

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

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19 th April 1986

Temple Or Cemetery?

The stench of rotting corpses pervades the environs of the historic Selvasannithy Temple at Thondamannar, which has been partly damaged by shelling and strafing.

No one dares to get near enough to remove the corpses — unless they want to end up as corpses themselves, gunned down by the Army sentries in the Camp opposite, just across the river.

Some of the corpses have been attacked by dogs, according to news reports.

The corpses are those of devotees shot by security forces.

For nearly a month now there have been no poojas — for the first time in the over 400-year history of the Temple (see page 8).

And what, pray, is Hindu Religious Affairs Minister, Chelliah Rajadurai, doing about all this? Apart, that is, from offering a symbolic sacrifice of a white

horse to bring down the blessings of the Gods on the Government?

Selvasannithy only symbolises dramatically what has been happening to Hindu temples especially since this Government came to power.

Nearly 200 Hindu temples have been damaged by goondas since 1977.

Now it appears that the security forces too have joined in the onslaught. A month back the famous Nagapooshani Ambal Temple at Nainativu was damaged by the security forces. A news report says that the Pillaiyar Temple in Batticaloa has now become an army check-point!

The situation has become so bad that an association has been formed to protect Hindu Temples and institutions on an all island basis (see SR, 5th April).

This move obviously implies that the Hindu population has lost

whatever confidence it had in the Hindu Affairs Minister.

Under this religiose (no, it's not a printer's devil) Government, it's not only Hindu temples that have been desecrated.

In the Tamil-speaking areas, Christian — especially Catholic — churches too have become the targets of the Security forces.

A couple of years back, a portion of the Our Lady of Refuge Church in Jaffna was damaged by mortar shells.

But the most horrifying incident to date is what happened at Batticaloa on 19th January this year.

During the rampage by security forces at Iruthayapuram on that Bloody Sunday, the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was turned into a slaughter-house (see SR, 15th February).

All this under a dharmista Government which has declared Buddhism the State religion!

One has to conclude that patriotism is not the only refuge of politicians.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Hindu Affairs should salvage what's left of his honour by resigning forthwith. There's no other way he can save his conscience.

Tolerance is Hinduism's greatest virtue but there can be no compromise with evil.

RAMBO REAGAN'S EFFIGY BURNT

An effigy of US President Ronald Reagan, wrapped in the American flag, was burnt on Thursday 17th April in Jaffna at the end of a march to protest the American bombing of Libya. The March was organised by the Islamic Youth Movement in Jaffna.

The 2000-strong protest marchers shouted slogans in support of the Libyan leader Col. Gaddafi and denouncing the US bombing.

Jaffna observed a hartal on Thursday.

Militant organisations, meanwhile, have put up posters throughout Jaffna denouncing the US and Israel and expressing solidarity with Libya.

The Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) and the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) have issued strongly-worded statements condemning the US aggression.

NEW YEAR 'FIREWORKS'

Helicopter strafing in the Palaly Camp area on New Year's day (14th April) badly injured a 69-year-old lady and a 17-year-old girl. Their houses too were damaged.

BY THEIR FRIENDS...

President Jayewardene has told Radio Australia in an interview that Pakistan is a better friend of Sri Lanka than India, in the present ethnic conflict.

BITTER RICE

Security forces took away 200 bags of paddy from a house near the 3rd Channel Thiruvaiaru (Kilinochchi District) recently.

'TERRORISTS'!

The Point Pedro Citizens' Committee has sent the following letter to the Govt Agent, Jaffna:

It has been brought to our notice that the following persons have been arrested by the Navy personnel while they were doing fishing close to the shore in the early hours of Sunday 13th instant: 1. Ramana-than Pathmanathan 30 yrs' Nagar Kovil, married with 6 children, off Nagar Kovil coast. 2. Theivanayagam Somanathar age 50 yrs. 3. Somanathar Joseph Jeyaraj age 12 yrs. son of (2) above. 4. Thangaraj Uthayaraj age 26 yrs. son-in-law of (2) above.

The last three were arrested off the coast of Munai with their Kattumaram and a blue fibre-glass boat.

We are directing their kith and kin to you so that you could contact the Naval authorities and inform them of the position of those arrested.

It was dire starvation that prompted them to go to the sea and not a determination to violate the law. Please be good enough to persuade them with a warning.

The Rupavahini announced that these arrested fishermen were 'Terrorists'.

ARMY VS. 'BOYS'

There was a direct confrontation between the militants and the security forces in Jaffna and Navat-kuli on Thursday (17th April).

The 2-hour exchange of fire on Thursday afternoon at Jaffna left one soldier dead and three injured. Five members of the public too were injured: one of them is a security guard and another a Police Dept. minor employee.

A 6-year-old child, 2 militants and a member of the public were killed in the confrontation at Navat-kuli on Wednesday night and Thursday morning.

The confrontations took place when the security forces moved out of their camps and tried to advance backed up by helicopter strafing.

HOMELESS WANDERERS

More than 60 families in Nilaveli, who lived close to the Army Camp, are homeless now.

They quit their homes on the orders of the Army and are now living on the streets of Trincomalee as refugee camps have been ordered not to take them in.

