

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

Vol. 6 No. 3 7th February 1987

COMMISSION — YES WHITEWASH — NO

The Media Centre and the media whores have, once more, served up chunks of disinformation.

The media men, who were taken on a conducted tour of Kokkaticholai, predictably, saw no evil and heard no evil.

The villains, in their version, were the Tamil 'terrorists' and the heroes the Special Task Force (STF), naturally.

Why Not Release Him?

Raphael Joseph Jesuthasan returned to Sri Lanka on 22nd December after working in Saudi Arabia for four years.

On 31st January he went to Vavuniya with the lorry to obtain release of his baggage and personal belongings which had been detained at the Army Camp at Vavuniya for some unknown reason.

Mr. Jesuthasan was reportedly taken into custody by the Security Forces.

His aged parents are now greatly distressed that he has not yet been released and have addressed an appeal to the Co-ordinating Officer, Vavuniya and the Government Agent, Vavuniya requesting his release. Jesuthasan is the brother of a staffer at the SATURDAY REVIEW.

Reprisals

Nine Sinhalese were killed and 15 seriously injured when Tamil militants attacked Sinhalese settlements in the Amparai District on Independence Day (4th February), as reprisals for the STF's massacre at Kokkaticholai.

The Batticaloa Citizens Committee and the Chief Executive of the FIAC-approved prawn culture project in Kokkaticholai have marshalled the tragic facts (see page 8).

But who's interested in truth nowadays — except the old fogeys who think facts are sacred?

Certainly not those dressed in a little brief authority and their media valets.

But truth will be out, despite the media Centre.

If the Government really wants to establish its bona fides, then there's only one course open to it.

It must immediately set up an independent Commission of Inquiry — not to whitewash the STF but to get at the facts.

INDEPENDENCE EVE HITS

Around 5.30 p.m. on 3rd February two bombers with helicopter cover swooped and dropped bombs on the villages of Anaicoddai and Achchelu a few miles from Jaffna. These bombs destroyed some houses in the neighbourhood and killed a pregnant woman and — an old man. A family of five including two children were seriously injured in the attack.

On the same day around midnight, shells fired from the Jaffna Fort landed on a mango tree of the General Hospital damaging several buildings in the hospital. A patient, Joseph Wilson (41) who was in

And once the facts are known, the Government must not flinch from punishing the guilty.

Do we dare hope for such a miracle?

Barrier Boutiques

If you are returning home from the Middle East with a considerable amount of money. If you are keen on doing business, searching and hoping for a suitable place, why don't you try Elephant Pass?

The recent mushrooming of boutiques in the vicinity of the Elephant Pass barrier could well explain the nature and degree of sales there. Some 900 odd vehicles are still at the barrier waiting for a "go ahead". Meanwhile the embargo on Fuel and aluminium goods is still in force. A number of other items like batteries, bicycle spare parts, tyres and medicines also are not being allowed into the Jaffna Peninsula.

Ward No.19 of the Hospital was seriously injured and other patients suffered minor injuries. The damage to the hospital is estimated at Rs. one lakh. The Maternity Ward, Telephone Exchange and the Eye Ward were damaged. Glass windows, walls, furniture and tiles were damaged by shrapnel. Another shell fell on a house at 2nd Cross Street, where the mother and her 7 year old son were sleeping. The boy was seriously injured.

A Muslim youth was shot dead by Army sentries round about 6 p.m. on 3rd February while washing his face at a public tap on Beach Road.

Twenty Sri Lankan Tamils were deported from Romania on 27th January after being held for six days in Bucharest's freezing airport with almost no food. Western diplomatic sources said here today, according to Reuter.

The British Consulate intervened out of humanitarian concern and sent bread, fish and meat out to the airport for the Tamils, who had almost no money and were not given food or bedding by the Romanian authorities.

