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SRI LANKA

Vol 4 No. 40 21st December 1985

TORTURE-Glorious Tradition

Sri Lanka, we sincerely believe, is still a wonderful place—despite all the horrifying reports we receive from some parts of the island.

A wonderful place compared to many other countries from which we hear of even more horrifying stories.

Torture, for instance. It is taking place only on a very limited scale in Sri Lanka, if we are to go by the reports of devilish deeds in other countries put out by Amnesty International, the International Commission of Jurists and other human rights organisations.

As a classic illustration, President Jayewardene did not give ex-Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike the 'lamp-post treatment' despite all the misdeeds attributed to her during her 1970—77 regime. She was only deprived of her civic rights—to ensure her a much-needed holiday from politics.

Quite unlike President Zia ul-Haq, our most recent State Guest, who eliminated his own 'guru' Ali Bhutto by putting a noose round his neck.

So there we are, still observing some democratic norms and paying at least lip-service to human values.

Of course, a little bit of torture is carried on routinely in the Northern and Eastern Provinces and sometimes, in the South as well.

But this is like the cost of living which, as our leaders say, is a common and inevitable phenomenon in most 'developing countries.'

Even compared to what prevailed during the reigns of some of the glorious Sinhalese kings, we are much better off now, at least as far as torture is concerned.

Remember the tales of inconvenient people who, during the ancient days, had spikes sent up their backs or had their bodies torn apart by tying them between trees which were then cut loose?

Remember the last Sinhalese (or was it Tamil?) King, Sri Wickrema Rajasingha who got Ehelepola's children pounded to death?

Torture, then, is one more of our glorious traditions, just as it is in many other countries.

'Terrorists', as President Zia so bluntly pointed out during his interview over our TV, are 'animals' and they should be treated as such.

So we—all of us—should stop griping about torture.

Until we are caught up with it—individually. Then it will be too late. And there may not be any opportunity for any griping.

N. B. We were prompted to write this piece after seeing the chest of a 27-year father of two children.

It was tattooed all over by some sadists in khaki who had apparently used a razor blade. The man had been picked up in Jaffna town as a suspected 'terrorist' along with nine others and given the works.

Part of the treatment, he told the SATURDAY REVIEW, was an injection in the groin after which he passed blood and semen.

Unheard of, unbelievable and unpalatable in Dharmista Sri Lanka.

SORRY, BUT...

Everything is going up in price — with the blessings of the Government!

This includes postal charges. Just like traders who pass on any increases in the business turnover tax. etc, to the customers, we will be compelled to pass on to our readers the recent increase in the postal charges.

An announcement in this connection will be made shortly.

However, those Readers who have already taken out subscriptions will not be affected until their subscription period is over.

New subscriptions taken out until 31st December will also be at the current rate.

SCOT'S GRAND GESTURE

There are kind and caring souls all over the world—except perhaps in some sections in 'Colombo-7'—who will rush to the rescue of people who are affected by calamities of one sort or another.

Like the Standing Committee of Tamil-speaking People (SCOT) of Middlesex, which has sent the highest individual donation so far to the SATURDAY REVIEW Refugee Relief Fund.

We publish below their letter, sent along with a draft for £ 3,000 approximately Rs. 120,000.

Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

Middlesex
England
25th November 1985

Dear Mr. Navaratne,
REFUGEE RELIEF FUND

In response to your appeal (SR 9 November 1985) we have arranged a telegraphic transfer in the sum of £3,000 to your bank account as our contribution to the Relief Fund sponsored by your newspaper. A copy of the letter to our bank is attached and we look forward to receiving your acknowledgement in due course.

We trust this contribution will assist in some measure, your efforts to provide relief to helpless Tamil refugees, particularly those, who according to your reports have drifted into the Jaffna peninsula from other Tamil areas. It would help us in our appeals for further contributions towards these efforts, if we could have some feedback as to the nature of the relief operations that these monies will support.

Our organisation was set up as a registered charity in the UK in 1977 to encourage the growth of a self-reliant Tamil community. Because of the problems faced by the community during these years, our resources have largely been deployed in providing relief for refugees, though of course we have also provided modest support for rehabilitation programmes. In the long term, we are firmly committed to the task of raising the living standards in the Tamil areas of Sri Lanka.

We wish you every success in this humanitarian task that you have undertaken and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely
C. Kathiresan
Co-ordinator Relief/ Rehabilitation

Owing to the intervening seasonal holidays, there will be no issue of the SATURDAY REVIEW on 28th December.

The next issue will appear on 4th January, 1986.

Release ALL Political detenus in Sri Lanka jails

Saturday Review
SRI LANKA

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GAMINI NAVARATNE

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SRI LANKA TAMILS: LEGITIMATE EXPECTATIONS—8

JR DEAF TO TAMIL OPINION

by N. Satyendra

(Continued from last issue)

On the 11th of July 1983, the elected President of Sri Lanka gave expression to the policy of his government in respect of a section of his electorate. President Jayewardene, vested by the Sri Lankan Constitution with the executive power of the State, announced to the world:

"I have tried to be effective for sometime but cannot. I am not worried about the opinion of the Tamil people now". He said at one time his party had been anxious to apply policies in the northern region in such a way as to attract popular support there. "Now, we cannot think of them. Not about lives or of their opinion about us. Nothing will happen in our favour until the terrorists are wiped out. Just that. You cannot cure an appendix patient until you remove the appendix." He went on: "The more you put pressure in the north the happier the Sinhala people will be here. Really, if I starve the Tamils out, the Sinhala people will be happy".. (*London Telegraph 11th July 1984*)

The government of Sri Lanka was frank. On such occasions, it should be taken at its word. In the perception of the government, the claims of the Tamil people had assumed a dimension that demanded a response—but, strangely,a response which did not have regard for the lives of the Tamil people or for that matter, their opinion.

