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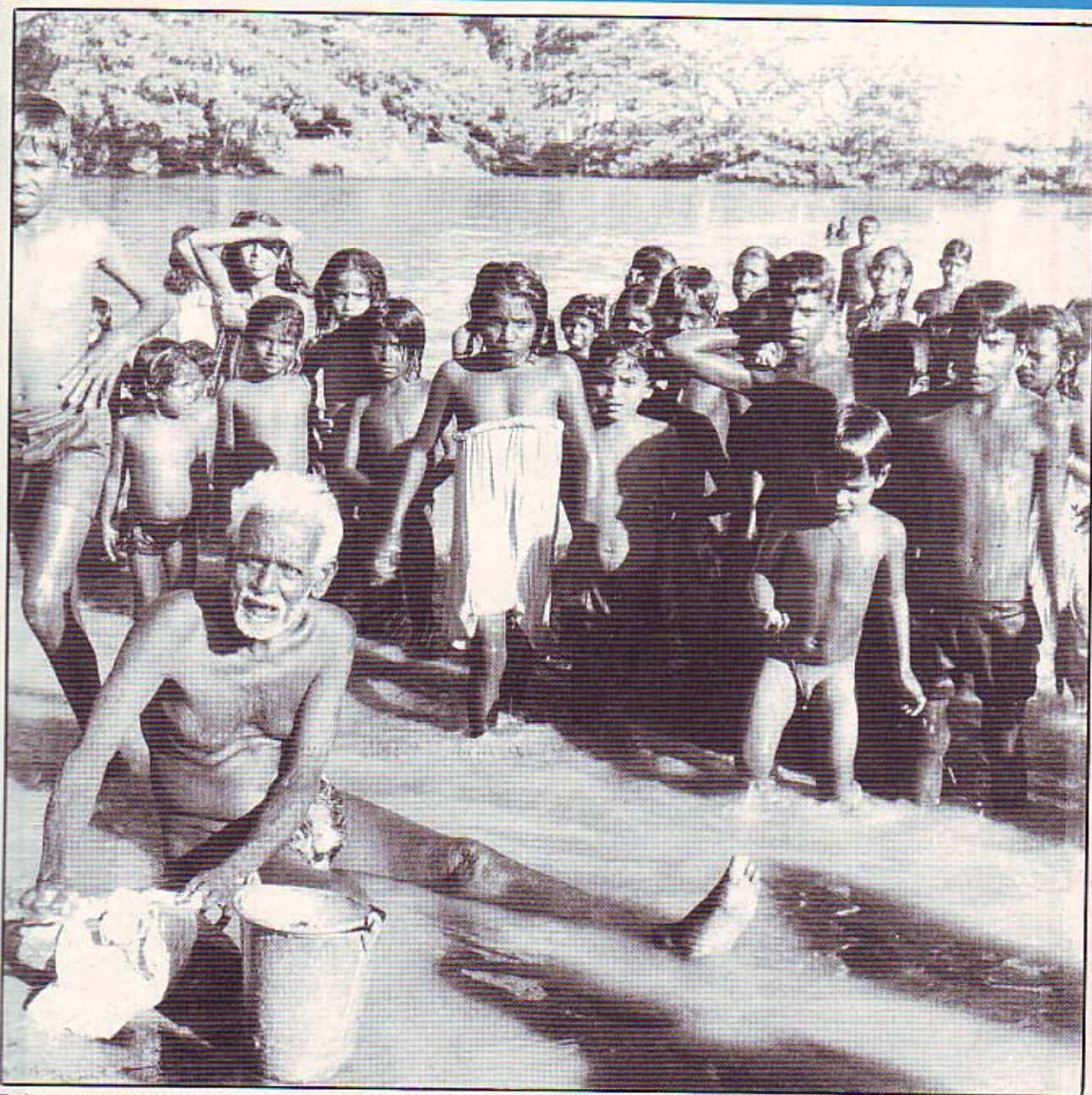
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Refugees bathing at Madhu, Northern Sri Lanka (Photo: Courtesy of Stephen Champion).

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I do not agree with a word
of what you say, but I'll
defend to the death your
right to say it.
- Voltaire.

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A SHABBY ABUSE OF POWER

The sudden and unceremonious dismissal recently of the much respected Governor of the Western Provincial Council has again brought into sharp relief the manner in which the powers of the Executive President of Sri Lanka are exercised.

President Wijetunga's Secretary telephoned Governor Mr. S. Sharvananda at his residence on the morning of 10 June and conveyed the wish of the President that the Governor should submit his resignation forthwith. Taken aback by this totally unexpected request, the Governor asked for the reasons as to why the President wanted him to resign, and none were given. The Governor advised the President's Secretary that he would not resign unless he was given the reasons. At 12.45 pm on the same day, a news bulletin broadcast over the radio announced that the President had sworn in Mr. D.M. Swaminathan as the Governor of the Western Provincial Council, Mr. Sharvananda received the letter of his dismissal by the President at about 1.30 pm. The letter did not give any reasons for his removal.

Where a public official or authority is vested with power untrammelled by any prospect of judicial scrutiny, it is important to ensure that the exercise of such power is guided by discretion, reason and above all public interest. The Governor of a Provincial Council is appointed by the President and there is no doubt that the President enjoys the constitutional power to remove the Governor from his office. But as Prof. G.L. Peiris puts it, 'one of the core values of public law is that discretionary power, however sweeping its range, must be exercised reasonably equitably and in a manner calculated to inspire public confidence. The black letter of the law in its substantive provisions represents only the backbone of a Constitution. What makes a Constitution workable, and indeed worth working, are the assumptions, practices and conventions which sustain and buttress it. Unfortunately, these are the issues that are flagrantly infringed by the cavalier removal of Governor Sharvananda.'

There is no doubt that the Governor's dismissal was directly attributable to the removal a few days earlier by the Governor of the Minister of Education of the WPC on the advice of its Chief Minister. In removing the Minister, the Governor acted in complete conformity with his constitutional duty and no one has suggested otherwise. If he had not acted in terms of the advice given to him by the Chief Minister, then he would have acted contrary to law, but certainly would not have incurred the wrath of the President and would have continued as Governor of the WPC to this day. What the President's action in this instance signifies, therefore, is that he expected and wanted the Governor to act contrary to law. This is not something which is surprisingly new. Subversion of the rule of law by itself and through its agencies and functionaries has been the stock-in-trade of the government and the ruling party over the years, and the dispensation under President Wijetunga is no exception to this practice.

After his dismissal, Mr. Sharvananda is reported to have said that he would not have wanted to stick to his post even for a moment longer if the government did not want him. 'I am not interested in government policy. I am only interested in acting according to law. This is a crude way of removing a Governor.'

Mr. Sharvananda held with much distinction the highest judicial post as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the country. During his judicial tenure he was acclaimed as having performed his functions with sturdy independence and total integrity. A person of his standing and stature did not deserve the shabby treatment that the President had meted out. But Mr. Sharvananda leaves his office with his reputation intact and integrity unassailed. On the contrary, what this episode again demonstrates is the repeated recourse to abuse of presidential power at the altar of political expediency and in the interests of the party and persons in power.

NEWS REVIEW

★ PRESIDENT SACKS WESTERN PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR

In a move that surprised many, President D.B. Wijetunga dismissed the Governor of the opposition controlled Western Provincial Council, Mr. S. Sharvananda, on 10 June and replaced him with Mr. D.M. Swaminathan as the new Governor. Many consider the President's action as politically motivated.

The newly appointed Governor Mr. Swaminathan is also a well known lawyer with commercial interests, and has been a long standing supporter of the ruling United National Party. He has held many elevated positions in state institutions and presently occupies chairmanships and directorships in many private companies.

Political observers describe the President's move as a pre-emptive strike against Mrs. Chandrika Wijekumaranatunga, the Chief Minister of the Western Provincial Council (WPC), who had ideas of seeking a dissolution of the Council to precipitate a fresh election which she hoped to win for the Peoples Alliance easily.

The dismissed Governor Sharvananda, a former Chief Justice with a wide reputation for his integrity and judicial independence, told the press that he had received the President's letter removing him from his position in the early afternoon on 10 June. The letter did not give any valid reasons for his removal. Earlier on the same day, Presidential Secretary Mr. K.H.J. Wijedasa had telephoned Mr. Sharvananda to convey President Wijetunga's wish that the Governor should resign. Mr. Sharvananda had asked for the reasons why the President wanted him to resign but was not given any reasons, and therefore he refused to resign.

Ever since Gamini Dissanayake, the leader of the DUNF, decided to join the ruling United National Party (UNP), there was a split in the ranks of the WPC members belonging to the DUNF, the majority of whom continued to support Mrs. Kumaranatunga's administration. The attempts by the UNP leadership to wean away a sufficient number of DUNF councillors to topple her administration did not succeed. But she was aware of the

continuing machinations by the ruling party to unseat her, and it is said that she had planned to seek a dissolution of the Council by the Governor at the appropriate time thus precipitating the holding of an election in which, on the basis of the results of the recently held elections for the Southern Provincial Council, the Peoples Alliance would have trounced the UNP without much difficulty.

Recently the Health Minister of the WPC, Mr. Premaratne Gunasekera was removed from office by the Governor on the advice of the Chief Minister Mrs. Wijekumaranatunga. Mr. Gunasekera belonged to the DUNF and his removal was attributed to the suspicion on the part of the Chief Minister that he had succumbed to pressures from Gamini Dissanayake to cross over to the UNP.

It is probable that Mr. Sharvananda was removed because of his refusal to permit repeated attempts at interference by the central government and its ministers in the affairs of the WPC falling within its devalued ambit and the government's suspicion that he might concede Chandrika's request for a dissolution of the Council if and when she made it.

However, Mr. Sharvananda told the press that he was not aware of any intention on the part of Chandrika to seek a dissolution of the Council, but explained the constitutional position that if the Chief Minister commanded a majority in the Council, she could advise the Governor to dissolve and that the Governor would have to consent.

While denying that the Chief Minister had any intention of asking the Governor for the dissolution of the WPC, opposition parties of the Peoples Alliance condemned the removal of Mr. Sharvananda from his position as an act of political victimisation and a blatant abuse of presidential power.

★ RE-ENTRY OF GAMINI AND RONNIE

At last, after a prolonged wait in the political wilderness but never out of controversy, the leader of the DUNF Gamini Dissanayake has re-entered parliament as a National List MP. For some months now, the UNP National List MPs had resisted pressure from President Wijetunga to resign and make way for Gamini Dissanayake and others whom the President wanted to bring into par-

liament. Reports indicated that offers of alternative positions, bribery and even intimidation constituted part of this pressure. First to yield to this pressure was Mr. M.H. Amit who resigned on 17 May and Gamini was nominated and sworn-in as MP on 19 May followed by much fanfare. On 14 June, he joined Wijetunga's cabinet as Minister of Mahaveli Development. Mr. Amit has now been rewarded with another post - Chairman of the Sri Lanka-Libya Agricultural Development Corporation Ltd.

Two other National List MPs, Alec Robertson and R.A.D. Sirisena also resigned to enable the former Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel and Gamini Jayawickrema Perera, the former Chief Minister of the North Western Province, to re-enter Parliament. Mr. Ronnie de Mel has now joined the cabinet as Minister for Ports and Shipping.

Ronnie de Mel's toing and froing from one party to another is legendary in Sri Lanka's recent political history. Having been a civil servant in the 1950s, he flirted with Philip Gunawardene's MEP in the 1960s, joined the SLFP in the early 1970s, and feeling disgruntled by not getting a portfolio in Mrs. Bandaranaike's cabinet joined the UNP in 1977 and became Finance Minister in President Jayawardene's cabinet, a post he held for nearly 11 years. He resigned from the cabinet and the UNP towards the end of Jayawardene's term and joined the SLFP in 1988 and campaigned against Premadasa in the Presidential elections held that year and the subsequent parliamentary elections. Following the victory of Premadasa and the UNP in these elections, Ronnie went into a self-imposed exile and spent the last few years in London, but always yearned to return.

The expectation of President Wijetunga in inducting nationally known political heavyweights like Gamini and Ronnie into his cabinet is that it will enhance the political fortunes of the UNP in the forthcoming elections. But their re-entry into the UNP has not been universally welcomed by all sections of the party.

The Premadasa loyalist faction within the UNP, which had been angered over President Wijetunga's attempts to sideline and at times denigrate the former President's family members and his close associates, has been particularly hostile to

the re-entry into the UNP of these two anti-Premadasa stalwarts. Ronnie had been no friend of Premadasa even when they were together in Jayawardene's cabinet. He accused Premadasa personally of corruption during the 1988 presidential campaign. As for Gamini, Premadasa did not want him even in his cabinet. Gamini was a co-architect, along with Lalith Athulathmudali, of the impeachment motion against Premadasa. Thus their re-entry into positions of power and influence in the party and the government may result in further disunity in an already fractured UNP.

With the rehabilitation of Gamini Dissanayake in the upper echelons of the UNP, his brother-in-law Mr. Wickrema Weerasooriya has also been inducted as an advisor to President Wijetunga and Secretary to Ministry of Policy Planning and Implementation. He played an important and powerful role during the Jayawardene regime, but after Premadasa became President, Mr. Weerasooriya left for Australia where he and his family normally live.

It is learnt that Mr. Weerasooriya considers himself as occupying a special position in the Presidential Secretariat, even superior to the Secretary to the President Mr. K.H.J. Wijedasa and Presidential Advisor Mr. Bradman Weerakoon. This perception on the part of Mr. Weerasooriya has led him to act in a manner which has resulted in much acrimony within the Presidential Secretariat.

In addition to being advisor to the President, Mr. Weerasooriya is also said to be holding (in an acting capacity) several posts held by Secretary to the Treasury Mr. R. Paskaralingam who has reportedly gone abroad for medical treatment. But what has caused much flutter is that Mr. Weerasooriya is going about making appointments and attending to matters as if he has been permanently appointed in these posts. It is also reported that he is to play a vital role in the UNP's electoral campaign, and at a certain meeting with businessmen he is on record as having said that the 'UNP will win'. The question is whether, if Mr. Weerasooriya is a state employee and is paid as such from the public purse, it is proper and legal for him to play a political role on behalf of the ruling political party.

In the meantime there has been much speculation as to the whereabouts

of the once powerful R. Paskaralingam and whether he will ever return to his post, or decide to stay abroad indefinitely. Recent reports indicate that he is at present in Singapore and that a message has gone out to him from President Wijetunga to return to his post.

★ PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

Though it has been decided that the presidential candidate of the opposition Peoples Alliance is to be the SLFP leader Mrs. S. Bandaranaike, there are those who continue to assert that the chances of defeating the UNP at the elections would be enhanced if Mrs. Chandrika Kumaranatunga is nominated by the opposition as its candidate.

Even within the SLFP there has been a signature campaign at provincial level urging that Chandrika be nominated. Those who support the candidature of Chandrika give many reasons for their preference: Mrs. Bandaranaike is too old and feeble to be able to lead a punishing election campaign; although experienced, she has lost her vigour and vitality due to old age and recent illness which has resulted in her seeking hospital treatment; she lacks the organisational ability that is required to fight a party in power; and that Chandrika by her performance during the southern provincial elections had proved herself to be the best campaigner that the opposition has.

Victor Ivan, the editor of the influential Sinhala weekly, 'Ravaya', has through the columns of his journal continued to make a strong case for the nomination of Chandrika instead of Mrs. Bandaranaike. He points out that Chandrika is better placed to attract the votes of minorities the overwhelming majority of whom have been alienated by the SLFP over the years.

Although Mrs. Bandaranaike reiterates that she would be the opposition presidential candidate, she has moved to formally appoint Chandrika as the deputy leader of the party, and made it clear to all that in her absence it would be Chandrika who would be acting on her behalf. In case Mrs. Bandaranaike is affected by illness or otherwise before the elections, there appears to be no doubt now that Chandrika would be the candidate who will lead the opposition. However, Mrs. Bandaranaike has made it known in recent interviews that she still has her motherly affection and

feeling for her son Anura Bandaranaike who crossed over to the UNP. Insiders say that the one reason that prevents her handing over the SLFP leadership to Chandrika is that, if she does that, Anura will be permanently alienated. She is said to be hoping against hope that Anura would soon return to the 'family and the party'. It is said that she was pleasantly surprised and extremely pleased that Anura flew to Singapore recently to see his mother who went there for medical treatment.

★ MUSLIM-TAMIL RELATIONS

The leader of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, Mr. M.H.M. Ashroff, in a letter recently addressed to the leader of the LTTE, Mr. V. Prabhakaran, has called for a joint effort by the Tamils and Muslims to win back the rights of both communities. In his letter Mr. Ashroff states: 'As long as the Tamils put forward one demand and the Muslims another, no solution could be arrived at to the problem of the North and East. It is therefore necessary for a change in the approach adopted by both the communities, and the leaders of both should strive to present a joint demand on behalf of both the Tamils and Muslims.'

The Tamil and Muslim political leaders have been cheated by all political leaders from Bandaranaike onwards. Even present day leaders are not concerned about the continuing blood-letting in the country, and do not even consider the present crisis as a national problem. There was a time when the North-East problem was discussed by the Sinhala chauvinist leadership only with the Tamil leadership. But today the situation has changed.

'When talking to the Tamils they would say, 'We accept your demands. But the Muslims would not agree. What can we do? When talking to the Muslims they would say, 'It is of course necessary to safeguard your identity, but the Tamils have not agreed to share power with the Muslims. Why not the Muslims and the Sinhalese get together and appoint a Muslim as the Chief Minister of the North-East and make the Tamils dance to our tune!'

If this trend is to be changed, then the Muslims and Tamils must be united in thought and action. Of what use will talks be without LTTE

Continued on page 6

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participation? The LTTE should not isolate itself. It should enter a new era with hope for better relations between Tamils and Muslims.

The first mighty blow to the Sinhala chauvinist forces will be Tamil-Muslim unity. Although I do not know how far you were responsible for the injustice done to the Muslims, it is your duty to publicly apologise for the injustices committed by the Tigers against the Muslims. You should declare publicly that the displaced Muslims will be resettled in their original places of residence with compensation.

'The Sinhala chauvinist forces would not be able to stomach healthy relations between the Tamils and Muslims. We should identify who our enemies are and who our friends are. Let us not turn our brotherly controversies into conflicts. Instead let us win our rights by forging unity'.

NORTH-EAST MERGER THRO' TAMIL-MUSLIM UNITY

The TULF Member of Parliament, Mr. Mavai S. Senathirajah in a recent statement to the press said that the Tamils and Muslims can secure their rights only if the northern and eastern provinces are merged into a single linguistic territorial unit. He added:

It has been suggested that 32% of Muslims in the Eastern Province would be reduced to 17.62% if the Northern and Eastern Provinces are amalgamated. While statistics may be correct it should be remembered that statistics cannot solve social problems. The following matters may be given serious thought:

● Muslims can live in peace with Tamils more than the majority Sinhalese.

(a) In spite of their being 32% of the population in the Eastern Province, Colonisation and appropriation have taken place and they have lost their paddy lands i.e. Seruwila and Digavapi.

(b) Murder at Puttalam mosque, attack at Slave Island. It is the Tamil leaders who raised their voices of protest.

(c) While Muslims were behind the government, it is the Tamil leaders who raised the issues regarding Tamil areas.

● Although Tamils and Muslims follow different religions, they communicate through the same lan-

guage and live cheek by jowl in the East.

