

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

Vol 4 Nos.12-13

8th-15th June 1985

The release of the SATURDAY REVIEW of 1st June 1985 was held up for seven days because a copy of it had to be sent to the Censor in Colombo for re-scrutiny. Censorship delays also made it impossible to publish the SR on schedule last week. Readers would understand our predicament from the accompanying letters:

CENSOR ON THE

WAR - PATH

Dear Readers :

We have been forced to conclude that the Censor—the Secretary to the Ministry of State, who is the "Competent Authority" under the Emergency Regulations—is demanding more than his pound of flesh.

The Censor is insisting that all material intended for publication in the SATURDAY REVIEW should be forwarded to him in Colombo for approval.

To us, the Censor appears to be displaying crass ignorance of the geography of Sri Lanka, of the present state of communications between the Southern and Northern capitals, of printing schedules and of newspaper distribution systems.

When the SR was allowed to resume publication in February 1984—after a seven-month ban imposed under the Emergency Regulations—strict conditions were set as to what could not be printed in it.

In addition, it was required that all news items, letters, articles, pictures, etc., should be sent, before publication, to the Government Agent of Jaffna, who was designated the "Competent Authority" for purposes of censorship in Jaffna.

CENSORED

We tolerated the GA of Jaffna acting as Censor for the reason that he was easily accessible: his office is less than a mile from our office.

But now we have been ordered by the Secretary to the Ministry of State to send copy all the way to Colombo.

The original order came by letter dated 18th April 1985.

We thought it was a mistake because the GA of Jaffna continued to accept material for censorship—until 31st May 1985. On that day, he informed us that he no longer enjoyed the powers of censorship as far as the SR was concerned.

We believe the Secretary was constrained to draw attention to his letter of 18th April 1985—and insist on compliance with its contents—because of the stinging attack on his Minister, Mr. Ananda Tissa de Alwis in the SR of 18th May 1985.

CENSORED

(criticism of the Minister, which appeared in the SR of 1st June!)

To us, Mr. de Alwis is just one more politician, subject to public scrutiny as long as he holds public office. We have seen hundreds of politicians like him strut on the political stage for some time and then fade away, to be completely forgotten by the people.

To us, truth is more important. Truth is something eternal. We cannot lie to you, Dear Readers, about what is happening in the North, especially when our operations are based in Jaffna.

CENSORED

In our struggle to ensure the continuity of the SR, we have been inspired and encouraged by President Jayewardene's dictum: "The freedom of the Press is the essence of liberty and this is the source of all other liberties. If this freedom is suppressed, restrained or controlled, then the foundation for autocracy is laid..."

In view of the position taken up by the Secretary which, we have no doubt, coincides with that of his Minister, we considered three options: to suspend publication of the SR until the cramping order is rescinded; to publish the SR as a monthly magazine; to publish the SR from Madras.

For the moment, we have decided not to exercise any of these options. We shall endeavour to produce the SR—censored from Colombo but published as usual from Jaffna.

—EDITOR

The train service between Colombo and Jaffna was resumed on 14th June, after a lapse of many months during which period weeds had begun to sprout on the tracks.

1. CENSOR TO EDITOR

MINISTRY OF STATE,
Transworks House,
Lower Chatham Street,
Colombo 1.
18th April 1985.

The Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

By virtue of the powers vested in me by Regulation 14 (1) of the Emergency (Miscellaneous Provisions & Powers) Regulations No. 5 of 1985, I, Buddhin Indrajith Gunatunge, Secretary to the Ministry of State, appointed to be Competent Authority for the purpose of Regulation 14, being of opinion that it is necessary for preventing and restricting the publication in Sri Lanka and or the transmission from Sri Lanka to places outside Sri Lanka, of matter which would or might be prejudicial to the interests of national security, the preservation of public order, maintenance of supplies and services essential to the life of the community, and matters inciting and encouraging persons to mutiny, riot or civil commotion, do hereby direct that all material, which term shall include articles, comments, news items, pictorial representations and photographs, to be published in the SATURDAY REVIEW shall before such publication be submitted or exhibited to me at the Ministry of State, "Transworks House", Lower Chatham Street, Colombo 1.

B. I. Gunatunge

Secretary to the Ministry of State
COMPETENT AUTHORITY.

2. G. A. JAFFNA TO EDITOR

My No. ACG/ES/J/SR/46
Jaffna, 31-05-85

The Editor,
SATURDAY REVIEW
4th Cross Street,
Jaffna.

Dear Sir,

Please note that all articles submitted by you for approval for publication in the Saturday Review issue for Saturday June 1st, 1985 and in

(Continued on page 8)

Now, Fully Censored in Colombo, Published From Jaffna. HA! HA!!

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

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GAMINI NAVARATNE

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CABINET RIFT WIDENS

One of the results of the Anuradhapura massacre has been the sharpening—and public airing—of differences within the Cabinet.

For the first time, both President Jayewardene and National Security Minister Athulathmudali have publicly acknowledged the existence of demands for their resignations.

Speaking to the Boy Scouts, President Jayewardene referred to such demands and announced that, like Winston Churchill, he intended to stick on "until the pubs closed".

"I won't leave office until the people want me to do so" he said.

Mr. Athulathmudali was, it is learnt, the object of sharp attack by several of his Cabinet colleagues especially, Prime Minister Premadasa, who sees him as a powerful rival in the struggle for Presidential succession.

Obviously referring to behind the scenes including inter-Cabinet attacks on him, Mr. Athulathmudali told TV viewers and Parliament that he is ready to give up his portfolio to anyone who could do his job better, but that there were "no volunteers" among critics.

He also said that anyone who took over from him would have to operate with the same Armed Forces and the same Police.

Finally, he pleaded that he really had no powers to give direct orders to the security forces.

He told a press conference on 21st May that he had "no direct

S. R. FUND

The SATURDAY REVIEW acknowledges with thanks the following further contributions received for our Refugee Relief Fund.

In Memory of David Cooray (R. I. P) by a member of his Family	2,000.00
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a parcel of clothes, a stereo cassette recorder and a clock.	

authority over anyone and had not been given legal powers to give direct orders".