President Jayewardene's Minister of Industries, Cyril Mathew was somewhat more explicit when he had declared in Parliament in 1981:

"Terrorism cannot be stopped and has never been stopped by means of the law. Terrorism has been stopped by terrorism. In no other way is it possible.."

The government of Sri Lanka was set on the path of finding a 'military' solution. The legitimising propaganda was that 'terrorism must be stopped by terrorism' But what was the nature of the so-called terrorism which the government of Sri Lanka sought to eradicate?

The International Commission of Jurists report on a mission to Sri Lanka in January 1984 stated:

".. The Tamil Tigers are, it is conceded, only a tiny group of violent youths in a fundamentally peaceful population of nearly 15 million. They have taken, on average, around 16 lives a year, almost all among people whom they either see as their armed oppressors, or as traitors to their own community, and entirely within a few small areas in the Island. By comparison the toll of deaths from terrorism in Northern Ireland over the same period—217 members of the security forces, and 275 civilians—has averaged 90 per annum in a population just one tenth the size of Sri Lanka: that is rate per capita 57 times as high...the scale and size of terrorism in Sri Lanka is not such as to constitute a public emergency threatening the life of the nation.. and so does not justify measures permanently derogating from the rights guaranteed by the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights.. if terrorism is to be contained or eliminated the legitimate expectations of the Tamil community must be met.." (*Sri Lanka: A Mounting Tragedy of Errors—Paul Sieghart, International Commission of Jurists and Justice March 1984*)

And in 1983, 35 years after independence from British rule, what were the legitimate expectations of the Tamils of Sri Lanka, who constituted one fifth of the island's population? What were the legitimate expectations of a people who were bound together by a common language and a common culture and many of whom continued to reside in their traditional homelands in the north and east of Sri Lanka?

It was **a legitimate expectation of the Tamil people** that the government of Sri Lanka would have acted on the comments of Professor Virginia Leary in the 1981 International Commission of Jurists Report that "The tension between the ethnic communities creates an extremely dangerous situation in Sri Lanka which may escalate into major violence in the Island and negate all efforts to develop the Island economically... As a minimum, the Tamils are entitled to protection of their physical security within Sri Lanka. This protection can no longer be taken for granted..." and endeavoured to create a climate where the Tamil people were encouraged to live with self respect, where they were encouraged and given confidence to found their families and look upon Sri Lanka as their motherland.

It was a legitimate expectation of the Tamil people that the government would give effect to Article 1 of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights that "All peoples have the right of self determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development" and act on the 1981 International Commission of Jurists Report that: "The Tamils could be considered to be a 'people.' They have a distinct language, culture, a separate religious identity from the majority population, and to an extent a defined territory..The application of the principle of self determination in concrete cases is difficult. It seems nevertheless,

(*Continued on page 7*)

NOT THE NEWS

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

Zia, the king of Paki Bashers and the Great Leader got together to celebrate Human Rights Day on 10th December.

"Who says we are not champions of human rights?" said Zia with his renowned, ingratiating smile of a 'B' movie villain. "Those who do not live it up like us can hardly be human beings, heh, heh."

"Well said, friend. Only Bhutto and a few others died in your prisons. You must see mine. 55 in a week in July 1983. You must send your minions to me for training, ho, ho."

"Ha, you forget buddy, my whole country is a prison, heh, heh."

"Don't underestimate me friend. That will come. But there is no restriction on death sentences wherever those miserable Tamils live. Each uniformed minion with a gun is Judge, Jury and Executioner."

"Because the Russians are in Afghanistan, Cowboy Ron has made me the guardian of Christendom, heh, heh."

"Because the Russians are in Afghanistan, Ron believes that my fiefdom is a democracy subject to a Marxist conspiracy, ho, ho."

"Three cheers for us buddy and long live human rights, heh heh."

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

from Gerontius

It is once more the season to send greetings and summary epistles to my well-wishers around the world. More of my letters come from abroad and many of my friends have crossed the bar. I almost feel a foreigner here. With the postal rates having been upped to service a war which no one wants, I am greatly indebted to the editor of the SR for having granted me this indulgence, enabling me to send out my greetings by this expeditious means.

Our President is ever fearful of an Indian invasion. But thanks to punitive harassment of Tamil travellers, the unreliability of the train services and the obstacles placed in the way of the Tamil youth pursuing professional and educational careers in the South, one can already perceive a creeping Indianisation of the Tamil homeland. At a recent wedding I was told that several guests had come from India, but none from Colombo. India is only 3 hours away and no passport needed. Colombo may be as much as a hazardous 24 hours away with several passport (IC) checks. The once despised Indian degrees are now the rage. The young are advised, 'Go to India even if you have a place at a local University. In India you will learn something useful and have a degree at the end. But here it is all chance. You are not likely to have the peace of mind to concentrate on your work. Students face arbitrary arrests — on some occasions even from examination halls'. In the past people returning from the South used to bring some of it back with them, including a bit of Sinhalese slang. Now people listen to All India Radio and Trichi, thanks to the integrity of the SLBC, and words such as 'gherao' and 'bandh' are coming into common currency. **It takes the shooting of innocent Tamils almost daily by the Sri Lankan forces to remind us that we are yet hapless citizens of the Sri Lankan Democratic Socialist Republic.** If that was the intention of our nominal rulers in Colombo, they have been very wise.