● Alternate Governments have harassed the minorities one after the other. The fight for Tamil Eelam is actually a fight in principle to restore the lost rights of the Tamil speaking people.

● The minorities can win their rights only through a political understanding amongst the Tamil speaking people. It is therefore essential that not only the people but the territory in which they live should remain amalgamated. Mr. Ashraff the leader of the Islamic Front had written to Mr. Prabhakaran the leader of the LTTE. This is a step which should be welcome. It is only through an understanding between the Tamils and Muslims and the amalgamation of the North-East that the minorities can win their rights.

★ CHANDRIKA PROMISES PROPOSALS FOR POLITICAL SOLUTION

'The ethnic problem is a subject for which a solution could be found. There was many a situation in the past when a solution could have been found. But the Government made no attempt' said Mrs. Chandrika Kumaranatunga, in a special interview granted to the Virakesari. She also added that the SLFP will put forward its own proposals in the near future. Although action has been initiated she refused to divulge what the proposals are.

Some of the questions and answers are as follows:

Q: Do you believe that a reasonable and sensible solution could be found for the problem in the North-East? If so what is the basis on which the SLFP hopes to initiate action?

A: Yes. We definitely believe that a reasonable solution could be found for the problem. But it is certain that it is not going to be easy. The Government which came to power with a 5/6 majority, failed to do so; when in power during the last 17 years, it had ample opportunity to solve the problem. At present it has reached a critical juncture. It will therefore be difficult to find a solution to the problem since both sides have hardened their stand and adopted extreme views, difficult to reconcile. The stand of the LTTE with regard to the matter creates more problems. They do not appear to be interested in discussions to

solve the problem. The people in the North-East want a solution to the problem and are fed up with the war. The SLFP in its recent report on its policies has given the basis of the solution to the problem. It can be solved only on the basis of broad based devolution. In addition to extending the principle to other regions it is necessary to consider the necessity to adjust boundaries of certain regions. We have appointed a committee to go into the matter.

Q: No one has the opportunity to serve in the cabinet from the North-East. Will the SLFP ensure representation for Tamils?

A: We will definitely do so. When SLFP National List MP, Mr. Rajaratnam passed away I recommended the appointment of a Tamil to replace him. But owing to many reasons this could not be done. The majority of the members in the higher ranks of the party support my view. The main reason for the breakdown in the communication between the centre and the North-Eastern Provincial Council was due to suspicion and mistrust of each other. It is necessary to continue discussions. Institutions should have been created to ensure continued discussions with the leaders of the North-East.

Q: Have you any suggestion to solve the problems between the Centre and the Provincial Councils?

A: This is just what I said. It is necessary to create new institutions. They should ensure continued discussions between the centre and the Provincial Councils without breakdown.

Q: Are you satisfied that the Commission on Official Languages has sufficient powers? How would you help to strengthen it?

A: There are various types of legislation all over the world. It is necessary for Governments to ensure effective implementation of their provisions. Otherwise they will be nullified. Even if the Commission on Official Languages is strengthened, Government should adhere to effective implementation. What the SLFP realises regarding the minorities is the fact that they are equal citizens of the country. They should be enabled to exercise their rights.

★ CHALLENGE TO PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

The leader of the Muslim Congress

M.H.M. Ashroff, has issued a public demand to those candidates who are going to contest the presidential election to place before the people their solution to the ethnic problem. There are only a few hundred days more to the presidential election.

In his demand to the presidential candidates, Ashroff has made the following observation:

Before the presidential election, the candidates from the majority community must do something constructive in order to attract the attention of the minority communities. The problem of the minorities is not only a national problem but has also now become an international problem. Unfortunately, this problem has got entangled with the country's economic problem and become more complicated. The northern and eastern provinces have been neglected for more than a decade with regard to economic develop-

ment. Even in the allocation of national resources and undertaking of development projects, these two provinces have not been given their share to which they are both legally and rightfully entitled.

The millions and millions spent with the hope of subduing the Tigers is not only going down the drain but there are no signs of victory either. Thousands of Sri Lankan youths have lost their lives and a few thousand have become widows, besides the others who have lost their limbs and have become handicapped.

Could anyone imagine that our economy could be developed without finding an amicable and satisfactory solution to the ethnic problem? Empty slogans like 'open economy' 'closed economy' are mere gimmicks at election meetings. The days when communal slogans brought votes are also over. The Sinhalese people are

as eager as the people of the north and east that a solution should be found to the ethnic problem.

The time when the Sinhalese people thought that the ethnic problem was confined to the north and east only is gone. Experience and knowledge of things have made them realize now that it has come to their door steps as well. The results of the recent elections in the south clearly show that the people cannot be deceived any more by slogans like 'Sri Lanka is the country of the Sinhalese', 'We are the sons of the soil', 'There is nothing called ethnic problem in the country but there is only a terrorist problem'.

The fear that 'Federalism' will result in the division of the country has now become a thing of the past. At both national and international levels, devolution of powers has now come to mean sharing of powers by the central government and the federated units. Therefore, the minorities are waiting to know what these 'New Thought', 'New Vision' and 'New Approach' mean.

The Sri Lanka Muslim Congress earnestly requests the presidential candidates to commence negotiations with those concerned with the ethnic problem and they should in no uncertain terms place before the people their methods of doing it.

Arson Attack on Tamil Resource Centre & Library

The Toronto based Tamil Resource Centre and Library known as Thedagam located at 566 Parliament Street at Wellesley was subjected to an arson attack shortly after 1.00am on 24 May 1994. The arsonists who had gained forced entry into the building through a window set fire to and destroyed a vast collection of books, journals, newspapers, documents and other literary material and furniture.

A spokesman for the Centre said that theirs was a community organisation that worked to advance the cause of self-determination of the Tamil speaking people of Sri Lanka and generally to advance the cause of human rights and freedom of expression. Its work was done through peaceful and non-violent means to focus attention among expatriate Sri Lankans and others on questions relating to the violation of human and democratic rights. The Resource Centre and the Thedagam Library has been extensively used by Tamils and others in Canada for gaining information and research purposes.

The Centre has also hosted many discussions and seminars on many issues relating to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka with

a view to promoting a negotiated political solution and on questions relating to freedom of expression, political violence and assassinations.

During its four year existence, the organisation and its personnel have been subjected to threats and intimidation by elements within the Canadian Tamil community which had become intolerant to criticism and dissent. The arson attack on the Centre on 24 May occurred a few hours after a meeting was held there in memory of the writer and publisher, Sabaratnam Sabalingam, who was murdered by two Tamil gunmen at his home in Paris on 1 May. A spokesman for the Centre said that their belief was that those elements responsible for the arson attack belonged to the same network of elements who were responsible for the murder of Sabalingam.

A solidarity demonstration in which many representing human rights and community organisations participated was held on 28 May to protest against political intimidation, violence and killings which were aimed at suppressing dissent and freedom of expression and to condemn the arson attack on the Centre.

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CWC and SLMC Spell Out Joint Plan for Solution

A set of proposals have emerged from Tamil and Muslim political parties to resolve the ethnic crisis which is plaguing the country for more than a decade.

The move has been initiated by Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) leader and Minister, Saumya Moorthy Thondaman about one and a half months ago.

Mr. Thondaman has sent his 1991 proposals to resolve the ethnic crisis to a selected number of political parties including the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), Sri Lankan Muslim Congress (SLMC), All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC).

He has invited them to study his proposals and make amendments which they feel necessary to bring about an amicable and a reasonable settlement.

Mr. Thondaman who wanted a critical re-assessment of his proposals fixed up separate meetings with these political parties in a bid to evolve a final set of proposals.

After closed door consultations and deliberations with other parties Mr. Thondaman prepared a document which he would present to the government for serious consideration.

Mr. Thondaman will thereafter have a dialogue with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to make these proposals a reality.

The highlights are there would be a regional council for North and East on the basis of the demarcations made when Sri Lanka received independence from the British.

In the East there will be a sub region for Muslims with Kalmunai district as the base.

Ampara district which has a high concentration of Muslims will be bifurcated for this purpose to create the new district of Kalmunai.

Muslim Pradeshiya Sabhas in Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts will be treated as non contiguous areas under this proposal.

The new proposals have their similarities with the Provincial Council system set up the J.R. Jayewardene administration but with more power conceded to the minorities for regional autonomy.

Some of the proposals are as follows:

A Regional Council

A Regional Council shall be established encompassing the nine districts specified in the First Schedule with effect from such date as the President may appoint by order published in the Gazette.

The boundaries of the Regional Council shall be the same as at the time of independence and shall not be changed except with the consent of the Regional Council.

The powers devolved upon the Regional Council cannot be changed except at the request or with the consent of the Regional Council.

The Regional Council so constituted shall have a Governor, a Chief Minister, a Deputy Chief Minister and a Board of Ministers.

The Regional Council shall have its own secretarial staff. The Council may by Statute regulate the recruitment and conditions of service of such staff.

Treatment of Muslims

The Muslim Community though numerically a minority in the North-East Region should be assured of a position of being equal in all respects and in no way being subordinate to the majority community of the Region. The majority community and the minorities should have a position of parity in the sphere of opportunities.

It is however necessary to remember that a spirit of understanding accommodation and goodwill will be more overpowering than legal enactments. To evolve them and to work out a future of harmonious relationship is left to the genius of all communities of the North-East Region.

The political and administrative arrangement should balance the interests of the majority community and those of the minorities in the North-East Region. The settlement should inspire confidence in the minorities that their rights will be safeguarded and their interests fostered.

To guarantee this constitutional safeguards will be provided and

administrative arrangements duly made.

Sub-Regional Council

Within the framework of a single Regional Council the predominantly Muslim areas shall have their own institutional arrangements.

Divisional Secretary's Divisions which are co-terminus with Pradeshiya Sabhas and have a substantial Muslim majority in the Eastern province share a certain identity and a community of interests. All these divisions may form the territory at the Sub-Regional Council. Though not territorially contiguous, they will be administered by one body to be called the Sub-Regional Council. This body shall be composed of the Muslim members of the Regional Council.

A Sub-Regional Council shall be established for the Divisions specified in the Second Schedule and falling under the area authority of the Regional Council.

This Sub-Regional Council shall exercise executive authority with respect to all subjects set out in list 1 of the Schedule in the area of authority of the Sub-Regional Council.

The Ampara District will be bifurcated into the Districts of Kalmunai and Ampara.

The Kalmunai District will encompass the Divisions with a substantial Muslim and Tamil Population.

Ampara District will cover the territory comprising Divisions outside the Kalmunai District which are almost wholly Sinhalese.

The Kalmunai District listed in the First Schedule encompassing the Divisions of Karavahupattu, Nintavurpattu, Sammanthurai, Thirukovil, Addalaichchenai, Karunkodithivu and Pothuvil shall form the base of the Sub-Regional Council. The Divisions of Kinniya, Thampalakamam and Muthur having a substantial Muslim population in the Trincomalee District and the Divisions of Oddaimavadi, Eravur and Kattankduy in the Batticaloa District will coalesce with this base to constitute the Sub-Regional Council.

The Sub-Regional Council established by the Regional Council shall be a Body Corporate and have a Chairman and an Executive Committee. This Council shall be the unit to which executive authority is delegated.

The Sub-Regional Council shall

Letter to the President

Ceylon Workers Congress leader S. Thondaman and Sri Lanka Muslim Congress leader M.H.M Ashraff have proposed a regional council for the North East Provinces in a bid to resolve the ethnic problems.

In their letter to President Wijetunga, the two leaders have said they had successfully arrived at an understanding, and proposed a regional council encompassing the North East Province.

They also say the region should enjoy and exercise extensive, executive, legislative, and administrative powers under the leadership of the Chief Minister and a Board of Ministers.

They have also proposed a territorial council for the Muslim areas which will be a part and parcel of the regional council. The Kalmunai, Sammanthurai and Pottuvil areas will serve as the base of this Territorial Council.

The letter says:

'We are pleased to inform Your Excellency that the Ceylon Workers Congress and the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress have successfully arrived at an understanding which we hope will lead to taking the peace process forward. A clear consonance of views and an agreed plan of action have now emerged. Our commitment to peace mandates a joint effort on the part of all communities. As an initial step in this direction the Tamils and the Muslims of the North East should resolve to work as co-partners and present a joint proposal for consideration by the Sinhala community. It is our perception that an endorsement of our Peace Plan by the Government along with a positive signal from the LTTE would clear the decks to launch meaningful negotiations. Success would lie in expedition.

'For the success of any lasting solution, all three communities should be assured of their political,

religious, linguistic, social and cultural security and it should provide scope for their development needs.

'It is our view that autonomy to an optimal degree is the singular option to end the current ethnic conflict and to usher in peace. The institution to receive such autonomy and to exercise power and authority shall be a Regional Council encompassing the North-East Region. The Governor appointed by the President shall be the Head of the Regional Council. The concurrent list of powers from the present Constitution be done away with and such powers be suitably redistributed between the Reserved list and the Regional list. The Region should enjoy and exercise extensive legislative, executive and administrative powers under the leadership of the Chief Minister and a Board of Ministers.

'The Regional Council will enable the Muslim community of the region to share reasonable extent of powers with the Tamil majority. However we are of the view that a special institutional arrangement is necessary to assuage the fears of the Muslims. Therefore we have also agreed to create a Territorial Council for this purpose.

'The Territorial Council will be part and parcel of the Regional Council and shall serve as a special constitutional institution to cater to the needs of the Muslims living in the areas of jurisdiction of the Territorial Council. The Kalmunai, Sammanthurai and Pottuvil areas will serve as the base of the Territorial Council. The predominantly Muslim areas of the North-East Region shall coalesce with the base in the constitution and functioning of the Territorial Council. The Head of the Territorial Council shall ex-officio be the Deputy Chief Minister of the Region. The Chief Minister shall appoint two of his

Ministers at the recommendation of the Deputy Chief Minister.

'How best could the Sinhalese community share power in the envisaged power structure. What efforts need be taken to remove their anxieties and concerns are questions that deserve paramount consideration and serious attention. We wish to record our sincere and serious commitment in finding out satisfactory answers to these and other questions that may surface.

We also wish to give Your Excellency our assurance to continue our relentless efforts in this regard to achieve inter-communal harmony in the region.

It appears best for a three stage strategy to be adopted. The first stage is for Tamils and Muslims to reach an understanding among them to work as co-partners. The second stage is for Governmental support for such an understanding. The third stage is getting a positive signal from the LTTE for these proposals. We concede that the Government while being responsible for all citizens of Sri Lanka has a special responsibility to safeguard the interests of the majority community.

'It is our fundamental perception that a political settlement evolved on the bedrock of Tamil-Muslim unity accepted by the Government and endorsed by the LTTE after due negotiation will compose the steel-frame of the peace arrangement. We are also emphatic that our ideas, concepts and aspirations should find practical expression through a Constitutional Amendment that would devolve power to the North-East and result in the creation of the envisaged political structure.

'The Ceylon Workers Congress and the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress look forward to a sympathetic appreciation of the minority problem by your government and seek Your Excellency's early response'.

have the authority to decide on the location of its secretariat to service its administration.

The exercise of the executive authority of the Regional Council in the territory of the Sub-Regional Council and in the execution of

policies and programmes, the Sub-Regional Council shall be the agent of the Regional Council.

Powers and responsibilities shall be delegated by the Regional Council to the Sub-Regional Council in respect of List 1. The delegations

made cannot be rescinded without a two-third majority of the Sub-Regional Council.

The Regional Council shall not have Authority to initiate legislation or formulate policy or implement

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programmes affecting the security, religion, culture, education or any other matter sensitive to the interests of the Muslim Community without the approval of two-third of the membership of the Sub-Regional Council.

Safeguards for the Sinhala minority

The position of the Sinhalese in the North-East Region of Sri Lanka is significantly different from that of other minorities in the Region. The Central Government is both a guardian and an appellate institution for the Sinhala population of the Region. Even so, it is obligatory on the part of the North-East Regional Authority to provide safeguards to the Sinhalese in the context of autonomy being granted.

As a power-sharing arrangement the Chief Minister shall appoint one Sinhalese Minister to the Board of Ministers.

The right of the Sinhalese from any part of Sri Lanka to own property anywhere in the North-East Region shall be considered sacrosanct.

Mahaveli lands shall be alienated as per the formula embodied in the draft proposals of 1986.

The cadre of the Sinhalese Police officers shall be proportionate to the ratio of Sinhalese in the Region.

Deployment of police personnel in predominantly Sinhalese areas will be as per the ethnic ratio in the Pradeshiya Sabha area.

There shall be a Sinhalese DIG for the North-East Region. The DIG shall be responsible to and be under the control of the IGP of the Region.

The basis formulated by the Central Government for the allocation of funds to the North-East Region will be adopted for apportioning financial resources to the predominantly Sinhalese areas. Such funds will be available for development and maintenance expenditure.

The linguistic and cultural freedom of the Sinhalese will be treated as inviolable. Policies shall be framed and programmes implemented to foster their language and culture.

The degree of autonomy would correspond to the quantum of power and authority that is vested and on the spread of subjects and functions that is brought exclusively under Regional purview. In amending the

constitution to vest power and authority in the Regional Council, the subjects and functions in the Provincial List, the reserved List and concurrent List as enumerated in the Thirteenth Amendment require to be substantially changed. There is unanimity that the Concurrent List be dispensed with. The subjects and functions of this List have therefore been apportioned to the Regional List and the Reserved List.

Regional List

Land.

State land in the Region shall vest in the Regional Authority.

The Regional Authority shall administer, control and utilise state lands within the Region.

The Regional Authority shall have the power over disposition of land by way of lease or sale.

State land within a Region required by the Central Government for a reserved subject shall be used with the concurrence of the Regional Authority.

Selection of allottees for settlement in irrigation projects will be determined by the Regional Authority with due regard to retaining the ethnic balance of the Province at the time of independence.

All people within the territory of the Regional Council shall have right to state land in any part of the Region.

The Regional Authority shall have authority to establish a Regional Land Commission.

The Regional Land Commission shall formulate policy on land use with the Region.

The composition and selection for the Commission shall be determined by the Board of Ministers of the Regional Authority.

Mahaveli lands shall be alienated as per the formula embodied in the draft proposals of 1986.

The Sub-Regional Council shall administer, control and utilise state land within the territory of the Sub-Regional Council. State land within the Sub-Regional Council required by the Regional Council shall be used with the concurrence of the Sub-Regional Council. Land available for alienation in a Division shall be allocated by the Sub-Regional Council according to the ethnic ratio of the Division.

For land alienated by the Regional Council, the people of the Sub-Regional Council shall be entitled to

allotments, corresponding to their ethnic proportion in the Region. Any extent in excess of this entitlement shall be determined according to ground realities by the Regional Council in consultation with the Sub-Regional Council.

Regional Police Force

The Regional Government shall have the authority to establish a Regional Police Force for the North-East Region.

The Regional Police Force of the North-East Region shall consist of an IGP, DIGs, SSPs, SPs, ASPs and other ranks recruited or promoted at Regional level.

The cadre of the Regional Police Force shall be fixed by the Regional Government having regard to the population area and the number of Police Stations that existed in the Region in 1986.

The initial recruitment shall be for a cadre of 10,000 police officers. Thus recruitment should be completed within a specified period.

The Police Force shall reflect the Regional ethnic ratio.

There shall be one Police Force for the whole of the Region. This would include reserve volunteers, special or any other units of the Police.

The appointment, transfer, dismissal and disciplinary control of Police Officers in the Region shall vest with the regional authority.