Release ALL Political detenus in Sri Lanka jails

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Coordinating Committee To Launch Day Of Protest

Text of the resolutions unanimously adopted at a Conference of delegates of constituent organisations of the Coordinating Committee for struggle against the oppression of the Tamil speaking people, held recently in Jaffna:

This Conference vehemently condemns the various acts of oppression, economic strangulation and genocide perpetrated by the Government of Sri Lanka on the Tamil speaking people and the following steps taken by it in furtherance of its policy:

(a) The expulsion of the representatives of the Tamil speaking people from the Parliament by adopting the sixth amendment to the constitution, which act itself is the culmination of a policy of oppression of the Tamil speaking people, commencing from the disenfranchisement of the plantation workers in 1948. (b) The continued daily killings of innocent Tamil speaking people, maiming large numbers of them, and the destruction of their property by letting loose the armed forces of the state. (c) The detention of large numbers of the Tamil speak-

ing people in Prisons and detention camps under the emergency regulations and Prevention of Terrorism act. (d) The extension of emergency, month by month and the enactment of repressive regulations like the Thousand metre Security Zone, Prohibited Sea Zone etc. which endanger the lives, property and occupation of the Tamil speaking people. (e) The colonisation of Tamil speaking areas on a racial basis, the provision of arms to those colonists and the driving away of Tamil speaking people from these areas. (f) The resort to false propaganda, deception, double dealing and hypocrisy in negotiations in respect of the rights of the Tamil speaking people.

This Conference demands the Government of Sri Lanka to: (a) Settle the national issue, in a manner acceptable to the Tamil speaking people, by recognising their right to Self Determination, on the basis that the Tamil speaking people are a distinct nationality. (b) Cease forthwith all military operations against the Tamil speaking people and withdraw the entire armed forces of the state from the Tamil speaking areas.

(c) Release unconditionally all political Prisoners and Detenus. (d) End the Emergency, which paves the way for the oppressive Regulations like the Thousand metre Zone, the Prohibited Zone for fishing etc. which endanger the lives of the Tamil speaking people and cause destruction to their economic pursuits. (e) Stop state-sponsored racial colonisation in the Tamil speaking areas and arming of such colonists. (f) Halt all types of violence against the Tamil speaking people in the Northern and Eastern and Hill-country areas.

This Conference unanimously resolves to declare a 'Day of Protest' against the acts of oppression and genocide perpetrated against the Tamil speaking people by the Government of Sri Lanka.

This Conference also calls upon the entire Tamil speaking people, in the Tamil speaking areas, to stop all work on that day and assemble at Public places between 8.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. on that day and express their opposition to the genocidal acts of the Government.

MILITARY SOLUTION—LANKA'S FIRST PRIORITY

This is the text of a letter circulated by Martin Ennals, Secretary General of INTERNATIONAL ALERT:

At the briefing meeting in Geneva on 24 February 1986 Dame Judith Hart MP reported on her visit to Sri Lanka and on the conversations which had taken place in Colombo with President Junius Jayewardene and members of his government. Dame Judith notified the President that the Committee of which she is the Chair would be advocating the cessation of aid to Sri Lanka pending a political settlement of the continuing ethnic conflict.

This policy decision has been taken only after the most serious consideration and in light of the recent Sri Lanka Government statements that the first priority is a military solution. It is clear from the talks which Dame Judith had in Colombo that there are currents of opinion, close to Government, in Sri Lanka which favour a political settlement and recognize that a purely military solution is not possible.

In the meantime human rights violations continue and are reported with fact and authority by all the specialized human rights organizations in the field.

The message which Dame Judith was seeking to convey on behalf of the International Emergency Committee on Sri Lanka is that human rights violations will continue until a political solution is achieved and implemented. The international community has abstained from expressing itself until now in deference to the longstanding traditions of democratic government and respect for human rights in Sri Lanka and the peace initiatives taken by the Indian Government. Following the breakdown of the peace talks between the government and Tamil representatives, and the mission by Dame Judith Hart, to both India and Sri Lanka, it is our view that international concern needs to be expressed now, and appropriate action taken through the United Nations, the Commonwealth, or other appropriate international bodies.

(See also page 8)

Ootru To Turn Out Artificial Limbs

The Ootru Organisation — an approved charity — will shortly set up a workshop in Jaffna to turn out artificial legs for legless persons.

Those interested in being trained at this workshop should apply, with their bio-data, to: The Secretary, Ootru Organisation, Mariaman Lane, Thirunelvely, Jaffna.

LANKA MAY BECOME A COLONY

A press release by the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party states 'The campaign to change the unitary system of government has now developed into a dangerous civil war...and may ultimately end in Sri Lanka being a colony under foreign domination. If this is not stopped the entire Island can before long turn into a virtual cemetery... It should be categorically stated that no satisfactory solution is possible to ethnic disputes in any country through armed action or violence.'

COORDINATING COMMITTEE SET UP

Eleven organisations in Jaffna have decided to coordinate their activities in the struggle against the oppression of the Tamil-speaking people.

They are: Joint Committee of Trade Unions, Mother's Front, Eelamists' Front, Rural Employees' Union, Vigilance Forum, National Students' Forum, University Students' Organisation, Women's Reawakening Front, Ceylon Progressive Writers' Association, Rural Workers' Union and the Rural Progressive Women's Front.

They have set up a Coordinating Committee to plan out the strategy for the common struggle.

LANDMINE KILLS 4

In a landmine blast on 15th April at Miyankulam in the Batticaloa District, 4 members of the security forces were killed and several injured.

Of all the heavenly bodies visible to the unaided eye, comets are the most remarkable and sometimes very spectacular. Numerous comets visit the region of our skies every year and most of them pass unnoticed. The famous German astronomer, **Johannes Kepler** once remarked "There are as many comets in the heavens as there are fish in the sea".

