

# Saturday Review

## SRI LANKA

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Rs. 2

### Editorial

## Fighting the battle in their backyards

So the Mathew Plan for a "North-South dialogue" is already working admirably well, as readers can see from the Mullaitivu happenings enumerated in the adjoining columns. In our issue of March 6 (Page 12) we reproduced a report from the "Nation" which stated: "Minister Mathew has discovered the existence of over 250 Buddhist shrines in the Northern and Eastern provinces. He has been urging Buddhist associations to adopt Buddhist shrines and establish a colony around the site. Mathew's plan is to introduce a Buddhist monk and a Sinhala colony around the site for its proper maintenance..."

Mr. Siri Perera, Q.C., President of the Y.M.B.A., it is reported, has jumped to answer Minister Mathew's call; what a pity that the law of Buddha Dharma enunciated by that greatest Hindu, Gautama, should today pass on to custodians with such distinct Sinhala Buddhist names as Mathew and Perera! Perhaps Sri Lankans, both the Sinhala Buddhists and the Tamil Hindus, have become too cynical to appreciate these finer nuances of irony. But look what religious inspiration can do to people! The Army at Mullaitivu has been seized with a high religious fervour! The Tile factory at Oddichuddan has forgotten the tiles and taken to religious activity!

It is good for the Hindus in this country to realise, particularly on the eve of a World Hindu Conference to be held under Government sponsorship, that not since Portuguese occupation four centuries ago, has Hinduism received such blow after blow as during the past 34 years of 'Independence' and particularly during the past five years.

The first blow fell deep south, in Hinduism's oldest and most venerated shrine at Kataragama. Under the guise of making 'sacred' an area which was already sacred to the Hindus, the Ramakrishna Mission house was forced to close down. The up-shot of the whole thing is that Kataragama has **NOW** ceased to be sacred; it has become a picnic spot to many, and Hindus have been deprived of even the sense of belonging there. In 1958 the priest of the Panadura Sivan Temple was burnt alive. In August/September 1977 no less than 50 Hindu temples in all parts of the island, from places as far remote as Anuradhapura, Matara, Maho, Warakapola, Kegalle, Katugastota, Ukkuwela, Galgamuwa and Peradeniya were attacked. At the fifty year old Sithivinayagar Temple at Katugastota, a Ganesha image was thrown out on the road and youths kicked it and spat on it.

It is hard to imagine in this country, even given this periodic proneness to violence, a Christian Church or an Islamic Mosque being attacked. Why? Perhaps even mobs have a way of reasoning.

The question is for the Hindus to ask themselves. Every time an attack comes in the front they have an unfortunate tendency to stage a mock battle in their own backyards. And when the attack comes, as in Mullaitivu where their identity and self-respect as a Tamil and as a Hindu are both imperilled—one can be sure that peninsular Hindus in retirement (both in forced retirement and otherwise) who talk of Tamil and Saivism in the same breath will be the last to lift a finger either for Tamil or for Saivism!

# Anti - Tamil, anti - Hindu offensive in Mullaitivu

Kurunthan Malai, a quiet peaceful spot in Tamil-populated Mullaitivu with ruins of both Hindu and Buddhist places of worship, will soon house an exclusive Buddhist vihare and temple and a Sinhala settlement, according to plans drawn up by officials working under the Ministry of Industries and Scientific Affairs. Army personnel, an ex-Director of a Public Corporation under the Ministry who was also a leading member of the UNP Trade Union—the Jathika Sevaka Sangamaya—several Ceramics Corporation vehicles, and employees of the government Tile factory of Oddichuddan 20 miles away—have all been enlisted in the implementation of this project.

Hindu statues found in the site have been taken away in Army vehicles, according to the local villagers, as far back as November last year. Kurunthan Malai situated in the Nagancholai Forest Reserve has long been held in veneration by the Vanni Tamils as the dwelling place of the guardian deity, Kurundoor Aiyandar. The building of a Buddhist vihare at the site began several months ago, and some employees of the Tile factory have been engaged in this, with orders apparently to do it unobtrusively without attracting public attention to the building activity.

Following this, some local inhabitants had put up a hut and installed a "Choolam" (trident) on the spot, but Army personnel from the Mullaitivu camp had demolished the hut, thrown away the "Choolam", chased away some of the Tamil families in the area and had taken away some of the youths in the area for questioning.

Since then, a new road has been built through the Nagancholai Forest Reserve, to facilitate accessibility to this site from Oddichuddan. Three major consequences flow from this move, quite apparently initiated by the Ministry of Industries:

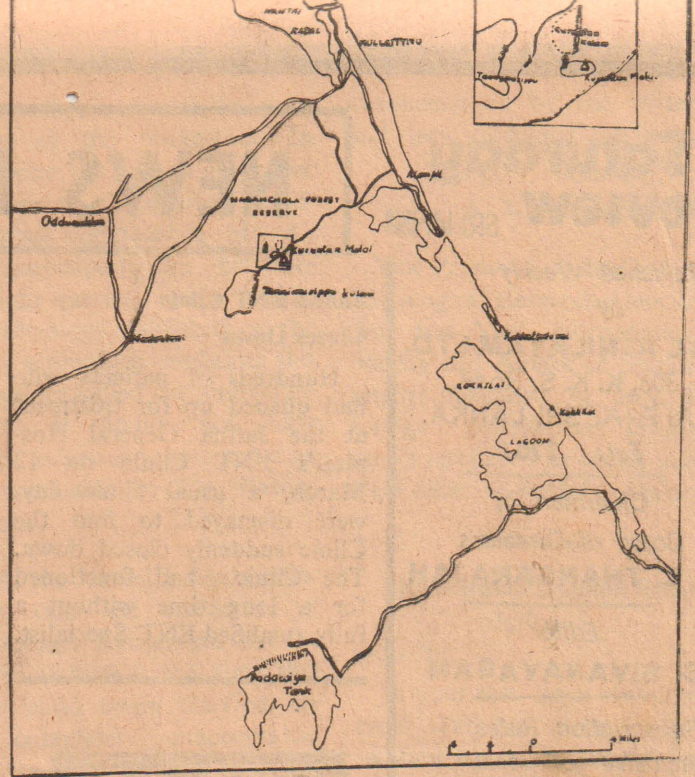
(1) Archaeological sites are being damaged irrevocably, preventing any genuine archaeological research on them in the future; (2) Tamils who have lived in the area for generations are being displaced by new Sinhala colonists; (3) Hindu religious sites are being furtively desecrated thus preventing identification of such sites in the future.

But what seems to be the most vicious attempt — an attempt which might well succeed in the present political circumstances — is a grand strategy to destroy the CONTIGUITY OF TAMIL POPULATIONS of the Mul-

laitivu, Vavuniya and the Trincomalee districts.

The Padaviya Sinhala colonies are expanding eastwards in an attempt to connect up with the Kokkilai Lagoon area. It is believed that with the pressures from the Mullaitivu Army camp on the north-east, the Tile factory of the Ministry of Industries at Oddichuddan on the North-west — two powerful repositories of State power — a spill-over from the Padaviya settlements is bound to occur, as it has been in other instances in the past. When that happens, the Tamils in three districts will be effectively cut off from each other, thereby not only losing a slice of their traditional homeland but weakened to a position where they cannot withstand further incursions in times to come.

In the Nagancholai Forest Reserve which is still an exclusive Tamil settlement area, there are about sixty tanks which have fallen into disuse. This indicates that there once had been a prosperous hydraulic civilisation in that region. Nothing has been done to retrieve the tanks from total destruction and restore the agricultural potential of the area.



# Saturday Review

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### Jaffna ENT Clinic Closes Down

Hundreds of patients who had queued up for treatment at the Jaffna General Hospital's ENT Clinic on 12 March, a usual clinic day, were dismayed to find the Clinic suddenly closed down. The Clinic had functioned for a long time without a fully qualified ENT Specialist.

### Appointment Letters In Sinhala Only

The Dept. of Health has sent out letters of appointment in Sinhala only to those selected to follow a course in Nursing at the Nurses Training School, Jaffna. Classes began on 15 March.

### 'Produce or release Vimalarajah'

The Students Council of the University of Jaffna has appealed to President Jayawardene to see that Apulingam Vimalarajah, a final year Jaffna University student who has been detained for nearly a year in the Panagoda Army Camp, is either produced in court and charged or released without any further delay.

### Army Search Causes Panic in Nallur

A youth distributing pamphlets vaulted over a fence and escaped, with army personnel hot on his heels, on the evening of 11 March at Nallur. Firing into the air, the servicemen then began a fruitless house to house

search in the area. This caused a lot of panic in Nallur — which spread to the Jaffna Bus-stand.

### Palmyra Sugar Sweetens Minister's Cup of Tea

Palmyra sugar produced at the Palmyra Sugar Factory, Sarasalai, (Chavakachcheri electorate) sweetened the cup of tea served to Minister Gamini Dissanayake at the Jaffna Secretariat while the DAC meeting was going on. The Minister remarked he couldn't tell the difference between palmyra and cane sugar. The Factory, run by the Chavakachcheri Palm Products Society, was put up at a cost of Rs. 1½ lakhs.

### Vipulananda College of Fine Arts

Regional Development and Hindu Affairs Minister C. Rajadurai will ceremonially lay the foundation stone for the Swami Vipulananda College of Fine Arts, Batticaloa, on 26 March. The highlights of the programme will be songs by 'Seerkali' S. Govindarajan and a dance recital by 'Vennira Aadai' Nirmala. Till the building — to be put up at a cost of Rs. 4 million — is completed, the College will function temporarily at the Ramakrishna Mission, Batticaloa.

### TULF Wants Hindu meet in Trinco

The TULF Parliamentary Group has informed Minister for Hindu Affairs, C. Rajadurai, that it will fully support the World Hindu Conference if it is held in Trincomalee instead of Colombo.

### Wells Dry Up In Drought-hit Mannar

The prolonged drought in Mannar, Mantai and Thiruketheeswaram has dried up all the wells and ponds in the area, leaving the people without drinking water. The G.A. Mannar, D. Vamadevan, has made arrangements for bowsers to supply drinking water to the people.

### Premier To Open Model Village

Premier R. Premadasa will ceremonially open the 'Vasanthapuram' Model Village in Illavalai (KKS electorate) in early June.