Mr. Premadasa did not confine his attacks to the Cabinet.

In public speeches, he questioned the value of national security precautions when security forces "could not even hit a tyre of the vehicle" in which those responsible for the Anuradhapura massacre were travelling.

In a pointed reference to his colleague, he advised listeners at the opening ceremony of the Goonesinhapura Housing Scheme that one of the most important qualities of a politician or person was to "avoid boasting".

Mr. Athulathmudali replied to this in an oblique reference in Parliament during the debate of the emergency. With Mr. Premadasa's unexpected public appeal for discussions with India in mind, he made the snide aside that he was glad to see that certain colleagues had changed their minds about the value of talks with India.

This was answered in the same debate by Mr. Premadasa exhorting the 2,000 Buddhist monks who had performed *satyakriya* on the route to Parliament against the mishandling of the security situation, to perform *Satyakriya* in the villages as well.

Political circles were also agog last week over reports of ructions at the first Cabinet meeting after "Bloody Tuesday" as some newspapers have dubbed the Anuradhapura massacre of 14th May.

Three Ministers—reportedly Mr. Gamini Jayasuriya, Mr. E. L. B. Hurulle and Mr. Nissanka Wijeyaratne—are said to have threatened to quit unless the ethnic problem is settled soon.

It is also learnt that the selection of Mr. Gamini Dissanayake to visit Anuradhapura on behalf of the Cabinet was made after it was considered "inadvisable" for Mr. Athulathmudali to do so and after the Prime Minister had flatly refused to do so.

(Courtesy: Forward 1st June)

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

TORCH, published fortnightly in English by Bishop's House; Jaffna for private circulation - Vol. 1 No.4 (25th April, 1985)

INDIAN AND FOREIGN REVIEW published in English by Publications Division of the Government of India, Patiala House, New Delhi on 15th and last day of every month. Annual subscription : Indian Rs. 137/-

SRI LANKA PROFILES, a monthly East - West publication in English issued from 238, D. S. Senanayake Vidiya, Kandy Annual Subscription Rs.42/- (inland), £ 5 (overseas).

CARE NEWSLETTER, published monthly by CARE, National Affairs, P. O. Box 51 Kensington Park, SA 5068, Australia. Devoted to human rights issues. Annual subscription : Australian \$ 10.

DALIT VOICE, fortnightly publication fighting for "Persecuted minorities" published by Dalit Sahitiya Academy, 109, 7th. Cross, Palace Lower Orchards, Bangalore 560003, India, Re 1/- per copy.

SATYODAYA, bulletin of the Satyodaya Centre for Social Research and Encounter, 30, Pushpadana Mawatha, Kandy, published

four times a year. Annual subscription : Rs. 7-50 (inland) £ 4 (overseas airmail).

VOICE OF THE VOICELESS, published by the Co-ordinating Secretariat for Plantation Areas, 30, Pushpadana Mawatha, Kandy, four times a year. Annual Subscription : 7-50 (inland), £ 4 (overseas air mail).

THE MORNING STAR, a Christian bi-lingual weekly (English and Tamil) published every Friday since 1841, by the Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India, from 330, Navalar Road, Jaffna.

VINIVIDA, social and cultural monthly, published by the Manawa Hithavadi Bhikku Sanvidanaya (Bhikku Organisation for Humanity), 500, Sri Maha Bodhi Vihara, Elvitigala Mawatha, Colombo. 5. Editorial Board: Ven. Mandawala Pannawansa, Ven. Hathigammana Uttarananda, Ven. Karambe Gunananda, Ven. Udagama Hemaloka, Ven. Senapura Vijithananda.

TAMIL INFORMATION, English bi-monthly published on behalf of the Tamil Information Centre, 3rd Floor, 24-28, Clapham High Street, London SW7UR.

THE MAHAWAMSA MENTALITY

This article was published world-wide through the GEMINI NEWS SERVICE, London.

History and legend bedevil the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka that has now so tragically developed into bouts of increasingly horrifying bloodshed. One argument at the root of the conflict between the Sinhalese and the Tamils is about which of the two peoples arrived on the island first.

The Sinhalese (Buddhists) form 74 per cent of the population and claim the entire country belongs to them. The Tamils (Hindu), who constitute 14 per cent of the population, say their ancestors were on the island hundreds of years before the Sinhalese arrived.

According to the Mahawamsa, the source book of Sinhalese history, a prince named Vijaya and 700 followers arrived in Sri Lanka from north India 2528 years ago to found the Sinhalese race.

The Mahawamsa synchronises the founding of the race with the death of the Buddha at Kusinara in India.

It relates that the Buddha, on the day of his passing away, addressed Sakra, the king of the gods, thus: "My doctrine, O Sakra, will eventually be established in the island of Sri Lanka; and on this day, Vijaya, eldest son of Sinhabahu, King of Sinhapura (believed to be modern Bengal), lands there with 700 followers, and will assume the sovereignty there. Do thou, therefore, guard well the King and his train and the island of Sri Lanka."

Sakra, in turn, the tradition goes, advised Vishnu, a deity of the Hindu Pantheon, to protect Vijaya and his followers.

This Mahawamsa tradition has been ingrained in the Sinhalese mind for centuries and from it has arisen certain beliefs. Chief of these is that the Sinhalese were a nation brought into being to carry the torch lit by the Buddha.

By

G. N.

Through the same tradition Vishnu was made the patron saint of Sri Lanka. Almost every Buddhist temple contains an image of the deity who is worshipped as the protector of the land, the race and the faith.

The Tamils refer to Ramayana, which recounts in verse the abduction of Sita, wife of the Indian prince Rama, by the Sri Lanka king Ravana who, they say, was a Dravidian (Tamil). This event is supposed to have taken place over 3,000 years ago.

Quite apart from that, they point to the fact that Sri Lanka's north is separated from South India by the narrow Palk Strait. At some points the distance between the two countries is only 13 miles. They argue that there must have been migrations across the seas and that because the majority in south India are Tamils, these early settlers must also have been Tamils.

