

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

Vol. 5 No. 22

21st June 1986

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Now, Economic Blockade Of Jaffna

Is the Government attempting to starve the Jaffna people into humble submission?

We get the impression that this is part of the Government's strategy to break the back of the Tamil militant movement fighting for liberation from the Sinhalese yoke.

The movement of people and goods into and out of the Jaffna Peninsula has been severely restricted following the bomb incidents in Colombo last month and the clashes between the militant groups and the Security Forces at Kilinochchi earlier this month.

The trains stopped running to Jaffna many months ago.

Now road traffic is also at a very low ebb.

A permit from the Commanding Officer of the North is necessary for any vehicle to go past the Elephant Pass barrier.

The Government Agent of Jaffna has no say in the matter.

There is strict checking of passengers and goods from Elephant Pass up to Vavuniya.

People are unnecessarily harassed at the various checkpoints and long hold-ups are the norm.

As highlighted in the SATURDAY REVIEW earlier, severe shortages of food, fuel other essentials have begun to emerge in the Peninsula.

Even the postal and telecommunication services are frequently disrupted.

It is a hell of a life in Jaffna now, though mercifully the aerial bombing has stopped.

As we see it, the Government is moving away and away from the Tamil people.

Instead of building bridges between the two communities, the Government appears determined to break the very few remaining bridges.

We warn the Government that just as it's military approach has failed to contain the ethnic conflict, the economic sanctions will also be counter-productive.

We appeal to the Government to come to its senses even at this very late stage.

Surely, there must be at least a few people in the Government with heads above their shoulders.

Not heads in the sky, not heads buried in the sand in ostrich-style.

Unless this Government relents and come to terms with the ethnic problem — a human problem — we are all heading for a disaster.

Eelam on a platter, as we have said earlier.

BATTLE GOES ON

Clashes between Security Forces and Tamil militants again erupted at Kilinochchi on 19th June.

According to Government reports, one officer was killed and five soldiers were injured.

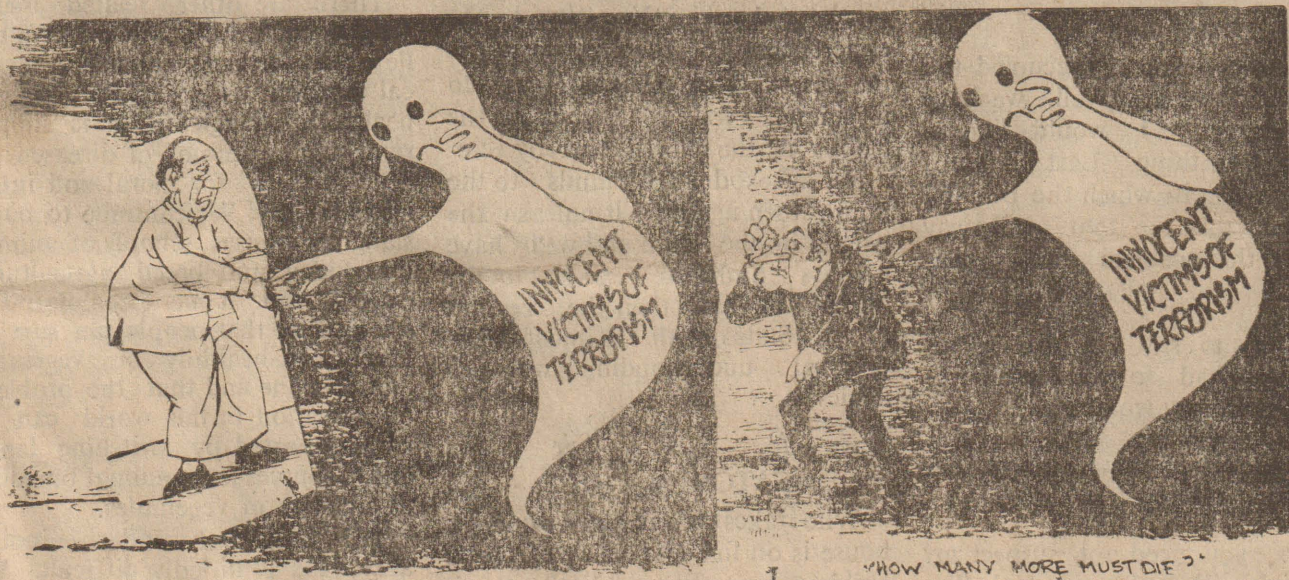
The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in a report stated that several soldiers were killed and one scout-car wrecked in a pitched battle with the Security Forces when they attempted to come from the camp through Thirunagar and Jayanthinagar.

In another incident at Mullaitivu on the same day Air Force planes are reported to have bombed the area where three people were killed but the exact number of people injured was not known.

Again at Vasavilan on 19th June the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front militants in another clash with Security Forces are reported to have killed 8, according to a statement by the EPRLF.

THESE TWO CARTOONS ARE A TELLING COMMENTARY ON THE SAD STATE OF AFFAIRS IN SRI LANKA, ESPECIALLY THE NORTH, TODAY.

THE ORIGINAL, BY R. WIJESOMA, APPEARED IN THE ISLAND, THE SECOND IS A SATURDAY REVIEW READER'S VERSION.



"HOW MANY MORE MUST DIE?"

"HOW MANY MORE MUST DIE?"

Release All The Political Prisoners in Sri Lanka jails

Saturday Review

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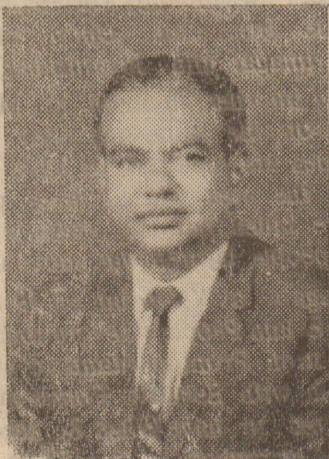
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WAR AND SANITY

A tired, dishevelled old man came into the offices of the SATURDAY REVIEW. He had a single-minded obsession to restore peace in this battered land. He displayed a tattered yellowing booklet in Sinhalese and an exercise book with copious notes. He had been, he explained, an employee of the naval dockyard at Trincomalee, "This book," he went on, "contains a speech made by D. S. Senanayake in 1951 where he had accepted both Tamil and Sinhalese as official languages. If only the Sinhalese people knew this, they will know that there is no problem between us and come to a settlement". After a pause he added, "I have spent a good deal of time trying to trace the issue of the Hansard containing the original speech

in English without success. I approached the Tamil United Liberation Front MP.s to give this matter some publicity. Thangathurai promised to see to it. But nothing happened. I even asked Militant groups to make posters of this and paste them on trains for the Sinhalese people to read. They did not seem to be interested".

by **Rajan Hoole**

This man had an undimmed faith in the innate decency and reasonableness of his fellow men. But the kindest word the normal run of people would have used for him is likely to be 'eccentric'. Then what do sane men do? Throughout the world great em-

NOT THE NEWS

A SHORT-CUT TO EELAM

It was a rare privilege indeed, to hear (no evils?) and see (no evils?) when our veteran and semi-semi-veteran Politicians were in action at the last Cabinet meeting.

