

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

Vol. 4 No. 39

14 th December 1985

EDITOR'S APOLOGIES

Our reference to "Colombo 7 Tamils" in the issue of 7th December seems to have had unexpected reactions. The point we were trying to make was that, in their hour of crisis for the Tamil people, there are some Tamil people in the South who do not care to lift a finger to help their compatriots in the North. We repeat that charge today. But we had no intentions of casting aspersions on those good Tamil people in the South who, in their silent way, have been doing yeoman service to humanity, that is to people irrespective of race, creed and caste. The Editor wishes to place on record his grateful thanks to the Tamil surgeon who recently restored the sight of his 84-year-old mother. If his feelings have been hurt in any way—some Tamil people appear to take a delight in taunting those people who associate with the Sinhalese—the Editor wishes to apologise profusely. There are 'Colombo 7 Tamils' and 'Colombo 7 Tamils'!

OPERATION NORTH STAR

There is apprehension in the North, particularly in Jaffna, that once President Jayewardene's Security Forces finish their "flushing out" operations in the Eastern Province, they will shift their attention to this region.

If this actually happens, it will be very unfortunate not merely for the people in the North but for all Sri Lanka.

We would warn the Government that the 'final solution' to the ethnic problem that some people in the South appear to be fond of will be no solution at all.

Like the 'final solution' that Hitler thought up as regards the Jews.

Jaffna, the heartland of Tamil country, has been comparatively quiet since the fragile de-facto cease-fire which came into operation on 18th June this year. Quiet, compared to parts of the Eastern Province which have gone up in smoke.

Thousands of innocent people have been caught up in the cross-fire of what seems to be an unending war in the Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Amparai districts of the Eastern Province and Man-

nar and Vavuniya districts in the Northern Province. And hundreds of people have gone untimely to Heaven—or Hell.

Not a single Colombo-based newspaper has given a true account so far of the tragic events that have taken place in these districts.

TWO MORE 'TERRORISTS' SHOT DEAD!



Foreign correspondents especially are debarred from visiting the region.

But the truth cannot be hidden for ever.

And the truth of what has happened in the Eastern Province, from

the trickle of reliable evidence reaching us, is horrifying.

Do we want a repetition of these events in the North?

We wish to tell the Government: even if all the Tamil youths between 15 and 25 are killed off, the

A Colombo-based newspaper has quoted him as saying that the "terrorists" are now harbouring civilians in their camps! What for? As cannon fodder for the Security Forces when they make their occasional forays?

Well, the Army did come out in Jaffna on 12th December to raid a "terrorist camp". The quarry was missing. But two people were shot dead—not inside a "camp" but on the road in the heart of Jaffna town.

They were K. Thuraiamy (79) a Malayan pensioner of Chankanai, Manipay, and Kanapathipillai (58) of Ariyalai, a labour supervisor (see pictures alongside).

Three people were also injured in the shooting.

They are Sivarajah Mathiyalagan (16), 78, Ramanathan Road, Jaffna; Illias Subair (18), Watertank Road, Kattankudy—6, Batticaloa, and K. Jayaweerasingam (22), Clock Tower Road, Jaffna.

We have not been able to ascertain whether they went to Heaven or Hell.

But this is a hell of a way of fighting the "terrorist menace."

"Lankapuwath," please take over from here.

A BIG 'THANK YOU'

We have been encouraged by the response to our appeal for help on behalf of the thousands of people, irrespective of race, who have been displaced by the continuing ethnic conflict.

Unlike some social service organisations in the South and "The Island" newspaper (which also has started a refugee relief fund), we

do not limit to any particular community what little assistance we could render.

A number of diplomatic missions in Colombo have written to their home Governments about the refugee problem in Sri Lanka, citing the SATURDAY REVIEW appeal on 9th November 1985. Our thanks go to them.

There have also been a number of inquiries from individuals and organisations asking us what type of help is required.

There have been a number of further donations to the SR Relief fund as well.

One from an old lady who could spare only Rs. 25 from her pension. Thank you sincerely, madam.

Also, 3,000 pounds sterling (approximately Rs. 120,000/-) from the Standing Committee of Tamil Speaking People (S.C.O.T.) of Middlesex.

We appeal to men of goodwill of all races in Sri Lanka and abroad to help us to help the unfortunate people who have been caught up in a vicious circle not of their creation.

Release ALL Political detenus in Sri Lanka jails

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

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THONDA'S REGRET

At a ceremony in which the Indian High Commissioner, Mr. J. N. Dixit gifted a number of books given by the Tamil Nadu Government to the Colombo Tamil Sangam, the Minister of Rural Industries Mr. S. Thondaman regretted that there was no 'Minister for Tamil Security', although there was a Minister for the Tamil Language. He had further stated that 'Sri Lankan Tamils were not only supported by Tamil Nadu alone but the whole of India. The Tamils need not wield weapons, if they are bold in spirit and have the necessary will-power. They cannot be subdued.'

HOUSE FOR SALE

House on 12½ lachchams
on cultivable land with
separate well at Kopay
North, Kopay.

APPLY TO:

C. NAVANATHAN
Palaly Road, Kondavil East,
KONDAVIL.

National Harmony Committee Pleads For Political Solution

Extracts from a press statement issued by the Citizens' Committee for National Harmony.

The Citizens' Committee for National Harmony has consistently pleaded for a political solution to the ethnic problem - a solution that will meet the demands of the Tamil people and allay the fears of the Sinhala people through a just system of devolution.

The Committee feels current developments support the view that we are now closer to a solution of the ethnic problem than ever before.

The Committee urges both parties to make genuine commitments to a ceasefire and actively cooperate in making it effective. Since there are organisations of Tamil militants outside the groups that are negotiating with the government, it is possible that violations of the ceasefire will continue to take place. In such instances, it is essential that all parties to the ceasefire act in a manner which does not jeopardise the effort to reach a peaceful settlement. It is particularly important that the government and security forces deal with these violations in a manner which helps to limit and reduce the violence that occurs and which also promotes the objectives of the ceasefire to which most of the parties are committed. In realising such objectives, the protection and security of non-combatant civilians will be a decisive factor.