The Tamils were held in Bucharest airport's transit lounge to await Wednesday's Singapore flight. The transit lounge was unheated despite sub-zero temperature with no food or bedding by the airline or authorities.

The group were all dressed in light clothing and had only two dollars between them, the sources said.

The diplomatic sources said the Sri Lankans were not able to contact any consular authorities for help but they received assistance from a British consular official who discovered the drama by chance when visiting the airport.

What an irony that once "imperialist" Britain had to come forward to help Tamils in a "Socialist" land!

Mothers Front Condemns Atrocities

The text of a protest letter sent to President Jayewardene by the Mothers Front:

We, the Mothers Front vehemently condemn the atrocities committed by the armed forces in Kokkaticholai and in the neighbouring villages during their combing out operations from 28th January onwards.

We understand from reports that more than two hundred civilians including women and children were brutally killed. More than thirty employees of Serendib — a food processing factory — also have been killed and their bodies burnt. Thousands of villagers along with the injured have fled into the jungles.

We urge you to 1. Stop killing of innocent civilians by armed forces. 2. Appoint an independent Commission to inquire into these killings en masse in Kokkaticholai and neighbouring villages. 3. Take immediate steps to stop terrorising activities of the armed forces, in future. 4. Provide immediate relief and rehabilitate those who are affected.

The fuel ban on the North is holding up newsprint supplies as well.

That is why the SATURDAY REVIEW has been forced to come out this week with a lean issue — eight pages instead of the standard 12.

Release All Political Prisoners In Sri Lankan Jails

Saturday Review

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Common Room Snippets

Pythagoras sat in his chair looking pensive, his arms folded, his empty tea cup in front of him. His appearance was wizened. But thirty years in the University profession had not dimmed his idealism. The news of killings near Batticaloa had just come in. All faces were grim. Pythagoras spoke:

"I expected the Government to be more intelligent. The only way the Government can hope to win this war is to get the majority of the Tamils on its side and failing this, at least to have them neutral. Killing Tamils in this manner or causing even irritations through economic blockades will only force Tamils into the opposite camp. A solution will have to recognise the basic premiss that the Tamils and the Sinhalese will have to live as neighbours, whatever the political set up. Mutual trust must be established. Any other solution will require the impractical condition that over a million Tamils have to be killed. The first step towards any solution has to be that of bridging the communication gap. Ironically, the Government's only success—its disinformation campaign in the South—is one that has had the opposite effect. This

is the sad part of it. I knew the Minister concerned in the old days he used to be a nice chap. I suppose power does things to people.

I find this communication gap very alarming. If the Sinhalese come to believe that really terrible things are being done to the Tamils, I think they will act more generously perhaps than Tamils in similar circumstances. Even Sinhalese whom I have moved with for a long time and who take me to be a fairly objective person have developed a men-

by

Archimedes

tal block towards accepting from me accounts of what is happening in Tamil areas. This is the success of the disinformation campaign.

Take a typical case where the Government says, that "Civilians were killed in a crossfire with the terrorists". We would of course accept a different account of it from sources we have come to rely on, though we are seldom direct witnesses. Our judgement is based on an intimate knowledge of a history of such civilian deaths and army and Government attitudes. But when I put this across to Sinhalese friends they would incline to the view that I am a victim of Eelamist propaganda.

I often think that it is time we should talk to the so-called Sinhalese extremists than to the liberals. The latter often sympathise with you and do little else. Breaking the mental block of the former will yield far-reaching results. I don't have much hope in the liberals. Of the present leaders, though it is too early to say, Vijaya Kumaratunge may go a long way. To be effective in breaking the communication gap requires the common touch. I find it worthwhile even spending two hours talking to an ordinary Sinhalese fisherman. At the end of it he may just begin to doubt what the Government claims. In talking to them you must not attempt to tell the whole truth; just pick the holes in their understanding of the situation and let them feel that things cannot be as the Government claims. In some sense this is happening to the whole Sinhalese population. At the least they feel that if the Government was telling the truth, the war should have been long over.