### One Million Set Apart For Thikkam Distillery

The Jaffna District Development Council has set apart Rs. 1 million from the decentralised budget to set up a palmyra arrack distillery at Thikkam (Udupiddy electorate). The distillery is expected to start production next year.

### Solar Energy For the Home

The Ceylon Electricity Board gave a demonstration of how solar energy can be used both for domestic purposes and to operate TV and radio sets, at the 'Technology for Development' Exhibition at Jaffna College, Vaddukoddai. The Exhibition closes today (20 March). Some of the other highlights were an exhibition of books from the International Bookship Logos and a Soviet Book Exhibition.

### Transport Minister for Lottery Draw

Transport Minister M. H. Mohammed will be the Chief Guest at the Bus Ticket Lottery Draw — organised by the Northern Region Transport Board — to be held at the Open Air Theatre, Jaffna, on 21 March.

### Helmetless Riders Fined On the Spot

The Jaffna Traffic Police who carried out a surprise check in the town, especially opposite the Public Library, on 11 March, nabbed several helmetless motor cycle and scooter riders, along with their pillion riders. They were each fined Rs. 25/- on the spot.

### President's Confession

"The rights we have granted estate workers are not adequate" confessed President J. R. Jayewardene when he addressed the 27th Annual Conference of the Ceylon Workers Congress at Nuwara Eliya. He added that the Government was planning to give them more rights.



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## Deaths

**NADARAJAH—S. A.** (Retired Office assistant, Small Industries) husband of Rasamayaki, father of Dr. Jasintha (Kalubowila Hospital), Vasantha, Jayantha, father-in-law of Chandra Kumar (Nigeria), expired on 13-3-82. 91, Nachchimar Kovil Road, Jaffna. Cremated on 15-3-82, at Kombayanmanal, Jaffna.

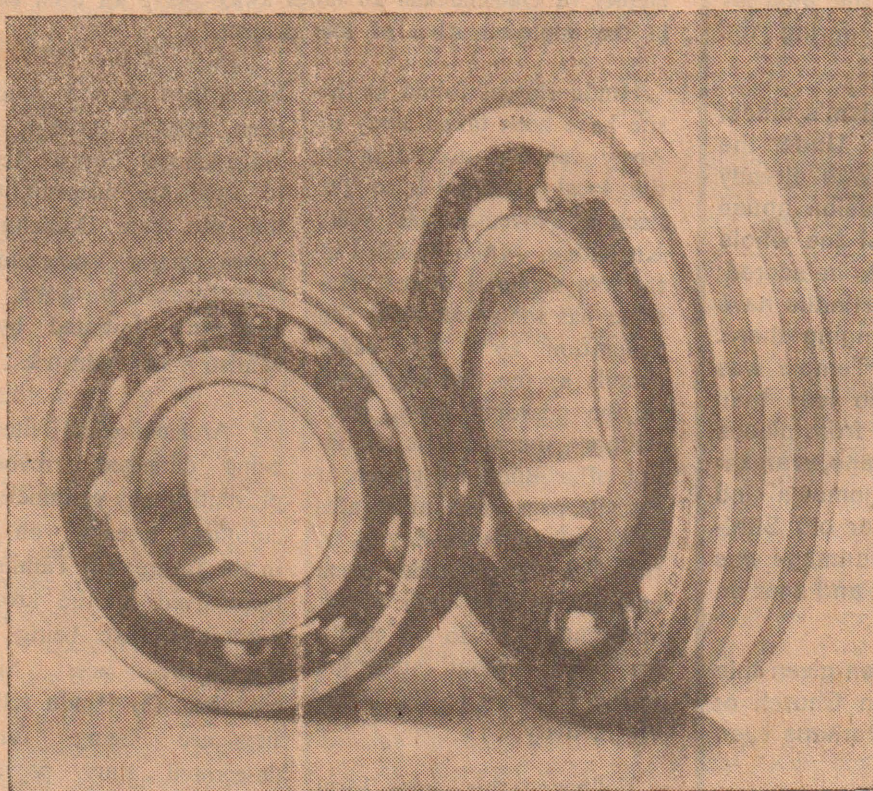
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# T. U. L. F. M. P. accuses U. S. of backing Israel's "international banditry"

"The recent decision of Israel's Parliament to annex the illegally and immorally occupied Syrian lands on the Golan Heights is a gross violation of the U.N. Charter and cannot be described as anything but international "banditry" said Mr. V. Dharmalingam, T. U. L. F., M. P. for Uduvil at a public meeting organised by the Afro-Asian Solidarity Association of Sri Lanka held at the Moors Islamic Cultural Home, Bristol Street, Colombo 1. on Monday, March 15th.

The meeting was held to demand the vacation of aggression by Israel against the Arab countries with particular reference to the annexation of the Golan Heights and raids on Lebanon and the Palestinians. Mr. Dharmalingam said that Israel was at present preparing an attack against South Lebanon in a determined effort to annihilate the Liberation Forces of Palestine. These acts of aggression, he said, are serious threats to peace and security in the Middle East and the rest of the world, and have shocked the conscience of the world, but Zionism and imperialism are not moved by the violation

of Human Rights and the suffering of people.

Israel is not interested in Peace, it is not interested in carrying out its obligations to the U.N. Charter nor can it be bound by the U.N. Resolutions as long as it has a powerful ally in the U.S.A.

It is the U.S. that has consolidated the Zionist Regime politically, economically, and militarily since the Zionist State was planted in the heart of the Arab Nation. It is the U.S. that provides Israel with the Finance to establish settlements. It is the U.S. that supplies Israel with Arms to defend these settlements and to commit daily Acts of Aggression against the Arab People.

Every year U.S.A. pumps into the Israeli economy more than 2 billion Dollars. In the U.N., U. S. is always behind Israel to nullify any decision taken against Israel. Recently when the U. N. Security Council in order to restrain Israel and compel it to recind the annexation of Golan Heights adopted a Resolution demanding Sanctions against Israel by the requisite 9 Votes, the U.S. nullified the Resolution by the use of veto.

## The Chelvanayakam Memorial lecture 1982

Prof. S. Arasaratnam, Head of the Department of History, University of New England, Australia will deliver the Chelvanayagam Memorial Lecture 1982 at the Robert William Hall, St. John's College, Jaffna on 27th and 29th March, at 6 p. m. each day.

The theme of Prof. Arasaratnam's lectures — to be delivered under the auspices of the Thanthai Chelva Memorial Trust — is "The Historical Foundation of the Economy of the Tamils of North Ceylon."

The first lecture on Saturday, 27th March will be on "The Economy in the 17th-18th centuries. Prof K. Indrapala, Head of the Dept.,

of Fine Arts, University of Jaffna, will take the chair.

The second lecture on Monday 29th March chaired by Prof. B. E. St. J. Bastiampillai, Dean, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo will deal with "The Economy in the 19th — 20th centuries"

The following publications of the Thanthai Chelva Memorial Trust will be on sale at Robert William Hall on both days. Dr. R. R. Divakar 1978 Chelva Memorial Lecture (Rs. 2-00); Fr. Xavier Thaninayagam's (Chelva Memorial Lecture (Rs. 5-00); Dr. A. J. Wilson's 1981 Chelva Memorial Lecture (Rs. 2-00); Homage to the Thanthai (Rs. 2-00)

# Political Causerie

## A Cabinet re-shuffle

### before April?

The opposition Sinhala newspapers are confidently "announcing" a Cabinet reshuffle before the end of March, as a prelude to the opening of the new Parliament building (on April 23, says the "Aththa")

One change forecast is the re-appointment of Mr. Anandatissa de Alwis as the Speaker. Some say that this will be done to satisfy or pacify the sentiments of Sinhalese Buddhists who want one of their kind to preside over an institution sited in their ancient capital!

The Ministry of State according to these predictions, will be managed by a council of five members under the direction of the President.

Now that the Chairman of the Building Materials Corporation has been "exposed", what next? Resignation or removal of the Chairman? A defence by the Prime Minister (under whom the B.M.C. functions) if this is possible? Attempt to carry on regardless? Or lace the B.M.C. under the President's wing?

If the last option is exercised, it would amount to a vote of no-confidence in the Prime Minister. Will the President take such a step in 1982, which he has designated "Election Year"

Those who believe that the extreme step would be taken cite the fact that Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike resorted to such a manoeuvre when he wanted to get Mr. Philip Gunawardena out of the Government.

One question that has so far not been asked in the open is: Why pick only on the B.M.C.? There are several other corporations facing liquidity and other problems due to mismanagement, waste and corruption.

Is the answer as obvious as many people within and outside the UNP seem to think?

## The Media Scene

In the absence of an independent body in Sri Lanka to audit newspaper sales, it is extremely difficult to obtain reliable statistics about circulations.

Most publishers, with a big eye on advertising possibilities, tend give bloated figures which in

## How many readers?

some instances are several times the actual sales!

Some newspapers attempt to hide their low sales by claiming to have the "largest readership"—implying that each copy is read by a number of people. Some others expand the word "circulation" to mean the same thing, that is, that each copy passed through a number of hands, like money.

Their publishers conveniently ignore or forget the

fact that this happens with every newspaper.

One newly-started newspaper really takes the cake where claims about its popularity are concerned. "The English newspaper with the largest circulation in Sri Lanka" it says, mentioning to inquirers a figure which is equivalent to the combined daily sales of the "Daily News" (started in 1909) and the "Sun" (started in 1961).

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CABLES: "LALITHAS"

# President's 'Swadeshi' appeal is 4 years too late!

by our Economic Correspondent

President Jayawardene's appeal to the people to buy "swadeshi" goods in preference to imported goods has come too late; four years too late, to be exact.

It should have made with the liberalisation of imports instituted in January 1978. Then at least some people would have given ear to it and been patriotic enough to shun imported goods.

Instead, Government leaders spoke deprecatingly at the time of "shoddy" and "sub-standard" local manufactures. These speeches created a psychological climate which favoured the rush for imports.

The unrestricted imports, even some members of the Government now admit, have wrought havoc on domestic agriculture and industry. Industrial production has suffered the most so much so that some industrialists have found it more profitable to close their factories and go into the import business. The "import boom" is now virtually over because there is not enough foreign currency to maintain the same tempo as between 1978 and 1980.

## LIQUIDITY PROBLEMS

Most importers themselves are now in trouble because their goods are not moving as fast as before. Some importers, in fact, are facing severe liquidity problems, with the banks refusing any more loans and insisting on the repayment of earlier loans.

