

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

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1 MILLION HOUSES MINUS X = ?

Prime Minister Premadasa has won recognition abroad—undeserved, former Housing Minister Pieter Keuneman of the Moscow Communist Party might say—for his one million houses scheme: he's the Minister of Housing as well. A British University has endorsed this recognition: Ok Pieter, let's not go into details. But Sri Lanka's Army doesn't give a damn. Shelling from the Navatkuli Army Camp has damaged 25 houses in the Kaithady Housing Scheme. Earlier, heavy shelling from the Mandaitivu Army Camp not only damaged the Gurunagar Flats but also killed some of the residents. Well, even PMs cum Housing Ministers are not honoured in their own country.

(See also page 7)

BABEL OF VOICES

Refugees Trek, Starve

No more air strikes, so people in Jaffna—including the Army—can sleep (not rest) in peace, say the radio and the papers.

Simultaneously, JAFFNA RADIO—that poisonous mushroom which sprouted up in the Palaly Army Camp on 26th May (the day the Sri Lankan Government launched OPERATION LIBERATION—advises Jaffna listeners to be prepared to leave their homes at short notice; make-shift air raid trenches in homes would be

the first target of bombers and soldiers moving overland, it warned.

Who are the people to believe? Language, as Voltaire once said, seems to have been designed to conceal, not reveal, people's real intentions and meanings.

Amidst the babel of voices, the people trek from one area to the other, seeking sanctuary in temples, schools or in relatives' houses.

The mass migration began in Vadamarachy where the Forces first

launched their still-unfinished offensive.

It still goes on, despite the shutting between Delhi and Tamilnadu, radio broadcasts and TV telecasts.

People all over the Peninsula are finding it very difficult to get a square meal a day.

Refugees manage with whatever they can get—and that's very little.

State officials have thrown up their hands in despair.

The SATURDAY REVIEW will document this Exodus in the coming

issues.

Meanwhile, the starving people in the Jaffna Peninsula send their good wishes to all those sleek, well-fed VIPs who appear nightly on RUPA-VAHINI to assure everyone that God's in Heaven and all's right with the world.

BUDDHANG SARANANG
GACHCHAMI

SPECIAL ENVOY TAKES WING

H. W. Jayewardene, brother of President J.R. Jayewardene, has left on a special mission, it is learnt.

He will brief countries 'friendly' to Sri Lanka about its position on India's air-drop of food to starving Jaffna last week.

H. W. Jayewardene has acted as his brother's special envoy on previous occasions too—most notably, as the leader of Sri Lanka's delegation to the aborted Thimpu talks on Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict.

Lest We Forget

The Weekend Sun (7th June) featured a front page picture of Col. Lalith Guneratne fondling a child at Valvettiturai, after the recent military offensive in Pt. Pedro.

What the Sun didn't mention was that round about the time the Colonel was fondling the child, Damayanthi, the 21-day old daughter of Navaratnam of Varathupallai was injured when the army opened fire. She was rushed to Manthikai Hospital and later admitted to Jaffna Hospital.

KISS, KILL



On the left, Col. Lalith Guneratne fondles a child at Valvettiturai after the recent offensive; on the right, the 8-month-old girl Viswalingam Subashini, butchered on board the govt. launch 'Kumuthini' on 15th May 1985 by Navy personnel.

Like any other Army in the world the Sri Lanka Army too has only one face.

ALL SECURITY PERSONNEL ARE TRAINED TO KILL. That's the only reason for standing armies, anywhere in the world.

Kissing—and fondling children—are part of the propaganda ploy to show that even army men are also human.

Alas, all too human.



Release All Political Prisoners In Sri Lankan Jails

Saturday Review

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THE ABANDONED SUBJECTS

Perhaps the most painful—for those who desire the amity of Ceylon is the Government's abandoning a section of its population—a government that stands for a unitary state. To put an end to acts of terrorism is the common concern of all citizens, whether these acts are in Colombo, Habarana or Kokkadicholai. To single out certain acts of terror and to mete out in effect, collective punishment to a helpless section of the population is something that erodes the concepts of

secularism and equality before the law that form the foundation of a modern state.

The Tamil-speaking people of Ceylon have been denied the basic protection from the state and have to get about their daily existence under threat of bombing and shelling from government forces that have claimed over 200 lives since 22nd April. The government can hardly believe its own claim that these are targeted at terrorists. To take an instance of bombing, bombs

were released over Pt. Pedro on 22nd April at 8.35 A.M. The apparent target was located in the crowded town area where it was peak time for shoppers. Two bombs fell in Goldsmith's Lane 100 yards north of the target killing 7 people, including a school teacher mother, an elderly carter and a lady fish-vendor. Six small children of Mrs. Balendra and her sister, seated 10 feet from the explosion had a narrow escape. Discovering that the target was not hit the bombers returned at 12-20 p.m. and managed to hit a house nearer the target, whose owner had fortunately vacated after the first bombing. It would be stretching a febrile imagination to suppose that these bombs were aimed 'at terrorists.'

SR EDITOR'S REFUGEE FUND

We wish to acknowledge with thanks the following further contributions to the SATURDAY REVIEW EDITOR'S REFUGEE RELIEF FUND:-

List of Donors

International Co-ordination Committee for Development Project Hfl.	40,000
In memory of father, late Mr. M. V. Rajaratnam	1,000.00
In memory of William Paul	500.00
Mr. K. Nadarajah	50.00
Mr. K. Sothinathan	100.00
Mrs. S. Bala	100.00
Mr. C. Sugumar	1000.00
Anonymous	50.00
Mr. R. Somalingam	75.00
In loving memory of Mrs. Rukmani Kanagaratnam	500.00
Mr. S. Natesan	2000.00
Mr. A. Ganeshalingam	1000.00

DISBURSEMENTS

Drugs supplied to Batticaloa refugees	5000.00
Supply of medicine to Trincomalee refugees	9999.75

A number of other contributions have also been received but the proceeds have not been realised because of the banking and postal delays.