All Police Officers serving in the Region shall function under the direction and control of the Inspector General of the Region.

The IGP of the Region shall be responsible to and be under the control of the Chief Minister of the Region.

The cadre of Police Officers of the Sub-Regional Council shall be fixed by the Regional Council having regard to the population, area and the number of Police Stations in the Sub-Regional Council. Minorities like Burghers, Malays and others shall enjoy a specific quota as warranted by their population.

Deployment of Police personnel in predominantly Muslim divisions will be as per the ethnic ratio in the division. Deployment in the Districts in non-Muslim areas will be as per the ethnic ratio of the district.

There may be variations to the above principles in accordance with ground realities. These variations will be kept to the minimum.

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The Chandrika Factor and the Ethnic Question

by Taraki

A characteristic feature of Ms. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga's politics is undoubtedly her stand on the minority question. She has successfully impressed the view that she is the best bet for the Tamils and Muslims upon a sizeable number of intellectuals, opinion makers and informed individuals of the two communities.

And one is also truly astonished at the number of young intellectuals, journalists and writers in Colombo who strongly feel that she is the only Sinhala leader who has the steadfastness and acumen to ultimately find a just solution to the conflict in the northeast. Though it is more than certain that the SLFP will, with Mrs. B. at the helm, flounder and fail pathetically in due course, one cannot afford thereby to ignore the personality of Ms. Kumaratunga in discussing the political future of the minorities in the Sri Lankan polity.

The question therefore is 'Can she really begin the process to solve the northeast problem on a political footing?' That she is politically correct in her pronouncements on the minority question is, as I am sure she would have realised by now, not enough to keep those who matter among the

Tamils and Muslims on her side for too long.

Once all those nice principled and definitely bold things that she may say about the ethnic question become cliches which point to nowhere, there will be bitterness.

This is underscored by the fact that LTTE has already started saying that Chandrika, like Premadasa, is trying to set a trap to capture Tamil votes and that she is saying the right things on the Tamil question only as a tactical measure to woo the Tamils in favour of the SLFP. A recent issue of the LTTE's official organ 'Viduthalai Pulihal' devotes a whole page to analyse her politics.

The headline to the article says 'The SLFP has picked up the fishing rod which D.B. threw away.' The strap line reads 'The trap that Chandrika is setting up with new tactics for Tamil votes'. The LTTE, it is obvious, feels that Chandrika will ultimately end up doing what Premadasa did: being politically correct on the ethnic question while not conceding anything in substance and, in their view, giving a free hand to the military in the prosecution of the war on Jaffna. The Tigers thought that what they called Premadasa's double track policy - speak soft

and hit hard - was the most dangerous thing which they could ever face in a Sinhala national leader. And it is quite clear, when considering their views on Chandrika that they see the same attitude in her as well.

On the other hand one must say that the LTTE has, on more than one occasion, expressed their 'appreciations' of D.B.'s politics. Although it might sound somewhat paradoxical no right thinking person can gainsay the fact that 'logically' the Tiger needs D.B. and his steadfast line on the Tamil question for furthering its cause with much felicity. On one occasion they contrasted him favourably with Ranil and on another with Chandrika. In the March issue of their official organ, the editorial said, 'Although chauvinist fanatics like Gamini Dissanayake and many other local and foreign political analysts and diplomats do not agree with Wijetunga the Sri Lankan President continues to adamantly stand by his policy. In this we can say that he is an honest (Sinhala) nationalist. But Sri Lanka's Prime Minister, Mr. Ranil Wickremasinghe who likes to show himself as a moderate is messing up the ditch (a Tamil phrase which connotes insidious political opportunism) by saying confounding things about bringing the war to an end'.

And again in the latest issue they say contrasting D.B.'s politics with that of Chandrika and Premadasa that the President's honest Sinhala nationalist mind does not permit him to engage in the 'politics of ambiguity' which according to them was the hallmark of the former President and is that of the Western Province Chief Minister in their dealings with the Tamils.

Many Colombo based Tamil politicians who are opposed by the LTTE realise very well the 'logic' behind all this, and hence are quite anxious that Chandrika should become the SLFP's Presidential candidate soon so that she might be able to initiate negotiations on a solid footing. The Tamil politicians who argued in her favour pointed out that she is the only Sinhala leader since independence who has had experience

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Absorption of LTTE cadres into the Police Force

The Police Force of the country will consist of: National Police Force, Regional Police Force.

The National Police Force shall reflect the national ethnic proportions. The Regional Police Force shall reflect the regional ethnic proportions.

From among the cadres of the LTTE who has the requisite qualifications and training, an appropriate number shall be recruited.

Recruitment to the Armed Forces.

With regard to recruitment to the armed forces at the national level, ethnic ratios need to be reflected.

Planning and economic affairs.

The Regional Authority shall have the right to establish a Regional Planning Commission.

The Regional Planning Commission shall formulate:

The Regional Economic Plans.

Public and Private Sector Investment Programmes. Guidelines and Incentives for Foreign and Local Investment.

A scheme for developing the Financial Infrastructure.

The composition and selection of the Commission shall be determined by the Board of Ministers of the Regional Authority.

The Chairman of the Planning Commission shall be responsible to the Chief Minister.

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in coping with and struggling against the inadequacies of devolution in her role as the chief minister of the Western Province. Therefore, they averred her empathy could definitely be counted on if the SLFP were to engage in a serious dialogue in drawing up a comprehensive and acceptable devolution package for amicably resolving the northeast conflict. Their argument was by all means sound in itself. True, she was boldly challenging those insidious aspects of the thirteenth amendment (which constituted the provincial council system of devolution in 1987 under the Accord) which are designed as instruments with which the central government can thoroughly subvert the effectiveness of any elected provincial administration which does not belong to the party that happens to be in power at the centre.

She has even gone to the Supreme Court on the question of Centre taking over some schools in her province on the grounds that they fall into the category of National Schools which under Appendix III of the Ninth schedule to the constitution are specified as not coming under devolved subjects of education and educational services (item 3 in the Provincial List). Then there was the sore problem of getting the Governor's assent for statutes passed by the Western Provincial Council, specified under Article 154H.

But does all this mean that Chandrika can take on those fundamental features of the Sri Lankan constitution which, according to most Tamil politicians, make the devolution package envisaged under the Thirteenth Amendment hollow? The question is important because it involves Sri Lanka's unitary status (Article 2), the constitutionally ensured foremost place to Buddhism (Article 9) and the exclusive legislative power of the parliament, (also referred to as the sovereignty of Parliament, Articles 4 a and 76.1) and more important is the problem of amendment. All those who glibly speak of finding a solution to the ethnic question childishly overlook or deliberately ignore the fact that even the slightest improvement to

the framework of devolution which we already have i.e. the 13th amendment, requires a two thirds majority in parliament, and if effectively challenged by someone in the Supreme Court on the ground that such improvement would contravene, one of the entrenched clauses of the Sri Lankan constitution (particularly 2 and 9 in this context), it would require a national referendum as well under article 82.

No party can secure a two thirds majority, unless some miracle were to happen, in the parliament under the proportional representation system of election which prevails today. And secondly would it be realistic to make the claim or naively assume that either the SLFP or the UNP will risk a referendum which seeks a mandate from the country to repeal that article which says that Sri Lanka is a unitary state and the other which asserts 'The Republic of Sri Lanka shall give to Buddhism the foremost place and accordingly it shall be the duty of the State to protect and foster the Buddha Sasana. . .'

The judgement of the 9 member bench of the Supreme Court on the constitutionality of the 13th amendment makes it quite clear that one can make a valid case against an improved devolution package on the basis that it goes against the concept of a unitary state and that a regional legislature constituted under it can, by virtue of the fact that it is going to be dominated by people of a different religion and ethnicity, contravene Article 9.

Thirdly, one cannot ignore the possibility that either the UNP or the SLFP can if one of them decide to do so, (and provided all the minority MPs agree on an improved package) have two thirds majority in Parliament if the party which moves the matter has that minimum number of MPs which when added with the number of minority MPs will constitute a two third majority. But then again will it be pragmatic, given the political dynamics of the south, to expect either the UNP or the SLFP (despite Chandrika's putative leadership), to allow themselves to be portrayed by their respective de-

tractors as ganging up with the minorities to pave the way for federalism? Furthermore as I have pointed out above a two thirds majority in itself is not a guarantee that the amendments deemed necessary for an improved devolution package envisaged as a solution to the ethnic problem, will be made to the constitution.

In this context therefore it is the bounden duty of all those politicians who are getting quite busy as the Presidential polls approach, particularly Chandrika who insists on her bona fides vis-a-vis the north-east issue and Mr. Ranil Wickremasinghe who is the only senior UNPer engaged in making certain proposals involving regional councils etc. and those among the Tamils and Muslims who may be keen to strike deals with them, to lay down clearly and unambiguously the constitutionally valid and politically feasible modality by which they propose to implement their ideas on devolution. Otherwise such exercises cannot be viewed except as witting or unwitting acts of collusion to hoodwink the Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims in order to achieve certain electoral ambitions both at the Presidential and General Elections.

Fourthly and finally a party can always ask the people for a mandate to introduce a new constitution. When discussing such problems recently, Mr. Gamini Disanayake said: 'why not have a referendum' while not failing to add that his party was yet to entrust him with the task of opening a dialogue with the minorities, (perhaps he will spell out in detail what exactly he has in mind once he gets ensconced in the cabinet.

Thus we can see that contrary to what was claimed by some Tamil politicians, analysts, the fact that Chandrika is the only Sinhala leader who is capable of a large measure of 'fruitful' empathy on the question of 'a new deal' for the minorities, is not in itself a sufficient condition for finding a solution, but if the relevant issues are earnestly addressed by her and her advisors, it would definitely constitute a moral and political advantage, unequalled in the recent past.

(Courtesy: *The Sunday Island*).

A New Political Course for Tamils

by G.G. Ponnambalam Jr.

The Tamils must charter a radically new course for themselves politically, and forthwith, if they are not to make their position worse from what it is at the moment, and if the Tamils want to be taken seriously by the Sinhalese and the world in the future. They must abandon their craving for being appendages of the UNP and SLFP, and stand on their own feet and by themselves. By this means, they must learn to live with self-respect and dignity. They must also prove that the 12 percent Tamils of Sri Lankan origin, too, can by their unity and solidarity, create enough strength to get others to come to their heels, just as the five percent Tamils of Indian origin have been able to do. The Tamils must not allow themselves to be taken for granted hereafter. This is the new course the Tamils will have to charter for themselves from now on.

For almost 50 years Tamil politicians, at one time or another, extended responsive cooperation to Governments, had secret understandings between individuals, entered into bilateral pacts with political parties, joined several other political parties to formulate manifestos and did their utmost, one way or another, to be appendages of either the UNP or SLFP. It has led the Tamils nowhere. But it has certainly led the UNP and the SLFP to power several times riding on the backs of the Tamils.

This being Election Year, there are signs that some Tamil politicians might, once again, want the Tamils to be appendages of either the UNP or the SLFP by asking the Tamils to vote for the UNP or the SLFP at the Presidential Elections, in the first instance.

The Tamils have absolutely no reason to support the UNP or the SLFP.

Let us take the UNP, the Government Party, to start with. In their 1977 manifesto for the General Elections, the UNP recognised a Tamil Problem which they promised to settle by convening a Round Table Conference. They did not do so during that term. Instead, they had one of their Commissions and set up District Development Councils, which the UNP stultified from the

very beginning. The DDC were TULF's alternative to their mandate to set up Tamil Eelam. At the 1982 Presidential Elections, the UNP could show nothing for the Tamils. When a Tamil stood at the Presidential Election on a specific stand, the TULF took up the position that the Tamils who were for Tamil Eelam need not interest themselves in an election to elect a President for Sri Lanka and officially called upon the Tamils to vote against the Tamil candidate by a decision they took at Trincomalee. They even trotted out the Tamil proverb 'Does it matter to us whether Ravana rules or Rama rules?' But, the TULF did pass the word round that the Tamils should support J.R. Jayewardene. Mercifully the Jaffna District did not let the side down. At the 1988 Presidential Elections, the UNP's 'New Vision, New Deal' Manifesto did not have, so much as even a word on the Tamil Problem. The TULF, this time, chose to remain silent because of the Indo-Lanka Agreement, to which the UNP leader was a signatory. The unpronounced message was that if the Tamils supported the Indo-Lanka Agreement, then they must vote UNP. The EPRLF provided the bodyguards for the SLFP candidate and spoke from his platform. It is known in Tamil circles that whilst doing this, the EPRLF secretly supported the UNP because they thought Premadasa will perpetuate the Indo-Lanka Agreement and keep the IPKF on. It would be seen that both the TULF and the EPRLF were guilty of contortionist politics. This type of politics amongst the Tamils must now stop and stop for all times because Tamil contortionist politicians cannot play about with Tamils as pawns.

Let us take the SLFP now, the Alternate Government. What is its track record? At the 1982 Presidential Elections, some Tamils voted for the SLFP because of chillies and onions, as the SLFP had helped the Tamil farmer during its regime between 1970 and 1977. At the 1988 Presidential Elections, the SLFP went before the people on the DPA Manifesto. A Manifesto which had a complete and comprehensive chapter on 'the resolution of the ethnic

problem.' A manifesto prepared by the leaders of eight political parties – the SLFP, MEP, SLMC, ELJP, Liberal Party, DWC, JVP and ACTC. This Manifesto was signed by the SLFP, MEP, Liberal Party, DWC and ACTC. The SLMC, EJLP, and JVP did not sign the Manifesto for reasons other than what was contained in the Manifesto. Apart from these eight political parties, the PLOTE took part in some sittings and endorsed totally the totality of the manifesto. The EROS indicated by letter, signed by its leader, its total acceptance of the manifesto. The LTTE, who were kept informed of every point decided upon, did not, at any stage, indicate any reservation to any matter on the chapter on 'the resolution of the ethnic problem.' Yet, the SLFP threw this Manifesto overboard, and unilaterally, within 72 hours of the results of the 1988 Presidential Elections.

At the 1993 Provincial Council Elections, both the TULF and the EPRLF called upon the Tamils to support the NSSP. Within hours of the results of the 1994 Southern Provincial Council Elections, both parties changed course, almost mid-stream and started singing the praises of the SLFP! What could be the reason for this *volte-face* Ms. Kumaranatunga? But she was there even before the Elections because she spearheaded the SLFP campaign. Did any of her actions or pronouncements give hope to the Tamils? The only thing she said before the Elections was that 'the Army was no better than the LTTE'. Does this solve the Tamil Problem? In her interview to the Tamil daily 'Virakesari', published on the 1st of May 1994, all that she says, to repeated questions on the Tamil problem posed by the interviewer, is that the Tamil Problem was very difficult to resolve.

The SLFP manifesto

The answer to a few simple questions will put the whole thing in the correct perspective. Can the SLFP ever do better on the Tamil Problem than the DPA Manifesto which had the blessings of 10 political parties over a very wide spectrum? Is the SLFP for the recognition of the right of self determination of the Tamils, which was one of the 4 points put forward by Tamil parties, including the TULF and EPRLF, at Thimpu? Is the SLFP for full fledged federalism which is the clamour of all Tamil political parties now, including the

TULF and EPRLF, now that Sri Lanka has the substance of federalism through the 13th Amendment? Is the SLFP for the merger of the North and East, as they are at the moment, which was one of the items of the DPA Manifesto, where even the obnoxious and unacceptable provision of the Referendum was not even referred to? Merger formed the corner stone of the 4 points put forward by eight Tamil political parties, including the TULF, and EPRLF, before the Mangala Moonesinghe Parliamentary Select Committee. Is the SLFP for the abrogation of the Indo-Lanka Agreement, as was mentioned in the DPA Manifesto, or is the SLFP for the perpetuation of the Indo-Lanka Agreement, as the TULF and EPRLF would want? Is the SLFP for the perpetuation of the Provincial Council System brought in by the Indo-Lanka Agreement, or for the abolition of it, as was mentioned in the DPA Manifesto and in public utterances ever since 1989? Answers to these questions will bring into sharp focus the position the TULF and EPRLF can take *vis a vis* the SLFP. Are all the postulates of the TULF and the EPRLF on the Tamil Problem, taken before various fora, to go down into history as mere insincere platitudes and gimmicks?

The SLFP's track record on the Tamil Problem is dismal.

The SLFP is wedded to do away with the Executive Presidential system if it comes to power. That process is going to take some time. Then the installation of parliamentary supremacy must take place. And thereafter the 'handing over ceremony' from parent to progeny, which is also going to take some time. After this matter is attended to, the SLFP must embark on doing away with the Provincial Councils System. This is also going to take time. These are promises made to the Sinhalese. Not to the Tamils. Charity starts at home. After this is done must come Ms. Kumaranatunga's priorities - the cost of living and violations of democracy. When all these matters are attended to, it will be time for the next Presidential Elections and General Elections! With that, the love-making with the minorities will start all over again!

If the Tamils support the UNP or SLFP hereafter, let them be warned that they are only helping to put back the resolution of the Tamil Problem for another six years.

No more can the Tamils afford to

be directed by politicians who, like the people who do not want the Tamil Problem resolved because that would adversely affect their 'livelihood', want to switch sides with every election in order to be 'in business' politically.

There are Tamils who say that the UNP has given protection to the Tamils in Colombo and therefore the Tamils must vote for the UNP. This is the same argument trotted out by the SLFP. It is sad to see that even Tamils can trot this argument out - forgetting that the very clamour for a merged North and East came about because of the need for the security and safety of the Tamils after all the UNP-instigated pogroms that the Tamils in Colombo and elsewhere suffered, culminating in the 1983 holocaust and the world famous massacre of caged Tamils in the Welikada Jail.

There are other Tamils who say that if Tamils in Colombo do not vote for the UNP, that the UNP hoodlums will thrash the daylight out of the Tamils. These Tamils have forgotten that Tamils have traditionally voted for the UNP at Presidential and General Elections and have yet got hammered at the first opportunity. This is because the Tamils have been taken for granted. The Tamils have been taken for granted because the Sinhalese know that Tamil memory is short. Shorter than that of any other nation on this planet. The Sinhalese know that there is a section of the Tamils who will cringe, crawl and creep and vote UNP whatever bashing they give. These Tamils are truly a disgrace.

Some Tamils ask the question 'why should a Tamil contest the Presidential Election, when a Tamil just cannot win?' When a Tamil who means business comes forward to contest, he is not doing it for fun. He is doing it with a purpose and with a strategy all chalked out. By a Tamil contesting the Presidential Election he can show the Sinhalese and the world a number of very important positions *vis-a-vis* the Tamils. If a Tamil contests and the Tamils vote en-bloc for him, the UNP or the SLFP will not get the necessary votes in the first round. If the Tamil candidate asks his supporters not to mark a second preference for any body else and with the UNP and SLFP supporters also marking no second preference votes (as must be expected), there will come a situation where a Sinhalese will not get the required votes for election on the

second count as well. Thereafter a Sinhalese will be elected only on some simple majority. This is itself an achievement. This itself will show that the UNP or the SLFP cannot ride to power on the back of the Tamils. For, the support of the Tamils will only help the UNP or SLFP to romp home on the first count. If the Sinhalese candidates do not get the support of the Tamils, the Tamils would have established the very important point that the Sinhalese do not have the moral right to govern the Tamils. The Protest Vote of the Tamils, far from being a negative one, becomes a positive thing that will even pave the way and give further validity for the exercise of the right to self determination.