The tragedy is that so much foreign currency was frittered away on so many items which can easily be recognised as "non-essential" or "luxuries" from the standpoint of a developing country like Sri Lanka.

The tragi-comedy, if I may call it that was that there were Government leaders who stoutly defended the unrestricted imports, in effect the subsidisation of foreign producers at the expense of local producers. One of them was the Minister of Trade Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali.

I remember the SLFP MP for Attanagalla, Mr. Lakshman Jayakoddy, asking a question in Parliament last year about "luxury imports". He said he believed the Central Bank Report for 1980 had put the figure at 10 per cent. Up jumped Mr. Athulathmudali to say there was no such reference anywhere in the Report.

The Minister was correct. The figure had been mentioned by the Bank's senior Deputy Governor, Dr. H. N.

S. Karunatilake at a seminar on the "Credit Squeeze".

Here is what he said, according to a press report of June 3, 1981: "...Speaking on the import of non-essential goods, he said 10 per cent of the total import bill went on such items. Although this percentage sounded small, 10 per cent of the total import bill came to Rs. 3.5 billion. This sum could finance two Maduru Oya projects. How much more milk food or textiles could be

imported with this money? It has to be admitted that our pattern of imports has not been entirely satisfactory. In Sri Lanka today, one can find a range and variety of goods not found even in Singapore or Europe, he added...."

My own reckoning is that the figure is well over 25 per cent. A big chunk of foreign currency, much of it borrowed, has gone, and is going, on "conspicuous consumption."

In this connection, it is worth quoting another of the Government's advisers, comments from whom were quoted in the last two issues of "Saturday Review." Before doing so,

I might as well reveal the identity of the man, because numerous readers have wanted to know the name. He is none other than Mr. Esmond Wickremesinghe one time boss of Lake House.

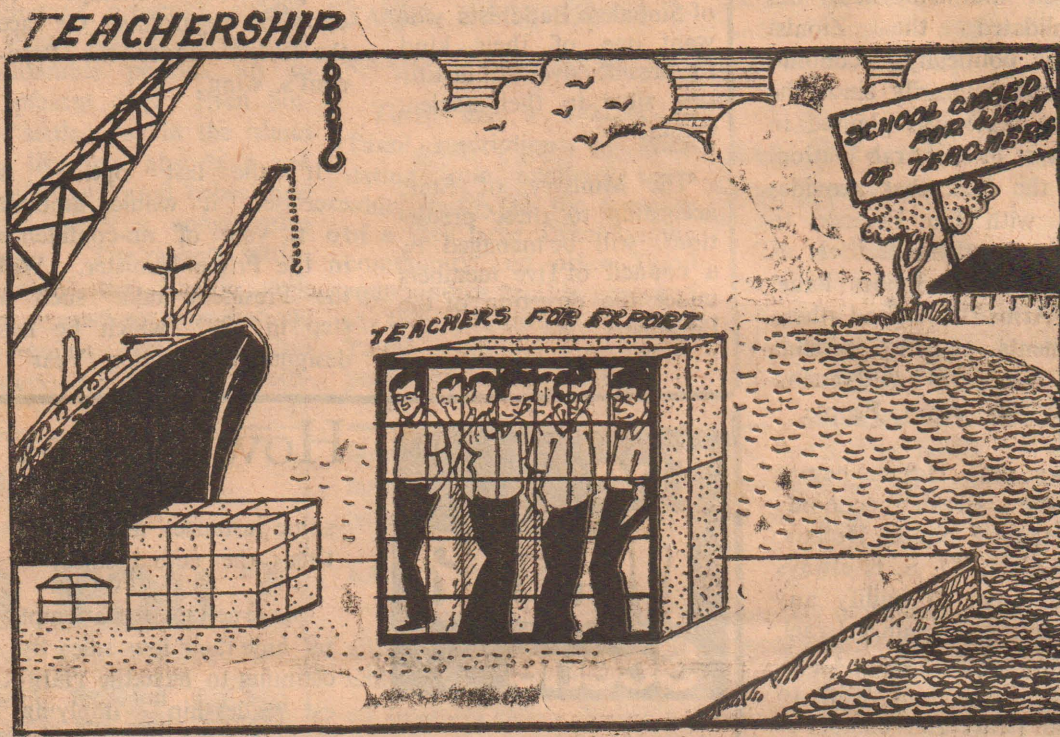
In his document from which excerpts were quoted earlier, he has said on the question of liberalisation: "The experience of South Korea should be our model in that it protected and fostered its domestic agricultural and industrial sectors, gearing them to full production for domestic use and simultaneously for export—a strategy which enabled it to let the domestic market carry all the overheads and enabled exporters to undercut its exports virtually from all foreign competition,

## SINGAPORE'S EXPERIENCE

The experience of Singapore was different. It depended solely on its exports as its domestic market was negligible. It deliberately went neo-colonial and allowed foreign manufactures to run its economy. But Singapore also abandoned free elections when it started this new economic policy. We cannot do that!"

It is indeed rather too late to raise the "Swadeshi" cry (originally raised by Mr. Jayawardene in 1940 after his visit to India to attend the sessions of the All India Congress).

We now have enough imported goods to last another generation. In the case of flashlights (or torchlights), there are enough—judging by the spillovers from the shops to the pavements and despite the smuggling to India—to light our way to 2001 A. D.



## Kandy drought leaves estate labourers starving

(From our Kandy correspondent)

1982 is reported to be only the second year in this century in which Kandy and other plantation areas have experienced such prolonged drought, as the present one uninterrupted by any rainfall—not even divine or Thai induced—for a period of almost three months. The hills are literally burning and the plantation workers, the victims of last year's riots, are now starving.

Drought has compelled the Estate Managements to deny work and throw out workers who call on the estates daily for work. Denied of work they are deprived of the daily wages—their only means to livelihood. Neither the management nor the government has so far taken any steps to ensure

minimum wages to these workers, or distribute food or ration among the starving workmen. If the situation continues, there will be, before long deaths in the estates, due to starvation.

Voluntary organisations working among the plantation workers, have started relief work by distributing free food, viz., rice, dhal etc. Appeals have been made to other organisations to render assistance to the relief work. They have also addressed a letter to the President of the Republic, who is also the Minister in charge of the Plantation Industries, to direct the estate managements to take meaningful steps to alleviate the misery of the drought victims.

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**INTRODUCTION TO SRI LANKA**

Sri Lanka (formerly known as Ceylon) is a large Island (65,609 square kilometers) situated 29 miles off the southern tip of India. The ethnic composition of its population of 14 million is 72% Sinhalese, 20.5% Tamil, (Ceylon and Indian), 7% Moors (Muslims), 0.5% Burghers (descendants of the Dutch and Portuguese) and others.

The official language of Sri Lanka is Sinhala with Sinhala and Tamil having equal status as national languages. English is widely spoken. The official religion is Buddhism, the religion of the majority of the Sinhalese population. The Tamils are predominantly Hindu, although a substantial minority of the Tamil speaking population are Muslims and Christians.

**STATE OF EMERGENCY**

Sri Lanka obtained its independence from Great Britain in 1948. Prior to British occupation in 1796 it had been colonized by the Portuguese and Dutch. It is a unitary democratic republic with a mixed presidential — parliamentary political system. Universal adult franchise was introduced in Sri Lanka as early as 1931 and since independence the country has held election every six or seven years. Two major political parties, the United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lankan Freedom Party (SLFP) have governed the country alternately since independence. Both these parties are predominantly Sinhalese. The SLFP, in coalition during part of the time with two Marxist parties, was in power from 1970 to 1977. The country was governed under a state of emergency for much of this period, following a major insurrection in 1971. Many civil liberties were severely curtailed. The coalition government adopted a policy of land redistribution and economic self-sufficiency. The defeat of the SLFP in 1977 has been widely attributed to economic difficulties, inefficiency and corruption.

**PLEGGED CIVIL LIBERTIES**

The UNP came into power in 1977 with a strong market economy orientation, an open door for foreign investment and imports and strong encouragement of tourism. It also pledged to restore civil liberties neglected by the preceding regime. J. R. Jeyawardene, the UNP leader, is President of the country. At the present writing, the UNP has more than a 2/3 parliamentary majority. The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) has become the opposition party in parliament with only 17 seats. The UNP has 139 seats. The next election is scheduled for 1983.

# The I.C.J. Report (I)

Although Sri Lanka has a very low per capita income it has a high level of literacy and education, low infant mortality rates and relatively high average life expectancy. Like many other developing countries, however, it has major problems of poverty and unemployment. Many skilled laborers and professional persons have emigrated. Its economy has traditionally been agricultural with an emphasis on tea, rubber and coconuts. An attractive country with beautiful beaches, diversified scenery, ruins of ancient cities, and friendly people, it has become a popular tourist area for Europeans.

**RECENT EVENTS : BACKGROUND TO THE ICJ MISSION**

On August 17, 1981, the government of Sri Lanka declared a state of emergency in order to control an outbreak of violence directed against the minority Tamil community. This state of emergency was the second declared within three months; the communal violence was the third major attack against Tamils since independence in 1948 and the second since the election of the present government in 1977.

apparently in reaction to the killing of the policemen, went on a rampage in the Tamil City of Jaffna burning the market area, the home of a member of Parliament, the TULF party headquarters and the Public Library containing 95,000 volumes.

In July a police station in Anacottai in the Tamil area was attacked, two policemen were killed and many firearms stolen. The attack was again attributed by government sources to a terrorist group of Tamil youths. Also in July, in an unusual, nearly unheard of, parliamentary procedure, members of the UNP, the parliamentary majority party (composed predominantly of Sinhalese), approved a motion of no confidence in the leader of the opposition political party, Mr. A. Amirthalingam of the Tamil United Liberation Front. The vote was preceded by verbal attacks by majority party members against the Tamil leader for criticizing the government abroad for its handling of the Tamil question.

At the end of July, the Court of Appeal in Colombo in a widely publicized and emotionally charged proce-

related to its adoption and application. The ICJ observer was in Sri Lanka from July 12 to August 2 and from August 18 to 23, a total period of four weeks, and was thus present during the attack on the police station in Anacottai, the vote of no-confidence against the opposition Tamil leader, the habeas corpus hearing in the Court of appeal and the period of the state of emergency immediately following the communal violence.