However, we believe that negotiations towards a political solution should go on irrespective of the problems pertaining to an effective ceasefire. The conditions for negotiations on the substantive issues now exist.

The political solution should be based on the reasonable devolution of power. The main units in such a system should be the province. The Committee understands from reports available to it, that difficulties that are still unresolved centre round questions of the maintenance of law and order, land settlement, education and inter-provincial linkages.

Questions of land settlement and of law and order are, to a certain extent, two aspects of the same problem - the necessity that there be areas in which the Tamil people, being in a majority, are assured of security of life and property. The events of July 1983, taken with

earlier outbursts of violence, have been understood by the Tamil people as an indication that there can be no guarantee of security to the Tamil people residing in areas in which they are a small minority. In this context, their concern to preserve the status quo in areas in which they are a majority has to be approached with sympathy and understanding. It will take a great deal of time and effort before this sense of deep insecurity is altogether removed and Tamil people live in all parts of the country without any feeling of foreboding and fear.

LAW AND ORDER

In this context we feel that in dealing with the functions relating to the police and maintenance of law and order, the arrangements should be such that these conditions are fulfilled. First, the provincial body should have the major share of responsibility for these functions. The stages where responsibilities pass from the provincial to the central government in a given law-and-order situation, could be clearly defined. There are many examples in other countries on which we can draw. Second, the ethnic composition of the cadres directly responsible for these functions should provide

for a majority of officers from ethnic groups which are in a majority in these areas.

LAND SETTLEMENT

Similar concerns regarding security have led to the problem relating to land settlement. In this we have to harmonize the need of land for re-settlement of the Sinhalese and the desire of the Tamils for an area that is one in which their security and identity are maintained. While arguing that there are areas and districts in which Tamils now predominate and that such predominance should continue to exist so that Tamil people are secure and have an opportunity to develop their own identity on the basis of their language and culture, it is yet difficult to accept that the entirety of new land available for cultivation, a large part of which happens to be in the districts of Mannar, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu, etc., should be available only to Tamil Citizens of this country. We feel that a satisfactory method of resolving this problem is to look at the various districts in terms of the parameters of security and population distribution that we referred to earlier—not to consider this problem in terms of the Northern and Eastern

(Continued on page 7)

NOT THE NEWS

CABINET RESHUFFLE

Political observers predict cabinet changes in the near future to take account of the actual roles played by our Ministers.

Mr. Hameed is tipped to become Minister of Arab Affairs as all the important jobs in foreign affairs are now handled by the President's immediate circle. In the see-saw of fortunes Israel has come into prominence and the Arabs have declined, and with them Mr. Hameed. A token of Mr. Hameed's effectiveness is that the pledged Saudi aid of US \$ 50 million for the Maduru Oya project is still absconding. Who cares for rivers anyway when Israel has opened up rivulets of blood which show promise of becoming rivers? It is a small mercy that Mr. Hameed can still do some face-saving by making an appearance at the UN now and then. But who cares about UN resolutions and covenants on human rights now drowned in Israel's rivulets? Mr. Premadasa is tipped to become Minister for Village Festivities. Since he gave up his tirades

against India, this is the main role in which he has recently been observed, barring a UN speech and a few tete-a-tetes—small mercies like those offered to Mr. Hameed in his Indian summer. The Prime Minister's job seems to have vanished in the party where each dog does another dog's barking.

The present Minister for Transport, Mr. Mohamed, is seemingly being considered for the Home Ministry. It has been said that in the current state of public transport, people are more and more confined to their homes.

Our photogenic Minister Mr. Athulathmudali, it is said will become Minister for Tourism and Airsickness. When few tourists are willing to brave a visit to this country what can be more appropriate than having a Minister for Tourism breezing about the world's most exquisite spots—London, Bahrain, Delhi... Others say this a stratagem to keep an ambitious minister tired and airborne, away from the wranglings for succession in Colombo.

A motley crowd stood assembled around a waterlogged grave-pit. A tiny coffin lay poised above with a rough hewn cross beside. The vicar read out the words from the order for the burial of a child: *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes* — words which sounded majestic against the lowering sky.

I cannot tell what impression these words made on the young mother, wan and aged before her time, standing beside her three surviving children. She was a refugee from Kilinochchi, a refugee for the second or third time in the golden era which dawned in 1977. The Army, she said, had burnt their dwelling and looted their possessions. Being turned out of home in this inclement rainy season, her youngest

DEATH OF A CHILD

child of three had contracted pneumonia at their refugee camp in Jaffna and died after ten days in hospital. The funeral had been organised in haste, the mourners being mainly fellow refugees and their youthful helpers. Alienation was written on the faces of the staring children, too young perhaps to understand that the world that had given them life had let them down. If they live to grow up, will they practise the arts of peace, or will they carry guns, to perpetuate what has now become reciprocal ruination?

This question faces tens of thousands of children of all communities who are now refugees, many of them orphaned.

A democracy can only run with people who are stable, healthy and educated. If this country is to become a democracy in some

distant future, this process of displacement and this orgy of blood sacrifices at the altars of blind gods of contending nationalisms must stop. That some, like our rulers, have been more fortunate than many of today's young to have received an education and upbringing that made them re-

by

Rajan Hoole

asonably stable and mature men and women, cannot be any cause for pride or boast. It should rather be one for shame. It is such people who can and should call a halt to the killing. This has been the core of the editorially made appeals by the Saturday

Review to the Government and the Sinhala intelligentsia.

The government is theirs, the Army is theirs and they can act. To preside over a policy where the Army by its actions perpetuates wantonly the cycle of death, hate and revenge is inexcusable.

As Prof. Sivathamby has pointed out, the action of the Tamil youth, many of them deprived, is one made autonomously in the face of oppression and independently of their elders.

The Tamil elders have little influence and no power, except their hands to wring. History will blame those who had all the chances in life, all the power, and did not act for the common good. We can only hope that the Sinhalese intelligentsia will not desert its role and that Royal College will celebrate a happy bicentenary with many more statesmen on its rolls. This country cannot be governed from a spaceship!