OLD LEFT-OVERS

Almost every Sunday at church I am told of some family emigrating to Australia, Canada or the US — the British think we are too good for them. Someone told me the other day that he has six years to go to Australia on the basis that his brother-in-law's brother-in-law's brother-in-law had just gone there and one has to be there two years before sponsoring another. Consequently the young are becoming fewer and more of the churchgoers are old left-overs like me waiting for our time. It is possible that many parishes will be reduced to buildings without people. Pt. Pedro, the once thriving centre of Methodist activity which also articulated itself through the once famous Hartley College is down to 14 families. The graves of their forebears are overgrown with thorns.

The Allapiddy Methodist Church where only an old watcher is left now shelters some chicks and a goat. With the oncoming rains, Christmas may see an Ox and an Ass added to the company, making it a fitting place for the Christ-child. Just as Eelam may dawn in some Australian or Canadian reservation, the Pt. Pedro Methodist Church may see a revival in Putney, London or Sydney, Australia. There is an old-fashioned idea in Christianity that one does not simply run away from suffering, but would rather seek God's grace to face it with honour. People have become wiser now. They think little of leaving their fellows with assurances of their constant thoughts and prayers. Christ and his Apostles were fools. Perhaps, when the West runs out of immigrants, their missionaries can come here, revive their missions and run their schools all over again.

I have been a little unfair to the Christians. Emigrants include all categories of educated Tamils of whom the Christians form only a fraction. One of my friends keeps telling me that what the Missionaries did was converting people not to Christianity, but to the Western way of life. The powerful message of Christ was buried beneath success and the fruits of western science. Thus the educated Hindu while passionately clinging to the symbols of his bygone identity is in substance no different from his fellow Christian. The more he understands this the more anti-Christian he may become. The modern Hindu who had been vegetarian for generations would seldom think anything of cutting up a rabbit to get his MBBS or rearing broiler chicks for slaughter and sale. Indeed he may use the Bhagavad Gita to justify modern scientific practice, throwing away mercy and compassion, by quoting Krishna's words to Arjuna to the effect that what one does in the line of duty can be distinct from one's private moral perceptions. So, we are all, Christian and Hindu, sold on what is modern, scientific and progressive. What can then be more reasonable than to quit this place? As my friend says, this place is for morons, oldies and psychiatric cases.

It is three years since our son's family in England visited us. There is no chance of their coming after this. They are rather sensitive to all violence outside butcher's shops and vivisection (animal experimentation) laboratories. The stock of stainless steel blades they gave me has been exhausted and I have now grown a white beard like Santa Claus I cannot afford blades on my Clerical Service pension. My son has taken a mortgage to move into a bigger house and cannot invite us this year. When I took a collect-call to them last year my grandson asked me 'how is Ceylon?' I was a little taken aback and answered that it is a bit like an English football match. I am now told that whenever there is talk of visiting 'Apappa' in Ceylon he starts crying.

BABY-SITTING

My daughter in the US has suggested that if we join them, my wife can look after the children so that she can go out to work, while I can be occupied running a hamburger joint. Thereby, she added, their family income can be doubled. I replied saying that we are not getting younger, and if we fall ill there may be no family income left. The matter has apparently been dropped.

Well then, here we are, the Tamils of Ceylon, divided scattered and confused, pursuing our diverse aims and occasionally clinging to common symbols: some receiving honours and prestige in prominent places oblivious to all else, and others in the misery of refugee camps or prisons. And many others die unrecorded and unmourned, except by their near ones.

I shall switch off before I weary you and the editor with my ravings. My capacity for that is unlimited, just in case you are thinking of paying me a Christmas visit. Just one more thing. Only this morning I saw a screaming fattened goat being taken on a bicycle for you know what. It reminded me of some of our boys being taken in by the Army for 'the treatment.' There has been enough blood around. Let us not celebrate the birth of the 'Prince of Peace' in an orgy of blood. If there are no floods to jack up the prices of vegetables, I will settle for Christmas on **Katharikkai** (brinjals) and **Paruppu** (lentils).

X'MAS MESSAGE — A CHALLENGE

by Fr. C. A. Joachim Pillai

As the season of advent hope and Christmas festivity draws near, all of us have to ask ourselves whether there is still some hope in our hearts for a peaceful and **just** settlement in our beautiful homeland. Extremisms of whatever hue which selfishly try to hold on to their point of view, cannot really show us the path of peace and justice. They only make our people—both Sinhalese and Tamils—accumulate much negative **karma** which might take a long, long time to be freed from.

Hidden Nemesis

Even if the killings and lootings do not come to the human court so that the perpetrators could be punished, there is—thank God—a hidden nemesis, an inner justice which no one can escape. **Crime is its own punishment.** The whole land, and all the hearts are under a cloud. People live in fear. The country ceases to develop and progress. Not only the economy, but even the minds and hearts and memories have begun to shrink. How sad!

Buddhists and Hindus, Muslims and Christians, all agree that violence begets violence. But there seems to be no end to it. The basic root of violence has to be eradicated. And the root of violence in our situation is the desire to control what does not legitimately belong to us—others' freedom, rights and homelands. The pursuit of such selfish domination—under whatever noble pretexts of unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty—cannot truly **free** people to be what they really are. Freedom to affirm one's identity—ethnic, religious, personal—cannot be bartered for any other convenience.