I have often found that what has made a strong impression on many Sinhalese is the fact that the Go-

vernment has found it necessary to parley with the militants. One pro-ruling United National Party (UNP) man with a close relative in the Army was unsettled at finding that this relative was impressed by the militants' conduct during the handing over of the bodies of soldiers.

I have been a close follower of the Vietnam war. And such wars are not about winning battles, but about wearing down the other side. The Viet Cong seldom won battles. An exception was the Tet offensive against Da Nang. One of my American friends was annoyed when I told him this at that time. If you take the Rhodesian war, Ian Smith's Government forces were well above the guerillas in capability and equipment. I do not think that the guerrillas won a single battle. In our case the militants controlling the Jaffna peninsula is an unusual development. In a way it may not be very helpful from the militants' point of view. I think the Government knows it has nothing to gain by over-running the Jaffna Peninsula. We must all hope that sober councils prevail on all sides."

Another Engineer Quits

Employees of the Cement Corporation at Kankasanturai held a farewell lunch for their Maintenance Manager, Mr. Srirangapathy on 31st January.

Mr. Srirangapathy, a mechanical engineer of 17 years standing, had been Maintenance Manager for a short but difficult period. He now leaves for Laos to work on a United Nations Development Programme sponsored project.

In a farewell address, Mr. A. T. Sampanthar spoke of Sriranga's integrity and sense of professional honour. "The future well-being of the Tamils needs such men Sriranga's professional honour and integrity during this difficult period must be an example to all of us. We must create conditions in Jaffna so that people can maintain such values without feeling themselves under pressure to leave. Otherwise there will be no such people left. We may have to go back to the early days of the factory when this place was run by foreign experts."

A fellow engineer praised Sriranga's loyalty and total unselfishness. He had cycled daily from Vaddukodai to KKS. He expressed the earnest hope that Sriranga would come back to them in happier circumstances. Several more of his colleagues spoke and expressed similar sentiments.

The Administrative Manager, Mr. A. Balendra, praised Sriranga's excellent record in support of which he read out a commendation from the UN on Sriranga's former services to the UN.

THREE JUBILIARIANS FETED

Three prominent members of the Catholic clergy were felicitated by the Board of Directors of the Patrician Institute on 31st January on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of their Sacerdotal ordination.

They were Rt. Rev. Dr. Kingsley Swampillai, Bishop of Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Very Rev. Fr. Xavier Croos Vicar-General, Mannar and Director of H. U. D. E. C and Fr. M. E. Pius.

The Chairman of the Institute, Dr. J. P. C. Phillips in his address

of welcome stated that they were meeting in a sad sombre atmosphere where many thousands of Tamil people in the North and East were undergoing untold suffering and hardships. Mr. Anton Alfred spoke of the sanctity of priesthood and congratulated the Jubilarians on their steadfastness and courage in their vocation.

The Jubilarians thanked the organisers for the invitation and the reception accorded to them and stressed that the need of the hour was Prayer.

Fr. Croos prefaced his thanks with a tribute to his late teachers, Messrs. F. N. C. Saverimuthu and S. F. Santhiapillai.

His Lordship, Kingsley Swampillai who spoke last said that the happenings in his Diocese were most distressing. He said it was difficult to wade through this "vale of sorrow and tears" without commending ourselves to the mercies of Divine Providence for it is He and He alone who could stave off disaster.

It was altogether a quiet and simple function in keeping with the pervading atmosphere of encircling gloom.

WANTED

A resident project officer to supervise a buildings programme for a Christian Educational Programme at Paranthan.

Salary negotiable. Meet the Principal, Jaffna College as early as possible.

Jaffna College, A. KADIRGAMAR,
VADDUKODAI. Principal

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Brief Life But Rich Harvest

The 125th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated on 22nd January.