SUPPRESSING THE SYMPTOMS

Analysis is paralysis. Yet adequate diagnosis which is a species of analysis is a sine qua non of any meaningful method of approach to curing any ailment. It is the confirmed opinion of many patriotic citizens of Sri Lanka that martinets and myrmidons are using the wrong modus operandi to solve the ethnic problem or rather to cure the ethnic disease. The armed forces especially use force. It does not require an Edmund Burke to tell us today that the use of force is only a temporary palliative which aggravates the disease and not a radical or permanent cure. The mistake that the Government is making is that instead of curing the present ethnic disease they are actively involved in forcibly suppressing the symptoms. Carlyle once remarked that we learn from History that no one learns anything from History. That is why history repeats itself.

When the militant groups initially started their sporadic attacks, what did the government do? They used their long arm to break the skulls of youths, to torture them inhumanly, to bruise their bodies and then to disgrace them by herding them in army camps for indefinite periods of time without trial. Here the remedy was worse than the disease. The militants finding themselves stigmatised as terrorists and ostracised by the government repeated their attacks on a larger scale. The vicious circle continues. Some Tamilians died within and without the jails. But what was the nett result of this purblind policy? A

few militants and umpteen innocent citizens died but violence spread like wild fire over the surface of Sri Lanka.

It appears as if certain newspapers have joined hands with certain politicians to achieve certain ulterior motives. They seem to actively aid and abet certain politicians to maintain the ethnic rift in which the posturing politicians can conveniently survive.

Sri Lanka politicians thrive only when there are parochial problems. After reading some of the news

race has started to subtly express their discontent over the government's attitude towards the problem. The rigid laws and actions of government they feel, are preventing them voicing their views. They feel that the government has usurped their freedom of expression by ignoring their patriotic feelings and alienating them from playing their role in making decisions.

Sri Lanka which claims to be a Buddhist country should set an example to all nations. Any prob-

by

Kandiah Navarendran

items that appear in newspapers one begins to wonder whether there isn't a terrifying topicality in Father Gratry's words (in The Well-spring): newspapers are full of the dust of useless facts. With the honourable exceptions of certain newspapers, most of the others slant the news they receive, suppress parts and indulge in propaganda, instead of straight-forwardly reporting the news.

The upsurge of violence has radically sprung from a sheer sense of frustration and uncertainty. The Tamilians are living in a nightmarish insecurity.

Many a sound Sri Lankans of the South worthy of the name, proud of his homeland and his

lem, however grave and complicated it may be, can be solved peacefully if there is love and compassion and a burning desire to solve it. But we are in the process of building a society which is violent. The environment, the culture in which we live, is the product of our endeavour, of our struggle, of our pain, of our appalling brutalities. But today's politicians are doing nothing better than paying lip service to Buddhism and ethics.

Sri Lanka was earlier surreptitiously and now openly involved in love-making with countries to which ninety percent of the countries in the world have closed their doors. Today our beloved Lanka is made to slant towards Power blocs which commit mass murders

and international burglary and yet want the young to condemn the stealing of a school boy's old marbles. Unwise moves effected politically and economically are making life for every Sri Lankan worthless. The spectres of unemployment and the spiralling cost of living are stalking the country. The posturing politicians are preaching of a Heaven and Nibbana in which they do not believe. The politicians are sowing the wind and the Sri Lankans are reaping the whirlwind. The cure is obvious.

3RD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TAMIL CULTURE

The Third International Conference of the International Movement for Tamil Culture began yesterday (13th December) at Vijayaraghavachariyar Memorial Hall in Salem, Tamil Nadu. The 3-day Conference ends tomorrow (15th December).

The Conference was attended by about 1000 delegates from nearly 40 different countries. This is the first time Salem hosted the delegates. A book titled *World Tamils*, a research study and history of Tamils spread the world over, was released to mark the opening of the Conference.

The World Tamil Cultural Movement was inaugurated in Jaffna in 1974. Meetings of the World Tamil delegates were held in Madras in 1977 and in Mauritius in 1980.

Men came together in cities in order to live.

They remain together in order to live the good life.

The above insight of Aristotle still holds. A UNESCO study pointed out sometime ago that compared with the 'system of cities' that grew up in Europe and America in the wake of industrialisation, urbanisation in Asia has been the result of European occupation. In the event most town and cities in Sri Lanka (and even more in India) are human jungles, not calculated to provide a creative social environment for the pursuit of the good life. The gravest weakness is that transplanted villagers who came to form the bulk of citizenry left behind the cohesiveness and sense of community of the village.

In the *Culture of Cities*, Lewis Mumford avers that, along with language, the city remains man's greatest work of art. The city symbolizes the spirit and strength of a region, its past and its future. Its future too, since it is through the inter-course in the market and the meeting place, fresh advances in modes of living open themselves to a people and new thoughts occur about human destiny. Mumford, however, admits that even in the West the Science of City Planning has been a late-comer in the field of knowledge.

UNPLANNED

But, the City of Jaffna seemed always to be an unplanned City. Nowhere, nowhere else even in this country, would the public authorities, and the public, have been so indifferent to the despoiling of the grounds where once stood the palace of proud kings at Sankili Thopu, Nallur. To cite another example, what are we to make of the slums that are rearing before our eye so as to disfigure the City's future Galle Face? Or the piles of refuse heaped over a mile along that beautiful highway, the coastal road from Jaffna Fort to Kayts, with picturesque landscape on one side and seascape on the other. And now, a despoiled City, like the half-destroyed cities and towns in the Tamil areas, is witness to the agony that is our dear Motherland of Sri Lanka today!

We do well to remember that we live in an age which possesses the know-how of providing a creative social environment in which the highest possibilities of human life can be furthered. Fortunately too, the City of Jaffna possesses the physical base and potentialities of being reared into a City Beautiful. The lagoon front, a sprawling flat land and as yet many unbuilt open spaces are no mean assets. The several ponds too lend themselves to be turned into small Japanese-

style lake-gardens. Time is indeed opportune to imaginatively remodel the Northern Capital as a Regional City and formulate a new picture of local life. The task carries a thrill of its own because it is a voyage into the future. For to re-design a City is to begin the task of re-building a civilization.