Of all these comets **Halley's** has aroused a lot of curiosity and enthusiasm among the people, young and old, all over the world. It is not without reasons. Firstly, it has been a regular visitor to our region having made its appearance more than 30 times in recorded history. Its first recorded visit was in 1059 B. C. and most of the earlier observations were made by the Chinese. Secondly, its periodicity is very long, nearly 76 years, and as such it would obviously have a warmer reception than more frequent visitors. And thirdly, above all, when it appeared last in 1910 it was such a magnificent sight, its tail covering almost one-third of the sky, that all would have expected to see a repetition of that splendour in the heavens this time too.

POOR SHOWING

From the beginning of the year 1985 elaborate preparations had been made in all parts of the world to view this rare visitor. As it was not visible in the Northern hemisphere during a good part of its visit many scientists and others interested had journeyed from the northern to some suitable points in the southern hemisphere. For all the preparations made, all the trouble taken

HALLEY'S COMET DISAPPOINTS

and for all the great expectations people had, **Halley's** has very miserably disappointed all the people on the earth. This is supposed to be its poorest appearance in its history. Even in 2061 when it reappears its performance will be no better. It will be a long time before the comet makes as good a showing as in 1910.

Some of its notable appearances are as follows: in 374 A.D. it had its closest approach at about 0.09 astronomical units from the earth (an astronomical unit is the distance between the sun and the earth). It

The joint European Space Agency interceptor probe was named '**Giotto**' after this painter. When it appeared in 1456 **Pope Calixtus III** preached against it as the agent of the Devil. **Kepler** observed it in 1607 and **Edmund Halley** after whom this comet is named observed it in 1682 and he predicted its return in 1759. It did appear as predicted but **Halley** was not alive to see it. The last appearance in 1910 was a very good one and the first photographs of it were taken.

Halley's comet was seen this time first somewhere in October last

BY W. S. SENTHILNATHAN

was drawn for the first time in 684 A. D. and the sketch was published in the Nuremberg Chronicle. The 760 A.D. appearance was described as 'brilliant, like a great beam'. In 1066 A.D. it was very bright and is recorded in Bayeux Tapestry (this is an 11th century embroidery about 231 feet long and 20 inches wide designed for the nave of Bayeux Cathedral, France, depicting the conquest of England by William the Conqueror). In 1301 A. D. it was very bright and was seen by the Florentine painter **Giotto di Bondone** who used it as the Star of Bethlehem in his picture *The Adoration of the Magi*.

year while it was approaching the sun. It did not have much of a tail at that time as in most past returns the comet had developed its tail fully only after perihelion (that is the point at which the comet takes its turn in its elliptical orbit while going round the sun). The perihelion occurred on 9th February this year and thereafter the comet has been and is still receding from the sun. Its best appearance was in March when it was passing through the constellations Capricornus and Sagittarius. But in the latter part of the month the moon came into the region and consequently the visibility was very poor. During early March its tail too was visible

like a long streak even with naked eyes. It entered **Scorpius** at the beginning of April and although it was closest to the earth on the 11th the appearance was very faint as it was far away from the sun. After that date it is eluding naked eye observation.

Comets have all along and in all parts of the world been viewed with awe and horror and have been considered a presage of tragedy or catastrophe. We find certain accounts which reflect the ideas about comets that prevailed through the ages. The historian **Nicetus** wrote in 1182, "A comet appeared in the heavens like a twisting serpent, now writhing and coiling back upon itself terrifying the people with its gaping mouth, as if lusting for human blood....." And the famous surgeon **Ambroise Pare** says about the comet of 1528, "So horrible was it, so terrible, so great a fright it did engender in the populace that some died of fear, others fell sick... This comet was the colour of blood.....". We all know the famous lines of **Shakespeare** in **Julius Caesar**, "When beggars die there are no comets seen. The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes".

It must be admitted that despite the tremendous advances in scientific knowledge during the last few centuries these old fears still linger on in one form or another. But whatever it is, even granting that these celestial visitors have any effect on the earth there is one consolation that since the appearance of **Halley's** had been very disappointing this time, its malefic effects, if any, would also be minimal.

Value Of Contemporaneous Documents Foreign To ISD, CID Intellects — Judge

The first accused was charged—that between 25th March, 1981 and 19th November 1982 at **Colombothurai** in **Jaffna**, within the jurisdiction of this court knowing or having reasonable cause to believe that a person had committed an offence under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act No. 48 of 1979 to wit, that **Prabakaran** and others have participated in the Bank Robbery committed at **Neerveli** on 25th March, 1981, failed to inform a Police Officer of the fact, and has thereby committed an offence punishable under Section 5 (a) (1) of Act No. 48 of 1979 as amended by Act No. 10 of 1982.

On count 2 he was indicted that at the same time and place and in the course of the same transaction that the first accused

having in his possession information relating to the movements or whereabouts of a person who has committed an offence under

Police Officer regarding **Prabakaran** who participated in the Bank Robbery committed at **Neerveli** on 25th March 1981 has

Extracts from the Order delivered by **Colombo High Court Judge Mr. H. W. Senanayake** in H. C. Case No. 1199/83, filed under the PTA, against **Rev. Fr. Aparanam Singarayar** and **Rev. Fr. Philip Anton Sinnarasa** on charges that they withheld information about the **Neerveli Bank robbery**.

Both were acquitted. **Fr. Sinnarasa** was tried in absentia.

Fr. Singarayar was defended by **Mr. P. B. Tampoe** and **Mr. I. F. Xavier**.