The Tamil candidate

The Tamil candidate can also go before the Tamil people on specific issues and seek a mandate for the Tamil position, to be placed before the Sinhalese, like the recognition of the right to self-determination, demand the drawing up of a federal constitution for Sri Lanka as an alternative to a separate state, demand a merged North East as one of the States under a federal set up, demand a time frame of not more than six months after the Presidential Election to give effect to the issues mentioned above, if there is a political will and real desire on the part of the Sinhalese for a United Sri Lanka. It will be seen, therefore, that these are all very important and vital political positions for the Tamils and cannot be trifled with and can be placed at a Presidential Election to get the Mandate of the Tamils.

In the light of this it is difficult to understand the EPRLF's position that a Tamil candidate contesting the Presidential Election is absurd and will not serve any purpose. For those who are used to contortionist politics, of course, all this will be seen as meaningless. One has to be politically honest to understand these approaches.

It is very sad to see the TULF position that a minority candidate at the Presidential Election will be tantamount to a rejection of the possibility of getting the Sinhalese to commit themselves to a settlement. This is an absurdly naive way of looking at this problem. Just because a Tamil candidate contests, to place before the world the Tamil

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position, if the UNP or SLFP, through a sense of pique, choose not to have anything on their manifestos on the Tamil Problem, the UNP and SLFP will have to answer to the world for their attitude. It is tragic that the TULF does not realize this and raises a lame argument. It is the duty of those who aspire to govern this country to solve the Tamil Problem notwithstanding a Tamil contesting the Presidential Elections.

The Tamils have played the game that the UNP and SLFP have wanted from us for long enough. They can now be damned. The Tamils have asked the 76% Sinhalese majority to solve the Tamil problem on the lines of the aspirations of the Tamils. It has fallen on deaf ears. What is worse is that some anonymous idiots amongst them want to know in 1994, what the grievances of the Tamils are. They have been met with the advice given by Bernard Shaw that 'silence is the most perfect expression of scorn'. The Tamils are asking the Sinhalese for the very last time, perhaps, that the UNP and SLFP must get together and solve the Tamil Problem. If these two parties do not understand this the Tamils will cease making this request from the Sinhalese. So, let the Tamil Problem be solved before the Rubicon is crossed.

The Tamil Problem has lost its priority and, therefore, its urgency in the eyes of the UNP and SLFP. Do the Tamils also accept this position by voting for the UNP or SLFP in the future? The Tamils have been duped for decades with promises for the future. Do the Tamils want to make the same mistake once again? Have the Tamils forgotten the Tamil saying 'He is a fool who keeps on bending for repeated knocks on the head. And he is also a damn fool who keeps on knocking on the head every time the other keeps bending'? At some time this disgraceful process has to stop. The time has now come. Tamil mentality has to change drastically because the Tamils cannot fight a cause by supporting the UNP or SLFP. The Tamils must now have learnt a lesson and learn to live without the UNP or the SLFP.

Detractors may ask whom I represent. The ACTC nor I ever subscribed to the Divine Right to Rule theory. Nor did we ever have the arrogance to claim that we are the sole representatives of the Tamil people, as it is now being claimed by the LTTE, by certain Tamil political parties in Thimpu in 1985 and by the TULF before 1983. I represent only my conscience to which I am accountable. I am a Tamil and I have placed before the Tamils what

my conscience says is correct. My constituency is the Tamils. I stand or fall by their verdict. I have never been afraid to take a verdict nor have I sulked in a corner after the verdict. I have placed before the Tamils what I consider to be very vital issues concerning the Tamils.

My conscience tells me that the Tamils have been humiliated and have had a raw deal in their efforts to solve the Tamil Problem. The Muslims have also been humiliated. I, therefore requested Hon. Thondaman to contest the Presidential Elections as the candidate most acceptable to the minorities. That request was turned down. Hon. Thondaman had his reasons for doing so. I, then, personally requested Mr. Ashraff to contest as the Muslim candidate. It is two months now. He has not come back with his response as yet. I get the message. I had made a request to the TULF that Mr. Sivasithamparam should come forward as the Tamil candidate. The TULF's stand on this matter is clear. I get the message. But one thing is sure. A Tamil must contest the Presidential Election and Tamils must vote en bloc for that candidate. This is the only sanction the Tamils can place against the UNP and SLFP for their callous indifference in their handling of the Tamil Problem.

The Green Dirt that Cannot Wash

Lucien Rajakarunanayake

It happened many decades ago, even before the UNP was formed. It was the election in 1937, which brought Dudley Senanayake, now held high as the symbol of gentlemanly politics and the epitome of the liberal thinking, to the State Council. The tactic for victory was both crude, vulgar and wholly corrupt.

The Botale Walauwa, through its control over the village headmen, stationed the local thugs of the Dedigama area at the 'mahaniyaras' along which the rural people came to vote. As groups of village voters, including women, suspected of supporting the other side came along, the thugs raised their sarongs in indecent exposure. As the dirty message of

vulgar intimidation spread, both women and men who were opposed to the Senanayakes preferred to stay in their villages. Dudley Senanayake, son of D.S. Senanayake, the alleged Father of the Nation, arrived at the State Council, and later succeeded his father as the second UNP Prime Minister of independent Ceylon.

It is a story worth recalling when there is so much talk today about how the UNP hopes to usher in a new era of gentlemanly politics in Sri Lanka. Almost crushing such hopes was the comment by Mr. Sirisena Cooray, at the height of the political-criminal manhunt for Soththi Upali, that many people were forgetting the good work done by Upali for the Party. Mr.

Cooray, although not party secretary, was still in the Cabinet of Ministers when he made that statement. It was more than a broad hint that a man who was wanted in connection with an attempted murder in a courthouse, should not be hunted because, among other things, he put up posters for the party during difficult times. The times indeed are arresting.

The Soththi episode, if you pardon the cross-lingo pun, is at most a lame expression of the UNP's desire to cleanse itself of the criminal corruption of the past 17 years. It is a corruption from which no section of the party leadership has been left untainted. Which makes the task of the new doctor who has been brought to give it the necessary enema and bowel wash, all the more difficult, nay well nigh impossible.

What is more interesting is that this takes place at a time when some powerful sections of the UNP

are calling for the restoration of the Premadasa policies, and even blaming the defeat in the South on the departure from those policies. One is not surprised to hear such things being said by the family of the late President. The lack of privilege must be terrible. One can also feel a mixture of pity and contempt for the low country dancer and preacher of burgher gratitude, who think their only role as Members of Parliament is to pave the way for their late patron's widow to sit in Cabinet.

Whatever the immediate inner-party objectives of the UNP leadership in getting the police highly activated in the hunt for Soththi Upali, the man who once gave most of their top ranks clear directives on how to soft-peddle on organized crime, and also got them houses through the housing ministry, there is one fact that screams out for recognition. Soththi Upali and all what he is being hunted down for, is what was at the core of the UNP/Premadasa Policies in the politics of Sri Lanka.

As much as the UNP/Premadasa policies made journalism in Sri Lanka fetid with the likes of H.L.D. Mahindapala and Anuruddha Thilakasiri, it dragged our politics, which was never very clean, to the worst depths of criminality and corruption. The situation became so bad that today, an inner-party power struggle cannot be conducted without getting the key players of the underworld of political-crime out of the way, and behind bars.

It's time we laid the ghost of these UNP/Premadasa Policies, to rest and went ahead with the task of strengthening democracy, much to the chagrin of those who believe that what we need for the liberal economy to bear real fruit is more than a little bit of dictatorship — a la Singapore. Let's get this straight, the dictatorship of the UNP, of which Premadasa was the last exponent, was one where the wheels of politics were enmeshed inextricably with those of crime, violence and corruption. It was not directed at the welfare of the country or its people. It was one big sham, and there are still not enough people who are ready to admit that in the open.

There is nothing that worked in

that dictatorship of crime and fear, not even the clocktowers which latterly marked the hours of catastrophe for the country. All the largesse of the State distributed at the President's fancy made no change in the lives of the people. Poverty was not alleviated. So much for the widow who now wants to set up a fund for poverty alleviation. She should take that to the courts, and start a fund through the estate she inherited from her husband, who boasted of barefoot soccer.

The war in the North and East was not over when he was assassinated, in fact it was worse over there, than when he took over. If the economy did click, in the figures of growth and investment, it was not due to a peculiarly Premadasa intervention, it was despite him. Even there he made things worse with the garment cavalcade. Premadasa did not make capitalism the engine of growth in Sri Lanka. He, his family and his great defenders of today, made it an even worse form of cronyism than what existed in the Philippines under Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos.

Not all the flowers carried into temples, all the offerings made at churches, the many coconuts broken and ash put on at kovils, and the fake service of Seva Vanithas could hide the fact that the policies of Premadasa were those of the enthronement of family bandyism and criminality in politics. It was corruption at the core. In-laws can now miss saying it with flowers on the National Carrier, but let us not forget that it was under the leadership of Ranasinghe Premadasa that Soththi Upali was appointed to the National Executive Committee of the UNP.

It certainly follows the tradition of extending clemency to a condemned rapist, Gonawila Sunil, and making him an all island Justice of the Peace: of ministers interceding for criminals who tapped petroleum from the pipelines of the Petroleum Corporation. Of having the houses of Supreme Court judges stoned, and promoting policemen found guilty, by the courts, of human rights violations. The examples of the politico-criminal connections of the UNP

leadership require much more space to details. Most recently, it led to the pardoning of two persons from Kuliapitiya, convicted for culpable homicide even before they began serving their sentence, and despite the repeated demonstration of contempt for the courts, by both the accused and the Police.

The need today is to see the action against the alleged criminality of Soththi Upali, his political patrons and police protectors, not as a great cleansing operation of the UNP, But as the inevitable consequence of thieves falling out. All of these are people who have robbed our people of their wealth, through the national coffers, and fixed tenders. Through undervalued land and overloaded invoices. They have been through the whole gamut of crookedness, and to make it worse they have robbed us of our decency as well.

Soththi Upali was the contractor for the supply of grass sods for the thousands of acres that covered each Gam Udawa. He won the sod contract for the Gampaha Gam Udawa too. He was also the man who held the contract for the main public restaurant at every Gam Udawa. He may well have been a front for others who made the real money. It is natural that those who lose such great opportunity would lament the departure from UNP/Premadasa policies.

The merry-go-round of crooked UNP politics has come to a temporary halt. The brass band is not playing the same tune to please the 'catchers' who ride the wooden horses. It does not mean the UNP is cleansing itself. It may shed a few embarrassments, and tell the band to play a different tune. But the beat will remain the same. The merry-go-round will go on the same rails.

That is the danger of believing in the carnival of the UNP. It wallowed in corruption through 17 years. That is the crisis. Let's not be fooled by the new talk of gentlemanly politics. Even a searchlight won't bring out the gentlemen, who are said to be lurking under the green canvass. Good luck to you Dr. Wijesekera. There is no known emetic that can do the cleansing that is needed.

(Courtesy of Counterpoint, April-May 1994).

The New South Africa – A Lesson for Sri Lanka

by K. Jeganathan, South Africa.

At noon on Tuesday 10 May 1994 Mr. Nelson Mandela 75, took his oath as South Africa's first democratic President. Thirty years ago as an accused from the dock, in a statement that rang around the world, he said that democracy was an ideal he was prepared to die for; and now he vowed to redeem that pledge. During these three decades, much has changed in South Africa but his commitment to democracy has not. It was a commitment that endured the most punishing test – 27 years in jail.

The inauguration ceremony itself was a solemn but lavish one costing the nation R.25 million (Rs.350 million). In recognition of its historic significance, princes, presidents, prime ministers and representatives from 151 governments came to witness it. It was the biggest line-up of world leaders since John F. Kennedy's funeral in 1963.

A few excerpts from his inauguration speech are worthy of being quoted:-

'Out of the experience of an extraordinary human disaster that lasted too long, must be born a society of which all humanity will be proud.

'Our daily deeds as ordinary South Africans must produce an actual South African reality that will reinforce humanity's belief in justice, strengthen its confidence in the nobility of the human soul and sustain all our hopes for a glorious life for all.

... That spiritual and physical oneness we all share with this common homeland explains the depth of the pain we all carried in our hearts as we saw our country tear itself apart in a terrible conflict, and as we saw it spurned, outlawed and isolated by the peoples of the world, precisely because it has become the universal base of the pernicious ideology and practice of racism and racial oppression.

'... We have triumphed in the effort to implant hope in the breasts of the millions of our people. We enter into a covenant that we shall build the society in which all South Africans both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without any fear

in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity – a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world. Let there be justice for all. Let there be peace for all, let there be work, bread, water, and salt for all. Let each know that for each the body, the mind and the soul have been freed to fulfil themselves.

'Never, never, never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another and suffer the indignity of being the skunk of the world. Let freedom reign. The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement!'

A Comparison.

It is not uncommon for Presidents at their inauguration to make similar speeches. As I watched this ceremony live on television, my mind went back to nearly 17 years ago when as an invitee I witnessed the swearing in (at Galle Face Green) of Mr. J.R. Jayawardene as the country's first executive President. Like Mr. Mandela, Mr. Jayawardene too rode to power with a thumping majority. His speech too may have been as inspiring as Mr. Mandela's. But the chronicle of events during these 17 years as they have unfolded, leaves no one in doubt about the oppression, the misery, and the suffering of the hundreds of thousands of Tamils. At least for the hundreds of thousands bombed and slaughtered in many ways the misery and suffering is over!

Mr. Jayawardene assumed office with an unprecedented majority. But within months communal tensions ran high and hell broke out in the country. Hundreds lost their lives and properties even in Colombo. Mr. Jayawardene made public utterances like: 'If you want war, you will have war.' 'The feelings of the Sinhala masses have to be assuaged.' Reprisal attacks by the defence forces on innocent people became a common occurrence and is continuing unabated. The 1983 holocaust was the worst. His Presidency lasted a decade of oppression. His successor fared no better; and the present incumbent has suddenly got the wisdom to say that the problem

in the North-East is not an ethnic one but a terrorist problem. If ever there was a head of government in Sri Lanka's post independence period who could have corrected the injustices and given the Tamils their minimum rights and liberties and their human dignity as citizens of Sri Lanka, it was Mr. Jayawardene who had such a massive steam-roller majority in Parliament. He however chose to encourage Sinhala-Buddhist supremacy and turn a blind eye to anything justiceable. At such an incredible speed he soon dissipated all the initial good will and trust at the altar of his personal arrogance.

Deeds, not just Words.

Turning to the new government in South Africa a different picture emerges. Mr. Nelson Mandela's party, the African National Congress secured a resounding victory at the first democratic Election. The party polled 12,237,655 votes (62.6%) for the National Assembly and for the nine provincial Assemblies (of which it won seven), it polled: 91.6%; 84.4%; 83.3%; 80.7%; 76.6%; 57.6%; 49.7%; 33.0% and 32.2%. The last two it lost to the National Party and the Inkatha Freedom Party respectively. Within hours of his inauguration as President, Mr. Nelson Mandela went into action. He announced his cabinet of 27 ministers. This is when he translated his words (of national reconciliation) into deeds. Having captured 252 out of the 400 seats in the National Assembly, he still had the magnanimity to give six cabinet posts to the National Party (– the relic of the apartheid regime) and three cabinet posts to the Inkatha Freedom Party which had been the cause of the violence and loss of thousands of lives. He went a step further – he gave away some of the key portfolios – Finance, Home Affairs, Provincial Affairs & Constitutional Development, Agriculture, Land Affairs, Mineral & Energy Affairs to these two parties. Bolder still was giving four portfolios – Justice, Transport, Water Affairs & Forestry, Reconstruction and Development, to Indians. Again the Speaker of the National Assembly is a sari-clad Indian lady. These are facts. Would the members of the ruling U.N.P. and its President Mr. D.B. Wijeyatunge believe these? The truth is that Mr. Nelson Mandela is a statesman who places his country first above everything else; he is not a politician with his eyes on the next election.

Summary of Election Results

PARTIES	Votes Polled	Percentage	No. of Seats in Nat. Assembly	No. of Posts in Cabinet
African National Congress National Party	12,237,655	62.6%	252	18
Inkatha Freedom Party	3,983,690	20.4%	82	6
Freedom Front	2,058,294	10.5%	43	3
Democratic Party	424,555	2.2%	9	-
Pan Africanist Party	338,426	1.7%	7	-
African Christian Democratic Party	243,478	1.2%	5	-
Other Parties	88,104	0.5%	2	-
TOTAL:	159,296	0.9%	00	-
	19,533,498	100.00%	400	27

Languages.

English and Afrikaans were the official languages of South Africa till now. He has allowed these and added eleven other local languages to the official language list. Indeed simultaneous translations have already been arranged for members in the Assembly. Mr. Mandela's vision is: 'Many cultures, one nation', and he is committed to make it work. He is firmly in control and has the confidence that the people will follow. Wasn't it Sir Galahad of the Round Table who said: 'My strength is as the strength of ten because my heart is pure'?

When the 'Sinhala Only' bill was debated in the Sri Lankan Parliament in 1956, if my memory is correct, it was Dr. Colvin R. De Silva who cautioned saying: 'Two languages - one nation; but one language - two nations!' How true indeed it has turned out to be!

National Anthem.

'Die Stem' (in Afrikaans) was the National Anthem of South Africa of the white minority governments. There was so much opposition to it

that the South African team of athletes to the 1992 Olympics had to manage without a national anthem. The indigenous anthem is: 'Nkosi Sikelel i Africa'. At the inauguration itself Mr. Mandela had instructed that 'Die Stem' should be played first and then 'Nkosi Sikelel i Africa'. It was done. Later the same day when he visited the Ellis Park Stadium where the Zambia - South Africa soccer match was being played, he told the 60,000 soccer fans that at all functions both national anthems ought to be played. He further went on to say that those who did not understand the other national anthem must study that language. His view was welcomed with great applause.

There were many who predicted the most horrible bloodbath in the country in the wake of the elections. Indeed many forecast that it would not be possible to have peaceful elections on 27 April. They have all been proved false. The elections were peaceful, free and fair and its crowning success and hope for the future lay in Mr. Nelson Mandela's humility and magnanimity in the face of such an incredible victory.

There is no doubt that Divine intervention has placed the future of South Africa in the hands of a man who has had a date with Destiny. Here are some of the observations:

'We have been privileged to witness a turning point in the history of a nation. . . . South Africa has earned the respect and admiration of all tireless in search of understanding and vigorous in pursuit of peace. You have refused to let the difficulties defeat you', said Dr. Boutros Boutros Ghali, U.N. General Secretary.

'Before our very eyes we see a miracle unfolding', said Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate.

'I am very impressed by the leadership and the commitment of the leadership at all levels to make it succeed', said Mrs. Hilary Clinton, First Lady of the U.S.

Sri Lanka too sent its own representative to the inauguration ceremony. I wonder what message he took back to his President. It is a pity that Sri Lanka never had a statesman. Will it ever have one?

Inflation Set to Rise

In the wake of the defeat of the government party at the hands of the opposition in the recently held southern provincial elections and its continuing unpopularity, President Wijetunga's government has announced a vote-catching spending spree in the run-up to the forthcoming presidential elections scheduled to be held within the next four to five months.

The new welfare handouts and salary increases recently announced are estimated to cost Rs.18 billion (\$367 million), and economists in Colombo predict that these would trigger a steep rise in inflation to

about 17 per cent.