But, walls do not a city make, nor even a City Council constitute government of a city by its citizens. It is the shared living and civic spirit that go to make the city. It is the participation of the citizens in the process of discussion and decision making that constitutes civic government. The manner in which a City's institutions

CITY OF JAFFNA and a GRAND TRUNK ROAD

function can well be an educative force. Did not Plato tell us that in order to educate the citizens it is necessary to educate the City?

EDUCATIVE CITY

Perhaps, this is an opportunity to step beyond the limited colonial-style civic government functioning here before and to make local self-government come to life in our dear City. We need to get a group of Five representative citizens who will measure up to the supreme discovery of our ancient political genius, the Voice of the Five is

by

K. Nesiah

the Voice of God! And the Five, in turn, should assemble in each Ward the adult citizens and they choose (by consensus) Five Ward members. Together, this representative City Council should choose committees to re-design the City, to promote Development, to plan Education, including Continuing and Adult Education, to extend the Library system to serve every part of the City and to provide Parks and Playgrounds, and in the manner of providing these, make the Northern Capital an Educative City! Not the least part of this new set-up, that we should have done away with the bucket-system of latrines and a caste of people engaged in that service. For it is a new Social Order and participatory democracy that is our goal.

As for funds, at the moment the officers concerned will be bound by the present financial regulations,

also colonial style. We may have to depend on voluntary donations for these many services not contemplated in the Ordinances. So these voluntary new services, performed by voluntary groups, will have to depend on voluntary contributions from sons and daughters of Jaffna, here and abroad.

In this time of trouble, the great City, which symbolizes the strength and the spirit of a great people, their past and their future, calls every citizen and every householder to faithfully fulfil their duty by the City. The City calls every officer working in the Town Hall, or wherever they are working, to serve all citizens equally at every public

counter. The City calls every labourer to fill each hour with 60 minutes of work done. The City calls every person serving in any committee or council to faithfully lay his powers at the feet of the community as their fairest offering. The City calls every senior student and young person to render service through Shramadana, to make every street and every neighbourhood a clean and attractive one. The City calls every person who has means to set apart a share so that the needy and disabled, and the great causes for which the City stands, are pro-

vided for. Above all, the call is to build a new society in and through this noble City.

Nor need our vision of the future stop at the gates of the City. Did not Rudyard Kipling write "Truly, the Grand Trunk Road is a wonderful spectacle..... Such a river of life as nowhere else exists in the world."

For, life in the modern world is not confined to our native city or native village. The Grand Trunk Road is a view; along it flows the life of a Region and the Country. It is too a reminder that our life will be sluggish and short unless it reaches the ocean of humanity, to which we all belong!

The call then to our leaders of thought and engineers of action is to plan a Grand Trunk Road, and a network of other roads, to facilitate the flow of persons and ideas and goods regardless of frontiers,

so as to herald the dawn of a new Age.

As I step into my 85th year, in this critical year 1985, I crave to place my vision of the future of the city where I was born before my fellow-citizens and at the feet of God.

PROTESTS AGAINST LABOUR DEPT. IN ACTION

Four ex-employees of a mobile engineering company in Slave Island have complained to the Secretary, Ministry of Labour and the Attorney-General against the failure of the Department of Labour to prosecute their former employer for his refusal to pay them their gratuity in terms of the Payment of Gratuity Act No. 12 of 1983.

The Act stipulates that gratuity should be paid to employees who have worked for over five years in an establishment, within one month of the termination of their contract of employment.

This particular employer has refused to do so in the case of these four employees. They had complained to the Department of labour which summoned several conferences but the employer had blatantly ignored these summons and treated the Department with contempt. Despite this the Department of Labour has taken no further action to date and as a result the employer continues to deprive other employees of the Company of their lawful dues under the Gratuity Act.

The four employees have sought the early intervention of the Ministry of Labour and the Attorney-General towards obtaining the tens of thousands of rupees due to them.

In the meantime, the Ceylon Mercantile, Industrial and General Workers' Union (CMU) has lodged a string protest with the Commissioner of Labour against the failure of the Department to take action against several companies which had failed to pay gratuity in terms of the Act to about 50 members of the Union.

RELIEF FOR REFUGEES

We are happy to note that aid to refugees is fast pouring in. Earlier Duraiappah Vidyalayam at Colombuthurai had contributed its mite towards refugee relief. Now we have the staff of Jaffna Railway Station under the Chief Station Master, Mr. V. Rajah, making a generous contribution of foodstuffs to the value of Rs. 3000/- to the Sankilian Rehabilitation Association on 5. 12. 85. We are confident that other organisations will follow suit as the task of rehabilitation is too tremendous for a few individuals.

SRI LANKA TAMILS: LEGITIMATE EXPECTATIONS-7

PENNILESS, IMPOTENT DDC's

(Continued from last issue)

"...Under this law, a person can be detained for 18 months without trial and court decisions to transfer suspects to the custody of the judiciary can be reversed by Parliament. The brutal manner in which the Act has been enforced, as well as the widespread killings and torture by the security forces, have been investigated and condemned by international human rights organisations such as Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists, as well as other observers..." (*Tamils of Sri Lanka: Minority Rights Group September 1983*).

The United National Party failed to summon the Round Table Conference as it had pledged to do in its election manifesto, and it may well have been that the outbreak of violence in 1977 and the consequent exacerbation of feelings had something to do with this failure. However, in 1979, President Jayewardene appointed a Presidential Commission, which included a representative of the Tamil United Liberation Front, to report on the establishment of District Development Councils and decentralisation of the administration.

TIME RUNNING OUT

But clearly, time was running out.

"...As early as 1928, the Donoughmore Commission recommended the establishment of Provincial Councils on the ground that it was desirable that a large part of the administrative work of the centre should come into the hands of persons resident in the districts and thus more directly in contact with the needs of the area. Twelve years later the Executive Committee of Local Administration chaired by the late S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, considered the proposal of the Donoughmore Commission and in 1940, the State Council (the legislature) approved the establishment of Provincial Councils. The war intervened and nothing was in fact done, but in 1947, on the floor of the House of Representatives, the late S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike again declared his support for the establishment of Provincial Councils."

