passed in a Parliament, already devalued by the fact that 144 of its M.P.s voting "Aye" had already delivered up to the President signed (undated) letters of resignation. They were surviving on sufferance—puppets on a string. The political morality of the Fourth Amendment is quite another matter.

H. A. I. Goonetilleke

5. A Government (National or otherwise) by a President with a four-fifths majority of his hand-picked nominees can be given many appellations. But by no stretch of the political imagination, dare one call it a democracy.

6. Freely elected legislative assemblies and the separation of powers doctrine may not constitute ideal forms of government, but they have been worked for the benefit of the people in the last fifty years. Indeed, they have led to an increasing degree of popular participation and democratic encounter, which recent moves are threatening to undermine. Dust is being thrown in the eyes of the voter in a devious attempt to destroy the democratic gains of adult franchise, a well developed party system, and the fundamental right of the citizen to elect his representatives. If the Referendum serves the Government's purpose, then more than eight million voters and their natural increase will have been effectively debarred from the electoral process for twelve years in the first instance, and, perhaps, for all time.

7. In a democracy, as we know it, the people have the inalienable right to opt for a dictatorship, whether of the Left

or the Right. The process, is, rarely if at all, reversible. To opt back to democracy would be as frustrating as baying at the moon. Hitler was given power by the democratic choice of the people—he made himself a dictator, thereafter, by changing the Constitution.

8. It has been said down the ages (before Lord Acton propounded his dictum) that power has the habit of corrupting and absolute power is conducive to absolute corruption. Having survived the test of history it could well be applicable to the President of 1989.

9. If the Fourth Amendment is defeated at the Referendum, and General Elections held as a result, the UNP will, in all likelihood, capture the largest number of seats in the new Parliament, but the awesome majority will be lost. No amendments to the Constitution or Referenda, at the whim of a President, will be possible. Above all parliamentary democracy will be safe, and the fundamental rights of the voter assured. The 1978 Constitution was proclaimed to have the special characteristic of ensuring a strong Executive and a stable climate for development, peace and progress. His Excellency will thus be afforded the rare opportunity of proving that his Constitution is indeed a viable instrument of government.

Rev. Dr. D. J. Kanagaratnam continues his story

Continued from last issue

At 8.30 p.m. I was called by an officer and told that the Bishop of Colombo had given two telephone calls and considering what I said about my health, they would send me to the parish priest St. John's Church, Chundikuli to rest and to be brought in the morning. At 9.00 p.m. the Archdeacon of Jaffna and the parish priest of Chundikuli came to Gurunagar and took me.

On Wednesday 17th November at 9.00 a.m. a panel of C.I.D. men started questioning me. It appeared to me that they had put their heads together to find reasons for my arrest and got hold of some material from the Vavuniya police and headquarters about my involvement in human rights and in the Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality

(MIRJE). "Father, you have been involved in human rights in Vavuniya and you have issued reports and letters which have gone abroad and have created a bad name for the government?" I replied: "when-ever there was injustice in the Vavuniya District whether it is to the hill country Tamil settlers, local Tamils, or Sinhalese I have inquired and taken action. This is not terrorism". "Why do you involve yourself in such activities as a priest?" "Because I believe in a God of justice and love; I cannot ignore injustice and violation of human rights in the society in which I live and work." After a long enquiry into my ministry in Vavuniya, my background and my relationships, the panel got up and went into the opposite room for a consult-

ation within closed doors. They emerged after 15 minutes and told me, that they were hoping to release me that evening. "Now you have seen everything here, father. Some priest have been involved with the terrorists. Change your ideas and now spread the message to the people". I smiled.

A dialogue on Tamil Eelam

Earlier in the day a C.I.D officer called me to a room and wanted a friendly chat on the question of Tamil Eelam and my views. I said it will take a long time. It is a matter for five lectures. I briefly explained to him the problems and grievances of the Tamils from the Donoughmore Constitution in

the 20s to the present day and how the Tamils' problem was aggravated and not solved by any government. I told him of the attempts made by Mr. S. J. V. CHELVANAYAGAM and his frustration at the end. I told him what Bishop Harold de Soysa told us at a meeting in 1960 when there was a satyagraha campaign in Jaffna. "I have been with Mr. Chelvanayagam almost three hours and prayed with him. If the government really wants a solution this is the opportunity with a sincere, genuine and Christian Tamil leader like him. If the government doesn't seize this opportunity while he lives, I am afraid the problem will get into extremist hands". What prophetic words!