The government's vote-catching handouts included the reintroduction of free uniforms and meals for school children which were withdrawn last year for lack of funds, expansion of the poverty alleviation programme, wage rises for public sector workers, income tax cuts for middle class groups, loans to farmers and a programme for the promotion of 15,000 village projects.

According to officials, the extra spending would raise this year's budget deficit to about Rs.83 billion (\$1.7 billion) from an estimated Rs.65 billion (\$1.3 billion).

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Sri Lanka: Politics of Majoritarianism

by Nishantha Wickremasinghe

Let us first address the question as to what politics is all about. Isn't it another name for the 'Power Game'? The game (a blood sport now) of who rules whom and with what intent and for what purpose, by what means and with what restraint? Into this situation we must introduce the concept of Democracy which has been described or defined in many ways but the core of it is expressed in Lincoln's definition 'It is Government by the People of the People. . .'

Democracy is also considered participatory, a form of Government of All the people. But it is also referred to by cynics as a political experiment which seeks to dignify the bludgeoning of the minority by a majority on the basis that they have been elected. This crude understanding of what democracy is all about implies the coercion of all into mediocrities, where the dignity of man has no place.

Ludwig Lewisohn, a German writer has stated 'Democracy which began by liberating man politically has developed a dangerous tendency to enslave him through the tyranny of majorities and the deadly power of their opinion'.

Many politicians, particularly in the Third World, do not have an understanding of the concept of democracy. They pay lip service to it repeating it like a mantra. They pay lip service to the Lincoln definition but make a reality of the Lewisohn observation. Most of them certainly understand what democracy is all about – and all its facets – but have such contempt for the people they seek to rule, that they dish out their own versions of it and call them 'five star democracies'.

Monkeying around with democracy which began in a trot with the nationalisation of the press, followed soon after by the Attanagalla doctrine and the extension of the life of Parliament removing Mrs. Bandaranaike's Civil Rights and subsequently holding Referendums to extend the life of Parliament, to mention but a few instances. It continues still – recent statements of certain Sri Lankan leaders reveal a limited understanding of the concept of democracy, particularly of democra-

cy in a 'Secular', multi-ethnic, multi-religious society.

In stark contrast stand recent statements by a giant among politicians, a living statesman – Nelson Mandela. He has not only expressed his relief that his own party did not get a two third majority, but has given the absolute assurance that he would be fair by the Whites, who have for over three hundred years repressed his people in the most cruel and brutal of ways, exploiting them to the extent that they were left without any dignity. Here was Buddhist Metta and Karuna. This was Buddhist compassion and the understanding for fellow beings, a compassion and understanding not shown to him and his people. This is being Dharmishta in the true sense.

Our 'temple going' so called Buddhists, who keep repeating the Metta Sutra in Pali without understanding its meaning, should learn from Mandela. They could also learn from history, from the lives of Gandhi and Nehru – have they ever read a word of what these great men said, wrote or did? I seriously doubt whether any of our present politicians other than perhaps Anura Bandaranaike or Gamini Disanayake would have read anything. (Thank heavens that G.L. Peiris has come into politics).

The view that the majority, be they mono-ethnic or mono-religious have prior rights over the others merely because they are and form, the majority is not a concept which can be dignified by association with one small aspect of democracy. This is the concept of majoritarianism – a crude form under which the majority, invariably an ethnic group, rules having won the ballot, in the name of democracy. In the name of redressing old, real or imagined grievances, the minorities are left out. In the case of Sri Lanka the minority was victimised for the advantageous position they held at the time of independence. Their intention to perpetuate it through demands of some, such as the 50-50 were indeed provocative but real leaders must be magnanimous.

In a democracy every citizen

must be equal in every sense to the other with the same rights and enjoying equal opportunity based on no other criteria than merit. The sooner our politicians understand and practice this precept of giving unto others what they claim for themselves – then we shall certainly have democracy. In a democracy there are no second class citizens.

Majoritarianism is not democracy but naked communalism in its crudest form. The Sinhala revival, from the timing of Dharmapala, and in later years of the Sinhala Maha Sabha, the Eksath Bikkhu Peramuna, Rajaratna and F.R. Jayasuriya, thrived on resurrected memories of humiliations suffered under the Portuguese, Dutch and British. It is nothing but racism hewn out of mythological and historical memories. To call it 'nationalism' is to dignify it. Not being a Sinhala Buddhist should not be an impediment to being a nationalist. Our Peiter Keuneman, Bernard Soysa, Kaleel Ganeshalingam, Ponnambalam, Shahul Hameed and Bradman Weerakoon are as much nationalists as would be Ven. Madihe Pangnaseeha.

Political mobilization, on the basis of race and religion is like playing with dynamite and fire. Recent history, the Second World War, was the result of the crude racism of the Germans, and also of the Japanese. But why go so far, let us honestly ask ourselves what has caused the horrendous situation that exists in our country today? Is it not the result of racist politics?

Hindu communalism as exposed by the BJP which also claims that Hindus must have prior rights over others, because they are the majority in India, suffered a serious setback at recent elections because the ordinary people though uneducated, realised its dangers. It is hoped that those who advocate Sinhala communalism or majoritarianism in the name of democracy will change course before they plunge the country into yet another blood bath.

The image of Sri Lanka must be as a multi-racial, multi-religious society practising visibly the message of the great Buddha, particularly tolerance, where no one feels insecure because of his or her religion or ethnicity. That is the image we should project to get back our dignity. We should be seen as a country with a civilization that goes back 2500 years, a country where

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'Buddhism Betrayed?' 'The Satanic Verses' and Freedom of Expression

by Dr. Chanaka Amarantunga the leader of the Liberal Party. This is the text of his presentation made on January 05, at the YMCA Forum, Colombo.

If this had been a sermon, instead of the address that it is, I would have adopted as my text for it, the following passage from the Buddha's *Discourse to the Kalamas*:

Yes, O Kalamas, it is right for you to doubt, it is right for you to dissent, it is right for you to waver.

Come, O Kalamas, do not accept anything on heresy thinking thus have we heard it for a long time. Do not accept anything by mere tradition. Do not accept anything on account of rumours. Do not accept anything because it accords with your scriptures. Do not accept anything by mere supposition. Do not accept anything by inference. Do not accept anything by merely considering appearances. Do not accept anything because it seems to the multitude acceptable nor yet because the monk is respected by you.

But when you know yourselves - these things are moral, these things are blameless, these things are praised by the wise, these things when performed conduct to well-being and happiness - then should you live and act accordingly.

These words and the attitude of mind which they encompass are of profound relevance to the issue which concerns me today. That they were spoken by the founder of a great religion, over 2,500 years ago

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tolerance is practiced in the daily lives of the people, where man lives in dignity, in security and moulds his own destiny in a truly democratic situation.

Let our political leaders raise themselves to the level of Statesmen and lead us back to our dignity. Give the people an image they can be proud about, then the Buddhists can also say that ours is a truly Buddhist country.

is of immense significance. That they were spoken by the founder of the very religion whose adherents are the subject of Prof. Stanley Tambiah's critique in *Buddhism Betrayed?* one of the works which has generated the current controversy in Sri Lanka and led to a discussion, at least among those who may be referred to as the chattering classes, about when, if ever, a book should be banned, adds a dimension of immediacy.

This controversy is no more than a storm in a tea cup when contrasted with the global upheaval caused since 1989, following the publication of *The Satanic Verses* by the celebrated novelist, Salman Rushdie. While several Sinhala nationalist ideologues and intellectuals whose attitudes do not absolve them of the charge of racism, have been quick to point out that there has not been a clear demand for the ban of *Buddhism Betrayed?* the governments of several countries did ban *The Satanic Verses* and it must be said that the Government of Sri Lanka is, to its shame, among them.

Along with the Buddha's words from his *Discourse to the Kalamas* another, to my mind no less sacred, secular text must inform our reflection of whether, and if so, what books ought to be banned. I have cited this passage in many other contexts and was delighted to observe that a learned judge of the Supreme Court has done so in relation to the freedom of conscience of the Members of Parliament. It must be cited here for it movingly asserts the antithesis of the mindset of those who would ban and burn books. The passage I refer to is from John Stuart Mill's classic work, *On Liberty*:

If all mankind minus one were of one opinion and only one person were of the contrary opinion mankind would no more be justified in silencing that one person than he, if he had the power would be justified in silencing mankind.

It is now appropriate that I should examine the elements of similarity and difference between the modest Sri Lankan controversy over *Buddhism Betrayed?* and the highly-charged global one over *The Satanic Verses*. From such an examination, I trust I shall be able to discover whether a similar mindset is to be found among the denouncers of both these books and whether they emerge from the same stable.

Buddhism Betrayed? is a work of sociopolitical analysis while *The Satanic Verses* is a novel. *Buddhism Betrayed?* is a publication with a narrow circulation, of little interest to those outside the small group of academics and perhaps a few journalists and politicians in Sri Lanka and South Asia, and has been published as a monograph of the World Institute for Development of Economics Research (WIDER) of the United Nations University. *The Satanic Verses*, was guaranteed a large circulation in the English speaking world and beyond and the controversy surrounding it served only to further increase its sales. Nevertheless, both *Buddhism Betrayed?* and *The Satanic Verses*, one centrally and the other peripherally, stepped on the corns of religion. While *Buddhism Betrayed?* angered some militant Sinhala-Buddhist nationalists and chauvinists, *The Satanic Verses* succeeded in earning the wrath of the more militant elements in Islam.

The authors of both these books live in the West. Stanley Tambiah is an expatriate Sri Lankan who is Professor of Anthropology at Harvard University. He has lived in the United States for several decades. Similarly Salman Rushdie was born in Bombay of an Indian Muslim family and received both his school (Rugby) and university (Cambridge) education in Britain, and is now a British subject.

Buddhism Betrayed? is a study of Buddhist militancy in Sri Lanka particularly among the Buddhist clergy. It examines the evolution of this militancy from the 19th century; the romanticized renderings of history in the chronicles of Buddhist monks; and the use of the Mahavamsa and other ancient works in shaping the attitudes of contemporary Buddhist militants, principally clerical but also lay. Speeches and writings of the Anagarika Dharmapala and leading Buddhist monks

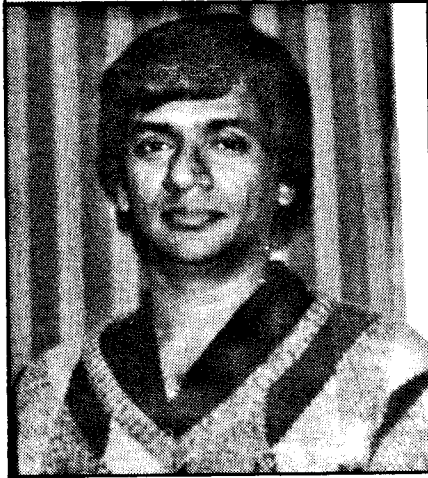
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such as the Ven. Dr. Walpola Rahula, the Ven. Maduluvave Sobitha and the Ven. Muruthetuwa Ananda are subjected to analysis. The Ven. Dr. Walpola Rahula's work in justification of the political engagement of the Buddhist clergy in defence of the nation, the race and religion, *Bhiksuvage Urumaya; the report of the Buddhist Commission of the 1950s entitled: The Betrayal of Buddhism*; and more recent works such as Dr. Sarath Amunugama's monograph, *Buddhaputra and Bhumiputra? Dilemmas of Modern Sinhala Buddhist Monks in Relation to Ethnic and Political Conflict* are extensively cited.

The Satanic Verses is a surreal fantasy of a novel that contains a large element of black comedy. Its principal characters are two friends, obviously of Indian origin (here I take India to encompass the borders of the British Indian Empire). They are Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha 'two real, full-grown, living men' who fall

from a great height, twenty-nine thousand and two feet towards the English Channel without benefit of parachutes or wings, out of a clear sky.

Much of what follows in this 547-page novel (in paperback) is the fantasy the friends have as they descend. What aroused the wrath of militant Muslims, is not these two friends, but one of the objects of their fantasy, the Prophet Mahound, in whom they recognise an unflattering portrait of the Prophet of Islam. As a non-Muslim I am unfamiliar with intimate details of the Muslim sacred texts, but I must say that from a limited, though by no means, nonexistent, knowledge of the life of the Prophet Mohammed, I would not recognize Mahound as a character based on him.

Treading on the corns of the militantly and intolerantly religious (if indeed such persons can be described as religious), is something both Tambiah and Rushdie have done. Being Asiatics in western climes has made them obvious targets to those whose desire to ban and burn books comes among other attributes, from hatred of all that is western.

What does it mean to tread on the corns of the religious? Why is religion to have a special, hallowed status, that permits it to expect and

to demand that its founders, its primary texts, its clergy, its practices, must be insulated from criticism, from ridicule, from condemnation – a status denied to all other areas which have ennobled and vitalized life? Controversies of philosophy, history, politics, literature, art, music, mathematics, physics, architecture, economics, medicine, the law and so many other fields of human activity have not aroused the insensate, raw, raucous, brute and brutal passions that the rousing of religious sensitivities have evoked. Is it precisely because these are indeed fields of human activity and thus may well be criticised, whereas religion, has about it the attributes of the divine, is in most cases the emanation of the divine, and therefore must not be open to abuse by puny and mere mortals?

This would certainly be the position of many of the enemies of *The Satanic Verses* and of the advocates of religious persecution in Europe in centuries gone by, and in the Middle East now. For the Buddhist critics of *Buddhism Betrayed?* however, such an argument poses problems. Buddhism is not a religion based on divine revelation but on human attainment. It is precisely from the standpoint of recognizing the human individual as the agent of his or her own salvation that the Buddha asserted the value of free enquiry in his *Discourse to the Kalamas*. Those who claim to be the followers of one who invited free debate and criticism on his own views while he lived can hardly, in the name of defending Buddhism, seek to suppress books perceived to be critical of Buddhism. It is, of course, evident, that Tambiah does not in any way seek to criticise Buddhism as it is understood in terms of doctrine and in terms of its principal texts. On the contrary, the suggestion of *Buddhism Betrayed?* seems to be that many of the vociferously Buddhist in Sri Lanka, clerical and lay, have during the course of this century been abominably false to the essence of Buddhism. I certainly find it difficult to associate the Buddha with the intolerance, invective and mean-spiritedness of those who shout loudest in his name.

Salman Rushdie can no more be said to have insulted the Prophet of Islam.

The issue here is, however, a far larger one. Although many of the religions demand that their religions be insulated from criticism, ridicule

and condemnation, all religions have been subjected to these, and probably have become more vibrant as a result. While many debates on religious issues have been pointless and immature, many debates on religion, both spoken and written, have contributed enormously to the evolution and reform of religion. It is a feeble and worthless religion indeed that would require the state to use its coercive power to insulate it from criticism.

What is significant here is the mindset that those excited by *Buddhism Betrayed?* and *The Satanic Verses* share. Whether in religion or in politics, the sad reality is that the temptation to suppress that which one does not like, is real. As the brilliant liberal philosopher Sir Isaiah Berlin declared in his moving lecture on the political ideas of the founder of modern liberalism, entitled *John Stuart Mill and the Ends of Life*:

the periods and societies in which civil liberties are respected and varieties of opinion and faith tolerated, have been very few and far between, oases in the desert of human uniformity, intolerance and oppression.

Whether in religion or in politics such a desire, however common it may be, must be condemned without reservation because it is cruel, bigoted and in the final analysis, stupid. To force a human being to live in fear of the expression of his or her opinions, which the repression of opinion entails is cruel. To believe that no one has the right to think differently from oneself is bigoted. To restrict the free expression of ideas, which curtails the possibility of reform is stupid for it converts disagreement into rebellion. As Mill said:

The peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is that it is robbing the human race, posterity as well as the present generation, those who dissent from the opinion still more than those who hold it.

Are there then to be limits on the freedom of expression? What about publications which incite racial hatred? What about the publication of blatant falsehood? What about the advocacy of armed rebellion?

I believe that the only restraints on freedom of expression must be those which can be proved to be necessary to prevent assaults on the

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freedom of others. If someone seeks to publish in Sri Lanka a pamphlet that calls on all Sinhalese to kill Tamils or which calls on all Tamils to kill Sinhalese, such a publication should indeed be prohibited. There must indeed be laws of libel so that the publication of falsehood, should require the payment of just compensation. In a liberal democratic state in which diverse political opinion and electoral choice is permitted, in other words, in which any opinion can be freely canvassed, no one should be permitted in a book or in a speech to advocate the violent overthrow of the constitutionally established order. The right of armed rebellion will, however, justifiably be resorted to if the essential freedoms guaranteed by a liberal democratic state are denied.

By these standards, Stanley Tambiah and Salman Rushdie and their works *Buddhism Betrayed?* and *The Satanic Verses* stand vindicated. One does not have to approve of what they said to uphold their right of publication. One does not have to think their respective books to be magnificent intellectual or literary productions, to defend them against abuse and vilification.

I do not find *Buddhism Betrayed?* to be a particularly well-written work even if I am very sympathetic to its essential thesis. I do not think *The Satanic Verses* Rushdie's best novel although I must admit that many, more distinguished figures have thought otherwise. The *Sunday Times* (of Britain) called *The Satanic Verses* 'a masterpiece' while the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* called it 'a towering work of fiction; a tour de force... One of the most complex and beautifully written novels in recent memory.'

It is important to remember that though it is my conclusion that those who condemn *Buddhism Betrayed?* belong to the same stable as those who would burn and ban *The Satanic Verses*, there is an important difference between them. The criticism in Sri Lanka of Stanley Tambiah even by the worst elements, contains none of the venom of the campaign against Salman Rushdie. Let no one forget that the *fatwa* of the late Ayatollah Komeini of Iran, sentenced Salman Rushdie to death for the sole crime of writing a novel that he didn't like. Even now Rushdie lives in peril of his life and several translators of his novel have been killed. To my mind such be-

Dutugemunu Betrayed?

by Raja de Silva
(former Commissioner of Archaeology)

The Dakkhina thupa (Southern Dagoba) in Anuradhapura had for a century been popularly known as the tomb of Elara – the Just, a Tamil king of a couple of thousand years ago. It was revered by one and all who kept faith with the orders of the victor, King Dutugemunu, that passers-by should respect and worship the memorial dagoba he had built for Elara, where the latter fell in combat (Mhv.25-73) near the south gate of the City of Anuradhapura (Mhv.25-69). The commentary to the Mahavamsa (Tika), describes the site or scene of combat as 'Anuradhapurassa dakkhinadisabhage' to the south side of the City of Anuradhapura.

In 1948, Elara's tomb ceased to exist, officially and in its place there appeared Dutugemunu's tomb, even though there is no mention in the Chronical of any memorial monument for this Hero-King. The Dakkhina thupa was described by its sign-board at the site, and in official publication (eg., administration report for 1948; *Guide to Anuradhapura 1952*) as having been built on the cremation site of Dutugemunu. The time-honoured memory of Elara, enshrined in his popularly recognised tomb, not to mention the chivalrous act of Dutugemunu, were destined to be forgotten 'unwept, unhonoured and unsung', for Paranavitana's new discovery was not questioned.

Nine years later, Paranavitana's

haviour is redolent of barbaric long-gone days, not of the world in which we live. We must act to ensure that it has no place in our world.

I conclude with the following reflections.

Only a principled commitment to uphold the freedom of any human being to publish anything that does not incite violence, or advocate rebellion in a liberal democracy can ensure a civilized world. To resort to special pleading is dangerous, inconsistent and hypocritical. It is the absurdity put forward so well in the words of the enemies of liberty to us, its friends:

I demand liberty in the name of your principles.