"In 1955, the Choksy Commission recommended the establishment of Regional Councils to take over the functions that were exercised by the Kachcheries and in May 1957, the government of the late S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike

presented a draft of the proposed Bill for the establishment of Regional Councils."

"Subsequently, in July 1957, the Bandaranaike—Chelvanayakam Pact made provision for direct election to Regional Councils and also provided that the subjects covered by Regional Councils shall include agriculture, co-operatives, lands and land development, colonisation and education. The Pact however did not survive the opposition of sections of the Sinhala Community which included the United National Party. In July 1963, the government of Mrs. Bandaranaike declared that 'early consideration' would be given to the question of the establishment of District Councils to replace the Kachcheries and the government appointed a Committee on District Councils and the report of this Committee containing a draft of the proposed Bill to establish District Councils was submitted but again nothing was in fact done."

"In 1965, the government of the late Dudley Senanayake declared that it would give 'earnest consideration' to the establishment

parliamentary democracy where political parties vie with one another to bid for the support of the people at the broadest common denominator, the highest bidder no doubt wins but often, the long term losers are the people themselves. This is a process which has its own dynamics...effective management and essential fairness are not always the result of a public auction...The Presidential Commission provides a forum which can be utilised to bring our peoples together but...time is running out..." (*N. Satyendra: Tamils of Sri Lanka and the Presidential Commission: Sri Lanka Tribune, 13th October 1979*).

The Presidential Commission was unable to reach unanimity and the representative of the TULF presented a dissenting report. The Development Councils which were eventually established failed to devolve power. Patricia Hyndman from Lawasia commented in 1983:

"The present government has set up District Development Councils with the stated aim of decentralisation. Unfortunately inadequate implementation of the scheme, has meant that the desired devolution

ary.....the destruction of the Jaffna Public Library was the incident which appeared to cause the most distress to the people of Jaffna...the 95,000 volumes of the Public Library destroyed by the fire included numerous culturally important and irreplaceable manuscripts..." (*Virginia Leary: Ethnic Conflict and Violence in Sri Lanka — ICJ Report 1981*)

These incidents in Jaffna were followed in August 1981 by organised attacks on Tamils in central and South Sri Lanka.

"...August incidents of violence centred on three specific areas: the gem mining area of Ratnapura, Negombo near the capital city of Colombo, and the plantation towns in central Sri Lanka. Before the violence was brought under control...at least 10 Indian Tamils had been killed, numerous Tamil shops and businesses burned, and more than 5000 Indian Tamils had fled to refugee camps..It was widely reported that attacks in Negombo as well as an attack against passengers on a Jaffna to Colombo train were made by organised gangs. Tamil sources stated that it could not be ruled out that people close to the government were behind the organised violence. They also claimed that the police and the army did not intervene to prevent attacks until the declaration of the state of emergency many days after the attacks began..." (*Virginia Leary: opcit*)

REPRISALS

And in 1982 and early 1983, the sporadic attacks by Tamil militant groups on police stations and banks were followed by increasingly wide ranging retaliatory attacks by state security forces on innocent Tamil civilians.

At the same time, commencing in late 1981, President Jayewardene engaged the TULF in a continuing dialogue but without resolving any of the underlying grievances of the Tamils of Sri Lanka. Standardisation of admission to Universities continued. The language provisions of the Constitution were not implemented. Employment opportunities for Tamils in the public sector decreased rather than increased. Inquiries were not held into police and army excesses. Compensation was not paid to the victims of attacks by organised Sinhala goon squads. And no attempt was made to discipline or control government supporters who indulged in openly racist propaganda.

(To be continued)

by

N. Satyendra

of District Councils and in 1968 a draft Bill approved by the Dudley Senanayake Cabinet was presented as a White Paper and this Bill provided for the establishment of District Councils...Ironically enough, this time round, the opposition to the Bill was spearheaded by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party which professed to follow the policies of the late S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike who himself had in 1940, 1947 and again in 1957, supported the establishment of a decentralised administrative structure...and the Bill was withdrawn..."

"More than 50 years have passed since 1928 and we have moved from Provincial Councils to Regional Councils and from Regional Councils to District Councils and now we appear to be moving from District Councils to Development Councils. We have had the 'early consideration' of Mrs. Srimavo Bandaranaike and the 'earnest consideration' of the late Dudley Senanayake. There has been no shortage of Committees and Commissions, of reports and recommendations but that which appears to be lacking was the political will to implement that which nobody denies is fair and right. In a

of power has not been forthcoming. A government agent described the Councils to the [delegation in the following terms — they have no funding, they have no powers, and more important, the scheme is not one of devolution, rather what has been done is to bring all village councils to a central spot." (*Patricia Hyndman: Communal Violence in Sri Lanka, July 1983 — Report to Lawasia Human Rights Standing Committee*)

LIBRARY BURNT

The elections to District Development Councils May/June 1981 were disrupted by incidents of violence by Tamil militants. One of the Tamil UNP candidates was killed. Unidentified gunmen fired shots at an election meeting and two policemen were killed. The response of the State security forces was to unleash an unrestrained attack on the civilian population of Jaffna.

"...a large group of police (estimated variously from 100 — 200) went on rampage on the nights of May 31-June 1 and June 1-2 burning the market area of Jaffna, the office of the Tamil Newspaper, the home of the Member of Parliament for Jaffna and the Jaffna Public Lib-

SATURDAY REVIEW UNDER FIRE

Editor

SATURDAY REVIEW

S.R. of 23rd, November carried a news item under the headline **Church Wins**. Readers from the East, Colombo, abroad or even Jaffna could not have gained or understood anything other than that one of the former D.J.'s judgements was turned down in appeal. The inclusion of the D.J.'s name creates doubts about your bona fides. Legal minds may understand correctly but the majority may feel that the D. J. is also a party in the case. Surely the names of Appeal Court judges could have been included. But it is not done. After all who knows that the Supreme Court will not give an opposite heading to this column in the event of an appeal.