I also told him that there

are deep rooted political, social, economic and cultural reasons for the rise of terrorism in the once peaceful North and these have to be inquired into and dealt with. Violence is the lava flowing from the top of a volcano fed by deeper fires of social and national dislocation and injustice. It can never be stopped by capping the top but by dealing with the real political and social reasons and finding solutions necessary to cool the fires below. After taking down a long report and my own statement duly signed, I was released on Wednesday, 17th November at 6.00 p.m.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake" says the Lord "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA



We record with deep regret the death of Professor Kailasapathy, Dean of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Jaffna. He died on Monday, December 6th at the General Hospital, Colombo, after a brief illness. He was 49.

Professor Kailasapathy, Scholar and Writer and one time a distinguished Editor of the *Thinakaran* was an international figure well-known locally and among the international community of Tamil scholars. Professor Kailasapathy was a staunch backer of "SATURDAY REVIEW", an admirer and a great friend of this paper. Next week "S. R." carries a tribute and appreciation of Professor Kailasapathy written by A. Thevarajan.

Dr. Kailasapathy leaves his wife Sarvamangalam and two daughters, Sumangala and Pavithra. His funeral took place at the General Cemetery, Kanatte, on Wednesday, December 8th.

referendum

59 Buddhist monks & 22 Christian priests say No

Fifty nine Buddhist Priests and twenty two Christian Clergymen have put out a printed leaflet titled "THE VOICE OF THE CLERGY", calling for a General Election in 1983. The leaflet is not for display in public or places of worship.

Here are excerpts from the leaflet:-

"The people of Sri Lanka have learnt to value Parliamentary Democracy for a period of over 50 years. We have also celebrated the 50 years of Universal Franchise in 1981.....

"We cannot conclude that a national or international crisis has arisen that prevented holding a General

Election. The General Election in any event is not due till August 1983. It is only then that we shall be facing the question of holding or not holding a General Election. The question does not arise at present. Therefore we express our disapproval of the decision to hold a referendum to bring in a Constitutional amendment to extend the life of Parliament. We also wish to express our dissatisfaction regarding vesting power in one person to appoint representatives to Parliament on behalf of the people. We believe that this process will cause anti-democratic trends to emerge.

In order to implement a system of Parliamentary Democracy in a meaning-

ful manner the opposition should have maximum opportunities for participation. It is not true democracy when a majority claims the sanction of the 'will of the people' to tyrannise the minority. It is necessary that all races, all interests of the people and their various opinions should find expression within Parliament; it is only through such a healthy dialogue that a government will be able to exercise power effectively, having the future and the prosperity of the country as its main objective. Therefore we must recognise and value the role played by the opposition within the Parliamentary system.

Such participation is being prevented by the present moves. As citizens we must take note of these trends.....

We therefore appeal to the government to abandon its idea of holding a referendum and to hold the General Election instead.....

If the government goes ahead with the referendum despite our protests, for 6 years we shall not be able to elect our representatives. This is the loss of a right. We must protect our right. Therefore let us exercise our vote against the extension of life of the present Parliament by marking "X" against the sign of the Pot and protect our rights.....

We are issuing this statement irrespective of any party affiliations. To postpone holding a General Election by 6 years is a violation of the people's right and this is a dangerous sign for the future. We must remember that we have a duty to protect our Fundamental Rights."

Imported thugs escalated the violence at Peradeniya campus

The import of hired thugs into the University campus caused an escalation of violence and the University of Peradeniya was declared out of bounds from 6 p.m., Sunday (5th) and was closed indefinitely, following clashes between JVP and UNP supporters.

On Friday the results of the elections for the Peradeniya Students' Organizations were released at 8 p.m. The JVP had won 14 posts, the UNP

3 and the SLFP 2. Shortly afterwards the processions of JVP and UNP had come into violent contact at one place. As the JVP has a more powerful student backing in the Campus many UNP members had received a thorough beating up. But the enraged UNP students had rallied round some thugs from outside the Campus and had brought them into the Campus late in the night to retaliate aga-

inst the JVPers.

Four students of the Marcus Fernando Hall (a JVP stronghold) were brutally beaten-up by these thugs. Later while they were being taken in an ambulance for treatment, the thugs had stopped the ambulance, unloaded the injured students and sent them back to their Halls.

About 14 people including two sub-wardens are said to be admitted to the Kandy General Hospital. Five are reported to be in a serious condition.

Students of the University told "Saturday Review" that the Colombo

Press had preferred to be silent regarding the "invasion" by the UNP thugs from outside. They also protested against the Vice-Chancellor's decision to take notice against twenty JVP students alone; they felt the involvement of the UNP students was being overlooked.

It should be noted that the attack by UNP thugs on the University students had occurred once before, in Vidyala kara and Colombo Campuses in mid 1978. The E. E. Road Hall of the A. Ceylon Buddhist Congress has also received such a "treatment" a few months back. The students asked "Saturday Review" whether the recent attack on the student community was a pointer to what could happen to the larger community after the Referendum.