The Sinhalese, however, claim that the Tamils first arrived as invaders in the 2nd Century BC. There followed several invasions until the arrival of the first Western colonisers, the Portuguese, in the 16th Century.

The Tamils entrenched themselves in the north of the island. When they had powerful kings, they extended their sway over the

rest of the island as well. The most powerful was Elara, who reigned over Sri Lanka for 43 years in the 2nd Century BC. He was reputed to have been a just ruler and, though a Hindu, was tolerant of Buddhism.

He was defeated in battle by Dutugemunu, the hero king of the Sinhalese Buddhists. Dutugemunu built many monuments to the Buddha. To this day they bear witness to his munificence and piety. The greatest of the monuments is Ruvanweli Stupa at Anuradhapura. It compares with the pyramids of Egypt.

Anuradhapura, 125 miles north of Colombo and now the scene of a massacre of 146 Sinhalese civilians, was the seat of government of the Sinhalese up to 900 years ago until more invasions from South India forced them to move further southwards.

To maintain their hold on the Sinhalese electorate, Sinhalese political leaders continue to harp on the Dutugemunu tradition and the glories of Anuradhapura.

CENSORED

There are about 25,000 monks in Sri Lanka, which is reputed to be the abode of orthodox Buddhism.

They are taking the lead in opposing the Government's proposals to grant regional autonomy to the Tamil-dominant Northern and Eastern Province, as an alternative to the extremists' demand for a separate independent state.

The all-party talks convened by President Jayewardene last year flopped because the Buddhist clergy were totally against the granting of any degree of self-rule for the Tamils. Their fear, shared by most Sinhalese, is that this could eventually lead to the link-up of the Tamils in north Sri Lanka with their compatriots in the south Indian state of Tamilnadu to pose a threat, as in the ancient past.

The fact that Tamilnadu leaders support the Sri Lanka Tamils in their independence struggle, even harbouring the guerrilla leaders, has exacerbated the situation. The guerrillas, for their part, are determined to carve out a separate state for the Tamils. The increasing pressure on educational opportunities, jobs and land is the current source of conflict.

Rapid economic development of the entire island could defuse the situation, but most of the Government's energies are now devoted to keeping a semblance of law and order in the north.

Expenditure on defence in the region is running at Rs. 5.5 billion a year, a sizeable chunk of the national budget.

CENSORED

HORRIFIC BLOOD - LETTING

This editorial is from "The Times of India" of 20th May:

The bloodletting in Sri Lanka, of which both Tamils and Sinhalese are victims, has reached horrific proportions. Hardly has one atrocity been perpetrated than it is followed by another, and yet another... On 14th May some 150 Sinhalese civilians were slaughtered in Anuradhapura in the North Central Province. While President Jayewardene has said that the incident was a reprisal by Tamil militants for the killings of Tamil civilians by Sri Lankan soldiers running amuck over the last few months, the militants have denied any hand in it. Unsurprisingly, Tamils living in and near Anuradhapura have been targets of Sinhalese retaliation, with about 75

of them being put to death in turn. Local tension is still running high.

On 15th May nearly 50 Tamils were massacred on a ferry boat off Delft island off the northern peninsula, provoking the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) to appeal to governments and international humanitarian bodies to save the Tamil minority from "extinction".

On 17th May it has now been reported, 40 young Tamils, arrested in the Eastern Province by a special police task force, were first made to dig their own graves, then killed and buried in them.

Such is the degree of lawlessness prevailing that a single army corporal who went berserk in Anuradhapura fired on Tamil refugees even as they were being evacuated, killing nine of them and injuring many more.

But what is truly blood-curdling is not so much the accumulation of individual incidents of utter bestiality. It is more the prospect of the island being drenched in a blood-bath with both Tamil insurgents and the Sri Lankan Army committing excesses, with ordinary Tamils and Sinhalese, as ominously in Anuradhapura, or even Tamil Hindus and Tamil-speaking Muslims in the Eastern Province, as recently happened, getting at each other's throats, and with July 1983 being repeated on a gigantic scale.

So far, the Sri Lanka administration has managed to keep the communal situation outside the Northern and Eastern Provinces under control. But for how much longer? The Anuradhapura killings, first of

Sinhalese and then of Tamils in a Sinhalese backlash, show how precarious communal harmony is.

What is perhaps most depressing, and infuriating, is the complete paralysis of will that Colombo is displaying, unable to rein in its brutal soldiery and unwilling to pursue with determination a political solution offering substantive autonomy to the Tamils. No wonder the vacuum its apparent impotence is creating is sought to be filled by Buddhist clerics of both the Asgiriya and Malwatte Chapters who are reported to have formed a body "to advise on national security".

As it is, President Jayewardene cannot resist hardline pressure from these quarters. Should the clergy start calling the shots, a bloody civil war would be on the cards. That is why it is urgently necessary for the Sri Lanka Government to resume the political dialogue in earnest even as it disciplines its trigger-happy soldiers.

THE TRAUMA OF ANURADHAPURA

One of the best commentaries on the Anuradhapura Massacre and its implications was published in "Forward" of 1st June. We wanted to reproduce it in full, but the Censor in Colombo had other ideas. Here is what is left of it after the butchery:

Although over a fortnight has past since the outrageous massacre of innocents at Anuradhapura, its trauma still remains.

The "war on terrorism" which the government launched in 1984 has seen many senseless and brutal killings, but no other event has had such an impact on public consciousness especially in the south after the hideous racist riots of 1983.

Who was responsible for the Anuradhapura massacre and why it was done have still not been finally clarified.

The government, through Minister Anandatissa de Alwis, first accused TELO, but later, through Minister Lalith Athulathmudali, changed its position to accuse Prabakaran's LTTE.

All the Tamil guerrilla groups (including TELO and LTTE) have denied having anything to do with the massacre. But only the statement of PLOTE's Uma Maheswaran, who unreservedly condemned the massacre as both unjustified and counter-productive to any liberation struggle, carried real conviction.

There are certainly some new elements in the Anuradhapura events.

CENSORED

Secondly, all their previous attacks on police stations, army camps and banks have been done in their own uniforms, and not in the uniforms of or closely resembling those of, the army.