Further I would like to take this opportunity to express my disapproval of some other items in past issues. S.R. publishes in English to make our friends in the South understand our grievances. The indoorgames results from Chundikuli, Football matches from KKS—who cares for items like this? Let **Eelamadu** and **Eelamurasu** carry these interesting items. The Tamils in Batticaloa live in fear of death. You play matches in the North.

Items like **AGA Explains** are very useful. Let other Assistant Government Agents and Municipal Commissioners also explain their position through your esteemed newspaper.

K. V. S. Sriskanda
Batticaloa

Note by Editor:

We have taken due note of reader Sriskanda's observations.

The implications of his statement "The Tamils in Batticaloa live in fear of death. You play matches in the North" cannot be allowed to pass unchallenged. If we were only interested in scoring debating points, we could well retort that it is not only the North that plays matches and it is not only in Batticaloa that Tamils live in fear of death. The Colombo-based media, these last few days, are full of write-ups about the Batticaloa Cagers' fine performances in the Basketball Nationals being worked out in Colombo. Surely reader Sriskanda cannot be unaware of this?

But debating points aside, the essential point is that life goes on and must go on. At the height of the Nazi blitz of Britain during the 2nd World War, cultural and recreational activities, among others, went on. So too in Vietnam where American bombers, used to drop more bombs over North Vietnam in one night than during the whole of the 2nd World War. The people of Britain and

Vietnam sensed correctly that normal activities must go on, as far as possible, to keep up the people's morale. Does reader Sriskanda think that we should all turn into a nation of professional mourners and renounce life?

We should like to stress that the **Saturday Review**, despite several constraints, has consistently spotlighted the atrocities perpetrated in the East. How is it that reader Sriskanda's eagle eye missed our coverage of what happened at Natpidimunai, Nilaveli and Murugapuri (to give just a few examples) and instead latched on to the small news items he refers to, in his letter? Does he realise the risks our correspondents and staff writers ran to get first-hand information about these incidents in the East?

We note that reader Sriskanda has given a Bar Road address. It would have been better, if instead of indulging in nit-picking, he had sent us an eye-witness account of the recent rampage by the Security

forces down his road, for publication.

DOUBLE STANDARDS

Editor

SATURDAY REVIEW

The Colombo-based media make so much of these 'widows and orphans' in the wake of terrorists bomb attacks. We have even seen photographs of children who have been given generous donations. But has the Colombo-based media heeded the cries of 'widows and orphans' who have been victims of random firing by Security Forces in the various parts of the North and East? Such cries will not go unheeded for 'vengeance is mine said the Lord!

Take the case of an incident in Trincomalee where 'two daughters of Mylvaganam' were shot dead by Security Forces leaving 10 children orphaned. Who will cry for them?

Jaffna

A Reader

N. E. MERGER

Editor

SATURDAY REVIEW

It is interesting to note the utterances of those in power regarding the MERGER AND SEPARATION of North and East-

A sober look reveals that the North and East merge in destruction and misery. It gets separated from the rest of the Island in development. A depression in the Bay of Bengal brings in rain and Ceylonese mostly to the North and East. So does the North East monsoon.

The climate, vegetation, the soil and even the people of the North and East are somewhat different from the rest of the country.

Merger and Separation are already there. Then why break heads? For whose benefit?

E. S. Theyagarajah

Kilinochchi

TIMELY REMINDER

Editor

SATURDAY REVIEW

Mr. William S. Rutnam of Mount Lavinia in a letter to an English daily bemoans the omission of the Tamil language as against Sinhala, English, French, German and Spanish in Christmas cards produced by CNAPT. In the same letter, he refers to Dr

John R. W. Wilson M. D., a Tamil who rendered valuable service to the CNAPT as its Chairman for 7 years.

After all, CNAPT has only reflected the general trend in this country of wanting to eliminate as a first step the Tamil language in this country. CNAPT has done a

service by reminding those Tamils who are not alive to the danger.

R. J. Solomon

Jaffna

APPRECIATION

M. Rajendram

Mr. M. Rajendram whose death occurred recently at the ripe old age of 78 hailed from an influential and wealthy family in Thondamanaru. His grandfather, popularly known as Thondamanaru Veeragathipillai, was a distinguished business magnate and philanthropist.

Mr. Rajendram had his primary education at the Hindu School, Thondamanaru which was founded and financed by his grandfather until the State took over the school. He had his secondary education at Parameshwara College where he matriculated. Thereafter he followed a Science Graduate Course at the Madras University where he obtained a B. Sc degree. After completion of the degree course he returned home and took charge as Principal of his Alma Mater at Thondamanaru. For 3 decades he taught and developed his pupils' intellects and moulded their moral character by infusing them with the noble traits of his character. Though by profession a teacher, he was not pedantic. In private discussions with his close associates in retirement he gave the impression of knowing little. This is the hall-mark of wisdom.

He was by nature of a retiring disposition, meek, humble, sincere to the core, pious, free from malice or hatred and performed his family, social and religious duties without pomp or show.

May this noble soul rest in peace with God!

Dr. K. Subramaniam

Colombo

PTA AFFLICTS SOUTH

"There has been a disturbing new development in recent weeks: the widespread arrests of youths in the South, apparently on political grounds" states a release signed by clerics, leading intellectuals and prominent cultural figures.

Among the signatories are: Rev. Batapola Anomadassi, Rev. Dr. Wellawatte Gnabiwansa Thero, Rev. Yohan Devananda, Reggie Siriwardene, Profs. Kumari Jayawardene, Carlo Fonseka and Osmand Jayaratne, Sumithra Gunawardene, Premasiri Khemadasa, Vijaya Kumaranatunge and Dhar-masiri Pathiraja.