During the mission in Sri Lanka, the undersigned interviewed government officials, opposition party members, lawyers, professors sociologists, trade union officials, journalists, and members of human rights organizations. The Ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs were informed of the ICJ study and were helpful in making known the government's point of view concerning the current crisis in Sri Lanka. The observer attended several sessions of the habeas corpus proceedings, met the President of the Court of Appeal, the attorneys for the petitioners and the Deputy General representing the government. She also interviewed families of detainees held under the Terrorism Act, visited areas of Jaffna which had been burned in June and interviewed residents of Jaffna.

Sri Lanka is a country in which citizens—even those in opposition to the government — appeared to feel free to express their opinions. Individuals interviewed did not request anonymity or lack of attribution and

government officials were uniformly courteous. In addition to information obtained through interviews, the observer was also able to obtain extensive written material on historical aspects of the racial situation, recent racial incidents and the situation of human rights in general. There appears to be no systematic censorship of the press or the mails; however, all of the major English language newspapers except one and radio and television are government controlled. The privately owned English language newspaper carried in full the Amnesty International report concerning the recent incommunicado detention of Tamil Youths.

**INSURANCE AGAINST LIBEL**

A number of allegations were heard, however, of selective reporting which exacerbated racial tension including by the privately owned English language paper. Concern was also expressed over a proposed bill which would provide that every newspaper make a deposit with the Insurance Corporation in order to meet any claim for damages that might result from being found guilty in a libel action, the amount of deposit to be determined by the Cabinet. Concern was expressed that the deposit might be so large as to put small newspapers with limited financial resources out of circulation.

Other recent human rights issues in Sri Lanka which have caused concern are the

(Continued on page 8)

## Ethnic Conflict and Violence in Sri Lanka : Report of a mission to Sri Lanka July - August 1981

The August violence followed several months of increasing tension between the two major ethnic groups. In April 1981, a number of Tamil youths were apprehended and detained by security forces under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. At least 27 youths were held incommunicado without access to lawyers or family members. The arrests followed a bank robbery in which two policemen were killed, attributed to an extremist group called the Tamil Liberation Tigers.

In early June, local elections for District Development Council members took place throughout the country. In the north of the country in the overwhelmingly Tamil area the elections were held during a state of emergency and in an atmosphere of violence. During the campaign, a candidate and two police officers were killed. Police and security forces,

edging, began hearing petitions for writs of habeas corpus for four of the 27 Tamil youth detained incommunicado by the Army since April under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The immediate occasion for undertaking the International Commission of Jurists' mission was the continued incommunicado detention of Tamil youths, but the events described above formed the backdrop of ICJ concern about the state of human rights in Sri Lanka and are intimately related to the application of the Terrorism Act.

**PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF MISSION: SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

In July, 1981, the ICJ requested the author of the present report, then on a private visit to Sri Lanka, to undertake a study of the human rights aspects of the Terrorism Act and events

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## From the pages of Hansard - 50 YEARS AGO

### Debates in the Legislative Council of Ceylon - Thursday

November 8, 1928

(Sir P. Ramanathan's speech continued from last week)

They cannot whilst serving or after serving sit by their masters' side because they happen to have the suffrage. That would not do. Notwithstanding these theoretical principles there are no equal rights. There are some persons who get blessings of all kinds and some who get quite the reverse. There are the different, varied conditions of life. I can understand every subject in a kingdom or a republic being entitled to be free from the bondage of tyrannical rule. That is quite clear. Then, American independence having been declared the principle was copied in France where there was, as we know, the French revolution which resulted in the overthrow of the monarchy. There also arose another trouble in France. When I went to that country thirty or forty years ago I found scribbled on the walls where scribbling could take place "Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality". But nevertheless I saw there was no equality or fraternity. That was a great misconception. Men are born unequally, they have to live on unequal terms, and they have to die in unequal terms. But as regards oppression on the part of the rulers there must be some limitation, and therefore it is wisely ordained that people must have some freedom. If we remember those nations it is impossible for us to accept this doctrine proposed in the report of the Donoughmore Commission. They seem to have written without knowing or without reference to the actual conditions of life prevailing in this country. Wrong opinions and wrong principles have been thrust into our country and there is wild confusion in the minds of the people. I am really sorry to find this trend of circumstances; and it may be that we shall presently have in Ceylon all those troubles which are implicating the whole of Europe. Rotten notions and revolutionary ideas prevailing in Europe and elsewhere are to be foisted on us because men who pose as leaders of political thought say that those notions and ideas are the best for this country. They say that these are safe principles; but they know they are the most unsafe principles. These men who pose as leaders are keen on insisting upon others to practise these principles. I do not think the Legislative Council consisting of the

leading men in this country should accept those wrong principles and wrong opinions prevailing in other countries. I think, Sir, I have spoken enough, and as I told you, I want to have a quiet talk with my colleagues in this Council and those outside; and if these statements of mine are thought over we shall be able to resist the troubles that are likely to come to us in the future and destroy the pleasant relationships that have continued for a long, long time.

The Hon. Mr. D. S. SENANAYAKE:—Sir, it is my intention to confine my remarks to the resolutions before the House to-day. I would beg Honourable Members to forget some of the philosophy that has just been preached and to think more of the subject with which we are concerned. The question before us is of great importance. It would be well for us not to be influenced by any prejudice and to consider the question very carefully in the interests of all concerned. I can say that there is not a single recommendation put forward by the Donoughmore Commission that is received with greater alarm than the recommendation for the extension of the franchise to those not domiciled in Ceylon. Judging from the speeches delivered here it is quite apparent that the position the Sinhalese have adopted has been greatly misunderstood, and in consequence a great deal of mud has been thrown at them. I feel sorry that even responsible Members of Council should have tried to bring about ill-feeling between the different communities. But at the same time I do not blame them. I realize that most of them have been shocked by the Commissioners' recommendation for the abolition of communal representation. Those Members who have spoken here and who did not desire differentiation have not been very consistent. If they are against differentiation why, I ask, should they be here as communal representatives? We know, Sir, that all other communities enjoy a privilege that is not enjoyed by the Sinhalese, and, that is, the right of the plural vote. It is as a result of differentiation in favour of these communities that communal members are here. If the latter are against that principle they should not have taken advantage of it and come here at all. I feel surprised that the high and I

# the First FRANCHISE debate

priest of non-differentiation spoke in the tone he did. I refer to the Third Muslim Member who said that there should not be differentiation between the Indians and the Ceylonese. When I was listening to him I really thought that he was convinced of what he was saying. But when I read through the Agenda Paper I found that he had given notice of a motion in these terms:



D. S. SENANAYAKE

## What Ceylon's First P.M. (1948) said in 1928

"That in the opinion of this Council provision should be made for the adequate representation of the Muslim and other recognized minority communities in the reformed Council either by the reservation of elected seats or by some other arrangement such as will ensure the election of members of such communities".

He wants differentiation in favour of minorities, but at the same time he says that there should be no differentiation.

Another Honourable Member, the European Urban Member, said that Indians are British subjects and that, therefore, they should have equal rights in Ceylon. At the same time I remember the Honourable the Commercial Member saying that the argument put forward by those who are against differentiation was not consistent, and I presume, therefore,

that he thinks that those arguments should not be considered. When my honourable friend the European Urban Member says that in the case of the Indian immigrants being British subjects there should be no differentiation in regard to them, I would ask him to remember, when he speaks as an Englishman and as a representative of his community, the creed preached by Englishmen in some of the British Colonies. We know that in Kenya they have resorted to differentiation. There they say that the Indians, who are British subjects, should not have the vote or equal rights because the interests of the natives must be safeguarded. But the Englishmen here say that the Indians should have the vote because they are British subjects. Well, then what would happen to the interests of the natives here?

I must say that I am rather pleased to see the alliance between, the Honourable the Second Indian Member and

the Honourable the European Urban Member.

The Hon. Mr. V. S. de S. WIKRAMANAYAKE:—Extremes sometimes meet.

The Hon. Mr. D. S. SENANAYAKE:—I hope, Sir, that alliance will continue long and that they will remain in the same camp if not to scratch their faces at least to scratch their backs.

Unfortunately these alliances have been formed more against an unfortunate community like the Sinhalese. I say an unfortunate community because the Sinhalese have been misunderstood and even their generosity forgotten. I do not think that there is any other people in the world like the Sinhalese who have consented to penalize themselves in order to give privileges to others. We have all this time consented to allow the other communities to have the plural vote. I believe my friend the Com-

mercial Member has even three votes, one in the territorial electorate and two in the commercial electorate. They have all this differentiation and all these privileges, and now when we say that we want only people domiciled in this country to have the vote, they say we are a sordid people and all others must combine against us. With regard to this differentiation itself I must say that it was not started by us at all. I say that we do not ask for any differentiation.

Before I come to the position we are taking I should like to point out that differentiation against Indians was first made by the Imperial Government by refusing to the Indians admission to the Ceylon Civil Service. We did not acquiesce in it. It was done by Imperial Government—not at our request, nor for the benefit of the people in India. It was recognized that 50 per cent of the officers could come from outside and they wanted to confine those posts to Englishmen. I do not say it is wrong; nor do I say it is right. I do not desire to express an opinion on the point, but I want to show that there was differentiation in favour of Englishmen made by the Imperial Government without our having a part in it. I think it was in the interests of the Englishmen. Even if we say that we want differentiation for the benefit of the people of the country according to the same method adopted in the interests of Englishmen, I say we are justified. Now let us see, for instance, what the Indian Government themselves did. The Indian Government wanted differentiation; they refused to allow persons to come here unless there was special legislation granting protection to the Indian cooly. They even went to the extent of sending an Indian agent here. They did not consider that Ceylon was part of the British Empire and that the Indians would be as safe in Ceylon as elsewhere in the Empire. The Indian Government did not want to dissociate themselves from their people who came out here. They wanted to protect them as Indians.

(To be continued next week)



**Foreign View**

# U. S. Ambassador discussed Trinco with T.U.L.F. leaders

by **S. Parthasarathy**  
of the 'Hindu'

Sri Lanka revisited — Part II

Just 11 years after the 1971 insurrection, the Jatika Vimukti Peramuna of Rohana Wijeweera, the bearded firebrand who led Sri Lanka's only attempt at an armed uprising, has burst on the country's political landscape with uncharacteristically restrained postures.