What we want for ourselves, we should be ready to let others have too. What the Israelis want for themselves, they should concede also to the Palestinians a homeland of their own. What the Ulster Protestants want for themselves, they should concede also to the Irish Catholics—some kind of meaningful relationship to their motherland. English Canadians have to be sensitive to the rights whether linguistic or economic, of the French Quebecois. Africaaners in South Africa should give their fellow Blacks and Asians the same rights that they enjoy. Sinhalese in Sri Lanka must understand that like them the Tamils too want **to be at home in their own country.** That is not asking too much.

(Continued on page 7)

THESE STATISTICS

Cease-fires are meant to be breached — at least in Sri Lanka.

The Government of Sri Lanka declared a unilateral cease-fire (or as the National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali is fond of saying, a cessation of hostilities) on 18th June this year — but the killings by the Security Forces keep mounting.

In September for instance, there were 383 mass killings of Tamils compared to 311 in June. This is the highest recorded 'rampage' killing so far this year.

There is documented evidence of at least 2,215 Tamils being killed from January to 12th December this year during 'operations' by the Security

DATE AND NATURE OF INCIDENT	NAME OF DECEASED	OFFICIAL VERSION
1 - 11 - 85 Subramaniam Kathiresu of Koddady Road, Jaffna, who was returning late from a party in high spirits had apparently strayed inadvertently into the forbidden zone near the Jaffna Fort where he was shot dead. His companions at the party are certain that he carried neither weapons nor grenades when he left their company.	S. Kathiresu (35)	The youth who was shot dead by the Army when attempting to enter the Jaffna Dutch Fort Army Camp has been identified as Subramaniam Kathirapillai of Jaffna. The hand grenade that was found in his possession bore the symbol TELO, government sources said. **The Island of 4th November**
At about 10 a.m., at Mulankavil Pillaiyar Temple, Security Forces who were airlifted to the spot shot dead six persons who were worshipping inside the temple. Another five persons were also shot dead by the Security Forces at Vellankulam near Mulankavil. Pooneryn Citizens' Committee lodged a complaint with the Cease-fire Monitoring Committee.	Kuttithamby Sivarajuthurai (36) father of four. S. Thangarajah (42) Chelliah Asokan (22) Maniam Sivarajah (34) father of three. Asirvatham Jayenthan (25)	Ten terrorists who arrived armed with automatic rifles were killed yesterday by the military at Mulankavil, a jungle area a few miles north of Mannar, a National Security Ministry spokesman said. Soldiers found 150 kilograms of explosives, 4000 flash light batteries, 400 cycle tyres and a large number of TELO identity cards in the camp. **The Daily News of 2nd November**
5 - 11 - 85 After a bomb blast at Vantharumoolai in Batticaloa District, the Special Task Force (STF) opened fire and killed 3 civilians.	Adam Bawa (40) S. Ponnamma (38) The other person was not identified.	
8 - 11 - 85 Army personnel arrived at the Kadalkaraichenai Sea Coast by Naval gun boats by about 3 a.m. Gun Boats started shelling the coast and the firing continued for an hour. People took shelter inside the Sri Varnakula Vinayagar Hindu Temple at Chenaiyur. The Army personnel started from the coast and moved towards Chenaiyur. All along the way they set fire to houses in the village. They took four people into custody and they were taken to the house of Mr. Thambirasa Kalirasa and all of them except one Mr. P. Karunadasa were shot dead and the bodies along with the houses were burnt down. Then they went to the house of Muthulingam Kathirgamathamby (57) and shot him dead. Another person Dharmalingam (55) and his son (21) also were shot dead.	Muthulingam Kathirgamathamby (57) K. **Dharmalingam** (55) **Dharmalingam Mohanaraj** (21) Nadarasa Kalirasa (23) Mahendran Arasaratnam (35) Venkadasalam (45) Sebastianpillai Antony Gabriel (21) Thambirasa Kalirasa (50)	
9 - 11 - 85 4 soldiers entered Sri Varnakula Vinayagar Temple, Chenaiyur and attacked people who had taken refuge there. At this time 2 helicopters were hovering over the area giving cover. On the afternoon of the same day, soldiers arrested 2 persons at Kaddaiparichan Village. At 3-30 p.m., the same day soldiers went to Sambur village where they stayed overnight. They proceeded to Koonithivu and set fire to about 40 houses. The gun-boats which were anchored off the coast started firing shells. An airforce plane escorted by 2 helicopters dropped bombs in jungles close to the villages. This bombing went on nearly an hour. People who were living at certain points in Trincomalee town could see 'fireballs' falling from an aircraft.		At least 33 terrorists were killed and 80 captured when the security forces raided four separatist hideouts in the Eastern province in three days, a Government spokesman said yesterday. **The Daily News of 11th November**

DO BLEED

Forces. This evidence has been gathered through on-the-spot reports and interviews with survivors and cross-checked, as far as possible.

We present below in tabulated form the killings during the month of November. The official versions of the incidents have been taken over from the state-controlled media, including Lankapuwath.

'Statistics don't bleed' said Arthur Koestler.

But these statistics do bleed. In their cold, impersonal way they tell the story of the agony the Tamil people in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka (particularly the latter) have undergone and are undergoing.