The release goes on to say: Reports that trickle through indicate that some of the detenus were taken into custody on the streets or removed from their homes by night. There are also reports that when a person wanted could not be found

by the security organisations, members of his family had been taken in as hostages. Since these arrests have taken place under the special powers that the government wields, both under emergency regulations and under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, there are serious questions which arise regarding the rights as well as the safety of persons taken into custody. Detenus can, under these powers, be kept in any place the authorities choose, so that they do not enjoy the minimum rights and safeguards enjoyed by those held in normal prisons. They can, at the will of the authorities, be cut off from access to relatives, friends and lawyers, who remain ignorant even of their place of detention. Under these conditions they can be defenceless against torture or even deprivation of life."

PROMOTING VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION

We reproduce here extracts from the editorial of the REFUGEES (No. 21, September 1985), a monthly published by the Public Information Section of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva, as it is relevant to the situation prevailing in Sri Lanka.

It is a generally accepted principle that voluntary repatriation, whenever feasible, is the most desirable solution to any given refugee situation. Equally evident, however, is the fact that it is not necessarily an easy solution to attain. It normally pre-supposes the elimination or at least the mitigation of the cause of fear or danger which had led to the departure of refugees from their home country. Often it also requires a willingness of the country of origin to re-admit its nationals and to co-operate with the country of asylum in arranging for the refugees' safe return. In many situations of large-scale influx, voluntary repatriation would nevertheless appear to be the only appropriate solution, provided of course that the necessary conditions are established in the country of origin.

The importance of voluntary repatriation as the ideal solution to current refugee problems has re-

cently been reaffirmed in a number of fora.

The most recent effort undertaken by the High Commissioner to promote voluntary repatriation is the Round Table on that subject which he convened in San Remo from 16 to 19 July.

During the three days of deliberations the participants reviewed in a spirit of frankness and co-operation voluntary repatriation in all its aspects. At the outset it was emphasized that the High Commissioner has a specific mandate to seek permanent solutions to refugee problems and that his office is the principal United Nations body concerned with voluntary repatriation.

There was a consensus that when, in the opinion of the High Commissioner, a serious problem existed in the promotion of voluntary repatriation of a particular refugee group, he should con-

sider appointing an informal *ad hoc* Consultative Group in consultation with the Chairman of his Executive Committee including, as appropriate, States which are not members of that Committee.

Otherwise, the method of establishing tripartite commissions is well adapted to securing satisfactory general co-operation. Such tripartite commissions, which should consist of the countries of origin and asylum and UNHCR, could involve themselves in both the planning and the implementation of a repatriation programme. It is also an effective means of securing consultations between the main parties concerned on any problems that might subsequently arise.

International action to promote voluntary repatriation requires consideration of the situation within the country of origin as well as within the receiving country. Assistance for the reintegration of returnees provided by the international community in the refugees' home country was recognized as an

important factor in promoting repatriation. It is equally important so as to avoid a new influx. To these ends, UNHCR should have funds readily available to assist the returnees in their country of origin.

It was also agreed that it is of fundamental importance that UNHCR be recognized as having a legitimate concern about the consequences of return, particularly where the return has been brought about as a result of an amnesty or other form of guarantee of safe return. The High Commissioner must be regarded as entitled to insist on his legitimate concern over the outcome of any return that he has assisted. He must also have direct and unhindered access to the returnees and be in a position to monitor fulfilment of the amnesties, guarantees or assurances on the basis of which the refugees have returned.

The participants also examined the responsibilities of States. It was underlined that a necessary precondition for the promotion of voluntary repatriation was sufficient political will on the part of the States directly concerned to address such issues as respect for human rights, the non-use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes and economic and social development. This was the primary responsibility of States.

NATIONAL HARMONY COMMITTEE PLEADS...

(Continued from page 2)

provinces as a whole, or in terms of national ethnic proportions, exclusively.

The following possibilities arise if we look at the problem in such a disaggregated way. For obvious reasons, relating to the present density of population, there is no question of land settlement in the Jaffna Peninsula. The three districts of the Eastern Province are already ethnically mixed—it should be possible to agree that new settlements in these three districts be on the basis of the ethnic proportions within the district as existing on a fixed date; the census of 1981 or 1971 could be agreed upon for this purpose. The question of land settlement acquires greater significance in the districts of Kilinochchi, Vavuniya, Mannar and Mullaitivu. In the case of settlements in these areas, we would urge the state not to insist on national ethnic proportions; that would involve a serious dilution of Tamil predominance in these areas and to grave fears concerning security. Similarly, we would urge the Tamil people not to insist on a total exclusion of Sinhalese peasants from these areas.

It should be possible, in a climate of rational accommodation, to allocate new settlements to peasants of all ethnic groups in proportions

which will enable the Tamils to retain their predominance in these districts. For example, there could be agreement that the proportion of Tamil population will not be below a certain level fixed for each of the four districts which could be in the range of 60% to 70%, depending on the present shares. Within the agreed proportions, preference would have to be given to persons resident in the areas, who qualify for land allocation on criteria based on needs and suitability. All selections of allottees within the province should be the responsibility of the Provincial Councils, in terms of procedures which are applicable nationally. Selection of allottees from outside the Province could be done in consultation with provincial authorities. We believe that some solution on these lines would not only meet the needs of the multi-ethnic society of Sri Lanka but would also ensure the Tamil people the security and sense of geographical identity they desire.

EDUCATION

We understand that difficulties in the field of education lie largely in the sphere of tertiary education, i.e., at the post-secondary and university level. Recognising that any authority, whether central or provincial, will need to maintain a balance between tertiary education, employment and financial resources, we do not see any insuperable ob-

jection to handing over management and development of tertiary education, subject to nationally devised policy, to provincial authorities. If this principle is accepted, the functioning of the tertiary component of a province within a national system could be clearly defined.

INTER-PROVINCIAL LINK

In speaking thus of provinces as the units of devolution, we are not unmindful of the demand that has been made to link up the Northern and Eastern Provinces. No doubt there are linguistic and cultural convergences in these areas that will make some linkage of these areas necessary. Even today, there are linkages and forms of co-operation transcending district or provincial boundaries, which take place under the aegis of the central government. It would be possible to envisage forms of inter-provincial co-operation which the provincial authorities could develop together on a variety of development activities. The institutional arrangements for devolution should make such forms of co-operation possible.