President Jayawardene has issued an appeal to the people to deny support to this group at the polls. Observers read this appeal between the lines and interpret it as a hint of early elections to Parliament which are due only in 1983. Does the ruling United National Party have any advantage in going to the polls now rather than next year?

The answer to this question comes from Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, leading light in the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (Maithripala group). According to him, dissensions are surfacing within the UNP and a shrewd politician like Mr. Jayawardene would like to go to the polls when the going is good. The President might be thinking that it is in the interests of the UNP to have elections before the crack developing within it widens.

**Differences**

It was difficult to know the truth, though it is obvious there are differences among the heavyweights in the ruling party, for instance, between the President and the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister, Mr. Premadasa who underwent surgery in the U.S. was convalescing in Singapore when the Indian President was touring the country. He has since returned home. But talking to top UNP leaders, including the Finance Minister, Mr. Ronnie de Mel, one got the impression that the ruling party was not diffident about an electoral triumph, no matter when they were held.

**Warring factions**

The SLFP's two warring factions—the Mrs. Bandaranaike's group and the Maithripala group — are breathing fire at each other in public though peace moves between Mrs. Bandaranaike and her son, Mr. Anura, have been initiated in private. The son has spoken of the need to

remove the civic disqualifications clamped on his mother by the Parliament at the instance of the UNP government.

When his party — SLFP (M) — comes to power either on its own or as part of an alliance of left parties, the first act of the new government would be to remove Mrs. Bandaranaike's shackles. It was not possible to infer from this whether this signified a reconciliation between son and mother or this was a move to cash in on the popularity of Mrs. Bandaranaike.

Several guesses are hazarded, about the outcome of the next poll. Some knowledgeable observers believe that no party will be returned in significant strength this time and the Government would necessarily have to be a coalition. But Mr. Jayawardene has said that whichever Government is in office in 1983 he will still be the Executive President and will not allow any drastic changes in present policies. There are people who speculate that in that event he may even dismiss the coalition government and take steps for the installation of a government which would not come in his way.

The Trotskyite Lanka Sama Samaja Party is trying to bring the two warring SLFP factions on to a common platform to agitate on common issues. The Srimavo group, however, views these efforts with suspicion. The Sri Lanka Communist Party is also thinking of making common cause with the non-Tamil Opposition in the Island to get back the influence it once enjoyed in the island's politics.

The left movement in Sri Lanka has a record of splits and disunity perhaps unequalled in any other country. The objective of all the Opposition parties which

have very little representation today in parliament, is to forge a united front against the ruling UNP. This has to be viewed in the background of the complete division in the "left" and "progressive" camp particularly in the last few years.

That leaves only the Tamil parties. How do they react to the attempts of the major Sinhala parties to woo them? They seem to think that Tamils have nothing to choose between the two. Their future will be determined by the state of Sinhala-Tamil relations which today is the most crucial problem of the Sri Lanka society.

UNP was in power earlier between 1947 and 1956 and again between 1965 and 1970. On both the occasions, it tried to make headway with its capitalist leaning "mixed economy" policies under the leadership of the Senanayakes (Don Stephen and Dudley) but failed. But when it returned to power in 1977 with a two-thirds parliamentary majority it embarked on a full-blooded free enterprise and the International Monetary Fund advised export oriented policies.

It is now in the saddle with a strong market economy orientation, an open door for foreign investment and imports and strong encouragement to tourism. The success story of Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea have been held out as the model for Sri Lanka to follow, and to a good measure the island is pursuing this line.

**A gamble**

Sri Lanka has a very low per capita income, but high literacy and education, low infant mortality rates and relatively high average life expectancy. Its major problems are poverty and unemployment.

According to observers, after three years, the experi-

ment still remains a gamble with many more questions asked than before. One now misses the rhetoric one heard last year about the new policies delivering goods "in a fantastic manner". There are bitter complaints of global inflation, world recession and OPEC intrusiveness. The same IMF experts who inaugurated the new era turn round and tell the Sri Lanka Government that its economy is "over-heated". They suggest that some of the more ambitious programmes be halted, if not given up, and the government confine itself to more modest development projects. They also suggest that attention be paid to repayment of the debts so far incurred.

The Finance and the Trade Ministry say that relations with IMF are very good. Mr. de Mel is happy that the Government has been able to go along with IMF except for factors "totally beyond the control of the Government." According to him, IMF has taken a sympathetic view of the country's situation.

**Removal of controls**

The Finance Minister elaborated the steps taken at the behest of the IMF. "In the last five years we have eliminated practically all subsidies. We still have selective subsidies on food, etc. to benefit the poorer sections. We found it necessary to increase train and other transport rates. We still could not make the services profitable". In areas like import, exchange and price controls, licensing, permits and quotas, over 90 per cent of the controls have been removed.

The Extended Fund Facility of the IMF has been completely used. The Sri Lanka Government has asked for further accommodation on those lines. It ex-

pects to get a new IMF mission in Colombo soon to start discussions on this.

During 1982 the Finance Minister expects almost the same amount of foreign aid —Rs. 15,000 millions —and in the coming years he hopes it will be maintained at this level, if not enhanced.

No one can fail to see that foreign aid and foreign capital have created a new and powerful elite of contractors and other entrepreneurs even as the hardships of the majority of the common people are daily mounting.

**Huge deficits**

While Government spokesmen and pro-Government analysts suggest there are no repayment problems, the huge deficits cannot but lead to reduced living standards for the common people followed by social upheavals in the view of critics.

One thing has become clear: funds for foreign lending are not only drying up in countries like the U.S. but there is increasing unwillingness to lend money to countries which are not active in support of foreign policies consistent with their own national interests and aspirations.

Mr. de Mel is very unhappy about cuts in IDA assistance. In every forum, he wants this to be discussed and a strong disapproval voiced by all the developing countries. He claimed that it was he who took the strongest stand against the attitude of the replenishing nations at the Bank-Fund meetings. Mr. R. Venkataraman congratulated him on his bold stand according to Mr. de Mel.

The developing countries cannot borrow from private commercial banks with their high interest rate structures. The forums where he is to take up the issue along with representatives of other countries, include the South-South meeting at Delhi, the Interim Committee meeting and the Development Committee meeting of the IMF and the World Bank meeting scheduled to take place in Helsinki in April.

The Sri Lanka Ministers, though not some of the top officials in the economic ministries, are emphatic that the economic policies have not failed. But it is admitted that their debt-service ratio has become very bad and the foreign exchange reserves at the moment were enough to last only three months.

According to the Finance Minister, the highest budget deficit was in 1980. It has substantially come down in

(Continued overleaf)

# Foxes - the latest terrorist force

The underlying ethnic conflict of Sri Lanka is constantly taking new forms of expression and producing new shapes of development. If in the late seventies was seen the poverty-stricken Sinhalese lower classes looting shops and houses of innocent Tamils under the guise of racial fervour, in the eighties we see the widespread and daringly regular occurrences of armed burglaries in the North itself. Some people involved in this, purely out of selfish, mercenary gains, are cunningly exploiting the existing social chaos to achieve their own vile ends. The armed confrontation between the Security Forces and the youth militants has produced a superb camouflage for the activities of these petty-minded self-seekers. The present inefficiency of the Security Forces in Jaffna has given them additional encouragement, and it has also been noted that they cunningly pose as Security Personnel uttering a few words of Sinhala, demanding a check on the house they ultimately burgle.

## Doubly exploited

It goes without saying that the atmosphere in the North is highly charged with the public being forced to live in consternation—of the terrorism by the Armed Forces on the one hand, the activities of the youth militants on the other, and these cunning Foxes who might appear in either's clothing.

Before being too critical of these selfish elements within our own society, we also have to understand their plight. The men involved in these burglaries are a doubly exploited class of people in Sri Lanka. If the Tamils are an Oppressed Nation, these men are further exploited and forced into poverty by the Tamil bourgeoisie itself.

The wealthy Tamils at least have the material means to

transcend their national oppression by sending their children abroad for education and employment and are also armed with adequate influence to grab the few places available for Tamils in the island itself. But this other segment of the Tamil society, not enjoying such benefits, is cornered so helplessly, that unable to show their protest against the more oppressive Government, they at least seek material consolation by robbing their own community. These widespread burglaries are a stark and timely reminder that the socio-economic disparity among the Tamils should first be resolved if it is not to contradict the very values Eelam is to be built on.

But we must certainly be critical of these self-seekers for lacking the sensitivity and selflessness to note that the cause of the Tamil Nation is more critical and demanding. These cunning and selfish elements within our community manifest the division and lack of consensus among the Tamils, and bode ill for the future when in face of more violent forms of oppression many more are going to desert the ranks and abandon the legitimate claims of their Nation.

A few sporadic acts of terrorism by the "Tigers" do not make a Revolution, and if the claims of an oppressed people are to be won there should be mass participation and a growing awareness among the community of its rightful claims and the nature of the political crisis. But the prevalent burg-

laries in Jaffna symbolise the lack of a social awareness, (and incidentally remind us of a good number of middle-class Tamils who too are only concerned about their petty personal interests and are blind to the worsening oppression of their fellowmen).

After all, crass materialism and unscrupulous selfishness are the universally acknowledged traits of the Jaffna man, which are roundly satirised in Lanerolle's "He comes from Jaffna". But these traits may ultimately prove to be the subtle causes which perpetuate the political slavery of the Tamils. It is surprising that the worsening oppression hasn't made the Tamil grow out of the defects in his nature.

by Suresh Canagarajah

Frantz Fanon in his classic, "The Wretched of the Earth" shows how in the very process of struggling for their liberation the oppressed people

re-create their personality. Paule Freire the Brazilian radical in his very comprehensive "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" says that the re-birth of the oppressed transcending their temperamental defects is a necessary precondition for the success of their struggle. It is imperative that the Tamil too transcends his limitations and refines his personality, if his legitimate claims for his rights are to be won.

It is interesting that after the second world war, when the African nations won back their freedom from the white colonists, it was marked by a spontaneous cultural re-awakening; such writers as Chinva Achebe, Wole Soyinka

of their sensibility and maturity of awareness.

The Nobel Prize winning poet W. B. Yeats too felt during the struggle of his fellow Irish against the British domination that whereas terrorism only blunts the sensibility of the people, it was necessary for culture to refine their nature — if their struggle for freedom was to have any success.