NATURE AND DATE OF INCIDENT	MISSING	ADDRESS
10 - 11 - 85 At about 4-30 p.m. at Chenaiyur a helicopter flew over the Sri Varnakula Vinayagar Hindu Temple and started firing from the air. Bullets pierced through the roof and the people there were injured. The rest of the people ran into the inner sanctum of the temple which has a more reinforced concrete cover, thus escaping death. The temple was strewn with bullets and splattered with blood.	Kandasamy Kamalakannan (18) **Kandasamy Kamalaruby (16)** **Thangaraja Komala (20)** Balasundaram Atputharajan (18) Perumal Murukaiya (19)	Alim Chenai, Muthur do
11 - 11 - 85 Soldiers entered Chenaiyur again and set fire to the houses which remained intact. The four-day gruesome ordeal left 30 persons from Koonitheevu, and 50 persons from Sambur missing. 70 persons were arrested.	Sivasubramaniam Suresh Shankar (23) Jesudasan Antonidasan (30) Kanagaratnam Mohanaraja (27) **Lazeres Stanislaus (20)** **Packiyaraja Antoni Jesudas (19)** **Tobias Vasanthakumar de Vas (17)** **Tobias Edmon Roche De Vas (26)** **Sellarajah Jeyakantan (18)** **Lion Jeevan (19)** **Saththan Raman (23)** **Nallaiah Palani (27)** Kasi Kunaseelan (21)	Ward No.3, Muthur do 64th Mile Post, Muthur do Ward No.1, Muthur ,, 7 Pala Nagar, Muthur do

(List to be continued)

	NAME OF DECEASED	OFFICIAL VERSION
16-11-85 In a landmine blast which occurred in Bar Road, Batticaloa 4 policemen were killed. In reprisals 9 Tamils including a Grama Sevaka, a Bank Staffer and a teacher were killed. 15 shops were burnt and several houses were looted by the Special Task Force (STF). Bombs were also reported to have been dropped from helicopters after the land mine explosion.	S. Vellaian (46) A Bank employee S. Mahalingam (24) Teacher Senathirajah (45) Grama Sevaka S. Thiyagarajah (71) V. Muniyandi (25) S. Vimalaratnam (30) The rest of the bodies were not identified.	Terrorists killed four policemen including a Sub-Inspector and injured the others by blowing up a Police Jeep with a landmine in Bar Road, Batticaloa. Immediately after the landmine explosion a party went to the scene of the incident in Bar Road where they encountered a group of terrorists. In the shoot out that followed 7 terrorists were shot dead. **The Sunday Observer of 17th November**
20-11-85 At Urany in Batticaloa, Security Forces who were on patrol shot dead 2 persons.	**Seenithamby Vijayakumar (23)** **Velmurugu Nathan (23)**	
23-11-85 At Onthachchimadam Junction in Batticaloa, following a landmine blast, 8 persons were shot dead. No casualties were reported among the Security Forces.	**Bodies were unidentified and were cremated.**	
28 - 11 - 85 Mandur and Sampur Massacre. See the SATURDAY REVIEW of 7th December.		Twenty four terrorists were killed yesterday in an encounter with the Security Forces at Mandur in the Eastern Province. **Security Forces told "Lankapuwath."** **The Daily News of 29th November**
30 - 11 - 85 2 youths were shot dead at the Colombo Army Headquarters.	K. Thiagarajah Jeyasundeen	2 terrorists who attempted to escape from custody were shot dead by sentries on duty. **The Island 1st December** *(To be continued)*

AN ATTORNEY'S CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

On the 12th November, I went to the High Court, Vavuniya, to appear in certain murder cases and to support some applications for bail. This court is situated along the Colombo-Jaffna Main Road and in front of the present Police station at Vavuniya. The main entrance to the Court is blocked on one side with a barbed wire fence and on the other side with wooden logs — productions which were lying in the compound of the Vavuniya District Court and which had been removed, without Court permission I understand, to ensure adequate security for the Police Station. The parapet wall of this Court had been demolished by the Police for reasons best known to them.

While I was scaling the logs piled across the road, a high-ranking Police officer in uniform and armed with a revolver, shouted at me "Who are you? Where are you going? Don't come this way. This road is blocked". I told him I was an Attorney-at-law due to appear in certain cases coming up before the Circuit High Court that day. After asking for my name and questioning me, he told me in a harsh tone "You cannot use this path." Then I told him "You have closed the road on either side. How can we lawyers and litigants gain entrance to the Court?" He pointed out a gap between the southern boundary of the Court and the Prison lock-up and said "You can go through this gap". That passage was muddy due to the heavy rains. Besides, a 4-foot deep channel had been cut across that passage. Huge Hume pipes had also been placed across it. One had to excel in hop-step and jump to gain entrance to the Court through the only passage allowed by the police. I am ashamed to say this, but I learn the Judicial Head of Vavuniya had perforce to use this hazardous and undignified path to get to the Court.

On certain occasions while on my way to Mannar Courts I was compelled to walk about 100 yards, hands held up high over my head, to the check-point in front of the Murunkan Police Station along with other passengers, though the Police officers were well aware of my identity as I attend Murunkan Circuit Court every week.

Once during a joint army-police combing out operation in Mullaitivu, security forces forcibly entered my office in my absence and removed files dealing with political cases.

In March 1983 while I was returning home on my scooter after attending the High Court, Jaffna, I was mercilessly assaulted by some army personnel in a truck, near Urumpirai Hindu College. As a result I was warded in a Government Hospital for 3 days and thereafter underwent native treatment.

The then M. P. for Nallur, Mr. M. Sivasithamparam, mentioned this incident in Parliament: it is recorded in the Hansard dated 21-03-1983.