Our prediction that many people in Jaffna itself would become refugees before long has now been proved correct.

We have received a flood of applications for assistance from persons who have been displaced by the constant bombing and shelling. With our limited resources, there is little we can do to help them.

The way this is developing in Jaffna now, the SR staff, including the Editor himself, may also soon become refugees.

We hope to carry on our relief work as long as funds permit.

In our acknowledgment of Rs.27,250 collected by the Tamil Society of the Northern District, Inc., Darwin, Australia, in the issue of 2nd May, 1987 the name of one of the collectors, Mr. K. Muttukumara, had appeared as Mr. T. Balasubramaniam. We apologise for this mistake.

The donation of Rs 500.00 which was acknowledged in the SR of 4th April as coming from Mr. D. Paramalingam was actually forwarded by him on behalf of Mr. Dharmasingam of Trinidad.

Dear Readers, specially those abroad, please keep in mind the very difficult circumstances that we are working under and please help to the best of your ability to help us to help people who urgently need help.

— Editor

by **Rajan Hoole**

It must be added that many citizens were relieved when soon after the two terrorist attacks in the South sections of the security forces acted responsibly in protecting Tamil residents travellers in the South. Expressions of gratitude appeared as letters to the editor. The Vavuniya command came in for praise from grateful travellers. But then what does one expect when the parliament that is meant to instruct the security forces went into a revelry of irresponsible words? An opportunity to strengthen national unity and ennoble the deaths of the victims was missed.

ANARCHY

The absurdities of government policy have not been missed by the more intelligent proponents of the unitary state, like Dinesh Gunawardene. By cutting off telephone links the government lost the ability to communicate with its own senior officials in Jaffna, leaving the BBC frequently better informed than the government itself. Confronted with exaggerations, some coming from the Media Centre itself, the government which has kept the foreign press out of Jaffna finds itself unable to combat these. In the first bout of aerial bombing starting on 22 April, the Media Centre gave the casualty figure of 200. The BBC got through to government hospital sources in Jaffna, now inaccessible to the government, and gave a much lower figure. The Government Agent, the chief representative of the government here has to ask the army for a telephone link to the south which may not be forthcoming for days.

(Continued on page 7)

2nd DEATH ANNIVERSARY



A Requiem Mass will be celebrated on 22nd June at 6.15 a.m. at St. Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna to commemorate the 2nd death Anniversary of the late Miss Theresa Rasamani Solomon of 60/1 A, Solomon Lane, Old Park Road, Jaffna. Friends and relations are kindly requested to attend this Memorial Mass and pray for the repose of her soul.

BY LAMIS ANDONI

The 18th session of the Palestine National Council saw the reunification of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, a rejection of the American-sponsored peace process, and closer links with the Soviet Union.

'The blood from the wounds of our martyrs has heated our divisions' said one of the delegate,

Will we - Tamils - learn from this Palestinian experience?

Algiers: The reunification of the Palestine Liberation (PLO) during the 18th session of the Palestine National Council (PNC), held on 20-25 April 1987 here in the capital of Algeria, signals an end to the post-1982 alignments in the region and the beginning of a change in the political landscape that will necessarily define the shape and the nature of any peaceful settlement in the Middle East.

The firm resolutions, including rejection of American preconditions for 'peace,' a definition of the role and functions of any international peace conference, a clear outline of Palestinian national goals and a laying down of the basis for Palestinian-Arab relations clearly indicate, that the chances of the PLO participating in any US-led peace process are dead.

The Palestinians have reunited on a platform that aims at undermining the American-sponsored peace process of the last five years while endorsing the Soviet concept of an effective international peace conference, with arbitration powers, to solve the Palestine question.

Disbelief in American readiness to deliver anything for the Palestinians, the USSR's active support for a complete Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state have succeeded in reuniting the major Palestinian factions on the basis of a unified political platform.

However, while the new Palestinian strategy reflects the failure of the pro-American wing within the PLO, and consequently the re-enforcement of the leftists' long-standing call for a solid alliance with the Soviet Union, it also represents an important shift in the political approach of the PLO's right wing.

This was most eloquently expressed by Fatah (the Al-Fatah National Liberation Movement, the main political organisation in the PLO) central committee member Khaled al-Hassan (considered to be the architect of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian strategy): 'The US has proved to be the enemy of our people while the Soviet Union is endorsing our national goals.'

In his view the new equation is the following: 'The PLO needs as upper power for an ally while the Soviet Union needs a good cause for promoting its role and influence in the region.'

This reinforced Soviet-Palestinian alliance, based on a convergence of interests, could not have materialised without the reunification of the PLO with a political programme that rejects American-sponsored peace.

This line was most clearly expressed in the abrogation of the 11th February accord with Jordan, the outright rejection of UN resolution 242 on its own, a commitment to

armed struggle, the reiteration of the demand for an independent Palestinian state, refusal to permit any other party to represent the Palestinians, and finally PLO leader Yasser Arafat's endorsement of a resolution linking relations with Cairo to Egypt's stand on the Camp David treaty.

The reunification of the PLO on the basis of an anti-US strategy cannot but lead to a reshuffle of the alliances which have prevailed the region since the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. The PLO's coordination with Jordan and Egypt had, at least on the surface, transformed the PLO from a 'rejectionist' force to the most important vehicle for pushing forward US plans.

On the other hand, the Palestinian opposition factions' presence in Damascus, capital of Syria, and their insistence on a strategic alliance with that country gave President Hafez al-Assad a cover to promote his plans for Syria as the major power broker in the region.

Consequently the reunification of the PLO now confronts both the pro-Western Arab countries and Syria with a serious dilemma. Jordan and Egypt would be risking isolation, even from other conservative Arab

countries, if they decided to carry on pushing the US-sponsored peace process without the PLO's backing and approval, especially since the PLO's reunification will discourage many elements in the Israeli-occupied territories from toying with the idea of forming an alternative leadership. And Assad would be taking the same risk if he took drastic measures against the Palestinians in Damascus and Lebanon.