Our political correspondent somehow managed to get an "entry visa." His report: A hot session was going on, undoubtedly anyone can guess — on the menace of terrorism and the means and methods (both sophisticated and tribal) were on the Agenda.

At a very crucial stage, one expert politician (the adjective "expert", perhaps may mean his celebrated educational background) suggested a novel idea, hitherto no one thought of — at least in the South.

The said expert, occupied the centre and began, "Well, we have had enough. I would like to suggest something. Last night, I had a dream in which the Buddha came and told me that only way to solve this problem is to grant Eelam."

Needless to say, at this point our expert had to face interruptions and, angry words.

Undaunted by these, he further explained politely.

"Sirs, you need not suspect my bona fides, I'm still a staunch Sinhala Buddhist in my heart. But you see, the crux of my idea is, of course to grant Eelam but not in the North and East. We'll have an Eelam in the South!

Considering all the aspects of Geo-political realities, International politics, small-nation Big nation theories etc., etc., I have come to this decision. We can later think of areas borders and the like."

A pindrop silence for a while; then whispering noises were heard. After three hours of more "secret" sessions everyone agreed to set up Eelam in the South and thereby eliminate the menace of terrorism.

But another politician—still having seventy five percent doubts asked a very pertinent question "How can we resettle the Sinhalese who live in the South, in the North and vice versa? Surely, they cannot voluntarily migrate."

The expert politician smiled gently and said, "You know the easiest part of the problem is the resettlement! What we can do is simple; First we unleash the troops in the North thereby creating an exodus of Tamils to the South then again we'll unleash the troops in the South and we'll have a mass Sinhalese exodus to the North and East then the creation of two States with the most Geopolitical understanding will be achieved.

★ ★ ★
CATCH A THIEF

Who takes a vacation when his house is on fire and his wife and children are refugees? Well, President Jayewardene who has his hands full with Marxist terrorists is off to Russia. Perhaps he remembered the old proverb, "set a thief to catch a thief".

phasis is placed on the art of killing and the highest honours are associated with it. A considerable part of the world's economy is tied to the military-industrial complex. Some of the best trained intellects are employed in seeking ways to kill and control minds with greater lethal efficacy.

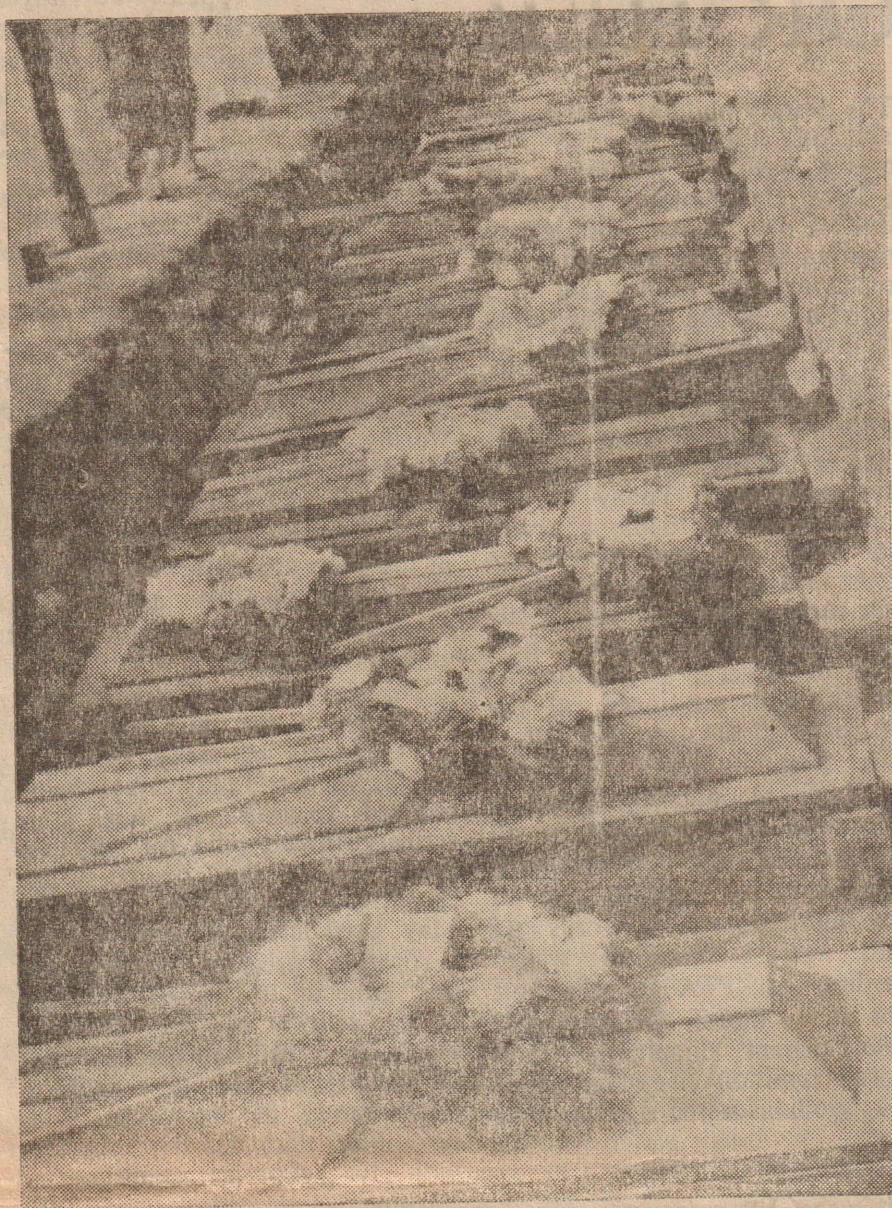
Old as is the notion of Karma, people continue to act as though they can cause injury elsewhere and escape evil consequences. The wise men of the world like Dr. Kissinger who believed that Vietnam and Cambodia can be saved for freedom and democracy by saturation bombing of what was in effect the civilian population continue to be feted with considerable ceremony at official and academic seminars around the world, even after they were proved tragically wrong. Who can blame the "terrorists" of this world when their methods have respectable precedents? Did not the Allies deliberately bomb German cities during the second world war? How about Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Jayewardene too has some right to complain against a world of pots calling a kettle black.