What I would like to ask the Minister of Justice is whether it is an offence under any law in force in Sri Lanka for an attorney-at-law to defend Tamil youths who have been kept in detention for over two years without any evidence? Will he take effective steps to preserve and protect the dignity of the legal profession?

S. K. Manoharan

Valvettiturai

LETTERS

LIVING WITH INDIA

Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

The historic agreement between the UK and the Ireland Governments regarding Ulster (Northern Ireland) is one that has to be welcomed by nations-in-the-making, so to say, such as Tamil Eelam whose population is nearly three times the Ulster population.

As this agreement subtly demonstrates, no country, however powerful, can claim to be an independent and sovereign power in isolation from its immediate regional neighbourhood. Already on lines similar to today's Anglo-Irish summit, a number of other regions in the world have also been active towards what you could call solutions on joint sovereignty, sharing of powers, joint controls etc. A joint Confederation Government between Jordan and the Palestinian lands has been proposed as a solution to the Palestinian problem.

Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, the British Prime Minister, is realistic enough to know that the old imperialistic approach will not even please President Reagan. Hence her early attempt at solutions.

Tamils and Sinhalese are only too conscious of the importance and the regional supremacy of India as a sub-super power in the Asian Region. We Tamils have to accept it and live with it — but the best way to secure our independence and sovereignty is to join the Indian region's super-power in a confederal set-up. Sri Lankan Sinhalese will be wise if they too join the regional set-up.

Krishna Vaikunthavasan

London

ALIEN CONCEPT

Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

The mutually contradictory words 'Marxist Terrorists' have been repeated ad nauseam by the media, including the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, so that now they have become household words. Marxism is associated with 'revolution' and definitely not with 'terrorism', which is an alien concept in the vocabulary of Marxism. The great Lenin condemned 'terrorism' outright, without mincing any words, when his own brother was indicted with the attempted murder of the Czar. In the considered opinion of Marxists, 'terrorism', the world over, is no solution to any problem. Marxism is a political philosophy that transcends all considerations of nationalism, religion, caste or any other sectarian concept.

As for 'terrorism', Reagan appears to favour it, despite all his utterances to the contrary: there is a quasi-military camp in Alabama where the Sikh terrorists have been trained. The courses provided include instruction in dynamiting bridges, skyjacking, assassinating politicians, poisoning drinking water etc.

V. Mahalingam

Karaveddy

HUMANE HUMOUR

Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

My piece **The Blessed Time Of Youth** (SR, 7th December) has been rendered slapstick by the editorial omission of the more subtle bits of humour. The omissions are on the appropriateness for gentlemen of non-violent cricket ("What can, after all, be more appropriate for gentlemen, who by definition, condescend to perform only such labour as is utterly useless, like carrying parcels for ladies and jogging along to relieve the boredom of stray dogs and bulls in harness?") and on the waltz ("The waltz was originally the dance of the natives of the Vienna s woods, which was later adopted by the European bourgeoisie. The modern cognoscenti in such matters invent the latest rage in dancing by observing the social and nuptial habits of cats, dogs and rhinoceroses").

The origins of this genre of humour go back to Jerome K. Jerome's **Three Men (and a dog) In A Boat.** Although the humour was initially deemed vulgar by the literati of that time, the British public decided otherwise and the book which first appeared in 1885 is still in print. P. G. Wodehouse was another lively exponent of Jerome's brand of humour.

Amidst important matters like history and political analysis humour should not be forgotten, even in times of war. Humour helps us to maintain civilised values by reminding us not to take ourselves too seriously. If both the Sinhalese and Tamils had a developed sense of humour many of our problems could have been solved. Whereas an excessive stress on a nationalist rendering of history and political analysis can make us rigid because the basis for such arguments must at least be partly subjective.

C. S. Lewis, an eminent man of letters, in his essay **Learning In Wartime** written during the 2nd World War, points to the importance of maintaining civilised activity even during wartime. There is nothing that civilises and renders us humane more than humour. Though the need for a political solution is urgent, in the long run there is a powerful case for raising the level of humour in Ceylon.

Jaffna **Rajan**

Note by Editor:

We totally agree with contributor Rajan about the civilising and humane influence of humour. The editorial surgery was unavoidable due to pressure on space. As they say, don't shoot the pianist, he's doing his best.

JR DEAF...

(*Continued from page 2*)

that a credible argument can be made that the Tamil community in Sri Lanka is entitled to self determination. Self determination does not necessarily mean separation...What is essential is that the political status of the 'people' should be freely determined by the 'people' themselves" and recognise that the Tamils of Sri Lanka constituted a nation and deal with them on that basis.

It was a legitimate expectation of the Tamil people that the government would recognise that Sri Lanka constituted a multi ational state and that therefore there was a need for two nations to share power within the frame of a federal constitutional structure.

It was a legitimate expectation of the Tamil people that the government would act on the 1981 International Commission of Jurists Report that "Policies concerning the use of Sinhala, inter alia, have seriously lessened the opportunities of Tamils for government employment. The government should adopt a system for recruitment for government service which provides equal opportunities for all persons regardless of ethnic origin," and repeal the Sinhala Only Act and adopt a system of recruitment for government service which provided equal opportunities for all persons regardless of ethnic origin.

It was a legitimate expectation of the Tamil people that the government would act on the 1981 International Commission Report that: "The government should give renewed attention to Tamil concern over government sponsored colonisation schemes which bring large numbers of Sinhalese into Tamil areas and thus change the ethnic composition in such areas. This is particularly important in view of the insecurity of Tamils due to communal violence against them in areas where they are in a minority" and stop state-sponsored colonisation of the traditional homelands of the Tamil people.