I refuse it to you in the name of mine.

conclusion was contested, in an article published by me, in the *Sunday Observer* newspaper of 14 March 1957. Paranavitana did not demolish my reasoning with the scornful pen that he was wont to wield with the dexterity of a rapier against his presumptuous critics. Instead, he was gentle enough to afford me, his former junior Assistant Commissioner, tacit encouragement in scholarship by maintaining an eloquent silence. I do not propose to reproduce here, those original objections of half a lifetime ago, nor do I propose to discuss Elara.

Emboldened, in 1968, action was taken towards reasonable restitution. I had the offending sign-board replaced with one that simply described the monument as the Dakkhina thupa built in that vihara that was founded in the reign of King Valagambahu. There were no reprisals.

Dutugemunu's tomb became newsworthy again in 1978 when the Minister of Cultural Affairs, Hon. Edwin Hurulle, was told by an informant bent on controversy that a parcel of excavated material containing what could well be the ashes of Dutugemunu was lying unrecovered in the stores of the Archaeological Museum, Anuradhapura. As instructed, the parcel was dusted without, handled with care, and placed in the hands of A.R.L. Wijesekera, then Deputy Government Analyst, for scientific ex-

In this context, I cannot help but recall that among the signatories of an appeal of intellectuals and academics for tolerance to *Buddhism Betrayed?* and its author, couched in terms that I as a Liberal find acceptable, was one who presented a paper on the controversy on *The Satanic Verses* which bent over backwards to sympathize with those who would kill Salman Rushdie, while expressing no support for him or those who defend his right of expression. Such hypocritical special pleading is pathetic.

I stand full square in defense of Salman Rushdie, Stanley Tambiah and all such authors; and against all the banners and burners of books, in the past, present and the future.

amination and for carbon-14 dating. The latter exercise was to be handled by Granville Dharmawardana, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Authority.

A Committee of Inquiry was appointed to study the question of whether the Dakkhina thupa was Dutugemunu's tomb. Deshamanya N.D. Wijesekera was the Chairman. Raja de Silva, Sadhamanghala Karunaratne, Roland Silva, and M.H. Sirisoma, all of whom have served as Archaeological Commissioner in turn, were among the members too numerous to mention here by name. The Secretary was Kalasuri V.V. Abhayagunawardena. In the interests of assisting the Committee with their inquiries, copies of my 1957 article on the Dakkhina thupa were distributed to the members at the outset inviting them to shoot down my arguments in flames.

After a few meetings of the Committee since no response was forthcoming from my fellow-members, I retired unhurt from its deliberations. I was thus not a party to the conclusions arrived at, nor have I seen the Report submitted to the Minister. Prof. Abaya Aryasinghe was reported to be a dissenting member of the Committee. The Committee is said to have concluded that the Dakkhina thupa was indeed built on Dutugemunu's cremation site the organic material (charcoal and ash) assumed reverend proportions as containing the ashes of the national hero-king. With honours due to royalty, the hitherto derelict charcoal and ash fraction from the excavation was brought in motor-procession from Ruhuna to Rajarata to find repose as the ashes of the hero Dutugemunu in his ancient capital, Anuradhapura. What went out in a brown paper parcel came back in a gilded urn. 'What mad pursuit? What pipes and timbrels?'

The generality of Sinhala Buddhists was satisfied; the Tamils, especially the intelligentsia, were chagrined. James Rutnam delivered a lecture at the Jaffna University in March 1981 on Elara's tomb, since published (Tirunelveli). Rutnam spared no words of censure in assailing the scholarship of Paranavitana and the role played by the Committee of Inquiry in reporting that the once popular Elara's tomb was the more popular Dutugemunu's tomb. Rutnam felt that Elara was betrayed. In the subsequent elevation

of 'fragments of Charcoal and lumps of ash' to the status of the ashes of our national hero, was Dutugemunu betrayed?

Evidence

In regard to the Report of the Committee of Inquiry and the report of the Carbon Dating Laboratory (said to be a French institution) to which the organic material was alleged to have been despatched by Granville Dharmawardana, and the report of the scientific examination said to have been conducted by A.R.L. Wijesekera at the Government Analyst's Department, the following relevant questions deserve to be answered. Their replies would constitute the evidence that sorely needs publicity, if only to allay the fears expressed at the Jaffna University:

1. Were human ashes present in the material examined? Over to A.R.L. Wijesekera.
2. What was the date assigned to the organic material by the French Dating Laboratory? Over to Granville Dharmawardana.
3. Did the answers to these questions lend support to the findings of the Committee of Inquiry? Over to Deshamanya N.D. Wijesekera and members of his Committee.
4. On what grounds did Prof. Abaya Aryasinghe dissent? Over to Prof. Aryasinghe.

Discussion

Paranavitana lent verisimilitude to his recognition of the Dakkhina thupa (ca. rule of Valagambahu BC 89 - 77) as a monument built on the cremation site of Dutugemunu (mort. ca. BC 137) by suggesting that there might have been a smaller dagoba set up not long after the funeral of the hero-king. He admitted that this question was not settled by resorting to further excavation (*Glimpses of Ceylon's Past, 1972* p.18). It is interesting to note that the truth was bent acutely by the *Central Cultural Fund Guide Book to Anuradhapura, 1981*, p.43 'The Dakkhina dagoba was an enlargement of an earlier construction over the ashes of Duthagamani (*sic*)'. Furthermore, whereas Paranavitana stated that among the discoveries in the ransacked dagoba were found, at various levels, 'fragments of charcoal and lumps of ash', the *CCF Guide Book* (doubtless following the Report of the Committee of Inquiry) replaced the word 'ash' with 'ashes'

when it stated that 'traces of charcoal and ashes were found in the centre of the thupa'. It was also suggested that 'they were probably the actual remains of the legendary hero'.

Topographical

In keeping with his dying instructions, Dutugemunu was cremated at a spot where the Ruvanveli dagoba can be seen, on the terrace for the ceremonial acts of the sangha (*kamma-malaka*), Mhv. 32-58.

There would have been various buildings to the south of the Ruvanveliseya such as those of the Tissarama, the royal dwelling of Devanampiyatissa, and the Kala Pasada *parivena*. The king would have been cremated close to the Ruvanveliseya 'in a place where the great thupa may be seen', though it was, in fact, outside the 'precincts' (*nisam-malaka*) Mhv. 32-80. The precincts referred to may well have been those of this vihara. If, on the other hand, the cremation site was further south, in the (later) Dakkhina thupa premises, the above-mentioned buildings would have obstructed the view of the Ruvanveliseya which is situated eight hundred yards almost due north of that site; it is thus topographically ruled out.

Archaeological

The cremation site, later called the royal terrace, *raja-malaka*, according to the theory of Paranavitana, should be at the site of the Dakkhina thupa. Was this so? The platform for the funeral pyre would have been above the ground level at that time. The burnt and charred organic material from the funeral pyre would therefore be found at this very level. But at what level did Paranavitana find the 'ample traces of the compressed layer of charcoal' from which he had no alternative but to invoke the remains of a funeral pyre as its origins? This was far below the then ground-level and below the underground foundation brickwork of the Dakkhina thupa. This archaeological evidence goes against the proposition that the Dakkhina thupa was built over Dutugemunu's cremation site. On this count alone, it follows that the burnt material, charcoal and ash, could not have belonged to the funeral pyre and person of Dutugemunu.

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SUB-CONTINENTAL SCENE

U.S. Pressure on India for Capping Nuclear Programme

by T.N. Gopalan

'We are two great democracies with a great future together, and we emphasised that position today, not in any way not dealing with the issues of difficulty but knowing that it all has to be put in a proper context in the interest of the American people and in the interest of the Indian people...'

That was President Bill Clinton during a press conference he addressed along with Prime Minister Narasimha Rao after their talks at Washington on May 18. Piercing through the lofty sentiments, one realises that the areas of differences between the two leaders remain and that the US has only temporarily decided not to press the matter further for tactical reasons, meaning

for fear that more pressure at this stage could prove counter-productive.

India's restrictive trade policies, the human rights situation in the Kashmir valley and nuclear non-proliferation are the three major areas of discord between the two countries, and the US is said to be exercising a lot of pressure on India for quite some time now to make it fall in line - lift the restrictions, initiate a dialogue with Pakistan for a solution for the Kashmir issue, participate in a multilateral conference on non-proliferation and so on.

In fact so much arrogantly transparent has been this process of applying pressure that there was even

a clamour among certain sections of Indian opinion for cancellation of Mr. Rao's visit to the US, the first by an Indian Prime Minister after the end of the Cold War and seven years after Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's.

Mr. Rao of course strongly denied any arm-twisting by Mr. Clinton. 'My arm is absolutely intact. The President has not even touched it,' he observed jocularly at the joint press conference.

Apparently the US has become the wiser after the furore created in the Indian media over the 'weak-kneed' response of the Rao regime to the US pressure tactics. Mr. Clinton did underline his concern on the nuclear issue during his encounter with the Press, but left the matter at that.

Clearly the Clinton administration wants India to cap its nuclear research programme with any military connotations; it wants further a capping of weapons grade fissile material, wants India to stop all space research, not to deploy Prithvi and Agni missiles and become a signatory to the Missile Test Control Regime and so on.

Mr. Rao himself put his foot down firmly in his public statements in the US. While addressing a joint meeting of the US Congress he stressed the need for a global approach and said: 'I firmly believe that the way of ridding the world of weapons of mass destruction lies in creating a world order based on the universal principles of equality and non-discrimination as a means of enhancing security.'

Such assertions immediately produced loud acclaims in the Indian press as did his categorical declaration that there was no going back on liberalisation.

Whatever the brouhaha over the Rao-Clinton meeting or the platitudes that emanated from the encounter, the fact remains that the USA is exploring all possible avenues of imposing a cap on the nuclear programme in the sub-continent.

Mr. Lee Hamilton, Chairman of the US Foreign Affairs Committee and an influential senator, observed in the course of his address to Asia Society, Washington, last month, 'Later this year the Indian government will decide whether to produce

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Literary

From the point of view of the literature, the siting of the terrace of the acts of the samgha where the cremation took place can be investigated. Paranavitana drew attention to the terrace of the *picula* tree of the time of Mahinda *thera* which is the same as the terrace of the acts of the samgha (*kamma-malaka*) as recorded in the Mahavamsa, 15-27. He also cited the tradition in the late (14th century) Saddharmalankara, that the Dakkhina thupa was built on a terrace known as the great terrace of the *pulila* tree. He equates this terrace with that of the *picula* tree/*kamma-malaka* of the samgha, mentioned in the Mahavamsa. Let us see what the chronicle and its commentary have to say about this latter site in relation to other known monuments and sites.

On the following morning King Devanampiyatissa visited Mahinda *thera* who had spent his first night in the city in the royal dwelling in the Mahamegha park. This dwelling was situated to the west side of the west gate of the Sacred Bo-tree enclosure (Tika, 15-12). On receiving Jasmine flowers from the king, Mahinda *thera* went to the royal

dwelling and scattered eight handfuls of blossoms about the *picula* tree standing on the south side of it', *Mhv.* 15-28. Then, Mahinda announced that the *picula* tree site which was the *kamma-malaka* of the samgha in the time of three former Buddhas once again will be serving the same purpose. The commentary, here, states that the *picula* tree was situated to the south-east of the royal dwelling (Tika, p.344). It therefore follows that the terrace of the *picula* tree/*kamma-malaka* of the samgha was certainly very close to the royal dwelling and to the Bo-tree enclosure.

The Dakkhina thupa, however, as admitted by Paranavitana, is 400 yards to the southern direction from this area. Thus, notwithstanding the (late) tradition of the Saddharmalankara, it is evident from the literature quoted above, that the Dakkhina thupa could not have been built on the site of the *samgha*/terrace of the *picula* tree/*raja-malaka*, where Dutugemunu was cremated. These considerations give added support to my hitherto undisputed contention of thirty seven years ago that the evidence brought forward by Paranavitana to show that the Dakkhina thupa was built over the cremation site of Dutugemunu does not support his conclusion.

and deploy the Prithvi short-range ballistic missile. This is an important decision. Since ballistic missiles are qualitatively different from slow-moving fixed-wing aircraft, deploying the Prithvi would mark a watershed in the South Asian strategic environment. Given its range limitations, it would have no military use against China, only against Pakistan. Quite likely the latter would respond by deploying a comparable missile system... a South Asian ban on the deployment of ballistic missiles is an idea whose time has come. The administration has discussed this matter with both the Indians and the Pakistanis...'

The run-up to the US visit had proved extremely embarrassing for Mr. Rao. His government went red in its face time and again, within the span of a fortnight or so over the decision to defer Prithvi trials, the low profile/secret talks in London with the US on the non-proliferation issue, on whether Agni was going to be inducted into the armed forces and so on. The government had to do a lot of explaining in the face of a furious public reaction which found it 'weak-kneed' in the face of unabashed bullying by the US.

As one newspaper observed hysterically on the Prithvi trial deferment, '... (it) is yet another manifestation of this servility... Prithvi, Agni *et al*, are metaphors for pride and respect... They are essential in India's quest for an honourable place under the sun... an ominous signal that the country will succumb even at the cost of its security and sovereignty...'

When a newspaper carried the sensational scoop in the second week of May that the Rao regime had ordered the deferment of the user trials by the army of the Prithvi missile, apparently under pressure from the US, all hell broke loose.

In a belated explanation the Prime Minister said that the temporary deferment had been effected only to avoid any embarrassment 'in case of a particular result, when the PM is away in another country.' Not many took it seriously but.

Prithvi, supposed to be India's answer to Pakistan's Hatf-I and II and the longer range M-11 (assembled with the help of the Chinese hardware), is touted as being packed with 'real punch', valued for its short reaction time, supersonic speed, ruggedness, ability to strike deep into the enemy territory and as being far

more accurate than the SCUD and Lance missiles.

Displayed as part of the artillery armour, in the last Republic Day parade, Prithvi, India's first indigenous guided missile system, had been passed on to the army in the 150-200km version for user trials. It was one of those user trials consisting of a full launch off the Bay of Bengal which was postponed at the eleventh hour.

Even more galling for the Indian hawks, the misguided patriots or the anti-imperialists, was the amazing turn around of the Indian government over the Agni missile.

The successful third test-firing of the Agni, an intermediate range ballistic missile, in February last, had sent hopes soaring among the section mentioned earlier - even the more sober felt proud of the achievement. It can deliver a nuclear payload of one tonne over a distance of 1599 km or a smaller warhead of 500 kg over a longer range of 2,500 km and India is said to be scouting around for ways and means of short-circuiting the Missile Technology Control Regime to obtain the necessary launch vehicle technology.

Mr. Abdul Kalam, chief of the Indian Defence Research and Development Organisation, claimed in an interview recently that the Agni 'is already a proven system... it has been developed to carry any kind of warhead... let us just say we are very close to the operational stage (in regard to induction, that is)...'. Amidst speculation that under pressure from the US again, the Rao regime has decided to postpone indefinitely the induction of Agni, the government chose to dub the much vaunted Agni as merely a 'technology demonstration vehicle'. 'It's only an experiment,' said Mr. Rao and one wondered how an experiment could be capped.

There was a similar ruckus over the two-day talks between the Indian and the US officials over the non-proliferation issue at London. Again the government did not care to take the nation into confidence in the first instance, but the news found its way into the Indian Press and wild charges that India had surrendered its sovereignty before the brow-beating and the sole remaining Super Power, rent the air. Ultimately the talks scheduled for two days were wound up on the first day itself with each side reiterating its position on non-proliferation -

the US pressing India to sign the treaty and the latter resisting the pressure and favouring a global approach to the issue instead of a piece-meal regional route.

The US had been pressing India and Pakistan to sign the NPT or at least take part in a 5+2+2 conference (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, Germany and Japan besides India and Pakistan) wherein the issue could be thrashed out. But India is said to be favouring a larger conference which would include all nuclear threshold states including Israel, North Korea, South Africa and a couple of other former constituents of the now defunct Soviet Union.

In 1989 the then Rajiv Gandhi government had proposed a 'global comprehensive and non-discriminatory' disarmament proposal. Such a lofty, eminently sensible proposal is, unfortunately, no longer realistic in a world wherein one super power feels free to call the shots in almost every aspect of international affairs, whether economic, trade or military. With the Clinton administration hell-bent on making the developing world 'cry uncle', there is not much that governments like India's can do, especially when the Rao regime sees liberalisation and pumping in of dollars as the panacea for all the ills afflicting the economy and when its Pakistan counterpart is all too willing to obey the US dictates if only out of sheer spite for the Indian government and with a view to gaining political mileage in the process.

But what many self-righteous commentators and breast-beating jingoists seem to be missing in their outrage over the total injustice of the present scheme of things is the inherent advantage in lessening tension and reducing on military expenditure.

Even Mr. Jasjit Singh, Director of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, no dove in defence matters concedes that the existence of ballistic missiles is highly destabilising in its effect on the strategic environment... the only defence against missiles is installing your own. 'Like nuclear weapons, missile proliferation is adverse to India's strategic interests,' he says.

Mr. Clinton might be hypocritical when he says by keeping the nuclear club small, he is only seeking to promote world peace. All his bluster

Continued on page 28

TAMIL NADU NEWSLETTER

Gopalasamy Loses Party Name and Flag

by T.N. Gopalan

As widely expected Mr. V. Gopalasamy, the rebel leader of the DMK who formed his own party, has lost the battle for recognition by the Election Commission as the official DMK. In view of his failure to mobilise support to any significant extent among the members of the general council of the undivided party, Chief Election Commissioner, T.N. Seshan shot down the Gopalasamy (Vai.Go) group's claims in this regard.

Any fond hope that might have been entertained by Vai.Go's follow-

Continued from page 27

demanding verifiable capping may be wide of the mark since India, anyway is a nuclear-threshold state, and it has more than adequate technological base to achieve weaponisation at comparatively short notice. As Mr. P.K. Iyengar, father of the Pokhran explosion, observed the other day, India uses fissionable plutonium in 100 kg units as reactor fuel while bomb making requires plutonium only in single digit.

Still one must realise that while cutting down on defence expenditure enables use of scarce resources available for developmental works, rolling back nuclear weaponisation programmes should help push the sub-continent towards sanity and sobriety. Any peace initiative from a big country like India towards its smaller neighbours could pave the way for peace and harmony in this region.

But then such are only pious sentiments and easily lost in the cacaphony of jingoistic declamations and anti-US rhetoric. India is not a banana republic nor is it ruled by a tin-pot dictator. Carrying the public, the press, the opposition along with it is extremely important for any government if it wants to make any major step on such sensitive issues as the nuclear one or the Kashmir one for that matter. How the Clinton administration is going to react to this situation could decide the future course of history in this part of the world.

ers that at least the DMK's cherished election symbol, the rising sun, would be frozen, kept out of Mr. Karunanidhi's reach in the recently held Perundurai and Mylopore by-elections, was dashed to the ground by the decision of the high profile and controversial Election Commissioner, Mr. Seshan.

Whatever might be Vai.Go's popularity among the DMK rank-and-file, it was clear that he had failed to carry the party general council with him at the time of the split. *Per se* such a development was not necessarily a set-back for the dissidents - for when former Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran (MGR) walked out in 1972, a similar situation had obtained, but it was he who had the last laugh. Banking as he did on his charisma, he did not care too much on the DMK label itself. Surely he was realistic enough on the kind of support he enjoyed among the General Council members, and he went on to announce the formation of a new party the moment he decided to strike out on his own.