A good deal of our Education is mistaken. Transparently mistaken theories for social and political transformation stubbornly survive because too many interests are at stake. The laws of cause and effect are unimaginably complex. Most of what is taught in Universities will probably miss the point.

Our government has employed highly trained foreign experts who believe that an all out military effort even at the cost of cannibalising the economy and wantonly killing thousands of civilians will somehow restore normalcy and render its rule secure. Enough has been said about the government's sanity. Our Tamil experts too have their share of delusions. Can the killing of Sinhalese civilians in our name render us a people appreciative of freedom and decency?

There are other related issues which are hardly noticed. We believe that torturing animals in medical experiments is necessary for our health, as though health is simply removing symptoms of disease with little concern for moral and intellectual injury. We continue to build slaughter houses, schools of animal husbandry and breed agricultural experts while it has been clear for a long time that people can survive amply and healthily on vegetable matter alone and that the problem of starvation in this world can be largely averted by switching lands and resources from animal breeding to a choice of vegetables.

Who is sane? I wonder. Finding answers is admittedly difficult. We have some tentative answers offered by what is best in our traditions-enough to sustain our hope. The search for truth will remain an unfinished quest that requires team-work of an unconventional kind.



The coffins pile up. The scene at the St. Mary's cemetery Jaffna after the Mandaitivu killings by Security Forces.

NIRVANA

How do you want to die?
In bed, surrounded
by your loved ones,
past three scores and ten?

Or, yes or, in
the prime of your life?
Hacked, pierced or smothered
by axe, bayonet or bullet?
The choices are there.

Where do you want the bullet,
in the head,
in the chest,
or on your backside?
It must be a lovely feeling

to suddenly find you are inert,
But by then all feeling
would have gone.
Because you have entered
Nirvana.

Nirvana is on earth,
not in the sky.

Nirvana is in Sri Lanka,
not anywhere else.
The Dharmista land
over-flowing with milk and honey
—and blood.

— ANON - III

MANDAITIVU MASSACRE: PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION URGED

The Mallakam Bar Association at a special meeting held on 12th June in the court premises, with Mr. A. Kumaraguru, President in the chair, a resolution was unanimously adopted requesting the President Jayewardene to appoint a Presidential Commission to inquire into the Mandaitivu killings on 10th June and take meaningful steps to stop any further killing of innocent citizens of this country by the Armed Forces.

LOTUSES IN JAFFNA

My cycling in Jaffna sometimes take me to strange places and involvement in extraordinary situations.

Like on 10th June evening, when I ended up at the Gurunagar Community Centre.

The whole area was a vast sea of agitated people — and bicycles.

A grisly "exhibition" was on: 30 people who went to fish that morning were lying inert in the Centre's hall, like dead fish.

I was unmoved. I have attended worse "exhibitions" before, especially at Valvettiturai, Kurikadduvan and at the Jaffna General Hospital mortuary. At some of these "exhibitions" there were only pieces of flesh and bone.

I cycled back from Gurunagar, pondering not about man's inhumanity to man, but about the great contribution some people are making to prevent a population explosion in Sri Lanka. The population must be kept down, somehow.

The hatchet and the bullet are the best means, so that the Family Planning Association will have less work.

What is life? And what is death? I leave those questions to the saints and sages. Ordinary mortals like us must not get too worked up over these imponderables.

I cycled — along to one of my temporary "hide-outs" in Jaffna. "What is for dinner?" I asked. I had already forgotten about the cadavers at Gurunagar.

"Pittu and cuttle-fish" is the answer. I eat like a glutton, for most of us live to eat, not eat to live like the saints and sages.

I have a sound sleep, dreaming of the dead bodies at Gurunagar. How nice they look in death, bullet holes and all.

Next day, I see a wedding party (the groom's) wending its way to

the bride's house. What a pleasing sight. The sarees, oh, how lovely, the ladies hiding behind them! Even in this time of war, the Jaffna people marry with the thought of producing children.

Later, I see a funeral procession. Somebody had been shot dead by someone. It does not matter. Human lives are very cheap in Jaffna.

I see many parched and neglected fields where there used to be lush crops of chillie, onions and tobacco. In some cases, there are no people to work them — the people may be at Boosa or underground; in some other cases, no kerosene or diesel to work the water pumps.

As I approach the heart of the city, I see red and white lotus blooms in a pond on the left side of Point Pedro Road. I am filled with nostalgia. Lotus in Jaffna! Who introduced these to Jaffna? Cannot be Dutugemunu's Generals?

Then I look right. I see the Naga Vihara, a heap of rubble now. Surely, there must have been a link between the pond (tank) and dagoba in ancient times.

Some people have told me they are willing to rebuild the temple at their expense — if I can find a real Buddhaputra to be in-charge. I have been looking for one in various parts of Sri Lanka, but so far without success.

I cycle along, just like thousands of other Jaffna people. The easiest, cheapest and most convenient mode of transport in this part of the world. If the Army approaches, you can dump the vehicle and vanish through the maze of cross-roads that are an integral feature of Jaffna city, sure in the knowledge that the Army will not, cannot, follow you easily. But you might still get a bullet in the back — from a distance.

— GAMINI NAVARATNE

GUYS AT WORK

The Eelam General Union of Youth and Students (GUYS), in conjunction with the Asian Students Association based in Hong Kong and the Asian Youth Centre will hold a workshop programme entitled "ASA SOLIDARITY MISSION TO EELAM" from 28th June to 4th July at the World University Service Centre, Madras.

The workshop programme aims to achieve the following objectives:

To develop a collective understanding and deep appreciation of the Tamil peoples' struggle for a separate state called Eelam;

To gain a comprehensive knowledge of the historical causes of the Tamil-Sinhalese conflict, particularly the problems and aspirations of the Tamil-speaking people of Eelam;

To come up with a common understanding of the goals, methods and strategies of the Tamil-speaking people of Eelam.