It was a legitimate expectation of the Tamil people that the government would act on the 1981 International Commission of Jurists Report that "The Government should re-examine its policies on university admissions with a view to basing admission on merit rather than on racial grounds. Tamil and Sinhalese young people alike will then have equal rights to university education on the basis of capacity rather than on race. One of the major points of tension among many Tamil youth has been the implicit racial quota under present university admission policies which has barred many competent youths from pursuing higher education" and secure that University admissions were based on merit and not on implicit racial quotas.

It was a legitimate expectation of the Tamil people that the government would act on the 1981 International Commission of Jurists Report that: "The long term solution to the ethnic conflict in the interests of the entire population can only be achieved on the basis of respect for the rule of law and relevant human rights standards. It is regrettable that certain government and United National Party actions such as the actions and remarks of certain government and party members, the actions of security forces, the stripping of the civic rights of Mrs. Bandaranaike, the Parliamentary vote of no confidence in the Leader of the Tamil United Liberation Front as well as the adoption of the Terrorism Act have undermined respect for the Rule of law in Sri Lanka" and seek to resolve the ethnic conflict on the basis of respect for the rule of law.

It was a legitimate expectation of the Tamil people that the government would act on the report of Orville H. Schell, former President of the New York City Bar Association, current Chairman of the Americas Watch Committee, and Head of the Amnesty International 1982 fact finding mission to Sri Lanka that "...The Government (of Sri Lanka) has repeatedly denied that its security forces violate fundamental rights. However, as head of an Amnesty International fact finding mission in January 1982, I received first hand evidence that incommunicado detention under the Prevention of Terrorism Act was widespread and that the army and the police regularly tortured political suspects and carried out political killings in June 1981..." and direct its security forces to act according to law. (*To be continued*)

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X'MAS MESSAGE...

(*Continued from page 3*)

Being at home means that one's language and home and homeland and other basic rights be fully respected. Exploitation, under whatever legal and political fiction, remains exploitation. Even the simplest folk can recognize that. Certain values, people hold more sacred than life itself, to the point of laying down their lives, if need be. One such value is freedom. **Life without true freedom to be at home** is lifeless life.

I have met thousands of Tamil refugees in Europe, North America and India, who inspite of all the limitations of their displaced condition, **seem to feel more at home in their new place,** since even as refugees and immigrants and new citizens they enjoy equal rights with the people of the land when it comes to basic matters of health, education and welfare to economic and political participation in the life of the nation. Because of their background in education and their desire to work and contribute, a few of these new immigrants seem to fare even better than some of the local citizens. That is the heart of freedom. In many places, at the end of three to five years, they can be full-fledged citizens.

Stateless Paupers

Compare that to what has happened to our Indian Tamils on the Sri Lanka plantations. After many generations and decades, having contributed so richly to the economy of the country, most of them remain Stateless paupers with no political rights in the country where they were born and have laboured all their life. Such injustice cries to heaven. And no land that does such things can be blessed—whatever the beauty of the scenery. They draw a curse on themselves. No one needs to curse them.

During the last few years of unrest in Sri Lanka, nearly half a million Tamils have been displaced, not to mention the cruel and cowardly killings of unarmed civilians; and that is, one in every six has been displaced. A terrible statistic. And the other five live in fear and incertitude. Of these only a tiny fraction has been able to get away to India (which is already overcrowded) and to Western countries, and build a new life. Such emigration, as we all know, is not going to solve the problem of the great majority who remain, and want to remain, in their homelands.

The hope we celebrate at Christmas is that the Ultimate in human form can come to birth where we least expect it, and often amidst exile, poverty and affliction. Jesus was born of a poor, displaced girl of Nazareth, and put in the crib of a manger in Bethlehem. He continues to be the innocent, vulnerable child born of displaced parents amidst insecurity and suffering. Jesus and the child-refugee continue to invite us to hear the angelic harmony within our hearts: Glory to God in the highest And Peace to those of goodwill.

Without goodwill and true justice, there can be no peace. The Christmas message remains a challenge to all of us, whether in Palestine or Northern Ireland or South Africa or Sri Lanka or elsewhere.

No summit can bring peace. The participants are interested in their relative hegemony over the world. Summits can teach us how to balance war-heads and warring heads. True peace starts in the heart, a heart that is qualified with goodwill. Goodwill is to look with favour at the real needs of my neighbour—not to deny others what we so insistently want for ourselves: to be at home in our own home and homeland.

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. It is this true graciousness that we wish each other at Christmas time. True graciousness will not deprive my neighbour of his basic rights and freedoms. We know what happened to the child of Bethlehem, when as a young man he started fighting for freedom.

Remembering Jesus, we also remember all the young men who are sacrificing their lives in various ways so that the hoped for freedom and peace can be a reality for all. God help us.

Saturday Review SRI LANKA

STOP POLITICAL WITCH-HUNT — CROPP

Stop the witch-hunt of political opponents, Release all political prisoners, Guarantee safety of life and immunity from harassment, ill-treatment and torture of political prisoners, states a press release issued by Mr. Charles Abeyasekera, Coordinator of the Campaign for the Release of Political Prisoners (CROPP).