Perhaps Vai.Go., seeing himself too deeply involved in the DMK tradition to let go of the DMK tag lightly, decided to make a fight of it. He had raised hopes in the minds of his followers in the process. Frustrated in his attempts in this regard, he has chosen to call his outfit Marumalarchi (Renaissance) Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK).

In a rear-guard attempt to satisfy his loyalists, Vai.Go has even got friendly journalists to put out reports insinuating that justice might not have been rendered to him by the Election Commission.

The purported reasoning is that when the AIADMK split in the wake of MGR's death, the Election Commission froze the party's election symbol, pending further inquiry. (Of course Mr. Seshan was not the Commissioner then.) The symbol was restored only after Ms. Jayalalitha's supremacy was acknowledged and the party reunited after the 1989 polls. A similar thing could have

been done now by Mr. Seshan, so the argument went, instead of embarrassing Vai.Go. at the time of the crucial by-polls.

Well, though a majority of the MLAs were with the official Janaki-Veerappan faction at the time, the situation in regard to the AIADMK's general council was not that clear. Further it was a very loose-knit structure, and whoever had caught MGR's fancy had made it to the highest 'policy-making body'. Party records on this score were never, nor are they even now, very well-maintained. And hence the comparison cannot hold good. Besides going by the DMK constitution and records there was no dispute at all as to who represented the official group.

Be that as it may, Vai.Go. has said that his is the Marumalarchi DMK since his party would like to take up in earnest the work left behind by Anna, the founder of the DMK, who had 'ceaselessly crusaded to bring about a renaissance in the social, cultural and literary fields.'

Talking to the Press at the 'naming ceremony', he reiterated his party's first task was to fight for the removal of the corrupt AIADMK government. At the national level, he said, the MDMK would join hands with the anti-Cong-I forces to bring about a credible alternative to the ruling party.

He also steered clear of the LTTE saying that he was not supporting any of the militant groups. There should not be any violence on the soil of Tamil Nadu, he added.

Promptly the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) leader Dr. Ramdas chided Vai.Go. for developing cold feet on the Eelam issue and accused the latter of saying that he would not support any armed struggle in the neighbouring island. 'When he went to Jaffna during the LTTE-IPKF confrontation, were the militants conducting a non-violent struggle', he wondered.

Mr. Ramdas also felt that Vai.Go. had given up even the anti-Brahmin plank, a very vital one for a Dravidian party. That the DMK itself had been soft-peddling on anti-Brahminism for a very very long time now is a different matter altogether.

Anyway the upshot of it all is that Dr. Ramdas has made it clear there is no truck whatsoever with the MDMK as he finds it 'bankrupt on many counts'.

According to some reports the only party that might opt for an alliance with the MDMK is the Janata Dal. With Mr. Karunanidhi more anxious to renew ties with the Cong-I, the Dal-MDMK alliance could materialise before long. Already Vai.Go. has personally called on Mr. V.P. Singh on his return from abroad, and the Dal spokesmen are equivocating on the party's attitude to the DMK. Anyway the Dal itself is in a state of disarray, with Mr. Singh resolutely refusing to take over the reins again and exhorting his partymen to play second fiddle to Mr. Mulayam Singh in Uttara Pradesh. And Mr. V.P. Singh is suffering from blood cancer, it has been revealed. The only other party that could be favourably inclined towards Vai.Go. is the National League of Mr. Ibrahim Sulaiman Sait, recently expelled from the Indian Union Muslim League because of his uncompromising hostility to the Cong-I.

Even the CPM which seems to have burnt its bridges with the DMK is not very enthusiastic towards the MDMK. It supported a trade-unionist in Mylopore and the CPI In Perundurai by-elections. And victory at these two elections could have proved crucial for Vai.Go. and his MDMK. But Jayalalitha's AIADMK candidates won the seats with ease defeating the official DMK, the Congress-I and Vai.Go's MDMK.

As if to add to the woes of Vai.Go., Thamizhar Munnani, a little-known outfit, claimed that the flag of the MDMK, red stripes at the top and bottom ends and a black one in the middle, was its own. Formed by a person who broke with Mr. P. Nedumaran, say, five years ago, the Front is nothing much to speak of as a political entity - though it is claimed that it has put up candidates in at least two constituencies in the city in the past. The Front has gone to court seeking injunction against Vai.Go. from using 'its flag'.

Some observers believe that the Thamizhar Munnani's claims are but only well-founded and that Vai.Go. might have goofed in his choice of the party flag. Any court injunction on the matter could prove an unnecessary tactical set-back for the MDMK. Obviously rhetoric cannot compensate for lack of much-needed home-work.

Yet another point of disappointment for this latter day Tamil knight is that the murder of Mr.

Ezhumalai Naicker, chief functionary of the MDMK's Madras unit, which took place the day after its massive rally in the city last month - is now believed to have resulted from some personal enmity - inves-

tigations have revealed nothing political at all and some of the suspects are already behind the bars. Vai.Go. group's allegation of DMK's involvement in the murder proved to be widely off the mark.

S.J.V. Chelvanayakam Remembered

Repatriation of Tamil Refugees from South India Condemned

The President of the opposition, Dravidha Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), Mr. M. Karunanidhi, has declared that he would call for an all party agitation if the Central and Tamil Nadu governments did not take steps to end the forcible repatriation of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees to war-torn Sri Lanka.

Mr. Karunanidhi was participating in an all-party meeting to observe the ninety-sixth (96th) birth anniversary of the Sri Lankan Tamil leader, the late S.J.V. Chelvanayagam, known as the 'Gandhi of Eelam', here on Saturday.

'There should be no repatriation till peace is restored in Sri Lanka,' Mr. Karunanidhi said amidst applause from the thousands of refugees who had gathered to hear him. 'It is not Tamil culture to deny hospitality to someone in distress,' the DMK's supremo said, referring to the anxiety shown by the Tamil Nadu government to send the refugees packing to Sri Lanka, even though the Tamil homeland is still a war zone. Mr. Karunanidhi, as well as the other speakers, appeared moved by the songs of despair sung by a refugee choir.

Of the one-hundred-and-ten-thousand (110,000) Tamil refugees who were in the one-hundred-and-thirty-two (132) government-run camps in Tamil Nadu, forty-thousand (40,000) have been repatriated so far. Though the State and Central governments claim that the repatriation was a voluntary one, the refugees themselves have had a different story to tell. They said that the government had given them no option. By withdrawing many of the services the refugees enjoyed such as education, allowing the camps to deteriorate through wilful neglect, and denying the right to seek employment, the government had indirectly forced them to

leave. The repatriation has now tapered off. But the forty-thousand (40,000) Tamils still in the camps do not know when they would get sent back.

Though every speaker condemned forcible repatriation and pledged support to any movement to stop it, key speakers including Mr. Karunanidhi, said that the Eelam Tamils would do well to introspect on why the Tamils of Tamil Nadu, who received them with open arms, were now indifferent to their plight. Putting the blame on the LTTE for all this, Mr. Karunanidhi, said that what he called the militant group's policy of annihilating those who differed from it and interfering in the internal affairs of the political parties in Tamil Nadu, has alienated the people here. 'We find to our utter horror, that a person who is alive today is not alive tomorrow. Have we no right to ask why this should happen?' he said. Mr. Karunanidhi said that he was pained to read in pro-LTTE journals that the militant group had even questioned his bonafides as a leader of the Tamils and dubbed him a coward. The LTTE had shown scant regard for all that he and the people of Tamil Nadu had done for the Lankan Tamil struggle. 'There is a lack of faith in the Sri Lankan Tamils now. The problem is how to convert this lack of faith into faith,' Mr. Karunanidhi said.

Mr. T.S. Killivalavan, official spokesman of the State Congress (I) also pointed out the immense damage done to the Lankan Tamil cause by what he called the LTTE's policy of annihilation, but said that his party would give all support to the Lankan Tamils if they waged a peaceful struggle on the lines shown by the late Mr. Chelvanayagam. The LTTE's violence was worrying everybody including Mr. Karunanidhi, who faced a threat from it, Mr. Killivalavan said.

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MATRIMONIAL

Jaffna Hindu sister seeks fair, pretty, educated bride, 25 or younger for brother, 30, Computer Systems Analyst programmer, UK permanent resident. Send details, horoscope, photograph. M 737 c/o Tamil Times.

Sri Lankan Tamil parents in Australia seek preferably qualified partner for their attractive graduate daughter, Australian citizen, in good employment. Send details to P.O. Box 1227, Narre Warren 3804 Victoria, Australia.

Parents seek professionally qualified partner in late thirties for doctor daughter, U.S. resident. M 739 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Tamil parents seek doctor or other high academically qualified bride for doctor son, 32, practising in Australia. Please send all details M 740 c/o Tamil Times.

Hindu mother seeks pretty professionally qualified partner for son, 31, Ph.D., UK university lecturer, tall, medium complexion, no mars affliction. Horoscope, photograph and details expected. M 741 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu Tamil brother seeks partner for his very affluent brother, post graduate engineer, mid forties, innocent divorcee, UK citizen working in USA. Send horoscope, details. M 742 c/o Tamil Times.

WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate the following couples on their recent wedding.

Dr. Narendra son of Dr. & Mrs. C. Sornalingam of 54 Kendall Avenue South, South Croydon, Surrey, and Sivapriya daughter of Dr. & Mrs. S. Sivakumaran of 3 Savile Close, New Malden, Surrey on 28.5.94 at the Hammersmith Town Hall, London W6.

Romesh son of Mr. & Mrs. S. Rajadurai of Uyarapulam, Anaicoddai, Sri Lanka and Thanusha daughter of the late Mr. Rajaratnam and Mrs. Rajaratnam of 40 Brown Road, Jaffna on 3.6.94 at Marina Banquet Hall, St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Sripalan son of Mr. & Mrs. S.V. Kandasamy of 31 Meeraniya Street, Colombo 12 and Ahila daughter of Mr. & Mrs. T. Kulasegaram of D/2/6 Elivittigala Flats, Colombo 8 on 29.5.94 at Highgate Murugan Temple, Archway Road, London E6.

Jana son of the late Mr. K.C. Satchithananda and Mrs. P. Satchithananda of 49 Millwell Crescent, Chigwell, Essex and Keshthra daughter of Dr. & Dr. (Mrs.) S. Sivaloganathan of Leeds on 28th May 1994 at Highgate Murugan Temple, London N6.

OBITUARIES



Mr. Sittampalam Daniel Balarajah (Danny) son of late Mr. & Mrs. Sittampalam, son-in-law of late Mr. & Mrs. Kandiah of Manipay Sri Lanka; beloved husband of Pathmawathy, retired teacher, Hindu College Manipay, Sri Lanka; loving father of Usha, Prabah, Geetha, Subathira, and Bahirathan; father-in-law of Indramohan and Rohan; grandfather of Luxshika and Karthika; brother of Mrs. Ariyanayagam, Mrs. Chelliah (Negombo), Mrs. Ramalingam, Mrs. Kandasamy, Mr. Kandamoorthy, and late Mr. Visvalingam (all of Sri Lanka); brother-in-law of Mr. Ranganathan, Mr. Paramanathan, Mrs. Kanagaratnam, Mr. Pathmanathan (U.S.A.) and Mr. Shanmuganathan, passed away after a brief illness at St. Georges Hospital, London on 8.6.94. Friends and relatives paid their last tribute at St. Marks Church, Wimbledon. He was cremated on 11.6.94 at Streatham Vale Crematorium following ceremonies according to Hindu rites.

Mrs. Balarajah and all members of her family sincerely thank the Mayor – Malcolm Shearle and members of the council, Joe Abrams, Fred Flatt, Anthony Colman – Leader of the Council, Allen Jones & Mrs. Jan Jones, Mr. John Smith and the staff of the grants unit, Wimbledon Labour Party, The Estate Management Service of the Chief Executive's department, Merton, the Chairman and the Committee of Asian Elderly Group of Merton, the staff and members of Merton Racial Equality Council, the President Mr. S. Stanislaus and members of South London Tamil Welfare Group, Tamil Refugee Housing Association, Standing Committee of Tamil Speaking People, Eelam Solidarity Campaign, Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front, Bengali Association of Merton, Jaffna Central College Old Boys Association, Vembadi Old Girls Association, Tamil Refugee Action Group, friends and relatives who attended the funeral, sent floral tributes and messages of sympathy and assisted in various ways in the funeral arrangements. Our special thanks to Father Mark Far for his prayers, support and co-operation. – Mrs. P. Balarajah & Family, 21, Haydon Park Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 8JQ. Tel: 081-543 8210.

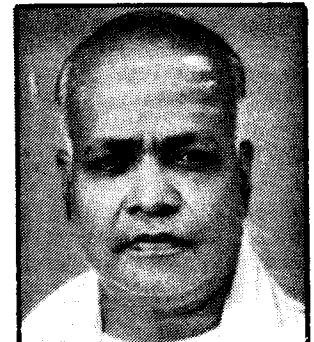


Mr. T. Shanmugarajah, Attorney-at-law, J.P.U.M. of Kondavil East Sri Lanka, son of late Mr. and Mrs. Thambidurai of Kondavil East, beloved husband of Ananthavalli, loving father of Shamani, father-in-law of Ranjit (Yellowknife, Canada) loving grandfather of Praveen and Anjana, brother of Dr. T.D. Sivalingam (U.K.), late Mrs. Ratneswary Subramaniam, Mrs. Dharmeswary Ratnesingham, late Mrs. Ganeswary Thammalingam, son-in-law of late Mr. A. Navaretnam and Mrs. Navaretnam of Rajasinghe

Road, Colombo, brother-in-law of N. Jeyadeva (Australia), N. Sugunadeva (U.K.), N. Vimaladeva (Colombo) passed away in Toronto, Canada on 5.5.94 and was cremated on 9.5.94. – (T. Ranjit, Yellowknife N.W.T, X1A,3M5 Canada, Tel: [403] 920 4704).



Mr. C. Paramaswaran (63), of Alaveddy, Sri Lanka; second son of the late Mr. & Mrs. S. Chelliah; beloved husband of Selvaratnam; devoted father of Suresh Nathan (Golders Green, London), Dr. Ramesh (Newfoundland, Canada), Satheesh (Ottawa, Canada), Sekar and Bamini (both of Toronto, Canada); brother of Vicknarajah, Leelapathy, Pathmanathan (all of Colombo, Sri Lanka), Rajendra, Suntharalingham (both of Golders Green, London), Kamalopathy (Klang, Malaysia), Pathmavathy, Tharmalingham, Sockalingham, Thiyaalingam and Sivasothy (all of Winnipeg, Canada) passed away in Canada on 6th April 1994 and was cremated on 9th April. – 24 Long Meadow Crescent, Markham, Ontario L3R 3J5, Canada. Tel: 0101 905 513 7839.

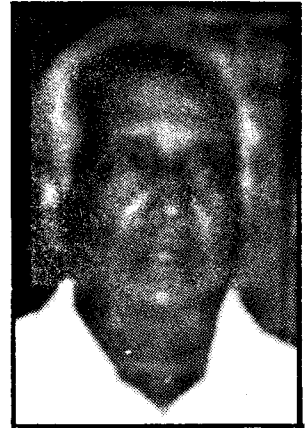


Pandit Kanapathipillai Sivassambu, Retired Teacher, Skanda Varodaya College, Chunnakam, beloved husband of Panchasothy; father of Sivasothy (New Delhi), Sivagnanatho, Sivanandan (UK), Sivayogasothy, Sivanasothy, Sivarasathy, Sivakumaran (UK); father-in-law of Kandasamy, late Sriskantharajah, Dr. Manoranjini Sivanandan,

Mahadeva and Kalakalan passed away in Uduvil, Sri Lanka on 1st April 1994 and was cremated on 2.4.94. A poojah in his memory was performed at Highgate Murugan Temple on 30.5.94. Members of his family thank very sincerely all friends and relatives who attended the funeral and all ceremonies, and sent messages of sympathy - K.S. Sivandandan, 57 Woodcroft Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR7 7AB. Tel: 081 684 8279.

Vidyalaya, Jaffna; beloved husband of Selvadevy; son of late Mr. & Mrs. Joseph of Uduvil; son-in-law of late Mr. & Mrs. Chelliah of Vannarponnai; loving brother of Helen Selvaratnam and late Gnanadeepam Carpenter; brother-in-law of Rajakulasingam, Navanathan, Mrs. Jayadevy Jesudasan, D.C. Jayarajah (UK), D.C. Balarajah (Canada), Mrs. Pushpadevy Arulannarajah and George Devarajah (UK), passed away peacefully in Jaffna on 31st May 1994 - 99/1 Kilner Lane, Vannarponnai, Jaffna.

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by your wife Indranee and sons Suthaharan and Vaseeharan. - 52 Marham Crescent, Greenford, Middlesex UB6 9SW, U.K.



In loving memory of Mr. Appukutty Thambirajah (Rasa), Native Physician, on the first anniversary of his passing away on 26.6.93.

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his sons Dr. Gunasuntharam (UK), Sivalingam (Sri Lanka), Muthulingam (Canada), Mahalingam (UK), Ratnasingam (Canada); daughter Selvamalar (Canada); daughters-in-law Rajini, Malar, Vicky, Vasanthi and Kala; son-in-law Ganeshathasan; grand children Nimalan, Kavitha, Sivaranjini, Sivaruban, Tharijini, Theepan, Partheepan, Aarani, Samantha, Rohan and Rahavan. - 48 Leigham Avenue, London SW16 2PZ.



Navatkuliyoor Dr. K.S. Nadarajah, Ilakkia Vithakar, Former Director, Tamil Services, Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation; Director, Film Corporation; President, Colombo Tamil Sangam; Patron, Canada Tamil Writers' Association; Consultant for Radio and Television Production, Ontario; Honorary Principal, Tamil College of Arts and Technology, Canada and Founder Member of the School of Tamil and Religion of the Alberta Maha Ganapathy Society; beloved husband of Thanagaranee; loving father of Vatsala and Mahilnan; father-in-law of Karu Chinniah and Malathy passed away in Canada on 17.2.94. He is greatly missed by his family, friends and community - 10 Stonehill Court, Apt. 301, Scarborough, Ontario M1W 2X8. Tel: (416) 756 2314.



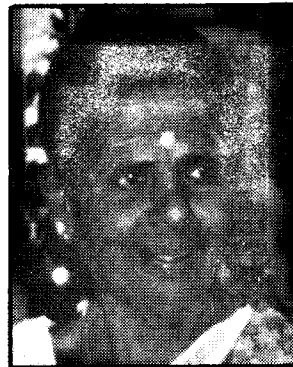
Mr. Ponnuthurai Nagarathnam, retired Principal, Skanda Varodaya College, Chunnakam, Sri Lanka, beloved husband of Vallinayagi, loving father of Sutharsan (UK), Suganthan (Singapore) and Sugirthan (Sri Lanka); brother of Mrs. Rathinamani Subramaniam and late Dr. P. Rajaratnam; brother-in-law of Kane-saratnam, Subramaniam, Mrs. Saraswathy Appadurai, Kangatheran and Mrs. Pathma Rajaratnam passed away on 2nd June '94 at Chunnakam, Sri Lanka.



In everloving memory of Mrs. Kanagambihai Ragunathan on the first anniversary of her passing away on 10th June 1993.

One sorrowful year has passed away, Your absence is felt every day.