JAFFNA'S AGONY FOR HER LIBRARIES

What type of terrorism was it that made a bonfire of the Jaffna Public Library on that fateful night of 31st May five years ago? Was it the wild terrorism of the Tigers of the more cultured intellectual terrorism of the library's patronisers that provoked the state storm troopers to set the torch on the imposing Dravidian architectural showpiece that treasured about 97,000 volumes of books and a deposit of rare manuscripts that no money can buy? What crime against Sri Lankan society had that repository of knowledge committed? Did it infringe on the wicked PTA law or its older cousin and equally heinous Emergency Regulations constantly updated by our legal hawks to keep our bosses in shape?

At the time this "repository of a great human culture in our country (Sri Lanka)" and therefore, "a place of great sanctity" was turned into ashes, the Jaffna Library boasted of the priceless special collections of the renowned international scholar, Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, as well as the personal collections of many others including two other celebrated clergymen scholars of the calibre of Rev. Dr. Issac Tambiah and the more recent Rev. Fr. H. S. David, a linguist and historian, of St. Patrick's College. The letter was a humble, childlike Catholic priest who frequented the place in his evening walks and who, it is said, died of shock when he heard of the tragic disaster that had struck his haunt, the City Library. "It was more than a city library, it was undoubtedly a national institution of international renown", was Mr. Devanesan Nesiiah's (Ex-GA, Jaffna) message when the rejuvenated library was opened to the reading public on 4th June 1984.

Mr. Sam A. Sabapathy, the then Mayor of Jaffna, Rev. Fr. Timothy F. Long, of St. Patrick's, the bubbling Irish enthusiast of education and social work of St. Patrick's, helped by a committee of the citizens of Jaffna went about to found a more lordly home from the original upstairs room along Front Street between the Rest House and Bankshall Street in the early fifties. The noted Indian architect, Sri Narasimha Rao, prepared the blueprints in consultation with Sri S. R. Ranganathan, the Library expert also from India, for the building in Dravidian style, and the first stage of the new building was

completed for use in 1959. From then on the library expanded rapidly for the people of the whole Peninsula greeted their magnificent temple of learning with characteristic enthusiasm and volunteered to donate their private collections of books as well as centuries old ola and paper manuscripts. They looked upon it as their treasure house and power house of knowledge and tended and fostered it with loving care. It appears that there were over 10,000 subscribing member clients attached to the library at the time of the holocaust, including many hundreds of students who availed its lending services for supplemental reading.

The Jaffna Library had a second lease of life thanks to the universal realization of sensitive people both here and abroad that "this was not just a loss to learning among the Tamils of the North but deep dent in the country's intellectual system and a loss too to the international community of

by

learning", to quote Prof. K. Nesiiah. He continues: "So they did not send to find for whom the bell tolled. Instead, institutions and groups the world over rallied round to help in reconstructing the library, restoring its shelves and restocking its books."

On 4th June 1984, the resurrected library was re-opened to the public with the second stage of Narasimha Rao's plan re-designed through the joint honorary services of our own professional personnel — namely Mr. V. S. Thuraiajah, architect, and the distinguished librarian, Mr. H.A. I Coonetilleke, — providing for a good many services of a modern public library. As ill-luck would have it, the Municipality has had to make do with makeshift arrangements as the restructured library finds itself in the security zone which being a prohibited zone for its patronizers, the library has again put up its shutters, as the needs of the people have to give way to the whims of the army. So back to square one. The reading public have perforce to be satisfied with three branch libraries: one at the YMCA building in Chundikuli, the second opposite the Hindu Lodge at Nallur and the third at Vannarponnai.

The library building itself amidst a spacious avenue of rich foliage is a beautiful landmark just the Town Hall building was of the Jaffna of our youth nostalgically reminding us of the days when we were happy and gay for this area was the hub of the town then-what with inter-school competitions all the year round in cricket, football, hockey, basketball and athletics not to speak of club matches in soccer and the many carnivals and exhibitions. Today it is a deserted spot said to be a prohibited zone and even pensioners who happen to stray around there rather early in the day to jostle for positions in the queue become victims of target practice for the machine guns positioned at the Fort go off at the drop of a hat.

Who does not feel and grieve for today's school-going youth of Jaffna who are deprived of all that fun and frolic and recreation that is theirs by right on account of an invisible war of words and nerves against terrorism waged according to PTA laws, an offshoot of the South African breed?

The current dilapidated and forlorn condition of these landmarks symbolises the nervous state

V. A. Philipupillai

of the people's existence and the receding hopes of survival against the President's threat of unleashing his troops on the defenceless and unarmed people of the Peninsula for befriending their offspring who have fallen foul of the government. The people of Jaffna find themselves in a hopelessly tragicomic situation. The government expects them to protect its army that has taken shelter in their midst even going against the natural law of self-preservation regardless of what the army does to them. That is the duty imposed on them by the almighty PTA law promulgated as far back as 1979 (?). Who said the army is here in Jaffna to protect the people?

There is an air of uncertainty about the fate and the future of the restructured library building complex for the Sword of Damocles seems to hang over it. There was a sensational news item in the Eelanadu a fortnight back that the library building may after all be pulled down at the behest of the army in occupation in Jaffna for exigencies of its own security. The people are left in suspense of the final outcome. Will it come under the auctioneer's hammer?

The purpose of the ritual of the sacrificial offering of the books to scare away the evil spirits in

Jaffna or to appease the anger of the gods performed with great gusto in the interest of the Jaffna people themselves perhaps is a moot point. If it was done in an attempt to draw them into the UNP fold at the DDC elections, one can't be so sure of their motive. But the pre-emptive strike of the sacking of the city of Jaffna in the first week of June 1981 had the reverse effect of alienating them altogether. But the pillaging of the library is a subject worthy of study by our social scientists in our national seats of learning in an effort to discover the state of the human psyche of those in the state protective agency that made this possible after half a century of free education and universal franchise.

This is indeed no stray or rare phenomenon for there have been news reports of many other libraries in the Tamil areas being reduced to ashes by the state security forces paid for by the taxes of the people. The SATURDAY REVIEW of 17th May gave details of some of them.

Another precious library that has gone up in flames belonged to the century old seat of learning at Point Pedro in the far North of the Island, that is a pride to any country in the world. It is no other than Hartley College with its glorious tradition of learning and scholarship, the nursery of many international scholars from the arid North, too numerous to mention. The evil day was 1st September 1984. Why this ill will against libraries? Are they such monstrous agents of evil to be so ruthlessly exterminated without even a trace? Are these deeds the after effects of some mental aberration? Social scientists and scholars do seem to have their hands full in probing these shameful acts of wild, barbaric vandalism. Was any official inquiry undertaken into such high-handed and questionable conduct of the state's protective agents?