Swami Vivekananda organised the Ramakrishna Mission which one of the most valuable agencies at work today for the regeneration of Hinduism and for social amelioration. He made Sri Ramakrishna's teachings widely known in India and abroad and worked to disseminate the great tenets of Hinduism and enlighten people of its catholicity, its tolerance, and its absorptive capacity.

Though his life was short, it was devoted to helping Indians to regain their lost faith. After the passing away of his Master, he — in keeping with the tradition for monks — set out on foot and moved from place to place. He walked the length and breadth of India, in the course of which he came face to face with the appalling conditions in which the poor people of India lived, and was moved to tears. He found that the masses had sunk low and had lost their self-confidence. He exhorted them to throw off their slavishness and petty jealousies and weaknesses and urged them to stand on their feet and be manly and brave. He raised the consciousness of

his people and taught them kindness and tolerance and the oneness of humanity.

Swami Vivekananda saw that man alone was responsible for the world he builds around himself. Man has energy but he has to use his power of enthusiasm and faith in order to attain desired goals. Swami Vivekananda believed that modern India could be built according to his dreams by infusing the energy of the people with the power of enthusiasm and faith. He wanted them to be sensitive to the sufferings of the poor and the neglected. He

more stimulating and more illuminating than the other addresses heard on the opening day of the convention. Among the galaxy of dignitaries who attended the convention he stood out as the representative of the most ancient order of monks in the world. The great teaching of the ancient faith he represented was tolerance and universal acceptance. He concluded his address with quotations from ancient Sanskrit teachings to the effect that all faiths lead to the Lord as all streams flow into the sea.

"Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man,"

by

R. Raja Mahendrasinkam

ordered, "Go all of you where there is an outbreak of plague or famine, wherever the people are in distress, and mitigate their sufferings. At the most you may die in the attempt. What of that?" He also cried in anguish and said, "I don't believe in a God or a religion that cannot wipe the widow's tears or bring a piece of bread to the orphan's mouth."

Swami Vivekananda's first address to the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893 was a short one, but it was more impressive,

he said. He put forward a revolutionary idea in education. He felt Indians must be given a life — building, man — making, character — forming education which would enable them to work out their own salvation.

For spiritual seekers, Swami Vivekananda left behind a great message, "Without steady devotion for the Guru and unflinching patience and perseverance, nothing is to be achieved. He had intense faith in his Master and felt that whatever he had done for the nation and the world was possible only by the grace of his great Guru.

Swami Vivekananda called upon every Indian to proclaim proudly,

"I am an Indian. Every Indian is my brother." He despised politics and paid attention only to values that were for him infinitely more important. At Harvard in 1896 he remarked "If I go to the village to teach the people politics, they will not understand; but if I go to teach them Vedanta, they will say, 'Now Swami, you are all right.'"

Swami Vivekananda had become a great teacher even while he was a young man in his twenties, and he passed away while he was still young, but he worked incessantly for the spiritual upliftment of people everywhere. It is not by the number of years but by the measure of achievement that we judge of the fulfilment of the purpose of life and from this standpoint Swami Vivekananda's brief life of 39 years reached a rich harvest of fulfilment.

Swami Vivekananda, the foremost of Sri Ramakrishna's disciples woke up his sleeping fellow Indians and made them aware of their great culture and their rich heritage. To the world he taught that narrow religious bigotry is to be shed and broad-minded tolerance cultivated. The advancement of India as she stands now and the consciousness in the world that tolerance and mutual understanding between peoples is absolutely necessary for peace can be traced to the fire Swami Vivekananda lit a century ago which burns brightly today. His message to the world may be summarised in the famous Vedic exhortation which he often quoted, "Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached".