The press release goes on to say: "There has been a disturbing new development in recent weeks: the widespread arrests of youths in the South, apparently on political grounds...A meeting of representatives of progressive and democratic organisations, political parties, trade unions and intellectuals which met to discuss the threat to civil liberties and democratic rights presented by this new wave of arrests decided to launch a broad-based campaign to compel the government to act in conformity with the normal processes of law. This is particularly in view of the fact that no valid evidence has so far been produced to justify the application of Emergency laws or of the provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, to the arrests referred to. We strongly urge the government to desist from the use of these laws to persecute their political opponents. In the meantime, we call upon the government to make public the names of all those arrested, to give due access to families and lawyers, to ensure that they are held in humane conditions and free from harassment, physical coercion, torture and death. We also urge that inquiries and investigations are expeditiously conducted and the detainees either released or produced before the judiciary, under the normal law."

Don't Make Tamils Hostages

Don't send back to Sri Lanka the Tamil youths who have sought asylum in Switzerland, until the ethnic problem is settled.

This was the urgent plea made by a delegation of the Jaffna Citizens' Committee when it met representatives of the Swiss Government at Hotel Ashok on Thursday (19th December).

The Citizens' Committee delegation also told the Swiss representatives that the idea of transferring the Tamil youths in Switzerland to special camps in the South of Sri Lanka was dangerous as these youths would virtually become hostages at the tender mercies of the Sri Lankan Government.

A delegation of the Jaffna Mothers' Front also met the Swiss representatives and handed over a memorandum.

Amnesty International has already appealed to the Swiss Government (see SR, 14th December) not to send back the Lankan Tamil youths as they would be subject to reprisals.

The Swiss representatives visited some refugee camps during their two-day stay in Jaffna.

The two Swiss representatives who visited Jaffna, accompanied by Mr. Kaufmann, acting Charge de Affaires of the Swiss Embassy, were Dr. S. Werenfels and Dr. M. Zuckschwerdt.

They called on the SATURDAY REVIEW Editor at his office yesterday.

4TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

We propose to publish a bumper issue of the SATURDAY REVIEW on 25th January, 1986 to commemorate our fourth anniversary of publication.

We invite Readers' contributions to this special issue on subjects that are immediately relevant to the current political and economic situation in Sri Lanka. The write-ups should be short. a maximum of 500 words each.

There would be space for a limited amount of advertisements as well. Advertisers are kindly requested to reserve space before 15th January, 1986.

MORE SHOOTINGS

Two fishermen were shot dead and seven people injured at Ponnalai Junction on Tuesday (17th December) when Naval personnel who had come from Karainagar in a Mannar-bound Northern Region Transport Board bus opened fire. According to eye-witnesses, there was the usual crowd of prawn-sellers and buyers at the Junction when the Naval personnel suddenly arrived on the scene early in the morning and opened fire at random, without provocation.

In a separate incident on the same day, security forces had opened fire at Senthankulam killing two fishermen.

CITIZENS APPEAL TO BRIGADIER

The President of the Pt. Pedro Citizens' Committee, Prof. V. K. Ganesalingam, has appealed to the Coordinating Officer, Jaffna, Brigadier Hamilton Wanasinghe, to expedite inquiries against the following persons who were arrested on 14th December and release them if nothing 'incriminating is established': M. Thavarajah, a salesman; V. Jeyaseelan, a labourer; R. Selvarajah, a refugee from Trincomalee; S. Vanitharajah, a fisherman; T. Navaratnarajah, a student and V. Gopalapillai, a fisherman.

SR REFUGEE FUND

The contribution of Rs. 23,000 which we acknowledged in the S.R. of 26th October 1985 as coming from an "anonymous donor" was from Mr. S. Yoganathan and friends from Singapore. They have since sent another donation af Rs. 8,189 to take their total contribution to Rs. 31,189.

We have received the following further donations:

Anonymous Chavakachcheri ..	100.00
Mr. S. Markandu ..	1,000.00
Mr. A. Arudsothy ..	1,000.00
Dr. Sam Abraham ..	3,274.00
Anonymous ..	500.00
" ..	25.00
Tamil Action Committee	965.50
Mr. S. Kuganesan ..	70.00
Anonymous ..	50.00
Anonymous, New York (approx.)	2,700.00

Swami U. E. Ramage of Chankanai Ashram donated 500 kilos of manioc—the produce of his farm—which were distributed among refugees in several camps by the Jaffna University Students.

We sincerely thank all the donors.

PAYMENTS

Relief work at Chunnakam		2,930.00
Total amount received from 1.1.85 to 13.2.85		394,191.52
Cheque returned ...		23,192.50
		370,999.02
Total amount spent 1.1.85 to 15.2.85		221,858.80
		149,140.22
Cash at Bank	144,140.22	
Cash in hand	5,000.00	149,140.22

TOYS, JOYS

As we went to press, we received this letter from a benefactor:

The Editor

SATURDAY REVIEW

I am also including with the clothes a parcel of toys personally selected and handed over by my little grand-daughter Jenny aged three years. Since then she has eft the country.....

Anon.

SHOULD TAMILS STRESS INTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS?

"Some circles are trying to maintain that the Tamils should not lay stress on internal contradictions in their society because unity is the need of the hour. However, we cannot sit unconcerned at the violations of basic human rights that are taking place in our own society. While insisting on our rights, we should also safeguard those of our brethren." So said Professor K. Sivathamby speaking at the MIRJE meeting held to commemorate Human Rights Day on 12th December at the YMCA, Jaffna.

Speaking at the same meeting, Professor K. Nesiah urged the Tamils to form a Regional Education Council for the North and East, the revival of the autonomous co-operative movement and the setting up of a Human Rights Council to inculcate knowledge of and respect for human rights among the people of the North and East especially among the younger generation.

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