The UNP's decade old dharmish-ta rule has been very eventful in the country's downward trend to anarchism and government's intolerance of its conscientious objectors. Violence and justice have confronted one another once too often and many a time right has had to give way in the onward march of might. It may appear quite logical for the UNP's seeming philosophy is that success alone matters in the end. The government seems to personify the twin evil genii of the Right and the Left of the modern world, on the one hand proclaiming itself to the gullible West to be a democracy of the first grade, while on the other, enjoying all the totalitarian power socialist dictatorships wield with no checks or brakes whatsoever. Woe be unto those who are caught under its heels or wheels!

THE VVT CAPER

The Valvettiturai Citizens Committee has sent the following letter to President Jayewardene:

It is our duty on behalf of the hundreds of civilians of Valvettiturai who were the victims of the merciless two-day-long attack, to report to you, the Commander-in-Chief of the Sri Lankan Armed Forces, the undistorted truth and details about that operation, which due to the partisan national media has gone largely unreported and unnoticed.

We are unable to hide to you the Head of the State, our exasperation about the manner in which this operation, which cost our town 5 deaths, 26 hospitalised cases of injured and about 50 O.P.D. cases and a full scale migration of most of the residents during that period.

It was a two-day-long attack, starting about 5 a.m. on both days. On the 10th, it went on from 5 a.m. to 3-30 p.m. and on the 11th it was done in two stretches, the first one from 5 a.m. to 12 noon and the second one from 1-30 p.m. to 6 p.m. During these hours the people were subjected to intermittent and simultaneous attacks from land, sea and air.

So far as we know, the following were the types of attack we had to face:

From land-mortar shelling.

From sea - naval shelling.

From air - (i) Planes - dropping of bombs. - throwing of fire-ball

like mechanisms which burn up places instantly. - mortar shells. (ii) Helicopters-shooting of machine guns, hurling of fire-ball like mechanisms.

People began to flee the town into the nearby villages on the morning of the first day but began to trickle back thinking that the worst was over. Those who returned and those who remained risking their life had to face the remorseless attack on the second day. If the first day's attack was unprecedented in that we were at the receiving end of a combined, simultaneous attack by bombers, helicopters, gunboats and land shelling, on the second day we had to face these for an entire full day (looking back it was an attack that lasted eleven out of twelve hours of the day) with a ferocity that exceeded the first day's one.

Naval shellings injured persons and damaged buildings and property within a range of about 4 miles from Valvettiturai and the air attacks have not left a single undamaged house from Kaddupulam to Nediyaadu, an extent of about 2 miles. With the combined attack of nine gunboats/ships, two bombers, two helicopters and an army detachment, the most congested part of the

town was pounded for 17 hours and 30 minutes.

Had it not been for the resumption of digging trenches done initially forty years ago to save ourselves from the Japanese air attacks, the death-toll at Valvettiturai on these two days would have been high. The victims this time were unsuspecting children mercilessly killed by the splinters that came off the shellings and bombings (Prasanna — 5 years, Sothilakshmi — 6 years, Ranjithkumar — 8 years, Devi—18years). Thambu Kathiravel, 62 years, a retired teacher, was gunned down by the Army on the first day.

Of the children, the first died when the Sri An Temple in which hundreds of people had taken shelter from the bombers was hit by a shell.

The number injured is very big. As mentioned earlier, the number yet warded in hospitals is 26, more than 50 were treated at the O.P.Ds, and many more got treatment from private practitioners.

The damage to houses has been heavy. The most painful damage was the gutting down of 50 of the 85 huts in which refugees from Trincomalee were housed. The manner these houses burnt on the fall of the bomb, the flame like character of the bomb itself, the charred

character of the remains have raised in the minds of those knowledgeable whether these were chemical bombs.

Inhabitants not only of this town but also those of neighbouring villages have moved further into the interior. Their plight is so bad that the Government Agent has ordered free issue of one weeks dry rations.

In reporting this to you, we do not for a moment side-step the fact that there is an armed fight between the state and the Tamil militants and that attacks like these have arisen out of that struggle. But what we from our knowledge want to emphasise especially in this case is that this whole operation as it had been executed was not something against the militants. This was one aimed at civilian targets, killing and injuring innocent civilian population and damaging civilian property. Whatever was told over the media, at least those who planned it and executed it know that it was against the civilian population.

This, of course, raises serious questions of political morality which we, as a Citizens Committee are not eligible to discuss. However, please permit us to point out that military operations of this type have built up among the Tamils the feeling that the Security Forces are in fact fighting the Tamils as a whole and the impression that if the Government considers the Tamils as part of the polity, it would not permit acts of this type.

Ten leading trade unions in the South have protested to President Jayewardene against the sending of Tamil officers in a number of Government institutions on compulsory leave following the bomb attacks by Tamil militants in Colombo.

These unions have made particular reference to the sending of Tamil officers at the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, Rupavahini and the Ministry of State on compulsory leave.

The unions have stated that though the Government claimed this measure was taken for the safety of the Tamil officers it was really another act of discrimination against the Tamil community and would serve to fan communal passions.

The unions have asked the President to take immediate steps to find a settlement to the ethnic problem.

The ten unions signatory to the protest are the Government Clerical Service Union, the Ceylon Teachers Union, The Sri Lanka National Teachers Union, the Industrial, Transport and General Workers Union, the Local Government Trade Union Federation, the State Staffs Union, the Insurance Employees Union, the United Workers Union, the Progressive

MORE PROTESTS

Co-operative Employees Union and the Workers Peasants Liberation Front.

The Ceylon Federation of Labour and the Government Workers' Trade Union Federation have sent the following letter to President Jayewardene:

The Ceylon Federation of Labour and the Government Workers' Trade Union Federation have decided to bring to your notice certain matters that relate to the security of workers and workplaces in the current political situation, the Government's proposed economic measures as will affect the living standard of workers, and the need for an immediate political solution to the ethnic crisis.

Our two Federations have no hesitation in condemning as terrorist the recent explosion of bombs in several workplaces. These inexcusable acts have killed several workmen and have injured and maimed several others and have affected employment.