The reunified PLO leadership, however, planning to pull the carpet from under Assad's feet, with Soviet backing, by requesting a dialogue with Damascus and calling for talks with all the Lebanese forces which still maintain relations with the Palestinian left-wing organisations, particularly the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and the Popular

'until the government decides on its reactions' - a clear, although unofficial, warning to the PFLP & DELP leaders.

The analysis here is that the next few months will witness a stepped-up campaign to isolate the PLO and pressure its leadership to dismantle their unity.

PLO leaders are not pessimistic since they believe that any steps taken against them by any Arab country would hurt the country concerned most in the long run. For example, how can Syria explain its animosity against the PLO after the endorsement of a political programme which is now closer than any other to the Syrian-declared line?

PALESTINIANS REUNITE

front for the Liberation of Palestine (FLP), to regulate Palestinian-Lebanese relations.

Steps are also planned to try to reopen a dialogue with Jordan on the basis of the Rabat summit resolutions. It will also ask the Jordanians to abandon their plan to 'improve living conditions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip'.

The PLO was surprised by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's drastic reaction in closing down its offices. The feeling here is that the Jordanian, Moroccan, Syrian and Egyptian reactions were part of a concerted anti-PLO campaign. They expect Palestinians will suffer in the short term.

For example, there are many Palestinian students in Egypt and the PLO office in Cairo expects the Government to make it difficult for them to continue their studies. In the evening of 28th April 1987 the factions in Algiers, particularly the DFLP and PFLP, received messages from their Damascus offices relaying warnings from Syrian intelligence not to return to Damascus for a while

The immediate impact of the PNC meeting will no doubt be in the refugee camps in Lebanon and the occupied territories where the PLO divisions had led to a fragmentation of Palestinian activity. And the PLO leadership here is confident that, despite some initial hostile steps, Syria, Egypt and Jordan will not take any drastic measures against the PLO and the Palestintans and will eventually have to come to terms with a united PLO.

Indeed, many here believe the reunification of the PLO could lead to the convening of the long-awaited Arab summit, especially if it led to the Syrian-Palestinian reconciliation for which the USSR has been pushing. Some progress seemed to have been achieved during Assad's visit to Moscow during the PNC meeting. The joint Soviet-Syrian statement includes support for Palestinian unity although this part of the statement was dropped from the Arabic translation published in the Syrian press.

—Middle East International / Third World Network Features.

Plantations: Past Contemporary And

(Continued from last issue)

Another law potentially promotive of estate worker rights was Ordinance No. 13 of 1889 enacted "to amend and consolidate the law relating to Indian Labourers employed on Ceylon Estates." Section 6(2) reads: Where wages are payable at a daily rate, the monthly wages shall be computed according to the number of days on which the labourer was able and willing to work and actually demanded employment, whether the employer was not able to provide him with work; Provided that an employer shall not be bound to provide for any labourer more than six days' work.

This law prescribing six days' work per week remained on paper and was not implemented. The monthly earnings of the labourers continued as before to be calculated on the basis of the number of days of work performed and not of formed the number of days of work performed.

It must also be remembered that minimum wages for estate workers were prescribed only after the enactment of Ordinance No. 27 of 1927 which acquired further muscle from the Wages Boards Ordinance No. 27 of 1941. Until 1927 wages were decided by the planter employers. Ordinance No. 11 of 1865 and No. 13 of 1889 spoke of contractual, not of minimum, wages. Theoretically, the wages should have been fixed by the unrestrained operation of the laws of supply and demand of labour; hence at least during periods of heavy demand or scarcity of labour, wages should have risen. That in fact they did not. Wesamperuma, for instance, notes that plantation wages remained static at a low level during the whole of the period of 30 years, 1880-1910, covered by his study — is another testimony to the well-known fact the law of the invisible hand of free enterprise is in practice the law of the stronger hand of the few which strangles the many. Throughout the period 1880-1910 wages were 25 cts per working day for women, 33 cents for men and between 18 to 22 cents for children, with only slight oscillations. The iniquity of these wage rates is heightened by two facts noted by Wesamperuma: these wage rates were ten per cent lower than the pre-1880 rates which were reduced by the planters on the plea of the depression in the coffee industry and,

secondly, they remained static while the general cost of living was rising and even when the plantation industry recovered from the slump. S.B. de Silva adduces evidence that the South Indian labourer worked for lower wages than the Jaffna Tamils in the work of repairing tanks in the Eastern Province: that in 1884 the peasants demanded wages higher than those given to Indian labour; that in 1910 villagers working on estates were paid more than the South Indian migrants. On the subject of wages, H. Marcus Fernando ends his letter of 10 June 1908 to the Secretary of the Labour Commission thus: During the last twenty-five years the wages of cooly labour in Ceylon in every other direction, except in plantations, have gone up by at least 33 per cent. The wages of estate coolies have stood at the same level.

If the wages paid on the plantations had been higher than those in surrounding peasant agriculture

employer during such incapacity; provided that the employer shall not be bound to pay to the servant during such a period his wages in addition. (26).

How the planters exercised their responsibility during the period before 1872 may be inferred from their reactions to improvements in health arrangements suggested by the Government in and after 1872. But there is also direct evidence: To leave the importation of labour to the planters and the kanganies was to invite abuse, exploitation and neglect. And the records indicate that the most widespread abuse was the neglect and harsh treatment of sick labourers. At its fifth Anniversary meeting (in 1843) the Kandy Friend-in-Need Society appealed to the planters for assistance rightly arguing that "those who induce the immigration of coolies are in duty bound to contribute to their necessities when afflicted with illness". This appeal was backed by the Cey-

lone Government. The advantage in the practical quarantine "of the long journey on foot and the Assistant Government Agent of Mannar referred to the North Road as the cooly filter". (28) In fact mortality between 1887 and 1910 was over 200 per 1000 births in 19 years and over 185 in the remaining 5 years. Over the same period the infant mortality rate among the Sinhalese in the planting districts though itself also high exceeded 200 only in 1909 and exceeded 185 only in 1899 and 1906. Both men and women suffered from poor health facilities, but the women suffered more.