Fr. Singarayar is still in detention at **Welikade** and is being charged on grounds that he 'harboured terrorists and withheld information about the known attack on **Chavakachcheri Police Station**.' The trial has been put off for 9th June.

the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act No. 48 of 1979 to wit: he failed to inform a

thereby committed an offence punishable under Section 5 (b) of Prevention of Terrorism (Tem-

porary Provisions) Act No. 48 of 1979 as amended by Act No. 10 of 1982.

That the 2nd accused did between 15th April, 1981 and 19th November, 1982 in the course of the aforesaid transaction within the jurisdiction of this Court at **Gurunagar** in **Jaffna** knowing or having reason to believe that a person has committed an offence under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act No. 48 of 1979 to wit: that **Prabakaran** and others had participated in the Bank Robbery at **Neerveli** on 25th March, 1981 failed to inform a Police Officer of that fact and has thereby committed an offence punishable under Section 5 (a) (1) of the Act No. 48 of 1979 as amended by Act No. 10 of 1982.

(Continued on page 6)

SRI LANKA'S CONFLICT - 3

(Continued from last Issue)

It is not uncommon to adopt a fatalistic attitude towards a negotiation. "Either they want to reach an agreement or they don't" we say, thinking that the outcome of the negotiation somehow lies in the hands of the other side. But a primary task of a negotiation is for us to actively change the choice open to the other side. If they reject their current choice, and we can see why they do so, then we need to present them with a better choice. As shown in the earlier 'choice charts' the benefits of saying 'yes' to the current set of proposals are less than saying 'no' for both the government and the Tamil groups. A better choice would be one where the benefits of saying 'yes' are greater than saying 'no' for both sides.

A BETTER CHOICE

A government or Tamil leader: "Should we agree to the New Plan"?

If yes:

1. We solve the problem and look successful.
2. We satisfy our interests with regard to:
 - security and our place on the island.
 - political control.
 - a long lasting, reliable agreement.
 - etc...
3. Realistically only a solution such as this which satisfies both sides will work. Any formula unacceptable to the other side will not help us.

Since success in a negotiation depends upon the other side making the decision we want, we should do what we can to make that decision an easy one. Rather than make things difficult for the other side, we should confront them with a choice that is as painless as possible. It is as important to them, as it is to us, to be able to take the agreement back and convince the constituents that their interests were well met. For any 'New Plan' to be agreed to by both sides it needs to meet this critical requirement.

Keeping this in mind let us look at the official language issue. At one time back in 1956 the Sinhalese thought that the dethroning of English as the official language and its replacement by Sinhala would bring about the era of the 'common man.' Whether this indeed occurred is debatable. Today most Sinhalese would probably concede that a prestigious station in life, not to mention employment in private firms or foreign countries, comes more readily with a know-

ledge of English rather than Sinhala. The Sinhalese interest in language today is basically one of preserving their cultural distinctiveness vis a vis the Tamils and Hindus who are seen to be a huge majority in the South Asian (Indian) region. This Sinhalese anxiety is reflected in the Sri Lankan constitution which not only continues to proclaim Sinhala to be the only official language but also gives to Buddhism the 'foremost place.'

On the other hand, language to the Tamil is not only a symbol to them of their secondary position in Sri Lanka, but it also has adversely affected them in their day to day lives and in obtaining government

- If no:
1. The situation will get worse.
 2. We will look stubborn and incompetent to our people and foreign allies who may abandon us and leave us to our fate.
 3. The longer the conflict lasts, the more our own people get sick of us.

employment. The Tamil interest in language is therefore much more weighty than their interest in religion because the provision pertaining to Buddhism has never been used to adversely affect the adherents of minority religions which include the influential Sinhalese Christians. To the contrary, there are two Ministries for Hindu and Muslim Affairs to which government funds are made available for religious development.

The thrust of this should be clear. Preserving the place of Buddhism in the country symbolically as much as materially matters a lot more to the Sinhalese than downgrading it matters to the Tamils. Likewise upgrading the Tamil language to the status of an official language matters a lot more to the Tamils, than denying it matters to the Sinhalese. By drawing a clear line between religion and language, the Tamils could relax most of the Sinhalese fears, imaginary or not, regarding their intentions. Further, it would make it easier for the Sinhalese, especially

the Buddhist Sangha, to accept the legitimacy of Tamil interests in more political autonomy in a part of the country that few Sinhalese even before the present violence visited more than once or twice in their lifetimes. And once the Sinhalese are satisfied that their place on the island is respected and that the Tamils do not seek to undermine it, they will have no legitimate need to object to what the Tamils do with themselves.

Separating positions from interests in a similar vein, let us briefly look at the questions of police powers and linkage of the two provinces. With respect to police powers, the real question is what type of police powers are required to deal with local law and order situations. Dealing with thugs or criminals does not require heavy armaments. Neither does it require police officers who are not accountable to the Central government.

by
Jehan Perera

But it does require a police force responsive to local needs and accountable to the people of the area. This suggests a police force equipped with small arms and with senior police officers who are appointed by the local authority subject to the approval of the Central government. Clearly, the veto power on appointments to be exercised by the Central authorities should not be an arbitrary one, but a responsible one that can meet 'for cause' standards in a court of law. This way the Tamils will enjoy the services of their own appointed police officers. Likewise the Sinhalese will be satisfied that a Tamil controlled police force will not form, or be able to form, the nucleus of an armed force hostile to the center.