We are disturbed by the failure of the Government to take the necessary steps in regard to the security of the workplaces in respect of acts of this nature. About a year ago the

Government publicly took upon itself the responsibility of organising for the public and the private sectors a security service as will be competent to cope with such acts. This function was even assigned to a Minister. But what has happened in so many workplaces. The position of the Police in regard to what happened in the Cold Stores bear ample testimony to the fact that the Government has failed in the responsibility it took upon itself. On its own statement the Police, despite prior and timely warning about Cold Stores being the target of a bomb attack, left the Company with its untrained staff to deal with the situation. We deplore this attitude.

We take this opportunity also to inform you that we cannot accept the position of the Government that the costs of the on going military operations should be met by what amounts to a wage freeze and other measures which are themselves additional burdens on the masses.

We have always been of the view that the military situation has arisen and has escalated on account of the Government's failure to involve a political ap-

proach firstly to minority rights and thereafter to a growing separatist movement. The military measures the Government has adopted have in no way contributed to an ending or an easing of the problem. On the contrary these have greatly aggravated it.

In these circumstances we request that—

(1) The Government take the responsibility for ensuring the safety of workplaces from terrorist attacks, and that the requisite measures be taken in consultation with the trade unions; that the Government ensure that these measures be free of racist approaches and that the Government withdraw its policy of excluding Tamils from workplaces.

(2) The Government make arrangements for the payment of compensation to all workers and dependants affected by the recent bomb explosions in workplaces.

(3) The Government desists from placing the economic burden of the military situation on the working class.

(4) The Government presents a reasonable political solution to the present crisis without further delay.

The letter has been signed by Mr. Batty Weerakoon, General Secretary of the CFL and Mr. P. D. Wimalasena, General Secretary of the GWTUF.

NON-VIOLENT THONDA!

Editor

SATURDAY REVIEW

Mr. S. Thondaman has worked his way into such a crucial position in Sri Lanka politics that any apology on his behalf, as made in the SATURDAY REVIEW of 7th June by the Director of Information of the Ceylon Workers Congress needs to be noted.

With regard to Mr. S. Thondaman not agreeing to the demand for a separate state, he knows that all that the Tamils wanted was to look after their own internal affairs in some sort of autonomous area. The cry for a separate State was never meant to be taken literally and the T.U.L.F. has recently

accepted offers made at the all Party conference which fell far short of a separate state. The separate state issue is being used by the Sinhalese leaders to mask their inability to agree among themselves as to the degree of devolution, if any, which should be given to the Tamils.

Mr. Thondaman believes in non-violence. Violence is not only just the physical violence of striking a man with a stick or shooting him. Violence can be exerted without moving a finger. When Mr. Thondaman asked his tea pluckers not to go to the morning parade but go to the temple instead and pray till just before noon and then report for work, he exerted such violence

that President Jayewardene caved in. Mr. Thondaman used a weapon far more violent than all the land mines and guns used by the Tamil "terrorists".

Mr. Thondaman is duly grateful. He is in the U.N.P and has been a long associate of President Jayewardene whom he immensely admires. He is also the best hated man by the racist section of the Sinhalese in the S.L.F.P and outside. His position is difficult and

killed. The armed forces prowling about in search of "terrorists hide-outs", strike a mine and the entire neighbourhood is wiped out. Even friendly foreign Governments have asked the President to discipline his armed forces. As long as undisciplined armed forces and Home Guards are allowed to freely kill Tamil civilians, the Tamils must fight back in defence.

If Mr. Thondaman is really committed to non-violence the first thing he would work for is an immediate cease-fire, with combatants on both sides withdrawing to base. Till this first step is taken there will always be violence. Once a genuine cease-fire is on, serious negotiations can start. European nations who used to kill each other have shown how problems can be resolved through negotiations. What is needed is the determination on both sides to succeed.

LETTERS

having won a famous victory if he kept his mouth shut he would have been wise. But he gratuitously gives an interview to the Hindu and makes the astounding statement that if the Tamil militants did not attack the armed forces there would be no trouble!

Mr. Thondaman has not cared to visit the North or East of Sri Lanka to see things for himself before denigrating the Tamils, who are being raped and killed by the armed forces and Home Guards. But he or his Secretariat must be getting Tamil news-papers (besides S. R.) which almost daily record the atrocities committed by the armed forces and Home Guards. Even if he is not disposed to believe local newspapers, foreign radio broadcast give details of civilians

ONCE UPON A TIME,
THERE WAS A STATUE...

Editor

SATURDAY REVIEW

Comrade Kandasamy participated in a general strike called for by the Public Servants Trade Union and became a martyr on June 5th 1947 when the Police

(Continued on page 7)

Ground Water: Are Threats Real?

The activities on and over our soils receive greater attention and a few try to see problems below our soils which are equally important.

As we know, our soils are underlain by limestone bed and it is known for its potential to retain ground water. Presence of caverns and passages enables movement of water within this medium. This geological formation is an important ingredient in the manufacture of cement, construction of buildings and road, etc., in this region. Indiscriminate mining of the limestone and removal of soil have become common practice now.

Limestone bed serves as a natural drainage system and for this reason we are ignorant about the importance of drainage in agriculture. The aim is to make quick buck and for that we are prepared to dump any material in to our highly permeable soils and drench or dust the plants and soils with chemicals if they can produce an immediate yield increase of a crop. Farmers are interested in size, weight and appearance and not worried about the contents of their farm produce. Soluble remnants left in the soil would eventually get leached into the ground water with the percolating irrigation or rain water. The invaluable limestone bed has become a permeable sewer carrying wastes and pollutants underground and it is here we draw or sometimes overdraw the 'precious ground water' for irrigation and domestic use.

There is a growing interest now to discover the substances applied

on the soil, in the ground water. Arising out from such exercises are some danger signals to the society. Outlined below are just three from the list of such man made hazards.

i. Our ground water in the intensively cultivated areas is nitrate concentrated and concentrations of nitrate at many places have exceeded the threshold level recommended by the World's Health Organisation (WHO). This indicates the blue baby hazard or methaemoglobinemia in babies and infants.

ii. More wells in the Valikamam and Vadamaradchi areas are turning saline — which means a progress towards barrenness.

iii. Ground water in the densely populated areas is faecally polluted—which implies the potential for several health problems.

The need for an alternative, regulated water supply to the densely populated areas of the North was felt long back during the early part of the 19th Century. Why this didn't turn real so far? There can be socio-political and economic constraints. But it is hightime to reiterate the importance of an alternate strategy of water use in the region.