Finally in 1912 came the Medical Wants Ordinance and the Diseases among Labourers Ordinance which are still the laws governing the provision of health and medical facilities to the plantation people. As testimony to the ineffectiveness of these laws, it will here be sufficient to cite the Committee appointed by the Minister of Health in 1976 to report on the maintenance and improvement of estate health and welfare facilities and on the possible integration of estate health services with the general health services of the country:

...We have recommended the repeal of the Medical Wants Ordinance and the Diseases (Labourers) Ordinance, which have not been able to bring about any significant improvement in the health of the estate sector, and seek to submit for your consideration a draft of a new law, titled the Estate Health Law, which embodies our recommendations.

The Government changed in 1977. As far as the present writer is aware, the Report was not published, nor was the new law enacted.

Financial Relief

As regards the financial easements afforded to the plantation worker immigrants, it has to be borne in mind that these easements, if they can be called easements at all, were in force because of the peculiar position of the plantation workers in the social economy during the British period. The estate workers were not integrated with, or made part of, the local population. Outside work on the estates — which as in the case of the roads, the British saw to be primarily in their own interest — the estate workers had no other private or personal field of work from which they could be taken away for road work: hence the question of commutation by way

by

Paul Caspersz

or petty commodity production, two consequences would have followed: an increase of wages outside the plantations and the introduction of labour-saving technologies on the plantations. Plantations wages would have been higher than elsewhere if the plantation system was genuinely capitalist. But it was not.

Finally, the laws passed in 1948 and 1949 to deprive the immigrants of the 19th century of the right to citizenship and consequently to franchise can hardly be called legislation "securing the rights of immigrant labourers" of this deprivation and its consequences, because they flow into the present period, more will be said later on.

Medical facilities

The reality behind the medical facilities made available to the estate people is even more galling than the reality behind the general legislative measures alleged to have been in their favour.

Until 1872 the responsibility for providing for the health of the estate workers was left to the planters themselves. The Master-Servant Law of 1865 enacted that: Any servant who shall be incapacitated by sickness from labour whilst in the service of any employer shall be entitled to lodging, food, as well as medical care, at the expense of such

on Agricultural Society which suggested that every estate should make an annual contribution of £3. But, only 6 estates made any contribution at all in 1843. In 1844 the number of estates making this annual contribution had increased to 16. (27)

Ordinance No. 14 of 1872 was the first direct attempt of the Government to intervene in the area of estate health. The planters objected strongly and were consistently uncooperative. The scheme failed.

Between 1880 and 1912 there were some improvements and the planters, especially with the progress of the tea industry and increased profits generally showed less reluctance to attend with greater effect to the health of their workforce. Yet throughout this period the health of the workers and their families remained poor. Even as late as 1890 the recruits from South India had to continue to take on foot the infamous North road from Pesalai or Vankalai (near Mannar) to the railway at Matale or for those who had no money for the train, straight to the estates. The Government and the planters refused to provide quarantine facilities at Mannar. Indeed, the Colonial Secretary had the brass to write that there was a great ad-

Future Patterns

of a tax instead of work simply did not, in their case, arise. Many of the taxes imposed by the British upon the Sinhalese peasants were, as we shall soon see, iniquitous both in themselves and in the manner of exaction but this insult could not be added to the injuries of the estate people simply because they were never allowed to be part of the peasantry and were given a different way and style of life.

The Caste and the Kangany System

The social oppression of caste and the economic oppression of class reinforced each other on the plantations. The British planters found in caste divisions and exclusivities a convenient tool for exploitative and oppressive labour management. Fortunately for the British, caste was also legitimized by the religious system of the predominantly Hindu plantation people.

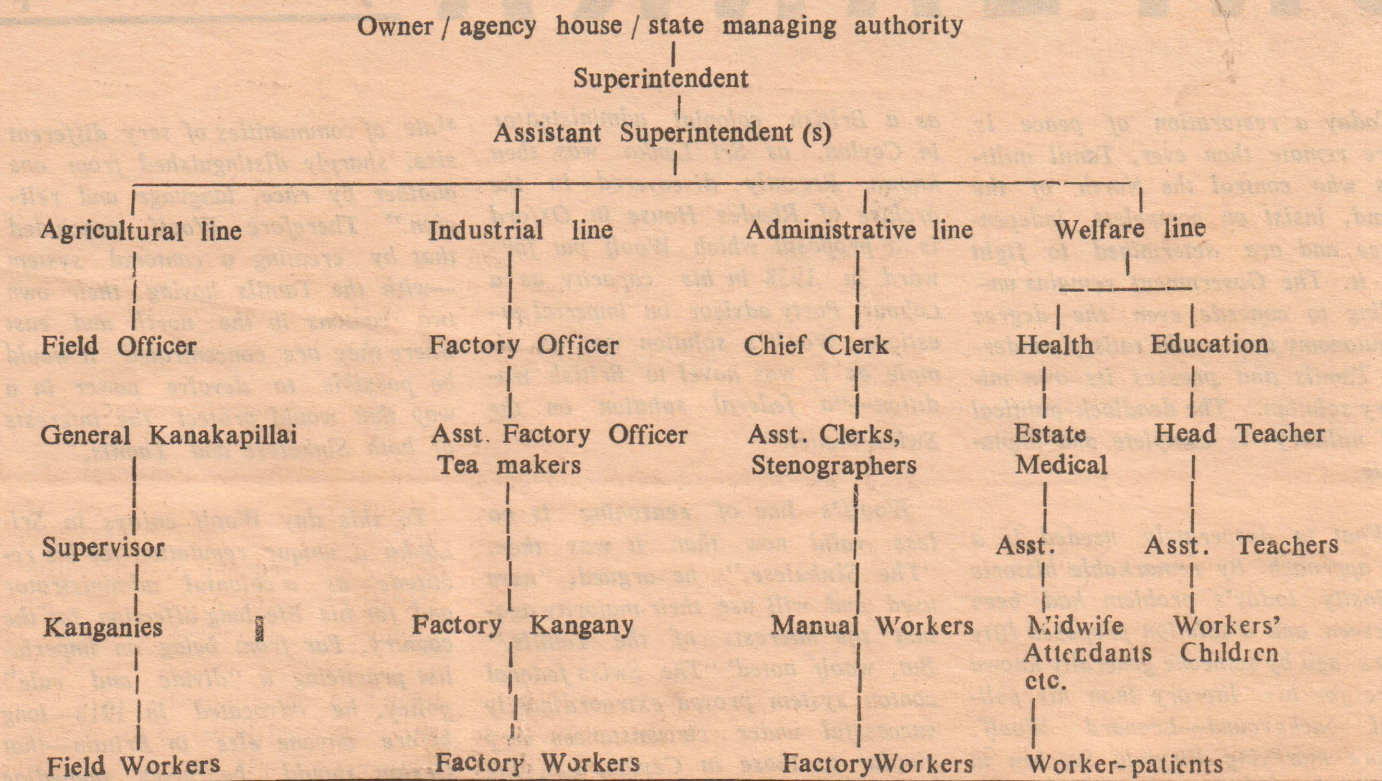
The mechanism used for both recruitment and management of estate labour in the 19th century was the kangany system. On most estates, or on each division of large estates, there was a head kangany (always male) under whom there were silara or small or sub-kanganies (also always male). The silara-kangany was the head of a small work gang while the head kangany was the leader of all the work gangs of all the silara kanganies working under him. The kangany consequently had great prestige and power in his dealings with the workers; vis-a-vis the management he was, at least until the trade unions were established, the workers' representative and spokesman. From the time that what were called coast advances were paid by the planters to bring the workers from South India to Ceylon - advances which the kangany had to recover from the workers in Ceylon - the workers were in permanent and virtually irredeemable debt to the kangany. The kangany maintained the debt - accounts of the workers. Malpractices were therefore all too common. The head kangany and silara kanganies were often of a caste considered "high" and were hardly ever of a "lower" caste than the workers under them. The estate workers were thus oppressed as much internally by the kangany and caste system as externally by the social structure of the estate.