With respect to the linkage issue, it is important to note that there is a difference between merging two Provinces into one Political unit in a way that enables one province to dominate the other province (political linkage) and permitting two provinces to engage in joint activities that enhance economic efficiency (non-political linkage). For instance instead of each province being forced to maintain its own higher education system, it might be economically more sensible to cut down costs of duplication by having a single regional higher educational system if the legislatures of both provinces so desire it. Thus, providing for non-political linkage will not

merely serve the interests of the people of the two provinces, but will also be in the interests of the central government because less economic waste means more money left over in the national coffers. Non-political linkage has the further benefit in that it pays deference to the positions the government and Tamil groups have publicly taken, so that neither appears to have 'given in' on the issue.

What the foregoing has illustrated is that creative solutions that satisfactorily accommodate the interests of the government and Tamil groups can be found if a distinction is drawn between positions and interests. A similar analysis can be applied to reach agreement on difficult issues such as federalism, land colonization and the reintegration of guerillas into the mainstream of society. For instance, provincial autonomy can solve devolution and land colonization problems without conceding Tamil 'homelands' or leading to an influx of Sinhalese settlers into the provinces. Perhaps India could be persuaded to formally or informally guarantee the stability of such an agreement. To sweeten the agreement further, India together with Western countries could increase aid and the flow of investments to the island. By doing this they would not be giving up something for nothing, but rather by ensuring stability in Sri Lanka, they would be furthering their own regional and global security and ideological objectives.

The foregoing analysis also suggests that it might be helpful to 'fractionate' the problem into small and more manageable units. Thus, instead of considering the other side's formula as a single package which must be rejected or accepted as a whole, it might be better to look at the elements of the proposal one by one, preferably starting with those elements which seem easiest to reach amicable agreement on.

Finally, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that the problem is a shared one. It is not 'their' problem alone; it is also 'ours.' To the extent that infighting within 'their' side holds up a solution, 'our' side is hurt too and we should think twice before encouraging it. It may also be that we do not personally like each other, but our problem is by definition a shared one, and we must sit side by side to solve it. And it will be best solved when we are willing to satisfy the interests of the other side adequately even as we try to satisfy our own interests.

(CONCLUDED)

"To see clearly is poetry, prophecy and religion, all in one", says John Ruskin in *Modern Painters*. That was the remarkable characteristic of S. J. V. Chelvanayakam's (whose 88th birth anniversary fell on 31st March) political leadership.

In the confusion that prevailed in the post-independence years when some of our brilliant egoists assumed that the Tamil speaking people or better still all the minorities in the country were equal partners in the power said to be vested in the people, SJV it was who exposed the hollowness of that dubious claim and laid bare the stark reality of a change of masters from London-based whites to Colombo-based browns as far as the Tamil speaking people were concerned. To him the wicked racist law of disenfranchisement was none other than a cold calculated move to cut by half the political strength of the Tamil speaking minority in Parliament, paving the way for easy subsequent inroads into their linguistic rights, at the same time reducing the plantation workers to abject slavery and exploiting their labour to fill the coffers of the State with much needed foreign exchange and lastly to reassure the British planters that their interests were secure.

He it was who had the courage to recognise the historical reality of Tamil nationalism and raised the hue and cry that state-sponsored colonisation had a deeper significance than mere agricultural development.

To the unsuspecting elitist Tamils in Colombo, he seemed to be like a fly in the ointment in their life of ease and luxury, progress and prosperity. His attempt to acquire the *Times of Ceylon* newspaper in his efforts to carry his message of 'live and let live' across the country and to counter the false and malicious propaganda of Lake House was thwarted by one of his own trusted clients—from the North, of course. The lack of spirited response from the Tamil speaking people themselves during these crucial years of post-independence has cost us all the price of blood, sweat and tears that we are now made to pay for claiming equality of rights as citizens of this country. Perhaps we the Tamil speaking people were unworthy of his single-minded dedicated leadership. There were many who ridiculed his stand as 'mid-summer madness'. There were others who arose from their slumber at election time and spoke of Eelam. A doughty fighter of the calibre of Eamon De Valera, SJV committed himself unreservedly to articulate the cause of Tamil nationalism and founded a movement and a political party to agitate for changes in the constitution to give due recognition to the Tamil nation in the country's polity.

SJV's POLITICAL STYLE

He cited Canada as a unique example of a unitary state that evolved into a federal structure to accommodate the claims of the French speaking Canadians who did not wish to lose their identity. He held Switzerland, smaller than ours in size, (and "a country that deals with a lot of minorities" in the words of Urs Schotteli, Executive Vice-President of the Liberal International and a Swiss himself) as a model of democratic institutions suitable for a multi-pluralist society like ours in this age of rapid change. But these are unpalatable truths to our political scientists who see the ghost of separatism in every bush and so the bush war rages without respite.

It is even said that efforts were made to lure him away from the political scene by offers of high judicial office but he was not the man to be side-tracked from his goal however painful the way ahead. A gentleman to his fingertips, SJV must have found himself like a fish out of water in the peculiar brand

nobility of character as a public figure.