Fondly remembered by your everloving husband RAGU; son SRI; daughter-in-law Saku; grandson Vishva; nephews, nieces, in-laws and friends. - 173 Mommoth Hall Trail, Scarborough, Ontario, Canada.



In loving memory of Mrs. Ponnamma Kandavanam on the second anniversary of her passing away on 23.6.92.

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by her children Thirupathy, Thanapathy, Pathma and Sivapakiam; son-in-law Nadarajah, Balasubramaniam, Dr. Thangarajah and Nagarathnam; daughter-in-law Tharmarani; grandchildren Mrs. Kumuthini Gnanakumaran, Mrs. Suganthini Navendhra, Shanthini, Amuthini, Jeyanthini, Thasintha, Shantha, Jamuna, Anula, Nalina, Thayalini, Sivandevi, Sivakumar, Sivaselvan, Sivaselvi and Sivathasan. - 57B Days Lane, Biddenham, Beds., U.K.



In treasured memory of Mrs. Sowpakiam Sinnadurai, beloved wife of the late S.T. Sinnadurai, J.P. (Founder of Leela Press and Leela Group of Companies) on the first anniversary of her passing away on 25th June 1993.

Sadly missed and lovingly remembered by sons Sundaralingam (Sri Lanka), Dr. Somasegaram (UK), Arulanantham, Dhesabandu, Loganathan, Dhanabala (all of Sri Lanka), Sockanathan (USA) and Ravindran (Sri Lanka); daughters-in-law, grand children and great grand children. - 69 Wansunt Road, Bexley, Kent DA5 2DJ. Tel: 0322 525170.



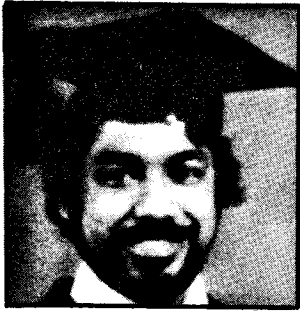
Mr. Arthur Ganeshapillai Joseph, of Uduvil, formerly of the staff of Memorial College, Manipay and Vaitheeswara

IN MEMORIAM



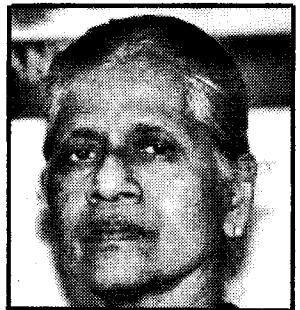
In loving memory of Dr. Manohara Nadarajah, formerly of Katsina, Nigeria and later Bedford General Hospital, UK, on the second anniversary of his passing away on 29.5.92.

You are always in our hearts and in our thoughts.



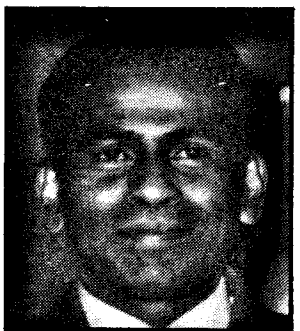
In loving memory of Mr. Sivaguru Mahadevan on the second anniversary of his passing away on 5th June 1992.

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his beloved wife Jayanthi; loving children Kalaivani, Gajan and Haran; mother Mrs. Selvapakiam Sivaguru; brothers Pathmanaban and Dr. Ganeshan; sisters Mrs. Jayeswary Narendra and Mrs. Vimaladevi Thyagarajah; several nephews, nieces and friends. - 31 Tamarisk Gardens, Bittern Park, Southampton SO2 4RA.



In loving memory of Mrs. Bagavathy Balasingam on the first anniversary of her passing away on 13th June 1993.

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by her loving sons Balaraman (UK) and Aurobindo (USA); daughter-in-law Mallika Devi and Myriam; grand children Priyadharshini and Natasha. - 62 Eversleigh Road, East Ham, London E6 1HQ. Tel: 081 470 2371.



In everloving memory of Mr. Nallathamby Sangarapillai of Mappanavoori, Karainagar, Sri Lanka, formerly a Flight Lieutenant in the Royal Ceylon and the British Royal Air Force, on

the first anniversary of his passing away on 11th June 1993.

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his beloved wife Kalavalli and his children Naresh and Vahini of 161 Queen Elizabeth Road, Lincoln LN1 3QQ. Tel: 0522 525517.



In everloving memory of Mr. B. Sivagananathan on the third anniversary of his passing away on 22.6.91.

Remembered with love and affection by his step mother Mrs. Rajaletchumy Balasubramaniam; wife Kamala; brothers Dr. Sivaloganathan, Thirunavukkarasu, Radhakrishnan and Sritharan; sisters Mrs. Gowri Pathmanathan, Mrs. Bhagawathy Mohanadas, Mrs. Mangayarkarasi Jetheendran and Mrs. Jayanthi Kumaryayanayagam. - 9 Upton Close, Park Street, St. Albans, Herts., U.K. Tel: 0737 873537.



Appreciation

My Friend Sister Clare

'Be cheerful my child. The Trinity College examiner is a kind hearted Englishman. Smile, shake hands and say, "Good Morning." Then relax and play the piano as you would play it for your dad,' said Sister Clare holding me gently on my narrow skinny shoulder.

Holding tightly, my first step piano book, I looked up at the Irish bird's soft and gentle face. She was old; older than my Papa and Amma.

The mother mentor who taught my aunt and all my teachers

was the superior of my beautiful school Holy Family Convent, Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

After forty fruitful years, Sister Clare left Jaffna in the year nineteen seventy with other missionaries.

She wrote to me from Leeds, England and I sent her some money to pay for her stamps. 'You and your husband are wonderfully kind and thoughtful to remember us all so well. May God Bless You. . .

. . . Peace will soon come to that dear island (Sri Lanka), we all loved so much. We will all be united in prayer and in love. Good-bye for now; A big God Bless You,' wrote Sister Clare as her ninety three New Year's wish.

Two months later in my dreamland, I saw Sister Clare with long gone my piano teacher, Sister Colombanus.

'Agnes is learning; she wants to be a writer,' said Sister Clare to Sister Colombanus while I was not even aware of her departure. Here I'm writing this prose to my dear friend who lived in this unkind world for almost a wonderful and graceful one hundred years.

Agnes P. Francis
Thambynayagam,
Sugar Land, Texas U.S.A.

Sister Clare passed away at Holy Family Convent, Leeds, England on the 16th February 1993.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

July 3 Feast of St. Thomas, Apostle of India.

July 4 Eekathasi.

July 6 Pirathosam.

July 11 Feast of St. Benedict.

July 12 Chathurthi.

July 13 Aani Uththaram.

July 16 6.00pm Cultural Evening to release Biography of Aalikumaran Anandan (V.S.C. Anandan) at Rutlish School, Mostyn Road - Entrance via school playing field - Wimbledon, London SW19. All welcome.

July 16 6.30pm Speech Day, London Tamil Centre at Wembley High School Hall, East Lane, Wembley. All welcome.

July 19 Eekathasi.

July 20 Pirathosam.

South London Tamil School 10th Anniversary Celebrations.

First and second day on 9th and 16th July from 6 to 9.00pm at South Norwood Centre, San-

down Road, London SE26. Programme includes Dance, Vocal, Violin, Miruthangam, Childrens' Play and Sakunthalai Drama. Admission Free.

Third day on 24th July, 2.00pm at Ashcroft Theatre, Fairfield Halls, Park Lane, Croydon. Programme includes Orchestra, Dance Drama, Vocal, Comedy Drama and Flute Extravaganza. For tickets Tel: 081 654 1381/655 1713.

At the Bhawan Centre, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ. Tel: 071-381 3086/4608.

July 8 7.45pm Santoor by Satish Vyas.

July 16 7.00pm Bharatha Natyam by Meera Appa.

July 17 6.30pm Kathak by Saswati Sen from India.

July 31 6.30pm Karnatic Vocal by Rajkumar Bharathi from India.

July 2, 6, 13, 20 & 27 5.30pm Gita Lectures by Sri Mathoor Krishnamurti. All Welcome.

World Tamil Cricket Tournament

For the first time, Tamil cricket enthusiasts living throughout the world will be able to take part in a knockout tournament. The inaugural meet will be held on 2nd July 1994 at Warren Farm Sports Centre, Windmill Lane, Southall, Middlesex, play commencing at 9.00am.

Befitting the occasion teams from Australia, Canada and many EEC countries have entered the competition. The format of the game will be eleven-a-side knock-out competition and the winning team will be awarded the 'World Tamil Cricket Tournament Shield'.

The tournament enables Tamils living in different parts of the globe to participate, come together, meet each other and share mutual friendship. Those from the same village but living in different countries now would love to revive old friendships and this tournament would provide the correct setting to fulfil old desires. The organisers hope to hold this tournament annually rotating the venue to other countries.

It is hoped that this occasion would be a source of income to help the needy at home with very little facilities for housing, health and education. There are several orphanages with many needy children who have lost everything and need all the assistance we can give.

APPRECIATION

**Prof. Alagiah Thurairajah**

(1934-94)

Professor Alagiah Thurairajah an eminent Geotechnical Engineer and Educator, died in Colombo of cardiovascular failure and leukaemia, on June 11, 1994. He was 59 and is survived by his wife, three daughters and two sons.

With the passing away of Thurai, as he was popularly called, Sri Lanka has lost its ablest and the best known Geotechnical Engineer and one of the foremost Educators. The University of Jaffna has lost its former Vice Chancellor. The Institution of Engineers, Sri Lanka, will be without one of its past Presidents and the Sri Lankan Geotechnical Society is robbed of its present President. Scores of professionals, friends and well wishers will feel the void left by his death for a long, long time to come. Persons like him come but rarely and it is therefore natural for him to be remembered for his exemplary qualities of head and heart.

Thurairajah was one of the fast disappearing breed of persons who could stand upright with scintillating grace wearing white robes of simplicity even before the proud and the powerful. His smile was disarming. Honours and awards came to him in plenty but hardly touched his humility.

He could be aptly described as a natural and highly gifted teacher. In fact it would be most appropriate to describe him as a superb teacher-learner. He loved his students from the core of his heart and they in turn adored him as an illuminati and a teacher par excellence.

He was perfectly balanced in views and remained as close to his colleagues as to his students, and always fought for what was just and right. In 1970s he fought with determination for getting teachers their due. On the other

hand in the 1980s when the University of Peradeniya had a student strike, he was perhaps the only one to whom students listened with respect and peace returned to the campus.

Born on 10 November, 1934 at Imayalan in Vadamarachchi, Thurairajah was schooled at Udupiddi American Mission College and Hartley College, Point Pedro. He was the President of the Old Boys Association of both these colleges at the time of his death. He was an undergraduate in engineering at the University of Ceylon from July 1953-1957 and so excelled in his studies that his educational record remains unbeaten to date. Soon after obtaining the degree, he became an instructor in Civil Engineering at the same University the post which he held for a brief period, until March 1958. He then joined the Public Works Department in Sri Lanka as a Junior Assistant Engineer, for a period of four months.

Recognising his exceptional merit Professor K.K. Roscoe, a giant in Soil Mechanics, at the University of Cambridge picked Thurairajah as his research student on a University Scholarship. His monumental work with Roscoe on shear properties of soils, carried out at Cambridge, between October 1958 and December 1961 not only earned him the Ph.D. degree from the University of Cambridge in June 1962, but gave him international recognition. A new model of simple shear apparatus designed and developed by him as a research student at Cambridge provided a springboard to many of the future researches for launching advance studies on the subject and could be justly regarded as a milestone in the history of development of geotechnical equipment.

Thurairajah had a brief spell in 1962 as Assistant Soil Engineer with Terresearch Ltd., London, prior to joining as a Lecturer at the University of Sri Lanka. Before taking over as the Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of Sri Lanka in December 1971, he spent a year as Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Waterloo in Canada. He later spent another year between October 1977 and December, 1978 as a Visiting Professor at the University of British Columbia, Canada.

Thurairajah served as the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya Campus in two spells - first from May 1975 to September 1977 and second from February 1982 to February 1985. He also served as the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering of the Open University of Sri Lanka from April 1987 to August 1988.

In September 1988, Thurairajah assumed office as Vice Chancellor of the Jaffna University, the position he resigned in March, 1994 to re-join the Open University Colombo.

The University of Jaffna will never be able to forget his yeoman service. He was the one who created the Vice Chancellor's Welfare Fund which helps about 200 needy students every year and has already benefited hundreds of students so far. He was also the one who established mechanisms of helping students who lacked parental support. The Faculty of Agriculture and the Faculty of Fisheries established in the University of Jaffna in 1990 were the outcome of his vision and effort. He has also sewn the seeds of the Faculty of Engineering of the Jaffna University and the plant, when it sprouts will be the most felicitous tribute to Thurai.

His contribution and achievements are too numerous to be recounted and because of his unassuming attitude some of these may perhaps never be known or attributed to him. The Jaffna Science Association established in 1992 was his brainchild and he was its founder President. In 1980s he created 'OOTRU' to promote upliftment of villages through the NGOs and remained as the Chairman of the Organisation until his last breath.

Thurairajah's professional excellence and research achievement remain unequalled. He was a Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences, Sri Lanka, since 1977, a Fellow of the Institution of Engineers, Sri Lanka, since 1979, and a Fellow the Institution of Civil Engineers, London, since May 1985. He was Vice President of the Institution of Engineers, Sri Lanka, from October, 1986 to September, 1989, and then its President from October 1989 to October 1990.

We all very humbly salute him and bid farewell to a thorough gentleman - indeed a noble soul and a professional of rare breed. He has no doubt gone the way of all flesh and blood, once again to underline the ultimate truth, but the rich fragrance of his good deeds will continue to stay with us. As for him, there could not have been a greater achievement than to die smiling surrounded by tearful friends and without a single enemy during his sojourn on this earth.

A pooja and meeting in memory of the late Prof. A. Thurairajah will take place at the Highgate Murugan Temple, 200A Archway Road, London N6 on 16th July 1994. (Tel: 081-348 9835). Pooja will commence at 10.00am followed by a memorial meeting and lunch. All friends, relations and well-wishers are invited.

South London Tamil School Reaches Milestone

The South London Tamil School which took its birth in Croydon on the Thai Pongal day in January 1984 with a handful of students has grown in strength and popularity to complete ten fruitful years of Tamil educational and cultural service. The school has been winning successes in GCSC Tamil and is recognised as a centre for this examination.

To mark this milestone a special action committee has been constituted and an elaborate programme of cultural events have been planned for three days in July 1994.

On the first day, Saturday 9th July between 6 and 9 p.m. at the South Norwood Centre, there will be an exhibition on the theme of Tamil Culture and displays of items produced by children, vocal and instrumental music, dance and a colourful drama SAKUNTHALAI by the school children.

On the final day, Sunday, 24th July, from 2 to 6 p.m. the venue is shifted to Ashcroft Theatre, Fairfield Halls, where special items are scheduled. An orchestra by senior students, a vocal recital by juniors (both items had won the Croydon Advertiser Award), a flute recital by a Radio Ceylon Artiste and crowned by a hilarious play 'Paavama Punniyama?' by a group of parents. This Ashcroft Theatre programme is on admission tickets at £4.00 and £2.00 (under 18).
Tel: Yogarajah, 081-654 1381.

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Padma's Vocal Arangetram



Though it was presented as the Arangetram of 11-year-old **Padmavathy Ramadoss**, in reality it was a brilliant full scale Kacheri, with a complete repertoire of composers and assisted by a full complement of professional orchestra. It was also a day of fulfilment for Smt. Sivasakthi Sivanesan who presented her first vocal music student at Arangetram, at the Bhavan Centre on Sunday 8th May last.

The effortless flow of compositions of Tyagarajar, Dikshithar, Purandaradasar, Swati Tirunal and various others and the torrential swara renderings by young Padma betoken the expert guidance of the Guru and the remarkable devotion of the pupil.

Starting with a varnam in sankarabharanam Padma went through a list of multilingual compositions with ease and perfect diction. The Tyagaraja pancharatnam in Nata stood out brilliantly in the concert and the main ragam Karaharapriya and Pallavi rendering in khanda triputa showed young Padma having a firm foundation to achieve greater heights. The full complement of pakka vadyams - Chandrasekar on the violin, Bhavani Shankar on the mridangam, R.N. Prakash on Ghatam, Muthu Sivaraja on khanjira and Chidambaranathan on morsing, made the concert lively.

Padma is gifted to be born in a family of musicians; her aunts and cousins are gifted singers, having been exposed to classical compositions and some training under Vidwan Radhakrishnan in Delhi, Padma came under the care of Sivasakthi in London. Two years of intensive training by the guru and full devotion by the pupil, a rare guru-sishya relationship,

brought about this successful Arangetram.

- S.S.S.

Dhanalakshmi Gananathalingam - an Appreciation

The death occurred in Colombo, 29 March 1994 of Dhanalakshmi (Dhana) after a long illness bravely borne. Born on 22 April 1936, she was the daughter of the late Mr. K. Ramachandra (Ceylon Government Railway) and Mrs. Ramachandra. Under the influence of her intensely devout parents and with an innate musical talent Dhana developed a strong sense of spirituality which manifested in a capacity to render vocally devotional songs that gained her fame in broadcasting and religious circles. She was closely associated with, among others, the Sri Ramakrishna Mission and the Sri Chinmayananda Society. She shared these talents and jointly performed with her younger sister Bhuvaneshwari Arunachalam.

Thanks to her parents she had the unique privilege and opportunity of being personally blessed by many saints and sages in India, to whose ashrams she accompanied her parents and sister beginning early in her life.

She bore with fortitude the vicissitudes of the ethnic conflicts in Sri Lanka which first displaced her from her parental home in Jayanthipura, Talangama and later disrupted her life in Jaffna. Despite the innumerable trials and tribulations of life in Jaffna she was immersed deeply in devotional activities. She remained a great source of strength and support to the members of her family. Her premature demise cut short a life of devotion and selfless service to her family and friends. She has left for posterity recordings of her vocal renderings that would inspire future generations.

'Of that which is born, death is certain; of that which is dead, Birth is certain.'

Sri Bhagavat Gita, 11. 27.

Chandra Mahendran.

Pararajasegaram Elected President

At the Fifth General Assembly of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness held in Berlin Dr. R. Pararajasegaram the Sri Lankan ophthalmologist was elected President for a five-year term.

Dr. Pararajasegaram is a Fellow of The Royal Colleges of Surgeons of both England and Edinburgh and also of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. He was conferred the Doctorate of Science by the University of Jaffna in 1981, in recognition of his academic and clinical work.

He is a past President of the Asia Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology and currently President of the International Society of Geographical Ophthalmology and Member of The International Council of Ophthalmology. Dr. Pararajasegaram has been associated with the work of the World Health Organization's Prevention of Blindness Programme since 1982.

Highgate Murugan Temple - Annual Festival

The Annual Festival of the Highgate Murugan Temple, London N6 will commence on 30th June '94 and continue for 15 days. Pooja times are daily from 9.00am to 12 noon and 6.45 to 9.30pm. Othuvar Kalai Mamani Muthukandasamy Desigar of Thirupanandal Kasi Madam, Tamil Nadu will deliver Pannisai from 7.30 to 8.30pm daily except on the last day - July 14th -, when Maha Sanga-bisekham in the morning and Thirukalyanam in the evening will take place. (Public Ubayam). Alankara Utsavam and procession of Deity will take place daily between 8.30 and 9.30pm. For details please contact the Administrator on 081-348 9835.

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