INTERIM SOLUTION

The Party Central Committee stresses that an interim political solution should incorporate the following proposals with a clear guarantee: 1. Traditional Homeland of the Tamils — Northern and Eastern Provinces — be granted Regional Autonomous status and autonomous bodies be set up. 2. These autonomous bodies have the right to merge and if necessary to function separately if they decide. 3. Without the interventions of the Central Government these Regional Autonomous bodies should have the maximum independence to manage the affairs of economy, employment, internal security, education, culture, health, social services etc. 4. The Muslims, people of Indian Origin and Sinhalese who reside within these areas should be given the right to establish inner autonomous bodies and thereby ensure their basic human rights, language and cultural rights. 5. The autonomous bodies should be

responsible for the security of the autonomous areas in the absence of external aggression. 6. Autonomous bodies should have the freedom to set up colonisation schemes within the area. At the same time the autonomous bodies should have the right to accept or reject any colonisation scheme of the Central Government within their area. 7. Concrete Steps should be taken to eradicate discriminations based on nationality, language or caste at the national and regional level. 8. Basic rights of plantation workers, Tamils, Muslims who reside outside North and East be recognised by setting up inner autonomous bodies. 9. There should be guarantee to hold elections at the national and regional level without the intervention of government, armed forces and others. 10. Depressed communities, backward section of the society be given institutional guarantee by way of concessions and facilities

in the field of economy, employment and education for their social upliftment.

While stressing the above proposals as a basis for arriving at an interim political solution our Party empha-

Excerpts from the statement of the Sri Lanka Communist Party (Left), containing the minimum proposals of the Central Committee of the Party for an Interim Solution to the National Question. The statement has been signed by the General Secretary of the Party, K.A. Subramaniam, on behalf of the Central Committee of the Party.

sizes the necessity of taking steps to solve the problems that arose in recent years due to warlike situation. 1. Prevention of Terrorism Act be withdrawn and state of emergency be lifted and all persons detained under the act and regulations be released unconditionally. 2. Those persons who are wanted under Pr-

vention of Terrorism Act and emergency regulations be pardoned unconditionally. Charges against them and those who were arrested prior to enactment of the act and promulgation be withdrawn completely. 3. By withdrawing the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution freedom of expression of the Tamils be respected. 4. Government troops be withdrawn from populated areas of Tamils on a time table and the camps be closed. 5. Home guards be disbanded and disarmed and that establishment be scrapped. 6. Government should give compensations to those affected for the losses caused by the troops and home guards by way of murders, arson, burglaries. 7. The government should give facilities to people who were forced to leave their homes, villages by the excesses committed by the government troops and home guards, and they be allowed to return to their homes and restart their vocation

(Continued on page 7)

This year has been proclaimed the International Year For Housing.

This article highlights the role of Coop Societies in meeting housing demand.

The rate of social progress in any society depends mainly on the combination of three factors. These are: first, self-help — what individuals are able and willing to do for themselves; second, Government — functions assumed by the state; third, association — what individuals are able to accomplish by joint effort.

STATE AID

Historically, the provision of housing on grounds of social welfare has been one of the responsibilities assumed by private charities. Several private charities in a great variety of countries have built almshouses and maintain housing projects for low-cost rentals. In the 19th Century, money for these purposes was raised in Great Britain from the so called 'five per cent philanthropists,' who were willing to loan money for a return at less than the current rate of interests so that these projects could be financed.

In the last fifty years or so, the burden of subsidizing the housing of the poor has been partly assumed by the State and the city authorities. In the United States, substantial public funds are invested in the housing program; but they are used not as a form of social service but to help citizens to buy their own houses. This policy is intended to benefit those most able to help themselves; the assumption is that the houses thus vacated will become available for poorer families and that a general reshuffling will take place so that virtually all sections of the community may benefit.

On a world view, very great variations are to be found in the extent to which different governments take responsibility for housing their populations. Motives of self-interest make governments to intervene in the matter wherever urbanization is occurring. If the government is promoting industrial development, it will be under pressure to provide, or stimulate the building of worker's housing within reach of the new industrial suburb. In addition to these motives of enlightened self-interest, governments may also be impelled on grounds of social welfare to make provision for their less privileged citizens.