SJV saw through the barriers and under-current of class and caste divisions among the Tamils in his travels around the country and acted as a bridge to bring these disparate groups together — no easy task amidst a people who are highly individualistic and are bricks at pulling in as many directions as there are individuals. Well known for his liberalism and humanism, he became a very reliable and dependable go-between among these far-flung diaspora in making common cause on the political and economic issues of the day. He was more often in the Eastern Province than in the North. He served his jail term during the civil disobedience campaign in the Batticaloa prisons in 1958. Earlier in August 1956 he organised the Trinco march for the Party Convention in Trincomalee. He was firm that a University for the Tamil speaking people should be set up in Trincomalee.

by

V. A. Philipupillai

of Sri Lankan politics where gentlemen's agreements are honoured more in the breach than in their observance or unarmed peaceful protesters are set upon by thugs in the presence of the state police. A national leader of a very high order, he did not spare any effort to espouse his cause but not of himself. When he was defeated at the 1952 polls at KKS, he stepped down and nominated C. Vanniasingham who was elected MP for Kopay as president of the party. In time, N. Rajavarothayam of Trinco, S.M. Rasamanickam of Paddirippu, Dr.E.M.V. Naganathan and other stalwarts served their term as official party leaders. He considered them all as co-workers in the same cause and wanted them to share responsibility while he preferred to be in the background ready to guide them. His statements to the Press, if and when necessary, were always given on behalf of the party and not in his name. They were brief and to the point with no beating about the bush. He never spoke out of turn. He was quite fluent in Tamil at public rallies. He could express himself freely and clearly and was able to put across his message with ease. Of course, he was the plain blunt man like Brutus in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* trying to convince without emotive appeal or jibes at his opponents. He also shared in good measure Brutus's

The strain of being constantly on the move in organising party branches and resistance campaigns in the fifties and sixties must have told not a little on SJV's health. However difficult the task, he was determined to make a nation of them and he did achieve his objective without a doubt. But by the time people realised his worth and his high principled ways and rallied behind him to a man, he unfortunately had become a victim of Parkinson's disease and could not be as active and be among his people as he might have wished.

He never sought name or fame or high office. He refused to accept ministerial office even when his party helped to form the government of the day. He was content to be in the Opposition and genuinely felt his party had a key role to play as watchdog of the rights of the minorities and the under-privileged sections of the people. He was a fearless fighter for the underdog. When some Muslims were shot in a mosque by the Police in Puttalam during the term of the United Front government, he raised the issue in Parliament even though there were several MPs from the Muslim community both in the government and opposition.

What would SJV have done in the tragic plight the Tamil people find themselves in — caught between the Scylla of the rebellious militants and the Charybdis of the state military?

It can be safely said that SJV would not have allowed matters to drift aimlessly and get out of hand. He would have tried his best to see that the case of the Tamil speaking people did not go by default, when the UNP flushed with the landslide victory at the polls lost no time in scrapping the old constitution and produced a new one out of a hat as it were. As the accredited representative of the Tamil speaking people all over the country, he would have insisted that their aspirations were reflected in the Third Constitution at the time it was being drafted. If his efforts failed, he would have been amply justified in mounting a campaign of protest that would have been difficult to contain. He would have maintained close links with CWC and acted in unison to each other's mutual advantage and allowed each one to go his own way.

SJV would have been too sharp not to see through JR's cunning device of nominating MPs for vacant seats without by-elections. He would have preferred to fight by-elections in the Tamil areas and not allow party leadership to be isolated from the people. He had no skeleton in the cupboard to worry about in going before the people and this is a necessary ingredient of participatory democracy. Lastly he would have been in the frontline of any struggle, be it nonviolent and peaceful or even in the case of an armed conflict, if there was no other way out. Like a true soldier and a born general, he would have been at the helm leading his people and not attempted to fight a war by proxy.

Moro Front Signs Ceasefire Agreement

The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), fighting for a separate state in the Philippines, has signed a preliminary ceasefire agreement with local military commanders.

Meanwhile Philippines President Corazon Aquino has appointed an unnamed personal emissary who will initiate ceasefire talks with the New People's Army (NPA).

The NPA — the 16,000 strong military wing of the banned Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) — is said to be the most advanced guerilla group in the South East Asian region.

(Continued on page 7)

Government Complacency Worries GMOA

Here's the text of a press release issued by the Government Medical Officers Association, before the Nurses' strike was settled on 16th April:

The G M O A is highly perturbed at the stalemate regarding the Nurses strike which has now entered its fourth week with no signs of a settlement in sight. This deadlock in a vital sector is causing the sick tremendous hardship, particularly the poor masses, who are unable to seek treatment in private hospitals and Nursing homes. This also has tremendous impact on doctors, who are presently performing their duties under great stress.

According to statistics obtained through our Branch Unions throughout the Island, we find that only 25% of the cadre is presently working compared to the 40% claimed by Government. As a result, it has been difficult for Doctors to provide even the bare and basic emergency services to save lives.

As most of the trained theatre Nursing staff are still on strike, it has necessitated the closing down of operating theatres in certain hospitals and limiting operations only to emergency cases. Even in attending to such emergency cases, it has resulted in many deaths that could

have been avoided as theatres are not prepared in time to take on such operations due to the absence of trained staff. Anaesthetists have brought to our notice that though they could start on a particular case, they are unable to handle a number of cases at the same time, as normally happens, as there are no adequately trained nurses for this purpose.

Similarly post operative care is nil resulting in many unwanted deaths. At the General Hospital, the Intensive Care Units providing post-operative care are closed and patients sent direct to wards where inadequately trained nurses are expected to look after them.

We would like to mention also that due to the present unsettled situation, hundreds of routine surgical operations are being postponed and this is most detrimental to the health of the patients. There is a severe back-log of such cases and more added on to the list day by day.