To the social structure of the estates we must now turn. This is graphically represented in the diagram on page 14. Orders are transmitted hierarchically

into the British colonial enterprise. The main goal of colonialism-in practice as also in theory-was the administration of the subjected territory and people for the benefit of the colonial power and was never

progressive sector in the economy. Instead, the plantation system left the worst features of Sri Lankan feudalism outside the plantations untouched-caste division, corvee labour, iniquitous exaction of surplus

DIAGRAMMATIC REPRESENTATION OF THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF A TYPICAL LARGE ESTATE



from top to bottom and there is not a trace of any mechanism to permit the workers to participate in decision-making. Yet at the top only 0.5 per cent of the plantation population constitute the management grades and are never plantation Tamils; only 2 per cent constitute the staff or supervisory grades and these offices in contemporary times go increasingly to Sinhalese persons, often through political influence; the worker grades constitute the remaining 97.5 per cent and are mainly Tamils with some Sinhalese and Moors. In fact, in the future, unless imaginative and creative action is deliberately taken, not only class, but also ethnicity may separate the worker grades on the estates from everyone else.

Even the language of the plantations reflects the hierarchical structure: the Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents are said to live in 'bungalows', the staff grades refer to their residences as 'quarters' while the workers say that they live in 'line-rooms'. The Superintendent is Periya Dorai (Big Master), his assistants are Sinna Dorais (Small Masters) the staff is Aiyya (Sir or Gentleman), while the workers are called either by their personal names or by the low form of the second personal pronoun.

The Kangany system, the caste system, the allied caste-legitimizing religious system and the social structure of the plantations fitted nicely

the development of the territory's resources for the full human and social development of its people. Sri Lanka's plantations are an excellent example.

Impact on the Peasantry

Where the capitalist system is in operation, it tends to spread its tentacles always both deeper and wider and gradually encompass the whole economy in which it operates. This was, for an example, the experience of the growing capitalist industrialization in the cities of England in the late 15th and 16th centuries and the parallel Enclosure Movement in the countryside. In Ceylon, on the other hand, the alleged capitalism of the plantation sector did not spread to the villages for the simple reason that the plantation sector was not capitalist.

It was not even a modern or progressive sector-except for the foreign owners of the plantations who secured for themselves and their own countries by far the greater share of the profits of the enterprise. The dual economy theory is probably not true anywhere. It is certainly, pace Snodgrass, Satchi Ponnambalam et al., not true in Sri Lanka. The plantation sector was not a dynamic engine of growth, and the peasant sector was not as backward as it is held to be. Indeed, relieved of its retrograde feudal features-a task which the plantation sector failed to undertake-it could have been the more

by way of various taxes-and only further aggravated the feudal miseries of the peasantry. The capital used in the plantation sector was, to use Shanmugaratnam's pithily graphic description 'antediluvian', that is, pre-capitalist or anti capitalist.

PART 11 THE CONTEMPORARY PERIOD

The present period is here taken to be the period from 1972 to the present day but is divided into two sub-periods: 1972-1977 and post 1977 1972-1977.

The plantation areas during these years were convulsed by two events or by one event and its consequence. The event was Land Reform, the consequence the direct intrusion of the factor of ethnicity into the plantations. The event had tremendous potential for people's development. The consequence effectively destroyed that potential by prostituting land reform to the selfish interests of shortsighted politicians.

There were two laws of Land Reform: the first was Land Reform Law No. 1 of 1972, the second Land Reform (Amendment) Law No. 39 of 1975. The first law statized land owned by private individuals and private companies though public company land not under cultivation came under the law. By the end of 1974 land owned over a ceiling of 25 acres for paddy and 50 acres for other land and amounting to a total of nearly 560,000 acres was deemed vested in the Land Reform Commission.

'SWISS MODEL' FOR SRI LANKA

by Frederic Spotts and Jehan Perera

Today a restoration of peace is more remote than ever. Tamil militants who control the North of the island, insist on complete independence and are determined to fight for it. The Government remains unwilling to concede even the degree of autonomy that would satisfy moderate Tamils and presses its own military solution. The deadlock—political and military—is complete and implacable.