Thirdly, this was the first example of an obviously terror attack on a major town in the Sinhalese areas, and a "sacred city" to boot.

CENSORED

But the balance of evidence available up to now and not merely that provided by the government seems to tilt in favour of the thesis that the massacre was organised and conducted by one or more of the Tamil guerrilla groups of by some force closely associated with them.

CENSORED

In regard to the Anuradhapura incident, there is evidence that the attack was led by persons who knew the town well.

In the debate in Parliament, names were mentioned, and it was said that one of those who led the attack on the bazaar was a person whose parents and family had been burnt in their shop during the 1983 riots.

But even if the purpose was retaliation and revenge, there can be no justification for the despicable massacre of innocents at Anuradhapura any more than for excesses in the north or east. Both must be unreservedly condemned and opposed.

CENSORED

Morality and politics apart, if the logic of the Anuradhapura massacre is to become the pattern and if one retaliatory strike against civilians is to follow another on a tit-for-tat basis in north and south, eventually it will be only the armed services and the guerrillas who will remain.

Most residents of south Sri Lanka, and the Sinhalese in particular, have not yet recovered from the shock of realising from the Anuradhapura events how inept the Government's security arrangements are.

For nearly a year, the Minister of National Security had been telling the people of the South to keep out of the act and to leave the fight against "terrorism" to him and his Security Forces. He had boasted that victory was in sight and, on May Day 1984, said that substantial advances would be made in the fight before May Day 1985.

During this period he did not say as he says now that he had not been given the power to issue a direct order to anyone. He allowed the media to present him as Supremo and Generalissimo rolled into one.

The case with which the attackers entered Anuradhapura, shot up the town, and escaped took everyone aback.

In this respect, the government showed all the ineptness that the French High Command showed over the Maginot Line in World War II or the British in regard to the defence of Singapore.

They assumed that the "enemy" would attack from one direction when, in fact, it came from the opposite direction with little or no check or resistance.

What made things worse was, as the Prime Minister has rubbed in, the security authorities had prior intelligence information that an attack on Anuradhapura was to be expected.

The unvalorous (to say the least) conduct of the Police at Anuradhapura and Nochchiyagama who, as the Prime Minister again rubbed in, did not even try to shoot at a tyre of the

vehicle in which the attackers were making their get-away but apparently preferred to put their own security above that of the people, made the position even worse.

The Government has congratulated itself that, unlike in 1983, there has been no mass backlash to the Anuradhapura massacre in the form of anti-Tamil violence.

CENSORED

What shocked Sinhala opinion was the fact that, despite the big talk about security (with no less than five Ministers in charge of the subject) and the massive expenditure (according to the Minister of Finance Rs. 16 million a day and Rs. 5.5 billion this year) security had broken down so totally and so abjectly in Anuradhapura.

The broad reaction was that things have gone too far and that something must be done to bring the ethnic dispute, which is tearing the country apart and pushing it to the edge of bankruptcy, to an end.

The "Sinhala hawks" who are shouting for total war even to the extent of chopping down all the remaining forest reserves and subjecting the Tamil areas to aerial and naval bombardment, are a strident minority.

But while the feeling that the attempt at a military solution had proved futile is widespread, those like the 3 party alliance recommending a cease fire and the start of negotiations with important sections of Tamil opinion, including the TULF and the representatives of the guerrillas, have not yet become the predominant force.

In this connection the discussion called by the Asgiriya Mahanayake at Kandy was an important development. Present on invitation were the leaders of the SLFP, LSSP, CPSL, SLMP and MEP and the Mahanayakes of all the other Buddhist Chapters. Only the U. N. P. although invited, refused to turn up.

Mrs. Bandaranaike had obviously a lot to do with this initiative. She had earlier visited both the Malwatte and Asgiriya Mahanayakes and obviously, from the speedy way which she agreed to support the proposals made, had forehand knowledge of what would be proposed.

The two trends in the proposals made reflect the trends that are now striving for supremacy among the Sinhalese people.

Only the SLFP was ready to back the proposal for a parallel Security Council headed by the Maha Sanga and with representatives of Opposition parties as members to advise the official Joint Operations Council on how best to conduct its "war against terrorism". The CPSL-LSSP-SLMP alliance was strongly opposed to this proposal or any other within the parameters of the "military solution".

But there was general agreement on the proposal for negotiations with the different sections of Tamil opinion, including the TULF and the guerrilla groups, and this aspect is likely to be developed further when discussions start again on June 4.

Interestingly enough, it was disclosed at the talks, that some Buddhist organisations had already started to explore the possibility of discussions between the government and guerrillas.

Meanwhile the government has stirred up a hornet's nest with (a) the President's threat to impose Martial Law, (b) the proposed granting to government M.P.S. of substantial executive powers now vested solely in the President and (c) the formation of what will be a UNP political army under the guise of an Auxiliary military force.

All Opposition parties have condemned these moves and the 3-party alliance has called on all other political parties to join together to resist these measures and compel the government to withdraw them.

The government has arrested around 400 J. V. P's who were at liberty but released most of them after a few days detention. It has done the same with Tamil youth arrested in house-to-house searches in Wellawatte and Grandpass. Everything points to the fact that this was a rehearsal to see how effective Police swoops would be if and when Martial Law is declared.

The situation is not merely extremely serious but changing fast.

CENSORED

Nevertheless united action now by all democratic forces can still force the government to retreat.

The following despatch from Colombo appeared in "The Times of India" on 26th May under the heading of "Lessons from Anuradhapura":

If the Anuradhapura massacre was the work of Tamil guerrillas fighting for a separate state in North Sri Lanka it reflects a major policy change by them and poses a new threat to President Jayewardene's Sinhalese-dominated government.

Hitherto, their general policy had been not to attack Sinhalese civilians. All six major guerrilla groups had repeatedly said in their original policy statements that their struggle was not directed against the Sinhalese but against the "repressive state machinery".

To quote from a publication of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) led by V. Prabhakaran. "We have nothing against the Sinhalese but we wish to live in this country with self-respect and dignity. Is it a crime to ask for our basic rights? Let the tyrants answer this. We wish to tell the Sinhalese that these tyrants are cheating them by carrying on a false propaganda about our aims and objectives".