Routine work in most wards is not being done. Drugs cannot be dispensed. Pupil nurses who are being posted to wards to perform work of nurses are not at all in a position to observe the exact condition of a patient and decide to sum-

mon the doctor when necessary, since they are not trained enough for the purpose.

On several occasions wrong drugs have been given to patients. Investigative procedures done in wards e. g. Lumbar punctures, cannot be carried out as there are no trained nurses to prepare and assist such procedures. In addition, in most hospitals, a number of wards have been closed down with only a surgical and medical ward being maintained.

Paediatric wards are the most affected. In certain hospitals such wards are completely closed down. In others, doctors are fighting a losing battle despite doing some of the work of nurses in order to save lives of innocent children. These include giving gavage feeds to premature babies at L.R.H. as well as preparing and observing the blood transfusion given to children suffering from diseases such as Leukaemia.

In certain hospitals, clinics too have been completely cancelled thereby affecting the follow-up of patients seriously, though their condition require regular supervision.

In Out-patient Department, the attendance has dwindled down to 1/3rd of the previous figures. In our discussions the authorities have expressed the view that this may be the actual amount who need real treatment. However, we do not agree with this view and seriously

feel that some genuine patients too may be missing any type of medical care, particularly those who cannot afford treatment in the private sector.

What we are most worried is that there is a complacent attitude on the part of the Government, who seem to think that things are generally okay and would come back to normal gradually. Since so many avoidable deaths have already occurred, we clearly see that this is not a normal situation and strongly urge that whatever steps to be taken to settle this matter, should be taken expeditiously.

WAKE UP, DS!

High denomination postage stamps (Rs. 100/- and Rs. 50/-) are now in acute short supply in Jaffna. These high value stamps are normally sold inside the Jaffna Fort where a temporary post office has been set up for high value transactions.

Members of the public who take a lot of trouble and risks to get inside the Fort to buy these stamps return empty-handed.

Why is the postal hierarchy in Jaffna keeping mum about this? Isn't it their duty to make the high-ups in Colombo aware of the situation and see that high denomination stamps are made available, irate members of the public ask.

VALUE OF...

(Continued from page 6)

But in the Police service a division has been created administratively, a specialised grade has been created and police personnel allotted which is neither recognized under the Criminal Procedure Code or the Police Ordinance or any other analogous law. It is rather distressing to note in evidence that a Superintendent of Police stating to Court that he was unaware under what law the raid was conducted. He was the only officer of the rank of A.S.P. available at the Gurunagar Head Quarters on that crucial day. He admitted that he gave directions to the C. I. D. and also introduced himself to Fr. Andrick Joseph that he was from the C. I. D. But yet he attempted to show Court that regarding the legality of the raid C. I. D. would be able to say whether it was legal or not. He admitted that he attended the conference with the Army Intelligence on the receipt of information before they proceeded on the raid. But when the Defence posed the question about the legality of the raid his answer was that he assumed the raid

to be legal as the C. I. D. was conducting the raid. It was also surprising to note that in his evidence he stated that as he belonged to the I. S. D. there was no legal obligation to note down the part he played in the raid. He also said that it was not necessary to record a statement after interrogation or during the course of the investigations. His position was that he made notes in half sheets either at the point of interrogation or subsequently but they were subsequently destroyed. The value of contemporaneous documents kept in the course of interrogations appears to be something foreign to the intellect of the I. S. D. Officers of the police and also of the C. I. D. officers of the Police.

I am satisfied that under the provisions of the P.T.A. for a search of premises a warrant is not necessary. Though the search was conducted without a written authority from the Superintendent of Police but the evidence obtained as a result of a search is admissible under our law.

(To be continued)

CHINA'S 'NO' TO MILITARY AID

(Continued from page 6)

The government has had the impudence to declare more than once that development work will be stopped in the North and the money would be utilised for National Security! Is this not material enough for countries to ponder as to whom they should give their aid?

More important to note is the denial of Tamils' right of self-determination which is universally accepted. Especially in a country like Sri Lanka ridden with racial hatred, slaughter of Tamils and destruction of their assets, formation of linguistic states with decentralised power to people will help to avoid racial conflicts.

In dealing with the Tamil freedom struggle, the government's approach, instead of trying to solve it peacefully, has been to crush it.

The foregoing outline of the Tamil freedom struggle has been given to enable countries to see

whether they will be justified in giving military aid to the Lankan government to crush the Tamil freedom struggle. Any such aid will be an infringement of the fundamental rights accorded by the Charter of United Nations to races of people having their distinct language, culture, religion, etc.

America and its satellite powers should not support the Sri Lankan government whose aim is to crush the freedom movement of the Tamils to win their fundamental rights. The Tamils are unhappy that the American President is continuing to send through S. Africa, Israel and Pakistan arms and military experts to the Sri Lanka government although it turned a deaf ear to his suggestion to settle the Tamil problem! It is our fervent prayer that at least hereafter wiser counsel will prevail in the light of the wisdom evinced by the Chinese President.

S. Ponniah

Thirunelvely

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

HOW LANKA FUNDS ITS WAR ON TAMILS

The text of a statement signed by Martin Ennals, Secretary General of INTERNATIONAL ALERT:

In a special visit to India and Sri Lanka in February 1986, the Chairperson of the International Emergency Committee on Sri Lanka, Dame Judith Hart, PC, MP, met with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and also with President Junius Jayewardene.