What is desperately needed is a new approach. By remarkable historic curiosity, today's problem had been foreseen and a solution proposed fifty years ago by someone generally known more for his literary than his political background—Leonard Woolf. Before marrying Virginia Stephen in 1912, Woolf had spent seven years

as a British colonial administrator in Ceylon, as Sri Lanka was then known. Recently discovered in the archive of Rhodes House in Oxford is a proposal which Woolf put forward in 1938 in his capacity as a Labour Party advisor on imperial questions. Woolf's solution was as simple as it was novel to British tradition—"a federal solution on the Swiss model."

Woolf's line of reasoning is no less valid now than it was then. "The Sinhalese," he argued, "have used and will use their majority against the interests of the Tamils." But, Woolf noted, "The Swiss federal canton system proved extraordinarily successful under circumstances very similar to those in Ceylon, i.e., the coexistence in a single democratic

state of communities of very different size, sharply distinguished from one another by race, language and religion." Therefore Woolf concluded that by creating a cantonal system—with the Tamils having their own two cantons in the north and east where they are concentrated it would be possible to devolve power in a way that would protect the interests of both Sinhalese and Tamils.

To this day Woolf enjoys in Sri Lanka a unique reputation for his rectitude as a colonial administrator and for his life-long affection for the country. Far from being an imperialist practicing a "divide and rule" policy, he advocated in 1918—long before anyone else in Britain—that Ceylon should be given immediate independence. Moreover, Woolf was

particularly well-disposed to the Sinhalese among whom he spent some of his happiest years. His advocacy of a decentralized system was both prophetic and impartial.

The Sri Lankan Government's latest proposals—of 19th December 1986—offer some devolution of power to the existing nine provinces but they maintain the unitary system. Most Tamils have no trust in the Government's offer and will be satisfied with nothing less than an autonomous "Tamil homeland." The idea of a federal system, which has never been considered by the Government, is a way out of the impasse. Willingness to explore it would be an acid test of the sincerity of desire of leaders on both sides to get out of the trenches and go back to the negotiating table. In fact, this fresh approach is probably the only remaining basis for a peaceful settlement.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON IMPERIAL QUESTIONS

The Ceylon Constitution, which resulted from the report of the Donoughmore Commission, has now been in operation for about seven years and demands are being put forward by the Sinhalese for revision in order that the people may be given an increased measure of responsible government.

The Constitution on the whole has been a success as a stage on the way to responsible government. It has educated the people in self-government and parliamentary procedure and the difficulties have been less than usual or than might have been expected during such an in-between stage. This has been largely due to the form of the Constitution and in particular to the committee system.

The Advisory Committee is of opinion that the time has come for a further measure of self-government and of an appreciable measure of responsible government and that the party should adopt this as its policy.

The Governor in his dispatch of June 1938, published last December makes certain proposals for amendment. They are as follows:

(1) Reshaping and adding to the electoral areas in order to afford necessary chances to the minority

candidates. The appointment of a committee to advise on such changes. The Advisory Committee is of opinion that this proposal should be supported.

(2) The nominated Burgher representatives should be increased from one to two. The Advisory Committee is not in favour of an increase in the nominated members of the State Council.

(3) Two additional nominable seats to be retained in reserve. The Advisory Committee is not in favour of this proposal.

(4) The introduction of the Cabinet system and the abolition of the committee system. The Advisory Committee recommends that the Party should support the proposal for the introduction of the cabinet system, but should oppose the abolition of the committees.

They should be made advisory instead of executory. A Prime Minister should be appointed by the Governor and the Prime Minister should appoint his Cabinet. The Committees should be elected by the Council, as they are now, and each Committee should be presided over by a Minister, but the Committee,

should be merely advisory to the Minister. It is advisable to retain the Committee system as it ensures that every member of the Council is closely associated with the actual work of legislation and administration.

(5) The abolition of the officers of State. The Advisory Committee is of opinion that this proposal should be supported.

(6) The Public Services Commission to be increased by not more than three non-officials, nominated by the Governor. The Advisory Committee is of opinion that the Public Services Commission should be composed of independent persons and that all higher appointments should be made, not by Ministers or committees, but by the Governor on the advice of the Public Services Commission.

The Advisory Committee is of opinion that provision should be made for the protection of minorities. This applies in particular to the Tamils who oppose revision of the Constitution and the grant of further measures of self-government on the ground that the Sinhalese have used and will use their majority against the interests of the Tamils.

Protection should be given by the Governor's right to reserve assent and by the Proposal redelineate constituencies and redistribute seats.

But another method might also be considered, namely, the possibility of ensuring a large measure of devolution or even of introducing a fede-

ral system on the Swiss model.

The indigenous Tamil minorities are concentrated in the extreme north and east of the island. The Kandyan Sinhalese, who are in many ways very different from the Low Country Sinhalese, form a homogeneous Sinhalese block in the centre of the island.

by Leonard S. Woolf

At least four cantons on the Swiss model could be created: i.e., the Low Country Sinhalese Provinces the Kandyan Sinhalese Provinces, the Tamil Northern Province, and the Tamil Eastern Province; and it might even be possible to create a fifth canton out of the area where the immigrant Indian Tamils form the majority of the population on tea estates.

The objection that Ceylon and its subdivisions are too small for such a system does not hold water. The area of Ceylon is about 10,000 sq miles greater than that of Switzerland; the population of Ceylon is roughly 5,300,000 and that of Switzerland 4,000,000. If the Swiss federal system were adapted to Ceylon the smallest canton would be the Eastern Province with over 200,000

(Continued on page 7)

THE ABANDONED...

(Continued from page 2)

During the shelling of Jaffna hospital on 30th March, the deaths of 5 Lanka Cement Ltd. employees on 22nd April and the shooting of an LCL Engineer on 21st May, messages had to be sent to the respective authorities in Colombo by devious means involving long delays. In all these cases there is little doubt that the officials in Jaffna enjoyed the trust of their ministries in Colombo. Nor was their professional integrity and judgement questioned.