Today's burglaries cunningly exploiting the confused social context open our eyes to the fact that if Eelam is to become a reality then it is imperative that a spiritual and moral regeneration be experienced by the selfish, materialistic Tamil.

The North is in need of a brand of men who will not be blindly idealistic or emotional, but who will critically face the embarrassing limitations of their community — not to place in jeopardy the legitimate claims of the Tamil Nation, but actually to enhance them!

## The I. C. J. Report (1)...

(Continued from page 5)

deprivation by Parliament in 1980 of the civic rights for a period of seven years of Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, leader of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and twice Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, and the adoption of the Essential Public Services Act in 1979 which enables the government to declare any of a wide variety of services as essential services, thereby

outlawing strikes or temporary cessation of work in such services.

While the International Commission of Jurists is concerned about these issues, the present report is limited to the most serious human rights problem in Sri Lanka at the moment, namely, the racial problem, violence resulting from racial conflict and the draconian provisions of the Terrorism Act

as a means of coping with the violence. The report is based on observations and interviews of the undersigned while in Sri Lanka, on written material obtained in Sri Lanka and on press and other reports of events occurring since the visit of the undersigned.

*NEXT WEEK: Historical background to the present conflict*

## U. S. Ambassador discussed Trinco ...

(Continued from page 7)

1981. Inflation in 1980, to quote Mr. de Mel, was as much as 35 per cent but by December 81 it had come down to just 18 per cent. He noted the criticisms against the policies and in response to one such, his government had strengthened agriculture and the country was expected to become self-reliant in rice soon.

All the development objectives set before UNP had been realised, he said—record employment effected in the country's history. Against

30 per cent unemployment during Mrs. Bandaranaike's time, unemployment today was hardly 10 per cent.

The Sri Lanka Government says it is wedded to a policy of keeping the Indian Ocean an area of peace, free from superpower rivalry. It is however argued by critics that as a corollary to its pro U.S. policy, Western type capitalist economy, and a foreign policy close to that of the U.S. Sri Lanka is providing special facilities for the U.S. armed forces. Many refer to "an American base" in Trincomalee on the

east coast. This correspondent during his visit to Trincomalee could not however see any base there.

### Oil storage

However, the Sri Lanka Government appears to have agreed to hand over on lease for an indefinite period a vast area near the sea shore (on the China Bay) in Trincomalee to the Coastal Corporation of U.S. for putting up a huge tankage to store oil. The American company would have the right to move its oil from this storage anywhere it likes.

Colombo cannot in times of crisis prevent the U.S. company from supplying fuel to bases like Diego Garcia. This is regarded as a possible danger to peace in the Ocean area.

The American Ambassador is believed to have discussed with the TULF leaders their strong opposition to the idea of oil storage by the U.S. Company which he emphasised, could be nothing more than a commercial transaction.

The Tamil leaders voiced the fear that since this was

an overwhelmingly Tamil area, such acts would invite attack by the other superpower in times of crisis endangering the Tamils' security of person and property.

Latest reports from Colombo suggest that the Sri Lanka Government might be re-considering the deal with the Coastal Corporation of America and might be evaluating the offers from other companies in the field of oil exploration and production as well, for leasing out space in Trincomalee for creating oil storage.

(To be concluded)



Who were the first inhabitants of Jaffna? When did they occupy this land? What was the historical process prior to the emergence of the kingdom of Jaffna?

These are some of the riddles where the available literary sources fail to bring out a clear picture. The Tamil Chronicles of late origin come up with the legend of the blind musician who received this sandy stretch as a gift from a king of Sri Lanka. The Pali Chronicles are virtually silent except calling this region as Nagadipa and mentioning the construction of certain Buddhist Stupas. To add to the misery, barring few exceptions, a vast realm of the early phase of Jaffna's History is forsaken by the epigraphical sources and by substantial art-architectural remains.

Such a situation demands the application of Prehistoric Archaeological techniques and a fresh approach to the entire problem, for Prehistoric Archaeology is a discipline in which the story of man is reconstructed in the absence of any written documents.

With this in mind, the venture started in September 1980, has by now covered the entire peninsula through a planned field work programme. The results, are encouraging as a number of sites have been located and analysed.

**How it was Planned**

Systematic archaeological field work as a rule begins at the table. The initial months of our programme were thus spent in studying and analysing the topography of the peninsula with the help of the 'One Inch' and 'Mosaic' sheets published by the Survey Department.

The plan finally chalked out was based on one assumption; that was to search for the sites alongside the presumed primitive transportation links. This perspective is possible only when we forget the present transportation network developed by the British to fit the steel and petrol civilization they introduced. However, to a great extent the location of the Dutch Forts in the peninsula has helped a lot to trace the forgotten sea and land routes of our forebears.

One who looks into the map of the Peninsula can easily understand how the peaceful waters of the Jaffna Lagoon could have provided a safe passage for the vessels plying between the east coast of India and Sri Lanka as it was dangerous for them to cross the Adams Bridge Reef. Hence, the core of the field work programme centred around the sea route of the Jaffna Lagoon. Along with the coasts of the Lagoon the islands and the basin of Valukkiyaru—the main flood outlet which flows in to the Lagoon were also covered.



# Pre - historic settlements of Jaffna

The other route which could have been possibly used was the East Coast Land Route which runs southwardly from Point Pedro. In this route, the mainland can be reached through the narrow sand bar at Chundikulam, which links the Peninsula with the mainland. Despite the seasonal floods, even now, pedestrians cattle and bullock carts make their way through this marshland. Perhaps a bullock cart is ideal for this route more than a motor vehicle.

**The Archaeological sites of the Lagoon route, Islands and of the Valukkiyaru basin.**

1. Kalapoomy 2. Verappiddy 3. Tisaimaluvai 4. Kaduppulam 5. Anaiviluntan 6. Kumpurupiddy 7. Chatti 8. Allaipiddy 9. Tikali 10. Vedyarasan Koddai 11. Kantarodai 12. Anaikoddai 13. Ariyalai East 14. Mannithalai 15. Kautharimunai and 16. Kachchai.

In this category, besides these sites, Dr. S. K. Sitrampalam of the University of

scratching the ground a few feet was another determining factor for the location of a settlement. All the early settlements are invariably found where the ground water is easily accessible. Ideal conditions were found alongside the Lagoon coast, Valukkiyaru basin, sandy stretches of Mannithalai, and along the east coast. Obviously their primitive iron technology would not have permitted them to penetrate the limestone bedrock of the interior peninsula for water.

It seems at the incipient level, these settlements were located where they could maintain a subsistence type of living with agricultural cum pastoral hinterland and by exploiting the aquatic life of the lagoon. For such primary settlements, the silty coast built up the retreating lagoon, and the Valukkiyaru basin would have been ideal.

At the secondary level, settlements sprang up along

the eastern coast of the peninsula without the conditions for agricultural cum pastoral hinterland. Probably this indicates that by now, the settlement of the peninsula had become interdependent and therefore this situation must have led to a point where the peninsula was transformed into a principality, perhaps with Kantharodai as its focus.

Archaeological research now makes it quite clear that there is certainly a non-Buddhist layer at the earliest level of human settlement in the peninsula. This layer can be called Megalithic, because of its identical cultural affinity with the Megalithic culture of South India. It seems this particular type of Megalithic culture was a common cultural stratum for the various groups of people who belong to Southern India and Sri Lanka.

The Buddhisisation of Sri Lanka must have actually taken place over this Megalithic layer. The early settlements of the Jaffna Peninsula reveal this fact that Buddhism overlapped the Megalithic culture, and established itself in the next few centuries. Later the Brahmanic revival which arose in South India during the early medieval times, swept away the Buddhist hegemony in the peninsula.

What is interesting here is the fact that despite these flows of cultural influences for centuries, still one can trace the survivals of Megalithic culture in various walks of Jaffna life. The Peninsula is a pocket of survivals for an Ethno-Archaeologist, as from the death ceremony to the dialogue of the Drummers, he may find it interesting to trace the residues of the early past.

However one question yet remains unanswered — whether these early inhabitants could be identified with the Nagas whom the tradition attributes to be the aborigines of this region?

by **P. Ragupathy**

Lecturer, Department of History & Archaeology  
University of Jaffna

**The Sites**

Based on these assumptions, the actual field work commenced on 29th November 1980. The day is unforgettable, as that very first day led us to stumble on that prestigious site at Anaikoddai. Just a glance at the carinated (flat bottomed) Black and Red ware sherds and a partially damaged urn was enough to grasp the potentiality of the site.

Later, the rescue excavation revealed the Megalithic burial layer, a first of its kind in the Peninsula. The artefacts found are extremely valuable for reconstructing the early stages of culture in the Peninsula. The priceless find among them is a unique, metal, biscriptual seal, which may be a key to many intriguing questions of South Asian History.

Subsequently, another site was located at Kalapoomy (Karinagar), where again a rescue excavation revealed a Megalithic burial stratum identical with Anaikoddai. Encouraged by these discoveries, the field work was carried out further, and to this date the following sites have been covered. The list includes the known sites, besides the freshly located ones.

Jaffna reports of an early site at Navalay. (17)

**The East Coast Sites**

18. Vallipuram 19. Kudatanai 20. Nagar Koyil 21. Talaiyal 22. Vettilai Kerni 23. Koyil Vayal 24. Nithiya Ved-dai 25. Thatankodu 26. Mandalai 27. Kuyavan Piddy, and scattered sites in the Chundikulam - Paparapiddy sand bar link. (28)

**Upparu Sites**

29. Nallur 30. Irupalai 31. Kopai

**The Pattern**

The topographical analysis of these sites reveal the presence of certain patterns in their location. To summarise;

They are found along the trade routes. Chronologically earlier settlements are found besides the Lagoon Route and in the Valukkiyaru basin, while the relatively later ones are found, along the East Coast Route. This location and the artefacts found, lead one to think that human settlements in the Peninsula were mercantile in origin and arose on the opening up of these Trade routes.

The fact that drinking water could be found by just

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Henry Ward also mentions the Tamil name in his records

The ancient Tamil name of Padawiya was "Pathi". This name is found in the Tamil inscriptions discovered in the area and in ancient manuscripts "Pathi" in Tamil means a settlement or village. "Patinapalai", an ancient Tamil poem describing the settlements created by the Chola King Karikalan says; that the important characteristics of a settlement according to this work are, a tank (kulam) a village (kudi) and a temple (kovil). These characteristics are found in the Vanni settlements. The tank in Pathi was called in ancient times "Pathiyilkulam" which was later Sinhalized into Padawaiya.