Threats for our life is not only on the surface and from the air but below the surface also. Silence and negligence on this matter would only promote the extinction of the human race in this region.

Are these threats real? The subject is open for expert opinion.

—ENJAY

BEHOLD! OUR BRETHREN!

"Might is Right, is their motto!
While they 'invade', and on they go!
"Wipe out Terrorism" the banner they hold,
"We'd never retreat till then", they told.
"Militarisation, a must for peace talk,"
Mentioned all men, while they walked.
Guided by the gliding bombers,
Guardian angels of destruction,
Trampling down, the human rights,
Marching on, went they for fight.

Ah! yes they fought. With whom God knows!
Lightening, Thunder, Fire, from the foes.
Buildings bend and blaze in the fire!
Together burn our fondest desire!
Sire and son, mother and child;
Young and old, It's called genocide
Imported 'vultures,' and hired 'blood hounds,'
In all their ways, perform ethnocide.
Justice is dead, buried and gone;
Peace is quiet, kept in the grave.

Horror, Murder, Torment, Torture;
Do they await us, even in future?
The sight of our beloved, brave young boys;
Methinks upholds; our depressed hearts.
Awake! Behold! male and female!
Who else would come, if we but fail?
Break up the chains of enslavement;
Move on towards our goal; liberation.
Land of our pride, we pledge to thee!
Some sunny morn, You'll be Free!

—Thayalini Thiagarajah

SOUTH KOREA OUT DO SRI LANKA

Hundreds of people are imprisoned each year in South Korea for criticising the Government, according to a news release by Amnesty International.

The release adds:

Some have been tortured until they falsely confessed to such charges as trying to overthrow the Government or spying for North Korea, and have then been convicted in trials which blatantly violated international standards of fairness.

"You're a fish on the chopping block and we only have to serve you up for dinner", Lee Kwang-ung quoted his torturers as saying during interrogation. A high-school teacher, he was accused of reading poetry and books frowned on by the authorities, listening to North Korean broadcasts and criticising the Government. Convicted in 1983 of conspiring to overthrow the Government, he is serving a seven-year prison sentence.

Electric shock, beatings and deprivation of food and sleep are among the tortures described in a new report from AI: "South

Korea: Violations of Human Rights." Prisoners also reported having their heads immersed in water, being suffocated with wet towels, and the "barbecued chicken torture", in which the handcuffed victim is hung from a rod and spun around.

At least 10 political prisoners are known to have been executed since 1975, and at least two are currently under sentence of death.

Prisoners of conscience—jailed for expressing non-violent views—include students, teachers, clergy, journalists, trade unionists and farmers. Many are held for up to a month for such offences as taking part in demonstrations likely to cause social unrest or circulating false rumours. Others have been given long prison terms on charges of being "pro-communist", endangering national security or spying for North Korea, after trials lacking fundamental safeguards of fairness.

AI's report describes cases in which prisoners told the courts trying them that their confessions were false and resulted only from torture—and were then convicted

on the basis of those confessions. Many were held incommunicado and denied access to lawyers during the pre-trial period when they should have been preparing their defence. South Korean law contains safeguards against torture, but the report said the authorities fail to implement them.

AI named three agencies which interrogate political prisoners and which have been regularly reported to torture and ill-treat them: the Anti-Communist Bureau of the National Police, the Agency for National Security Planning and the Army Security Command.

Publication of the report follows visits to South Korea by AI dele-

gates in 1984 and 1985, and continuous monitoring of information from that country.

The organisation sent the Government a memorandum in August 1985, urging a series of measures to halt the abuses. These include the release of prisoners of conscience, a review of trial proceedings for all prisoners convicted under the National Security Law and the Anti-Communist Law, with retrials for those found to have been denied fair trial, investigation of reports of torture and an end to prolonged incommunicado detention. AI said the South Korean authorities had told it they were committed to protecting human rights, but had not replied on the specific facts and recommendations in the memorandum.

ONCE UPON A TIME ...

(Continued from page 6)

opened fire on the marching strikers.

In Memory of his death a statue was erected at Kolonnawa the very place where he fell as victim to the Police bullet. Commemorating his 9th death anniversary on June 5th 1956 his statue was profusely garlanded by the members of the G. C. S. U. of which late Mr. Kandasamy happened to be a member. But Ironically on that date the Sinhala only bill was taken up for debate in parliament and the Federal Party in opposition, had performed a satyagraha at the Galle Face green opposite the Parliament on that very date. The racist goondas who broke the satyagraha by thuggery being attracted by the fresh garlands demolished the Kandasamy Statue as well.



This is the 30th anniversary of the destruction caused to the statue of comrade Kandasamy. The political parties that had controlled the leadership of the G. C. S. U. from time to time ever since 1947 have come and gone out of power in this country on more than one occasion. Yet the Statue of Kandasamy has not been re-erected. Hope the statue would be re-erected again at the same place in Kolonnawa in time for his 40th death anniversary next year.

Urumpirai

Anandan

PARADISE LOST

Editor

SATURDAY REVIEW

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu spoke at the Law College, Colombo, on

the morning of 9th October 1926. In the unavoidable absence of Sir Anton Bertram, Chief Justice, who was expected to take the chair, Mr. E. W. Jayewardene, the President of the Law Students' Union, presided over the meeting. Mr. Jayewardene, who was later elevated to the bench of the Supreme Court, was the father of the President of Sri Lanka.

The excerpt of her speech which may be relevant for the present situation prevailing in our fair isle, is given below:—

"Citizens of tomorrow, fathers of tomorrow, I want you to make the history of this island as nature has written her story upon its leaves and mountains. I have travelled in many beautiful lands of which the poets have sung. My own land is full of myriad beauties. But I do not know of any land as this beautiful land of Ceylon. But beauty has responsibility. Like every other kind of heritage beauty has responsibility. Man stains the handiwork of nature by his unworthiness. The streams that gush from the mountains, whose pollucid draughts are meant for the thirsty are often times stained by blood. The mountains upon which the ascetics and sages of our land sat, even as Christ on the Mount of Olives, those mountains have often in the centuries been the pathways of invading enemies who have come to destroy. Your beautiful trees that yield fruit and shade, your harvests, your green fields—all these things from time to time have been desecrated because man has not known how to cherish that beauty that God has given as a heritage to them. But I want you in Ceylon to say to yourselves. We are a little island, we are a little sanctuary where all creeds and races of the world might find reconciliation and harmony."