Consonant with this policy, until recently most Sinhalese living in the Tamil-dominant north, had been spared though their property and business were damaged.

TIT FOR TAT?

Of course, after the 1983 holocaust when a large number of Tamils in Sinhalese areas in the south were butchered, there are not many Sinhalese civilians beyond Vavuniya and hardly any in the Jaffna peninsula. They were evacuated by the government to safety.

MASS KILLING

The first-ever mass killing of Sinhalese in the north by guerrillas occurred last December when about 250 men, women and children at the Dollar and Ken farms at Mullaitivu, south-west of Jaffna, were killed by LTTE cadres. They were the advance party of "farmers" whom the government planned to settle in the North.

(Censored)

This was a direct challenge to the guerrillas who were vehemently opposed to "state aided Colonisation in the traditional Tamil territory".

Then came the Anuradhapura tragedy on 14th May.

(Censored)

On 3rd May, the cadres of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) raided the Karainagar naval base.

(Censored)

The question being asked by opposition political parties and the public is how could the guerrillas have penetrated the thick security cordon and travelled about 80 km. from near Puttalam on the north-east coast to Anuradhapura in the north central province and returned without being accosted by the security forces.

IN PARLIAMENT

When the matter was raised in parliament on Thursday by the opposition. Mr. Dinesh Gunewardene of People's United Front alleged that the Government had prior information about the plan to attack Anuradhapura and had even prepared a contingency plan which was scrapped on "orders from above". Was it the Army High Command or the President himself who gave the order? he asked. The question went unanswered by the government but the Prime Minister, Mr. R. Premadasa, acknowledged that an arrested "terrorist" had given information about the possible attack.

If the guerrillas indeed were behind the incident, it reveals that while they continue attacks on security forces and state property, they retain the option to attack Sinhalese

anywhere, even in Colombo, if there are any more reprisals against Tamil civilians in the North.

This would be an ominous development which would create a major security problem for the government making it necessary to divert more resources from development to defence. Though Rs. 2.5 billion has been earmarked for defence this year, it is expected that Rs. 2 billion more will be needed before the end of the year.

RAIDS IN CITY

About 200 Tamils were taken into custody during a combined house-to-house search operation by the Police and the Army in some of the predominantly-Tamil localities of the city on 25th May official sources said.

They said people living in those areas were checked against the electoral list to find if any "undesirable elements" were being harboured. Those who were not in the list and could not establish their bona fides were taken in for questioning.

"Such searches are routine in the north", one official said. The searches were believed to be part of the intensified security alert in the city following the recent Anuradhapura massacre.

Residents of localities like Wellawatte and Kotahena said over 400 people had been taken into custody during the search operation, in which over 300 men of the security forces took part.

(Censored)

A MATTER OF TIME

In the wake of the Anuradhapura and Wilpattu massacres on May 14th 1985, it becomes necessary to take a close look at what happened — as well as at what should have happened, but did not happen. This narrative adds to what has already been revealed in Parliament.

Few people may know that a plan for the surveillance of the Wilpattu coastline by Wildlife Department staff was put into operation as far back as 1983. In consultation with the Police and Security Services.

(CENSORED)

In all, 24 members of the Wildlife Department staff in Wilpattu died on the morning of May 14th gunned down by a gang that still remains unidentified and unapprehended. We have only the National Security Minister's word that, according to the government's improved intelligence feedback, three of the attackers who were injured by helicopter fire, subsequently died.

CENSORED

Some other questions now become pertinent. Our own, and

decidedly first-rate intelligence network provides the answers.

Q. 1: Was any attempt made to alert the Wilpattu staff once the Anuradhapura attack had begun?

A. 1: Yes. General Tissa Weerasingha himself telephoned the Director of Wildlife at his residence. The General's urgent call was to ask that the Wilpattu sanctuary staff be alerted to evacuate into the jungle taking with them their firearms and vehicles and, if possible, to block roads in the Park by felling trees.

Q. 2: What time did the General telephone the Director, Wildlife?

A. 2: The General called while the Anuradhapura attack was still on, so it had to be around 8-30 a.m., certainly no later than 8-40 a.m. The whole point of the General's call was that he suspected the Anuradhapura attackers would use the Wilpattu Park as their getaway route, and wanted to foil such a plan.

Q. 3: Was the General's message sent to Wilpattu?

A. 3: No, not until it was too late anyway.

Q. 4: How was the message sent?

A. 4: Contrary to popular rumour, it was not sent by Registered Post.

CENSORED

Q. 8: Is it true that the Director Wildlife has not attended the funerals of any of his 24 staffers killed in Wilpattu?

A. 8: We reliably understand that the Director Wildlife was there, in spirit.

Our intelligence service has just sent us a hot, hot postscript: For some inexplicable reason, it has now been decided to make "sitting ducks" of all surviving Wildlife Department staff in the Wilpattu and surrounding ranges by herding them, in two lots, into Maradanmadu (no radio-link, remember?) and Hunuwillagama, thereby leaving the entire sanctuary range more or less as "open country" for the free and unimpeded movement of the killer gang yet at large.

In view of the new requirement that all material intended for publication in the SATURDAY REVIEW must be sent to the Censor in Colombo for approval, there is likely to be considerable delay in the publication of news, letters and articles reaching us.

We appeal to Readers to bear with us in this untenable situation forced on us by the Censor.

To save time — and until the problem with the Censor is sorted out — Readers residing outside the North may send their contributions to Gamini Navaratne, "Sandesa", 23, Canal Row, Colombo-1.

Donations to the Editor's Refugee Relief Fund should be sent as usual to the SATURDAY REVIEW office at 118, 4th Cross Street, Jaffna. All cheques should be drawn in favour of New Era Publications Ltd.

WHY THE HIGH FAILURE RATE?

The Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

I followed with interest the letter by Dr. S. R. H. Hoole, concerning the University of Jaffna published in the issue of 20th April and the reply to it by the University Dons published in the issue of 11th May: permit me to make some comments.