Dame Judith expressed the growing international concern about the continuing ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka, the tragic loss of life, liberty and property. The International Emergency Committee on Sri Lanka was created to focus international attention on the fact that development and human rights are both victims of the continuing violence. Aid programmes are suspended in parts of Sri Lanka and non governmental development programmes in the island are frustrated. The high level of international development aid from governments is permitting other resources to be used to fund the internal conflict. (Emphasis ours — Ed.)

In a press briefing in Geneva on her return from her mission, Dame Judith announced that she had advised President Jayewardene and

members of his cabinet of the intention of the International Emergency Committee to advocate the cessation of government aid to Sri Lanka pending a political settlement acceptable to the peoples of Sri Lanka. It would be recommended that a fund be established to assist in the implementation of a peaceful, political solution and the rehabilitation of the economy and the well being of the Sri Lankan peoples.

All those concerned with the emergency situation in Sri Lanka who wish to contribute to bringing the crisis to an end are urged to contact the International Emergency Committee, 24 Chancery Lane London, WC 2A 1LS and to approach aid-giving governments to urge them to advocate the withholding of aid grants at the next meeting of the consortium of governments convened through the good offices of the World Bank in Paris in June 1986.

The International Community has been too long silent with regard to the tragedy of Sri Lanka. This concern is certainly shared by some within government and Sinhalese circles who would welcome international support.

(See also page 2)

NO FAITH IN RAJIV

In an interview to THE HINDU, Mr. S. Thondaman, Minister of Rural Industries, has said that 'not only Tamils but all Sri Lankans as well have lost faith in India's capacity to mediate.' He had also stated that 'a political solution to the ethnic problem can only be reached under President Jayewardene...it is doubtful whether any other Government can evolve a solution'.

15 ARRESTED

Fifteen Tamils were taken into custody at Kumburupiddy in Trincomalee District on Tuesday (15th April) during combing-out operations by security forces.

GIRL ASSAULTED

Vanaja Varnakulanathan (21) of Muthur has been hospitalised after she was reportedly roughed up by security personnel.

ASSAULTED

Tamil refugees at Nilaveli have complained to the Citizens' Committee that they were assaulted last Saturday (12th April).

YOUTH SHOT

A 19-year-old youth, Subramaniam Rajaratnam, was shot dead by security forces during a search operation at Thiriyai last week. Velu Chelliah was admitted to hospital with injuries.

NO POOJAS IN THIS TEMPLE

This is the text of an appeal sent to the President by the Valvettiturai Citizens' Committee:

The army camp at Thondamannaru is sited just across the Holy river alongside the famous Selva Sannithy Temple. Since the siting of the Camp the devotees of Lord Muruga had the humiliation of performing their prayers with modern destructive weapons pointing at them and within close range of these weapons. On 21st March, according to eye witnesses, without any apparent provocation the soldiers started shooting at the devotees who were inside the open courtyard of the temple. The shooting continued for over three hours and the devotees had to take shelter in the main hall area unable to move anywhere as the bullets were flying about and helplessly listening to the agonised moaning of one devotee who was shot and wounded and who continued to cry till he died bleeding after about two hours. Another devotee died instantaneously.

On 22nd March, four representatives of the priests of the temple met the Government Agent, Jaffna and brought these matters to his notice. After consulting the Army Authorities the Government Agent assured the delegation that they could carry on the poojas without any hindrance. But when they returned to the temple and rang the temple bell to commence poojas the soldiers started firing in the direction of the temple. On 22nd also two devotees were shot and killed and it was not possible to remove the dead bodies for two days.

No one has been able to approach the temple and rituals are not being held. This is the first time in over 400 years that daily poojas are not being held in this temple. This is a famous sacred temple of the Tamil people like the Kathirkamam temple in the South of the country which attracts thousands of devotees from all over the Tamil areas of the country and the callous manner in which the religious feelings of the Tamils are hurt is something that the Tamils cannot forget or forgive.

Recently there has been a statement issued by the Ministry of National Security that the Army Camps at Valvettiturai, Thondamannaru, Point Pedro and the Naval Camps at Karainagar and Kankesanthurai are expected to come under attack and advising

the people to move away from these localities.

Again on the 4th instant pamphlets were dropped from a helicopter at Valvettiturai suggesting that heavy weapons will be used by the army to repulse anticipated attack on the army camps and this could result in civilian casualties.

The above matters have created a great measure of panic, concern and confusion among the people of this area. The government cannot be unaware of the fact that there are so many army camps in this area, that there is no safe place for the people to flee except to India. The distance between the army camps at Thondamannaru and Valvettiturai is less than three miles and there are five army camps within a distance of fourteen miles from Pt. Pedro to Kankesanthurai. It is inconceivable how a government could create so much of panic among the people as is being done now.

The present army camps are located in the midst of heavily populated areas and their presence have caused severe dislocation to the people of the area. Representations were made to the government about the inability of the schools and colleges near these Camps to function and these have fallen on deaf ears. Now the situation has deteriorated so much that shots are fired at anyone in sight within firing range from these Camps. Vast areas of farm lands have been abandoned and there are instances where old people who have not been careful enough to avoid going anywhere near the firing range from the Camps have got shot and killed and severe problems were encountered in retrieving the dead bodies. Whenever the army personnel come out of their camps severe damage is done to life and property and the helpless people have to flee from their homes. No one is safe from the firing from the helicopters which is taking place very frequently.

We call upon the government to immediately cry halt to this process of ruin of the country and estrangement of the communities living in this country.

We strongly feel that what is required is a political solution to the problems and that the present military approach is only aggravating the problem and causing great havoc to the Tamils of the country in particular and to the entire country and all its citizens.