#### THE ANCIENT SETTLEMENT AROUND PATHI-YILKULAM

Not far from the ancient Tamil settlement of Periyapuliyanakulam where we find caves donated by Tamil traders to Buddhist monks in the 2nd Century B.C. towards the East was "Pathi" (Padawiya). H. Parker and R. L. Brohier who studied carefully this irrigation work refer to the old Tamil name and to its archaeological importance. Governor Sir

Pathi was an ancient Tamil settlement of traders coming into the interior from the port of Trincomalee. The Brahmi inscriptions of the 2nd Century B. C. refer to "Ganaka" (Tamil "Kanam") "Setthi" (Tamil "Chetti"). An inscription of Gajabahu I of the 2nd Century A.D. refers to "Nakara ganaka" which testifies to the presence of South Indian trading corporations.

#### TAMIL SETTLEMENTS—A CONTINUOUS PROCESS.

Historical evidences prove that the Tamil settlements in the Vanni were not the result of a single event at a particular period of history but a continuous process extending from before Christ over considerable periods up to the present day. Even Sinhala settlements in the island were like this, absorbing and assimilating Tamil tribes and castes over a considerable period. The earliest settlements of the Chettis with their trading corporations and guilds date from 2nd Century B.C. The Chetti-

kulam area and the Pathi (Padawiya) area were ancient settlements which were strengthened from time to time by later settlements.

#### TAMIL INSCRIPTIONS IN PATHI (PADAWIYA)

There are a number of Tamil inscriptions in Pathi dating from medieval times which testify to the presence of a very large Tamil trading community and other Tamil communities in this area and to their various activities. Tamil trading names, personal names, names of

corporations and guilds are found in these inscriptions. These show that the Tamil communities in Pathi were very prosperous economically and socially and contributed a great deal to the political, social, economic and cultural life of the country.

#### EARLIEST CHOLA INSCRIPTIONS.

The earliest inscriptions of the Chola period are found in this place. This proves that this area served as an important station for the Chola

before Polonnaruwa became their capital. One important inscription mentions various gifts donated to the Saiva temple called "Iravikula Manikka Iswaram" by prominent Chola officials, soldiers, chieftains and traders. The gifts include sacred perpetual lamps, bronzegongs, bronze bells, jewels, gold and cows. Another inscription mentions lavish endowments and gifts by a Tamil Mercantile Corporation to a Siva Temple.

#### VAISHNAVITES AND SAIVITES.

Many personal names of donors such as "Narayanan" and "Tirumal" along with Saivite names such as "Tirusittampalam" testify that there were Vaishnavites who came to Pathi and the Vanni district before the Saivite Cholas. They may have co-existed with the Saivites during the Chola period and later. It may have been during this time that "Pathi" acquired the name "Tiruppathi" in memory of their great shrine by that name in India. There are a number of Vaishnava shrines in different parts of the Vanni which await historical study.

#### TREMENDOUS HINDU BHAKTI

An inscription from Siva temple No. 3 contains a very beautiful 'Thevaram' in elegant Tamil expressing an ennobling devotion to God, a lofty Tamil ethic and theology. It was composed by a learned Tamil poet of Tiruppathi for the benefit of the Hindu trading community. The exquisite Saiva rock temples, the various gifts endowed to them and this beautiful Thevaram are lasting proof of the tremendous devotion and dedication of the Tamil Hindus of the area and the glory that was Tiruppathi in medieval times. Along with the Tamil inscriptions of Tiruppathi one ought to study carefully the Tamil inscription of the neighbouring place 'Kaddu-neri' (Vahalkadu). This was also an important Tamil settlement of traders and warriors. It was called "Virapattanam" and the warriors are described as bearers of the 'Virakodi'

(To be Continued in the next issue)

## HOW IS THIS WEEK FOR YOU?



(March 21 — March 27)

#### S. Ratnarajah

#### MESHA—ARIES.

A good week to purchase vehicles or properties. A successful week in connection with professional matters. Personal popularity in the social sphere. Short journeys in connection with professional matters indicated. Care required on Friday regarding personal health.

#### RISHABA—TAURUS.

Family harmony and happiness. Success, favours from superiors and popularity in the professional field indicated. Children will bring happiness and happy events will occur in the family where you will occupy a prominent place. An ideal week for progress and success.

#### MITHUNA—GEMINI

It is Chandrastamana on Sunday and part of Monday. Some can expect substantial benefits in the way of financial gain or profits in their profession during the latter part of the week. Children and spouse will be great help in your endeavours. Domestic harmony will prevail.

#### KATAKA—CANCER.

Avoid taking important decisions on Tuesday lest it proves detrimental to your progress. Short journeys will be made in connection with professional matters. Children and spouse will be very helpful in decisions pertaining to important matters. For some, superiors will be helpful in their professional upliftment.

#### SINHA—LEO.

Personal health requires attention. Some impediments and obstructions to your professional progress. You will enjoy

family harmony and happiness. For some, the health of the father will cause anxiety. Financial position will improve. It is better to keep away from social activities.

#### KANYA—VIRGO.

Be careful of accidents on Saturday and also abdominal ailments. Unexpected luck in the professional field. Superiors will be helpful. A good period for family harmony. Unexpected financial gains. Students will fare well in their studies. Restrict expenses.

#### THULA—LIBRA

Professional gains and unexpected journeys in connection with professional matters. Some will have to be separated from the dear ones during this week. Expenses will be very heavy. Beware of thefts or losing belongings while in transit. A week of mixed results.

#### VRICHIKA—SCORPIO.

You will gain prominence in the social sphere. Professionally you stand to gain and in the case of some, promotions are likely. You will have the help and blessings of good people. Money will be spent on religious matters. Speculative luck is also indicated during the early part of the week.

#### DHANU—SAGITTARIUS.

This is indeed a very lucky week for some. Unexpected financial gains and speculative luck. Professionally a week when you gain things that you would never have expected to get. Some will have peace and harmony in the family and blessings and favours from parents and superiors.

#### MAKARA—CAPRICORN

Financial gains for some, professional upliftment and successful favours from superiors are indicated this week. Journeys with unexpected gains are indicated. Students will progress in their studies. Enemies will not be able to do you any harm openly.

#### KUMBA—AQUARIUS.

You will be indulging in social activities, and involved in the promotion of fine arts. Financial gains will be made in purchase and sale of vehicles and properties by some. Professionally a profitable week. In the case of some, minor incidents in the family will cause pain of mind.

#### MEENA—PISCES.

A week of turmoil. Unpleasant events in the family likely. Even in the professional sphere there will be minor incidents which should be avoided. Avoid clashes with friends and superiors. Possibility of accidents so you will have to exercise some caution especially when you ride a bicycle or drive a car or vehicle.

**LETTERS**

**THE MAYOR EXPLAINS**

The Editor,  
"Saturday Review"  
303, K. K. S. Road,  
Jaffna.

Dear Sir,

I have read with regret the article appearing on page 12 of the Saturday Review dated 13th March, 1982, under the caption "Jaffna Mayor keeps out of TULF Courtesies to Minister". It is felt that if I fail to correct the information that might have been available to you, it may be misleading in the minds of the public. It was only when I received the letter from the Chairman, Water Resources Board, inviting me to attend the conference to be held at the Secretariat on 6-3-82, I came to know about the arrangements to hand over the Wind-mill. Even an initial courtesy of consultation was not extended to me, and as a matter of fact, the programme was drawn unilaterally by the authorities concerned.

This matter was discussed with me by the Additional G. A., and my position was made quite clear to him. Similarly, the Chairman, Development Council, also spoke to me, and I explained my position to him. However, the Municipal Commissioner was available at the Park to participate in the handing over ceremony in accordance with the programme intimated.

The Park is usually kept open from 4.00 p. m., and on the 6th also it was kept open from 4.00 p. m. The erection of pandals and the decorations in the Park were carried out by the officers of the Water Resources Board with our knowledge. At no stage did I order them to dismantle the pandals or to padlock the Park Gate. According to the information I have, the Municipal Commissioner who was present at the Park was informed about the intimation received by the Officers of the Water Resources Board that the Honourable Minister was cancelling the ceremony. It would thus be clear that the cancellation of the formal handing over of the Windmill was due to a decision taken by the Honourable Minister and his officials.

I should be very glad if you would kindly publish this information in your journal.

Thanking you,  
Yours faithfully,  
**R. Visuvanathan**  
Mayor  
Municipal Council  
Jaffna

Palaly South,  
Vayavilan P. O.,  
14-3-1982.

**HELP FOR CANCER INSTITUTE**

Dear Sir,

Please accept my congratulation in spotlighting the urgency of the above institute at the Base Hospital, Tellippalai in your issue of 13-3-82 (page 9). The authorities concerned, the various donors and especially the family of the late Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam, Q. C., must be commended for their goodwill in achieving this long felt need.

Up to now, the cancer patients had to go all the way to Maharagama. The patients and their helpers had to undergo unutterable hardships to get proper treatment. Many cancer patients died without getting proper treatment as they could not afford to go to Maharagama due to poverty. The Language barrier is another problem. There had been instances where the cancer patients themselves were victims of unhappy incidents from time to time and eventually got more pain of mind and body.

It is sincerely hoped that all people of good-will; especially Tamilians in far off lands would contribute liberally and if possible send the necessary equipment direct to the said cancer Society in order that the cancer patients in the north could receive better care and treatment without any let or hindrance.

If similar institutes are founded in other parts of the Island, let us help those too and relieve the sufferings of the cancer patients, who will be very grateful.

Yours respectfully,  
**J. A. Anandam.**

49, Rajaveethy,  
Nallur, Jaffna,  
Tamil Ealam.  
14-3-82.

The Editor,  
Saturday Review.

**RECORDING OF BIRTH TIME**

Sir,

With reference to the letter of Mr. C. Ratnasabapathy and the reply of your columnist Mr. Ratnarajah regarding the recording of time of the child's birth; this has been thrashed out a decade or two ago in several Astrological Magazines of the Indian Continent by several research scholars and it had been a healed wound. Why does Mr. Ratnarajah want to scratch an old sore none knows.