First of all, those among the Tamils who are interested in the academic future of our younger generation should be very grateful to the senior lecturers who have stuck committedly to the work of the university in spite of all the hardships that they face as a result of the political situation and the lack of support from the top. As they point out in their letter, they could with many of their colleagues have gone abroad for lucrative jobs and security. The writer is sure that Dr. Hoole did not mean to belittle them in any way, but was addressing himself to a problem which is of grave concern to all those who are interested in the University of Jaffna.

The problem is, why is that so many of our students, as much as 75 per cent in certain batches, fail the final examinations? Why is it that many end up as drop-outs and wreck their whole future after wasting so many years?

It is imperative that answers are sought urgently to these questions and action taken to remedy this situation. It is this that the writer will address herself to, in the context of the explanations given by the Dons to these questions.

It is not correct to dismiss, as the Dons do, the general degree students as not being the cream of our students, simply because they did not enter the Engineering or Medical Faculty and got in only on their 'third' tries. There are many who accepted admission to the Science faculty on the first try. There are others who try for engineering or medicine by sitting a second time in spite of gaining admission to the science faculty on the first try. Anyone who has observed such cases would know that many of them fail to obtain entrance to engineering or medicine not because of any lack of ability, but because they find it difficult to prepare sufficiently in the present environment of social traumas and political concerns within the short time they get after receiving their previous try's results. They are the cream of our students because they come within the top 15 to 20 per cent of all Jaffna students who sit the Advanced Levels.

Taken on an Island-wide basis they would easily come within the top 10 per cent. While Sinhalese students with lesser results than they enter the medical and engineering faculties and pass out as profes-

sionals, our university students end up in frustration after wasting their precious years. Moreover, many of these university students had shown a lot of perseverance and had kept up the high performance level of the top Tamil students at the Advanced Levels at a time when the average performance of the Tamils is sliding down because of the social-political situation and the general lack of discipline. Indeed, if the basis of selection was merit as in the days of their senior dons, these students would surely have entered engineering or medicine! Hence it is unfortunate that the potential of the Jaffna University students should be denied by their own teachers. The statement that 'the majority of the students following courses in science are those who

who can competently "handle" his subject. That is, he should have a deep grasp and wide knowledge of the subject. If he had deep grasp alone would he be able to impart the basic foundations and historical background to his students? Again, if he had a wide knowledge alone—much wider than his lecture material—would he be able to tackle understandingly the questions raised and go into the applications and development of his subject. These are the things that make a subject interesting and spark enthusiasm in students. When these elements are missing in a lecture, following it becomes laborious. Students lose interest soon and then struggle. The writer recalls from her university days the difference between lecturers who had depth & width and

Alumnus Replies Jaffna Dons

enter the University after three attempts' is factually (and deliberately?) erroneous and misleading. Students who enter on their third try are a minority in most batches.

The dons say that many students, especially those in the physical science stream prepare for examinations such as I.C.M.A & C.E.I. or do some odd jobs while being registered as internal students. They say that they cut classes to attend to other matters which they consider more important. This, according to them results in irregular attendance at lectures and tutorials by the said "many students". However, an analysis of one batch of more than a hundred science students showed that only three students followed the I.C.M.A., a further three the C.E.I. and one worked during the period of study. The writer has personal knowledge of many individual students who conscientiously attended lectures and tutorials and have no mean ability, ending as failures or drop-outs. It is suggested that individual cases are being taken and generalised. This argument does not contribute anything to explain such a ghastly failure rate. It is a pity that such arguments should be brought forward, to even partly justify the demoralising and breaking of so many of our future generation. How unfeeling!

Another reason advanced by the dons is that they do not have a sufficient number of qualified and experienced teachers, as a result of the mass exodus of Tamils and the unwillingness of those sent abroad for training to return and work in Jaffna. The writer is of the view that this is the primary reason for the bad performance of so many students. A good lecturer is one

those who did not. It did make a big difference. Many of the lecturers to the Jaffna University undergraduates had been taught by fairly raw graduates. Often these lecturers had been in turn raw graduates. Thus they never had a chance to either grasp their subject in depth so as to be competently able to impart or develop. As a result the writer found in conversations with some students about their problems that they did not have a grasp of their subjects. They rely on slogging through the notes and tutorials. The writer has personal acquaintance with a student who was brilliant in mathematics as an advanced level student, but is now a virtual drop-out because he has been struggling to pass a referred unit in mathematics after three attempts. He is a very hard working and sincere student. When asked what his difficulty was, the tragic reply was, "I never knew that mathematics at the university would be so tough & so difficult to understand".

Only one more attempt is allowed, but he does not have the courage to attempt. He is from a poor background and his parents are pleading with him to obtain his degree for which he has spent seven precious years. This is a striking illustration of the tragedy which is all too common in the Jaffna University. These things are not being said to belittle the quality of the junior lecturers of the Jaffna University, who after all were the top performers in previous batches. But it is unfair to expect them to measure up to the requirements of competent lecturers. Indeed a few of them are known to be doing a good job within their limitations. Let us hope

LETTERS

that many expatriate Tamil academics who have gone to greener and safer pastures abroad would return to take posts in the University. Let us seek to impart a spirit of sacrificial service in Jaffna for the sake of our community in spite of all the allurements abroad. For if our academics do not determinedly stick through thick and thin, the Tamil educational foundation will be wrecked. In the meantime let us hope that the senior lecturers would show sympathetic understanding to the plight of their students because of this serious shortcoming. For sadly, there are signs that this is lacking. If this existed, our second reason would not be there to mention.