There is also little doubt that unpleasant decisions were forced on unwilling ministries by the security establishment. The decision to close Jaffna hospital was taken without consulting the Medical Superintendent, Jaffna who was no longer on the phone. He was not given the courtesy of being able to tell his superiors that it was by a long haul impossible to cater, without Jaffna hospital, to the increasing number of injured resulting from military action. He was sent a letter, which took 7 days to arrive, giving him 5 days to close the hospital and make the impossible alternate arrangements. When a delegation of doctors went to Colombo and explained their case, the decision to

close the hospital came unstuck in what the BBC called a stunning reversal. Senior officials from the ministries of health and teaching hospitals together with the GMOA, some of whom had already fought the decision, backed the MS and the Jaffna doctors. If not for the reversal the ministry of health of a unitary state directly responsible for health care in Jaffna, would have cut a sorry figure.

An initiative from the Prime Minister's office to reopen the two cement plants came to grief when the army shot at a delegation of senior officials grievously wounding Mr. Thurairajasingam, LCL's harbour Engineer and a close associate of the General Manager, Mr. Jayamanne

GOVERNMENT SERVANTS

Many senior government servants have complained of being disowned by the government. In addition to the dangers of staying at home, they are shot at from government helicopters in Kopay and Vallai as they report for work in Government Offices. Indiscipline amongst helicopter gunners has become a serious problem. Many of the government servants killed recently by government forces are those whose commitment to their profession was of

the first order. They stayed behind to serve their people, which includes the Sinhalese people, at a time of rising temptation to go abroad.

Mr. Paramsothy the ambulance driver attached to Pt. Pedro hospital died when the ambulance was shot at by a helicopter in Vallai on 2nd April. Dr. Somasundaram who worked with him at Trincomalee hospital said that he was friendly and conscientious in his work. Paramsothy knew Trincomalee so well that he became an expert at avoiding army check-points and expediting the transport of patients. He was politically disinterested, but talked a good deal about his young children. He had a steady head and was not the sort to panic under fire from a helicopter. Indeed, his stopping the ambulance at the wayside temple, the only cover in Vallai, enabled the accompanying male-nurse to escape.

Dr. Viswaranjan a doctor attached to Jaffna hospital was shot dead by the army whilst returning from the clinic at KKS on 25th April. Given the tense situation following the attack on KKS harbour, a less dedicated man would have stayed at home. When warned by some that the army was on the road, he had replied, "I know all three languages". He had believed to the last that his Sri Lankan identity would protect him.

Mr. Jegathesan, an Engineer attached to the head office of Lanka Cement Ltd. was fatally injured when troops at Elephant pass fired at a Colombo-bound safety bus on 18th May. Despite his own condition his last act was to carry an injured lady who survived. Thus to his last he upheld that high sense of civic responsibility that is enshrined in the Engineers' professional code.

Dr. Gunam Luther, Mr. Paramapathy and Mr. Kumarasingam died on 27th May when a shell hit the boundary wall of Mr. Kumarasingam's house on Old Park Rd... Mr. Paramapathy was a retired Government surveyor. Dr. Luther joined the Ministry of Health in 1953. In 1966 he was offered the post of Medical Superintendent, Jaffna. This he declined on the grounds that an administrator to perform well should not be stationed at home and asked for Galle hospital instead. He later headed in turn the important hospitals at Mannar and Pt. Pedro. He was offered the post of MS Jaffna again in 1981 when Jaffna became a teaching hospital. This he declined and went in for private practice on a service oriented basis. Even the poor could obtain first rate medical care well within their means. He had refrained from doing private practice, both legitimate and lucrative, while in government service on the grounds that it will interfere with the quality of his work. When reminded by his wife that there was a curfew on as he left home

on the 27th morning he had replied, "curfew does not prevent people from becoming sick or injured."

Whilst serving in Mannar Dr. Luther once sat up a whole night with a Muslim child who suffered a snake-bite. His eldest son had needed spinal surgery. For this purpose he and another Tamil parent whose child had the same ailment shared the expenses of getting down a surgeon from England. At this time he came across another child needing similar treatment belonging to poor Sinhalese parents. He promptly made arrangements for this child to have the surgery without requiring the parents to share the expenses.

Mr. Paramapathy had served the Survey Dept. in Mullaitivu, Madawachchi, Anuradhapura, Mannar and Vavuniya.

These and many other victims of a mistaken government policy are people who in their lifework symbolised amity. Their services and their presence are now lost to the people of Ceylon.

Looking towards Jaffna town, one sees the sleek Italian made bomber winging its way through the evening twilight; an achievement in technology in stark contrast to the misery and destruction below and the poverty and turmoil of the South. With its amber lights flashing the pilot makes a smart dive to the right before unloading its lethal cargo. Perhaps the only thought in his mind was a wish that his girl-friend were there to see it all. Or as the artillery sergeant gazes across the Jaffna esplanade made green by fresh rains, before firing his cannon to kill and maim in places unseen of the eye; they cannot understand what they are about. Judging by the governments standards in responsibility, they too will be abandoned in their turn. While the Government blunders on, failing even to understand the problem, instruments of war are pounding away at the foundations of the state.

HURRAH FOR PREMA!

Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

Hurrah to the Hon. Prime Minister for his success on the million housing scheme. But only one small hitch. In this scheme public funds too have been utilised. Public in the sense, funds from all communities. However, almost all the houses or, may I say 90% of the houses completed have been given to the members of the major community. OK! NO grudge; they are in the majority and they must have the lion's share. When this is being done dwelling houses and other buildings belonging to the minority community—the Tamil community—are being systematically damaged and razed to the ground. Every cent in these buildings thus damaged was hard earned by the sweat of the members of the Tamil community.

These buildings get damaged when aerial bombing is done; when shelling is done from all army camps; buildings are blasted when some member of the security force suspects that there was a 'terrorist' in that building; when a member of the security force feels that a set of houses are a danger to them; when security personnel feel that

they can have a better view if a row or two of houses are razed to the ground etc. etc.