Jaffna Mrs. R. Joganathan

CRICKET TOURNEY

St. Patrick's Vs. Manipay Hindu — Under 17

S.P.C. — 1st Innings - 149 for 5. A. M. Nimalraj scored the 1st Century of the Season, an unbeaten 103. There was a partnership of 72 runs between Nimalraj and G. S. Saverimuttu 25 for the 2nd Wicket.

Manipay Hindu in reply were able to muster only 95 runs out of which P. Ravindran scored 46 runs. The main wicket takers were G.S.Saverimuttu (4 for 22) and V. R. Tilakaraj 3 for 23)

Manipay Hindu in the second innings scored 73 for 6. Loyola took 2 for 21. St. Patrick's won in the 1st Innings.

St. John's Vs. St. Patricks — Under 17

S. P. C. scored 187 runs in the 1st Innings and the main contributions came from Nimalraj (77) and Jeyvendra (22). Ravirajan bowled well taking 4 for 39.

S. J. C. were all out in the 1st Innings for 175 runs and the bowling

honours were divided among Tilakarajah (3 for 44), G. S. Saverimuttu (2 for 26) and Anandarajah (2 for 17).

S. P. C. were 15 for no loss in the 2nd Innings (G. S. Saverimuttu 12 n. o.) S. P. C. won in the 1st Innings by 12 runs.

Jaffna Hindu Vs. St. Patrick's — Under 15.

J.H.C. scored 200 for 6 (N. Jeyaraj 61) in the last Innings S.P.C. were all out for 101 out of which J.J. Thayalan scored 21. S.P.C. lost in the 1st Innings.

St. Patrick's Vs. St. John's — Under 15

St. Patrick's were 128 for 9 and chief scorers were M.P. Rajanayagam 56 and A.J. Justin 33). N. Suthakar took 3 for 35. St. John's made 147 for 8 and N. Suthakar scored 27. M.P. Rajanayagam took 3 for 23 and A.J. Justin 3 for 37. S.P.C. lost in the 1st Innings.

— ANTON RAVINDRAN

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

GOVERNMENT OKAYS PROVINCIAL COUNCILS

The Cabinet of Ministers, on 18th June, endorsed the establishment of Provincial Councils as a solution to the ethnic problem. Informed

sources say that there will be a Chief Minister and elected Provincial Assembly for which the maximum powers will also be defined.

YUDDHAM SARANAM GACHCHAMI

The Vesak Card issued this year from the Prime Minister's Office contains excerpts from a well-known discourse by the Buddha.

Printed at the Government Press probably at state expense, and posted at state expense, the greeting card had been sent in the names of the Prime Minister, Mrs., son Sajith and daughter Dulanjalee.

The text (printed in all three languages) was very appropriate in the context of Sri Lanka's ethnic problem.

We only wondered to whom the message was intended.

Here it is:

"Mahanama, I ask you: How do you propose to settle this dispute by war?" questioned the Buddha,

"Lord, the Sakyas can easily subdue the Koliyas", replied Mahanama. "We can annihilate the Koliyas. Victory will then be ours. We'll smash all canals and dams they have blocked."

"Tell me, Vishvamitra, how do you propose to settle this dispute by war," the Buddha asked the Commander of the Koliyas.

"Lord, it's easy for the Koliyas to subdue the Sakyas, "was Vishvamitra's reply. "Then victory will be ours. We'll construct canals and dams on the Rohini at any place we wish".



"Hear me," said the Buddha. "Now, both of you stand victorious. Had you fought, only one of you would have won. And, that, too, after a terrible manslaughter. War is a disaster in the extreme. Killing caused through malice, anger and hatred is an insult to humanity. It does not manifest the truth, but what is untrue and unfair. A solution needs a compromise. Therefore, I would suggest to you, the Sakyas, to use the waters of the Rohini from this point up to its confluence yonder with the tributary Anjana. The Koliyas may use at their will the waters beyond.

"In arriving at a solution, one cannot have everything to oneself. Some sacrifice is necessary, in the name of humanity. This behoves both Sakyas and Koliyas. What say you, Vishvamitra?"

"Lord, I bow to your suggestion."

"You, Mahanama"?

"Lord, we accept your suggestion. A solution surely needs a compromise.

"We shall respect this decision. Lord, can we even dream of war, leave alone waging war, before the radiance of your dispassionate men"?

BISHOP SPEAKS OUT

Rt. Rev. Dr. B. Deogupillai, Bishop of Jaffna was the chief-guest at St. Patricks College Prize-giving on 18th June: Excerpts from his address:

Bomb-blasts, rocket-blasts, shell-blasts, machine-gun fire etc. have become everyday occurrences for us. We are being attacked from the land, from the sea and even from the air. Hundreds of peaceful, unarmed Tamil civilians have been killed or wounded during such attacks, carried out during the past few months by the Government Forces in places like Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Vavuniya, Mannar, Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi, Valvettiturai, Jaffna, Kayts, Mandaitivu. Many peaceful Tamil civilians have

been brutally massacred by the Armed Forces in Murunkan, Chedikulam, Iruthayapuram, Akkarai-pattu, Kurikadduvan, Mandaitivu, and other places. Thousands of peaceful Tamil civilians, who have been forced to flee from their traditional homes due to the activities of the Armed Forces, are not being properly cared for by the Government. Fishing, the only livelihood of thousands of peaceful Tamil civilians, has been totally banned in the Northern Eastern seas. All these clearly show that under the pretext of fighting the "Marxist Tamil terrorists" the Government is intent on the annihilation of the Tamils living in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

The Citizens' Committees of the Northern and Eastern Provinces have appealed several times to the President of Sri Lanka against these inhuman measures taken against a peaceful defenceless people but with no effect. Since the peaceful Tamil civilians of the Northern and Eastern Provinces have no effective means at their disposal to defend themselves against the unjust attack on their lives and properties, the time has come, I feel, for us to raise our voice and make an appeal to the United Nations Organization to take effective steps to halt the annihilation of the peaceful, defenceless Tamil civilians of the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

GHOST TOWN

Kilinochchi town is now bereft of people, that is, native people, who have fled and taken refuge in other areas.

Kilinochchi is now occupied by "foreigners" — the Security Forces unsure of their ground and the Tamil militants who are flexing their muscles.

Kilinochchi, one of the main entrepots in the trade between the North and the South, remains paralysed.

For how long and what for, are the pertinent questions.