The Late Jhothisha Ratna and Vidya Visharada H. R. Seshadri Iyer, M. A. (Maths), Principal, College of Astrology, Bangalore, had concluded, in his research book 'New Technique of Prediction' Part I page 90: Controversy as to whether Jalodayam (Puncture of the placenta) or Shirodayam (appearance of Head) or Bhoopathanam (severance from mother's womb) has to be considered may be disposed of by preferring Bhoopathanam in Kaliyuga. There are other factors that hinder knowledge about the exact moment of birth. The lady in chamber may not announce the correct time. The exact Sunrise, Latitudinal, Longitudinal differences in minute, arithmetical errors in the calculation of Lagna etc., may all tend to drag down the real point. The responsibility now rests with Astrologer to fix up the correct time and not try to tell the consultants, if his readings go wrong, that the birth time is wrong. Thus rectification of birth time is of paramount importance. Therefore whatever time is recorded is not perfect till birth time is rectified by the astrologer. There are several methods for this rectification.

The other eminent Astrologer Sothida Mannan Jothisha Marthand the late K. S. Krishnamoorthy says, "In Kaliyuga Bhoopathanam or ti n c severance from mother's womb is to be taken as the correct birth time and not the first cry of the child as advocated by some. Severance may be by any means." The moment the child begins to live outside the mother under natural conditions is the actual time of birth. There will always be some interval between this time and the time of the first cry as the correct time of birth.

He also advocates that whatever the time recorded has to be rectified by the Astrologer (See importance of correct birth time in the Astrologer Magazine called Astrology and Athirshita of February 1976, page 19).

Yours truly,  
**V. Sinnathurai,**  
Co-Secretary.  
Ceylon Astrological  
Research Association.

211, Navalar Road,  
Jaffna, Sri Lanka.  
13th March, 1982.

The Editor,  
"Saturday Review",  
Jaffna.

Dear Sir,

I read with great interest the article on astrology by Mr. Ratnarajah in your issue of the 20th ultimo and the questions posed by Mr. C. Ratna

sabapathy, a reader, in your issue of the 6th instant. In my view the reply is no proper answer to the queries raised. I must congratulate Mr. C. Ratnasabapathy for his forthright queries, as the article on astrology published on the 20th ultimo was confusing and therefore called for enlightenment. It should not have been construed as criticism as concluded by Mr. Ratnarajah.

At the outset I would point out that the conviction of astrologer Ratnarajah that the time of birth is the time that the child utters the first cry is completely unacceptable. If the time of the first cry is taken as the time of birth, then all the horoscopes have to be rejected. Professor Dr. B. V. Raman may have answered this point in various issues of his magazine but in my own view the time of birth of a child is definitely not the time of the first cry.

The accepted correct time of birth of a child is when the child comes out of the mother's womb and when the umbilical cord is cut. This is the time the child starts its own life and which should be taken as the time for casting of horoscopes.

I must also point out here that the astrologer's answer to the query raised in regard to "first cause" is not an answer to the query. This is a question which no one has been able to explain and the reference to the Baghawat Gita discourse has been

misunderstood by the writer and used to cloud the issue.

Yours faithfully,  
**K. N. Navaratnam.**

Vice President of the Ceylon Astrological Research Association and Yarl Astronomical Society and Author of Several articles published in local & foreign newspapers; several books published in occult and Co-Editor of Sothida Malar.

119, Rasavinthoddam Road,  
Jaffna.

Dear Sir,

In your last issue an interested reader of the "S. R." referred to an excuseable but avoidable shortcoming in the weekly—namely the printer's devils. All readers would agree with him that a little more attention to proof reading will help solve this shortcoming. Printer's devils do creep in stealthily into any journal printed anywhere in the world.

Yet, printers devils sometimes make interesting reading. There was once an article on morality in a publication of an International Organization. The author wound up the article with a final plea that we should help to increase the **Mortality** of the people of this country.

Then there was a news item in a local daily about a statement made by our Transport Minister many years back. The item was titled, "Transport Minister interested in getting down bigger busts."

**S. Thirunavakarasu.**



Professor S. Vidyanathan presiding at the book releasing ceremony of Kandiah Navarendran's "Dissertation on Awareness" based on Krishnamurthi's talks, at the Veerasingham Hall, Jaffna, on March 9.

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# Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

## Follow due process of the law, Bishop tells Minister

The Bishop of Kurunegala, Rt. Rev. C. L. Wickremasinghe, has appealed to the Minister of Defence, T. B. Werapitiya, to ensure that both the Police and the Army acting in conjunction with them, observe due processes of law.

The Bishop's written appeal, sent on 9 March, specifically refers to the combined Army-Police search of the house of Dr. S. Rajasunderam, Organising Secretary of Gandhiam Society, and the Gandhiam Society, Vavuniya, on 18 February.

Pointing out that certain files and photographs taken away by the search party have still not been returned, Bishop Wickremasinghe goes on to say "On the other hand, Dr. Rajasunderam who was requested on 19th February to report to the Gurunagar Army Camp, Jaffna, was told on 21st February by the Officer-in-Charge of Vavuniya Police that he did not have to do so, but would be informed later about the matter. It is now over two and a half weeks since this entry took place".

The Bishop stresses that "there is no justification for these files and photographs to be retained by the Army if

## B.B.C. man to visit Jaffna

John Clapham, who is in charge of the BBC's Tamil Service, will be visiting Sri Lanka from 24 - 30 March. He will be in Jaffna from 26 to 28 March. He will be meeting fellow broadcasters and journalists, politicians and, particularly, listeners to the BBC's Tamilosai.

this is the case, and they should be returned forthwith to their owners. If the Police wish to make specific charges against Dr. Rajasunderam and/or the Gandhiam Society, these must be done by due processes of law. If any of the documents taken have to be retained by the police for the purpose of making specific charges, the owners should be notified of (a) what the charges are, (b) what particular documents are being retained to make such charges before a court of law, so that they will thereby be enabled to retain attorneys to act on their behalf."

Meanwhile, Dr. Rajasunderam, Organising Secretary, Gandhiam Society, Vavuniya, has appealed to Brigadier Ranatunga who is in charge of the Gurunagar Army Camp, Jaffna, to return the Society's files, photographs and documents taken away by a combined Army-Police search party on 18 February.

The Secretary's letter to the Brigadier, dated 11 March, states "Gandhiam Society Office was checked and certain files, photographs and documents were taken on 18-2-82 by your officers and thereafter I, as a Secretary of Gandhiam Society had to visit Gurunagar Army Camp to meet the C.I.D. Officials at their request for interrogation on 1-3-82 and 8-3-82; but the files and photographs — documents taken from the Gandhiam Office were not returned to us. We shall be glad if you could make arrangements for early delivery of these documents to continue our correspondence with the organisations concerned".

Dr. Rajasunderam regrets "that such an unwarranted happening should have occurred at our office and my home. We would have readily given any help unstinted without such action."

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American organisers claim:

# T.U.L.F. will attend World Tamil Eelam Convention in New York

THE TAMIL UNITED LIBERATION FRONT will be participating at the "WORLD THAMIL CONVENTION" to be held on July 3rd and 4th at the Holiday Inn, Nanuet, New York, according to a communication received at the Saturday Review Office from the members of the Programme Committee in charge of the arrangements. The convention is being organised by the Tamils of U. S. A., and Canada.

The registration for the Conference began on January 1st, 1982 and ended on February 28th for residents of U. S. A., and Canada. The registration dead-line for foreign participants will be March 31st

and the organisers state that in view of the limited accommodation at the Convention Hall it is imperative that the registrations are made early.

## Dance Drama and L. P. record

According to the programme there will be a pre-Convention Cocktail on July 2 at the residence of Dr. Winston V. Panchacharam at "Thamilam", 89, Tennyson Drive, Nanuet, New York 10954.

The first day's session from 8 a. m. to 8 p. m. will be exclusively conducted in Tamil. The second day's programme will be conducted in English

and will be followed by a Cultural Evening featuring a Tamil Dance Drama "Kannagi" by the Padmini Institute of Fine Arts.

The organisers of the Convention state in their publicity folder that the theme of the Convention would be "to reaffirm and recommit ourselves and all men of goodwill, with all their energy, devotion and dedication to the work of the reconstruction and re-establishment of the lost kingdom of Thamil Eelam which is now being held by neo-colonialists — the Sinhala Buddhist power-holders against the will of the people who constitute the Tamil-speaking population of Ceylon."

The organisers also state that the second part of the L. P. record-The story of Tamil Eelam-was released at the Annual General Meeting of the Illankai Thamil Sangam held recently in New York and that expatriate Tamils could apply to the Eelam Tamils' Association, 66, Glen Street, Somerville, Massachusetts 0215 U. S. A. for copies with a minimum contribution of \$ . 15 per album including postage.

Expatriate Tamils who wish to have more details of the Convention are asked to contact Dr. Panchacharam or any one of the other co-members of the Programme Committee: Edward Benedict, 17, Argyle Terrace, Yinkers, N. Y. 10701. U. S. A., Dr. K. Jegathesan, 81, Southgate Road, Waterbury, Connecticut 06708, U. S. A., T. Sritharan, 66, Glen Street, Somerville Massachusetts 02145, USA; N. Vijayanathan, 37, Sadlee Cove Crescent, Scarborough, Ontario, M1V1Y3, Canada.

## Naval terror at Kalpitiya

The Muslim town of Kalpitiya, 24 miles off Puttalam, became the scene of a violent clash recently between Naval personnel from the naval base established there and the local population.

It is reported that a fifteen year old Muslim girl was returning home after a tuition class with her friends when a man from the navy, cornering her into a narrow lane had tried to physically molest her. Apparently this particular man was seen following groups of girls in the town prior to this incident as well. The girl managed to escape from the man, ran home and reported the incident to her family. The brother of the girl, it is alleged, singled out the man concerned and assaulted him severely.

That same evening the assaulted navy person had returned to the town with

reinforcements from the base, assaulted people in the town area and went to the home of the girl concerned and forcibly dragged her away to the navy camp. There holding the girl as hostage they demanded the local population to hand over the brother who was in hiding.

In the meantime the Puttalam and Chilaw police were contacted by the townspeople who pressured the navy to release the girl. That very same night, the home of the girl was allegedly burnt down by the navy. The family lost their home, all their possessions including a motorbike and Rs. 10,000 cash that was in the house at that time.

People from the town say that it was the timely and firm intervention of the Police this time that saved the situation from further deteriorating.