LETTERS

What I wish to ask is, has the Prime Minister ever asked the Security forces not to damage dwelling houses or has he ever "said destroy only when it is really necessary" or has he ever expressed regrets that it is a pity that these buildings have to be damaged or has he ever accused the 'terrorists' for being the 'cause' of getting these buildings damaged in the "International Year of shelter for the homeless"? No, because these buildings belong to the members of the other community and we are following a Dharmista Policy.

Those who speak so much of Lord Buddha follow little or nothing of His teachings. Rightly has the mayor of Mahanuwara said recently, that we must find out as to how many of us follow Lord Buddha's teachings.

Jaffna

B. Manoharan

ADVISORY COMMITTEE...

(Continued from page 6)

population; in Switzerland the smallest canton has a population of about 14,000 and the largest about 700,000.

The Swiss federal canton system has proved extraordinarily successful under circumstances very similar to those in Ceylon, i.e., the co-existence in a single democratic state of communities of very different size, sharply distinguished from one another by race, language and religion.

(Memorandum on the Demands for Reform of the Ceylon Constitution November 1938.)

Thus the German-speaking Swiss, with a population of 2,750,000 occupy the numerical position of the Sinhalese, the French-speaking Swiss with 824,000, that of the Tamils and the Italian-speaking Swiss with 284,000 that of the Moormen.

The democratic canton and federal system in Switzerland has safeguarded the legitimate interests of the minorities.

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

AT CROSS PURPOSES

Sri Lanka's ethnic divide seems to have split the Ceylon Red Cross Society.

The Jaffna branch of the Ceylon Red Cross Society has written to the parent body in Geneva, the International Red Cross Society, pointing out that for the

last 3½ years, the Colombo-based headquarters of the Ceylon Red Cross Society has not helped it in any way despite several appeals.

The Jaffna Branch has also drawn the attention of the parent body to the

distressing situation in Vadamaradchy after the recent military offensive.

Food, infants' milk food, medicines and clothes—these are what we most urgently need now, the Jaffna Red Cross has told the parent body.

'LIBERATION'S' BLEEDING STATISTICS

Unconfirmed reports from the Vadamaradchy area, where the Sri Lankan Government launched the first stage of its massive military operation to wrest back control of the Jaffna Peninsula from the Liberation Tigers, say that between 900—1000

people died, during the Government's self-styled Operation Liberation.

The same sources say about 5000 people were injured by heli strafing. About 500 were injured by slash—and—cut

army men wielding swords and knives.

More than 4000 troops, 8 helicopters and 6 bombers were deployed, these sources add.

While the SATURDAY REVIEW is not yet in a position to confirm the above details—for obvious reasons—some statistics and informa-

tion gathered from hospital sources will be helpful to the discerning reader.

On 26th May—the day the offensive was mounted—600 people were admitted to the Base Hospital at Pt-Pedro. 120 were dead.

The Hospital can accommodate only 250 patients.

25 patients were brought

to the Jaffna Hospital after 10 days. The fingers of at least one of the persons admitted to the Pt. Pedro Hospital that day, had been chopped off.

The Hospital was run mainly by doctors and nurses from outside the Peninsula that day: reinforcements perhaps.

On admission, the first screening post asked the patients (and/or those who accompanied them) to say terrorists had shot them.

The patients said the army shot them: the hospital record says terrorists shot them.

That's a nice touch Mossad.

'Operation Liberation' Liberates Them All



Some of the victims of the three-pronged military assault on the Jaffna Peninsula.

ANURA'S BLOOD-THIRSTINESS

Anura Bandaranaike, the blue-blooded son of the late Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and the world's first woman Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike—ahem! says the ruling United National Party's (UNP) Prime Minister R.Premadasa—is out for blood.

The blood of Velupillai Prabhakaran, leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Anura, the Leader of Sri Lanka's Parliamentary Opposition and hopefully, Sri Lanka's next leader, has stated—according to a local Tamil daily—at a meeting in the South of Sri Lanka that if his Party, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, were in power they would ruthlessly eliminate all the Tamil 'terrorists' and exhibit Prabhakaran's corpse in the South: this would be living proof that his SLFP was more efficient than the UNP's National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali in eliminating the Tamil 'terrorists' in the North and East of Sri Lanka. (The ghost of the SLFP's ruthless extermination of the 1971

Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna's (JVP) insurrection—particularly, the unspeakable, ghastly execution of the teenager Miss Manamperi, at Katarama—still haunts his Party, as it should).

Anura's blood-thirstiness didn't stop with Prabhakaran. According to him, all Tamils between the ages of 15 and 25 are 'terrorists' and should be bumped off, without any quarter being shown to them.

After the Tamil youths were bumped off,—just as the flower of Sinhala youth in 1971—then his Party would give some concessions to the Tamils—no negotiations please—and tell them 'Take it or leave it'.

Sinhala political leaders, since Independence, have learnt nothing from history.

That's why Sri Lanka is in this bloody mess today.

No political blood transfusion can save you, Anura, Nor any whiskey-sodden politicians, whether their blood is red or blue.

RAJIV THANKED

The North Ceylon Chamber of Industries has sent the following letter to the Indian Prime Minister.

The North Ceylon Chamber of Industries assembled at a Special General Meeting held on Friday the 5th June 1987, passed the following resolution and it was unanimously decided to forward same to the Hon. Prime Minister of India.

"We wish to express our deep appreciation and admiration on your courageous leadership exhibited in air-dropping food parcels to the starving population in the Jaffna Peninsula, caused by the economic blockade imposed by the Sri Lanka Government on its own people. In addition, the deliberate denial of the Telecommunication facilities to the people in the North, kept the rest of the world in the dark in respect of the vast inhuman atrocities perpetrated by the Sri Lankan Armed Forces. We consider this humanitarian act of air-dropping food parcels was timely as otherwise starvation in the area would have reached unprecedented levels".