IMPLEMENTATION

To arrive at a political solution is hard, but the problems encountered in implementing it may be even harder. If a political solution is to work, the peoples of all ethnic groups must accept it and implement it in sincerity. There

must be no devious efforts to sidetrack or subvert an agreed solution. In this context, we appeal to all citizens and all organisations to deepen the awareness of the people of the problems that our society is faced with, and of the absolute necessity of a peaceful solution. We have often reiterated that the fears entertained by the Sinhalese who fear that devolution will strengthen the forces seeking separation, are based on grave misconceptions regarding the nature of power that is devolved. The powers of the central government will always enable it to preserve the unity of the nation and safeguard national security. Devolution as we have stated, will enable the people in different parts of the country to realise clearly their interdependence on each other and help them to work together for their common prosperity. It is imperative that this message be carried to all sections of the population by the leadership of all parties and by concerned citizen groups.

We would also urge the government to go ahead, irrespective of these negotiations, with the establishment of a Human Rights Committee, whose primary duty would be to investigate into grievances of an ethnic character, eliminate all forms of discrimination based on ethnic grounds and establish and uphold the norms of equity for a multi-racial society.

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

ABDUCTED SUPERVISOR STILL MISSING

Mr. V. Sithamparapillai (43), Works Supervisor, attached to the Irrigation Office, Kaluwanchikudi in Batticaloa District and engaged in the supervision of construction works at Sinnapukulam and Ilupadi-pallakulam had been abducted by an armed gang along with some others at about 10 a.m., on 25th November, 1985 while he was in a boutique at Periyapullumalai. His whereabouts are still not known. He had been assigned 2 worksites in Periyapullumalai area. Vellekalth-aravai Kulam and Natpathuacre-kulam.

He is married, with 3 children aged 8, 6 and 4. His family is at Neduli Lane, Thunnalai, Karaveddy.

He was transferred to Paddiruppu in February, 1985.

The Irrigation Engineer Paddiruppu, has reported the matter to the Officer-in-Charge, Eravur Police. The Deputy Director of Irrigation, Batticaloa Range has also lodged a complaint with the Co-ordinating Officer in Batticaloa.

NSSP CELEBRATIONS

The Nava Sama Samaja Party is making arrangements to celebrate its 8th anniversary and the 50th anniversary of the Sama Samaja movement. The celebrations will be highlighted by an Exhibition at the New Town Hall, Colombo on the 16th and 17th instant, and a mass rally on the 17th evening at the De Mel Park. The rally will be presided over by Mr. Vasudeva Nanayak-kara.

REFUGEES GET CLOTHES, MILK POWDER

The Vishva Hindu Parishad Sri Lanka branch and the Jaffna District Women's Conference have jointly distributed Cloth Parcels and Milk Powder Packets to the value of Rs. 112,000/- to the refugee families in the Assistant Government Agents' Divisions of Velanai and Kopay.

BASIC INTERNATIONAL DEMAND

The First International was founded on September 28, 1864, at a meeting in London with Karl Marx, the outstanding leader of the proletariat's liberation struggle, on the presidium. He and Frederick Engels were the movement's main political leaders and its outstanding thinkers.

The International raised the question of the eight hour day as a basic International demand from then on, and in oncoming decades it was to assume the greatest importance. It also demanded the abolition of night work for women and the regulation of the work of women and children in industry.

To gain a knowledge of the Socialist and Communist Internationals, read the book 'Lenin and Asia' by Attorney-at-Law T. Duraisingam, a veteran member of the revolutionary movement in this country.

Sinhala, Tamil and English editions of the book are available at bookshops.

Price Rs. 10/-

Council for Socialist Studies,
31, Wilson Street, Colombo 12.

SAVE US! MUTUR APPEALS

We reproduce a letter by Mr. S. Shanmuganathan of Kaddaiparichan in Mutur and also signed by 430 other chief occupants from Chenaiyoor, Kadatkaraichenai, Sambur, Koonitheevu and Kaddaiparichan to the Government Agent, Trincomalee.

Copies of the letter have also been sent to the Assistant Government Agent, Mutur; Co-ordinating Officer, Trincomalee; the Cease-fire Monitoring Committee; Mr. E. A. Mahroof, M. P., Mutur; and Mr. Sarath Muttetuwegama, M. P. Kalamana.

The SATURDAY REVIEW of 7th December had focussed the situation in the Mutur area.

We, the people of Kaddaiparichan, Chenaiyoor, Kadatkaraichenai, Sambur and Kunitheevu beg to bring the following facts for your kind and most sympathetic consideration and help.

The people of the above mentioned village are innocent and very peace-loving type. The security forces came into our villages several times and burnt houses, clothes, jewels, vehicles and furniture and caught many of our innocent and guiltless youngsters and families men and students and shot them to death.

On 27th November 1985, the security forces came to our villages and arrested twentyone innocent people and shot them to death at Sambur. The villagers took refuge in the schools, temples and jungles. Some of the refugees in the Chenaiyoor temple were attacked by Security forces from helicopters and the injured persons numbering

eight are getting treatment at the Mutur Government hospital.

People of these villages are afraid to live in their houses or 'chenas' or in the jungles. Even we are afraid to go out of our houses to the fields or to our gardens.

Therefore we take this opportunity to beg of your kind honour to grant us protection and save us from this disaster.

Though we lost our houses and belongings, the distribution of essential foodstuffs as relief were stopped three months ago.

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SUSPENSION, REQUISITIONS

Following the bomb blast at Maradana railway station on 12th December in which one bogey was damaged, rail services to the North has been suspended-yet again.

The Cement Corporation's premises at Kankesanthurai has been requisitioned for the use of the Army.

The Irrigation Department's I.E.'s quarters and D.D.'s Quarters at Kilinochchi have also been occupied by the Army.

DON'T EXPEL TAMILS - A. I.

Amnesty International has appealed to the Swiss Government not to repatriate about 4,500 Sri Lankan Tamils who have sought asylum there, on the grounds that they will be subject to 'reprisals.'

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