Secondly, the writer wishes to point to another very important reason for this high failure rate. In many of the subjects which junior lecturers teach, it is the senior lecturers or professors who set the paper. Often there is no connection between the examination paper and the tutorials (problems and questions tackled during the course). Frequently the examination models are changed. (This of course causes further problems to those students who sit as repeat candidates, thus making it difficult for them to get through their referred subjects). By any international standard these practices are unfair. In British universities question papers are set in such a way that any student who has done regular work by attending lectures and doing the tutorials and course work will be able to more than pass. This is only fair. This is also true of the other universities in this country. In all these universities there are a few questions to test the brilliance and originality of the students. It is the students who do these who can obtain A and B grades. However, there is a sufficient number of questions which could be tackled by any student who has faithfully attended lectures and attempted the tutorial problems. In a British university the average entrance requirement for a special degree course is 2C and a D (the upper region of our country's S) at the A levels. Students with such results easily complete their courses through regular work and they work much less than their counterparts in Jaffna. The failure rate per

(Continued on page 7)

ONWARD TO SOCIALISM IN INDIA

Unlike President Jayewardene's United National Party Government which, at the behest of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, behind which is the United States of America, is going all out to dismantle the public sector in Sri Lanka, India is doing everything possible to strengthen it, regarding it as "the sheet anchor of the country's progress."

At the latest session of the All-India Congress Committee, held in New Delhi, a resolution was passed

V. V. T. VICTIM



AN APPRECIATION

R. MOHANARAJAH

The late Mr. R. Mohanarajah is the eighth child in a family of ten of Mr. S. Ratnarajah and Puvaneswary; the other children being Sivaramarajah, Yogarajah, Yoganantharajah, Rajeswary, Rajasothy, Rajamalar, Rajarani, Rajakumari and Rajagowri.

He had his collegiate education at the Uduppiddy American Mission College from where he passed the G. C. E. Ordinary Level Examination. He worked at the Ceylon Synthetics Mills Limited and later in the People's Bookshop at Jaffna. Later he launched on his own business, a video cassette distribution centre — Sri Rams Video Centre — at Market Road, Uduppiddy, and was very successful in this field when he met his untimely end on 9th May 1985 at Urani Madam in Valvettiturai.

He was of an extremely pleasant disposition, obliging even to the extent of being helpful to strangers. His amiability won the hearts of both relations and friends.

He married his first love at school, Thavamany, who will be the mother of a posthumous child in June.

He is one of the many flowers which have been prematurely plucked from the garden of his family and friends.

re-affirming the party's traditional "left of centre" stance, both in political and economic affairs.

The resolution unequivocally declared the party's commitment to socialism and mixed economy in which the public sector would have a dominant role to play.

The AICC set at rest speculations rife in political circles that the Congress might tilt towards the right in its policies and programmes.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi in his concluding remarks, made it a point to reassure partymen that the Congress would not deflect from its chosen path of socialism "come what may".

Mr. Gandhi, like the Finance Minister, Mr. V.P. Singh, who spoke before him on the economic resolution, highlighted the role of the public sector in India's quest for self-reliance — a prerequisite to the country's unity and integrity.

In fact, Mr. Gandhi said his Government wanted to cleanse the public sector of its weakness and make it more stronger.

The Finance Minister said the runover of the public sector was equal to the Central budget.

The Gandhi announced that organisational elections from grassroots level up wards will be held in the beginning of next year and the process completed within a couple of months.

The membership campaigning now would end on 31st December. He asked partymen to enlist "genuine" members and further strengthen the party.

The economic resolution passed after a day-long debate in which 26 AICC members spoke, expressed concern at the "unwarranted rise" in the prices of some commodities.

Mr. Gandhi took a serious note of the price-spurt and said his Government would come down heavily on those responsible for this trend.

He said the Government would take all possible steps to hold the priceline.

The resolution suggested tightening up of the legal and administrative mechanism to punish economic offenders.

Mr. V. P. Singh said the Government had taken steps in this regard. Such offenders had no place in the society. "Their only refuge could either be in the Arabian Sea or jails" Mr. Singh remarked amidst thunderous applause.

The 25-paragraph resolution, moved by the former Finance Minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, also reaffirmed the party's faith in the primacy of the public sector, planned development and self-reliance in all spheres.

It asked the private sector to show results and display a mature sense of social responsibility.

While seeking the co-operation of the private sector in curbing tax evasion and eliminating connected malpractices the party, directed the Government to tighten up the legal and administrative mechanism to punish economic offenders irrespective of their status in the society.

WHY HIGH FAILURE RATE?

(Continued from page 6)

batch in most universities is within 10 per cent. However, at the Jaffna University, students with such good A Level performances struggle in vain to complete their degrees. Academics working abroad have commented that the question papers of the Jaffna University are tough. In this sense, the claim that the University of Jaffna is not keeping up to international norms is correct. It is our students who suffer in the end.

Thirdly, the writer would draw attention to the over-all relationships and attitudes within the university community as being an important contributory reason. In this the students are also to blame. They should appreciate their senior lecturers and professors who are sticking to Jaffna for their sake. As the Dons point out, they could easily go abroad. Indeed the whole Jaffna community should be grateful to them. The students should not be calling strikes and then jeering at the lecturers for every small reason. There have been instances where students have struck to demand a repeal of action taken against students who offend regulations! Ugly scenes have taken place. The tone of the dons' reply also shows the low estimate

they have of the majority of their students. An examination of the usage of library facilities showed that some students have developed an art of holding on to even reference books on an almost permanent basis.

This is sometimes done with the collaboration of the librarians or by hiding precious books during the daytime. As a result many of the unassuming type of students do not have access to the good books. Academic jealousy among the dons has resulted in disagreement between them as to the way funds should be used. There have been instances where funds from abroad have been withdrawn after remaining unused as a result of such bickering. Surely no community which exists for learning could function smoothly with such mutual disrespect. This is our basic Jaffna mentality and the stumbling block of our community. Let us hope that the University of Jaffna would succeed in overcoming weaknesses.

Finally, an explanation as to why the writer wishes to publish this in spite of the dons' call to desist from giving them advice in public, is necessary. The dons in their reply seem to be hurt at having to come under the public

eye. Phrases like 'Who is Dr. Hoole to advise' them and they 'have managed well without the advice of men like Dr. Hoole' betray an unwillingness to learn anything from anybody. The tone of the letter is as if they said, 'There is no person who is competent enough to advise us. So, shut up everyone'. However, the question which is pressing the minds of the concerned public is 'why is it that so many of our potential younger generation end up in discouragement?' Surely the public have a right to ask. Many have asked the learned dons in private for a long time. An ongoing public discussion is always a healthy means for change. Some public pressure on the university authorities seems necessary to spur them to remedy the unhealthy situation.

Thus the writer is glad that the *Saturday Review* has provided a stage for such a discussion. She hopes that the *Saturday Review* will continue the good work by publishing this letter. What has been said above is not offered as a complete analysis of the causes. However, if it would set minds, which are more competent and compassionate than the writer's, thinking and would result in some concrete changes for the better, she would be glad.

Tellippalai.

A. Ponnampalam

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

J.R. -- RAJIV SECRET PACT?

Have Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President Jayewardene come to a understanding on how to resolve Sri Lanka's ethnic problem?

It appears so, I think, by a statement attributed to Mr. Jayewardene published in the Times of India on 6th June.

Speaking to newsmen in New Delhi before leaving for Colombo, Mr. Jayewardene expressed optimism about finding a solution. Asked if India would help solve the crisis, Mr. Jayewardene said "very much".

His answer was again 'yes', when asked if any kind of agreement had been reached to defuse the crisis. Describing his talks with Mr. Gandhi as very cordial and useful, Mr. Jayewardene said 'elections will be held in Sri Lanka and power devolved to pave for a political solution'.

Specifying the measures he would take to resolve the problem Mr. Jayewardene said the first devolution unit would be the District Council. Later as they function Co-ordinating Councils will be set up.

Asked under what terms he would be willing to negotiate with the Tamil militants, Mr. Jaye-

wardene said that "they will have to lay down arms and I will provide them amnesty".

The representatives of various Tamil militant groups in Madras have told the Times of India that they are not aware of the reported move for a truce between them and the Sri Lankan Government. Spokesmen of the various groups said that they have not been approached by any mediators so far. They said they are not even aware of the details of the understanding reached between Mr. Gandhi and President Jayewardene. One of them pointed out that even as a vague talk of truce was on, there was a massacre of innocent Tamils in Trincomalee area last week. This created doubts about the sincerity of the Sri Lankan Government. The latest move to tighten the anti-terrorist law has even further created suspicion of the Government's intention.

Perhaps, the Sri Lankan Government wanted to gain time to consolidate and strengthen its security forces which were in disarray, the spokesman said.

Don't Send Back Tamils, UK Told

THE PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEWS AGENCY reports from London :

The British Government has begun to crack down on Tamil refugees following a sudden influx of people fleeing the strife-torn Sri Lanka and seeking asylum in this country on humanitarian grounds.

In a drastic change of the immigration rules, Tamils refused entry into the country have been given only 24 hours to appeal before being put on an aircraft back to the departure point. This is being explained as a move to sort out genuine refugees from those making use of the ethnic conflict in the island to gain entry in Britain.

In the normal course, British MPs can stop deportation of any foreign national. Britain has now ordered that in the case of the Tamils, representations will have to be made within 24 hours of an application by an MP to stop a deportation.

Many MPs are said to be furious on the change of rules about which they have not even been informed. "I do not accept that it is safe to return Tamils to Sri Lanka and I am horrified that the Home Secretary is effectively preventing adequate consideration of asylum cases", a Labour MP, Mr. Jeremy Corby, said.

At least three young Tamils are being returned to Colombo after

being refused entry to this country. They are among the estimated 1,500 Tamils who have arrived in this country to seek asylum.

There are reports that immigration services have been organised on an emergency footing to deal with sudden influx of Tamils. Army barracks, hospitals and hotels are to be used to ease the accommodation crisis at detention centres at airports here.

NEWS BRIEFS

IT'S HOMICIDE

The Jaffna Magistrate has returned a verdict of homicide at the inquest held after the recovery of skeletal remains from the debris of the Jaffna Cooperative stores building which was burnt down in April 1984: the remains are presumably those of the two missing employees Nadarasa Navaratnam and Sivapatham Jayachandiran. The Magistrate directed the Police to investigate further.

JUNGLES SAFER

The recent disturbances in Trincomalee have left 10,000 people homeless, according to reports. Sixteen camps have been set up to house the refugees. Another 10,000 people, from Lingapuram, Puliadichenai, Mallikathivu and other areas have reportedly fled to the jungles for safety.

HOMICIDE AGAIN

The Additional Magistrate, Jaffna returned a verdict of homicide at the inquest held into the deaths of 32 passengers who travelled in the launch 'Kumithini' from Delft to Kurrikadduvan of 15th May.

UNLUCKY 13

Thirteen policemen attacked to the Kuchchaveli police station who were on duty when it was attacked on 1st June have been interdicted by the SP Trincomalee, according to the Daily News.

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More 'Love Letters'

(Continued from page 1)

future issues and which have been approved and returned to you, should not be published but treated as cancelled.

Should you wish to have these articles published you are requested to obtain the approval of the Secretary, Ministry of State such publication.

Also kindly note that all articles etc. for publication in the Saturday Review should not be sent to me hereafter but to the Secretary, Ministry of State, for censorship.

Yours faithfully

Sgd. V. M. PANCHALINGAM
Dist. Secy. & Govt. Agent
Jaffna District.

3. EDITOR TO CENSOR

118, 4th Cross Street,
Jaffna.
Sri Lanka.
3rd June 1985

The Secretary,
Ministry of State,
Colombo.
Dear Sir,

I write to register my vehement protest against your order of 18th April 1985, issued under powers vested in you as Competent Authority under the Emergency Regulations, that all material intended for publication in the SATURDAY REVIEW should be sent to Colombo for approval.

It would be near impossible to publish the SATURDAY REVIEW under this condition.

As a journalist, I would prefer if there were no censorship at all in Sri Lanka. But this ideal is unlikely to be ever attained under a Government which appears to be content with paying lip-service to press freedom.

In the SATURDAY REVIEW case, if the special censorship in force since February 1984 should, in the Government's view, be retained, I urge you to allow continuance of the earlier arrangement, under which the Government Agent of Jaffna functioned as Censor.

If this is not permitted, it could mean only one of two things, or both: lack of confidence in the Government Agent as Censor or / and dislike of the truth about events in the North reaching the outside world.

I shall appreciate an early response from you to my appeal.

Editor