In spite of the great divergence in philosophy between this kind of assisted self-help and the welfare-

state policies now being implemented all over the world, the difference in practice has been far less striking. Governments have generally shied away from making direct provision by building new houses for the poorest families. This follows the experience of the private philanthropists that it is unattractively expensive to subsidize new housing to the point at which really poor families can afford the rents.

The provision of new housing is predominantly attuned to the needs of the newly married couples and

mobile families. It is only in cities undertaking a vigorous urban renewal and slum-clearance program that a substantial number of really poor families are displaced and forced to seek new homes. Even with generous subsidies many of these underprivileged families find the new rents too high and tend to gravitate back to the remaining slums thereby further overcrowding these areas.

Social welfare is not at all a mystery. It is the studied, systematic social engineering aimed at maximising social benefits to mankind. There is by now a fair understanding of human needs in housing and also of the means by which these needs can be satisfied. What is now needed in addition is the

by

balance of effort should swing from static to dynamic studies, from social investigation toward participation and social action.

CO-OPERATION

Co-operation comes under the third of those categories mentioned earlier. Co-operation enhances the ability of the individuals to look after themselves and their legitimate interests; relieving the state of its duties to look after emergency and short-term measures to relieve economic distress, so that it might concentrate on relatively long-term plans.

The realization has come over that in the post-colonial world mass mobilization can be done without the conventional channels and modes of mobilization such as the political parties and trade unions. Prof. Rajni Kothari, in a talk given at

third N. M. Perera Memorial Lecture describes the presently emerging counter-trend in the following words: "In generating this process of 'Conscientization', and engaging in actual struggles as well as searching for new alternatives there has emerged a whole new class of people known as activists, essentially drawn from the conscious and enlightened and troubled streams of the middle class, engaged on a wide range of activities, from Sarvodaya style 'Constructive work' and NGO type development projects to more struggle-oriented political work, but essen-

tially settling in the latter mode of intervention. It is from this convergence of conscious and restless people and a conscientious and equally restless class of volunteer politicians (to be distinguished from professional party politicians) that the new grassroots movements are taking shape. It is a convergence that is making it possible to conceive of the thousands of micro struggles and experiments in some kind of a macro perspective."

The State need not be the only author of transformation and development. The centralized apparatus can be ignored if the civil society can be geared to a task. In this connection, what else can be more suitable and readily available than co-operation?

Mallika Rasaratnam

Though it might seem paradoxical, in our country it is a reality that successive governments have promoted self-help through voluntary economic associations. Because self-help, co-operation and state action are complementary and react upon one another, planning for economic and social development, in order to achieve full success must be based on the integration of all three, viz. Self-help; Co-operation; and Government.

COOP HOUSING SOCIETIES

Escape from the congestion of large metropolitan cities to planned smaller communities was elevated into a principle by Sir Ebenezer Howard. Preplanned large-scale developments characterized by low land coverage and densities, generous green areas, and varying degrees of

unified control characterized the garden cities. Like such garden cities and the limited dividend societies that established communal ownership of land, housing co-operatives were formed to do away with speculative profits. Many co-operative societies were organized to build houses in England during the 19th century. After the houses were constructed, they were usually sold to members. Noteworthy developments are Ealing and Hampstead garden suburbs of London. Well-organized consumer cooperatives invested large sums in such developments.

In Germany, favourable legislation in 1889 led to a proliferation of cooperative housing societies under auspices of labour organization. A very large part of the German working-class housing in the 20th century was built or carried out by cooperative societies.

Cooperative housing has flourished particularly in the Scandinavian countries, where some cooperative communities own and operate central community buildings. Some housing societies even operate plants that produce building materials.

Like the rest of Europe, Austria was becoming an industrial nation in the middle of the nineteenth century and the migration of labour into the cities caused housing miseries. Before the state even began its regulating intervention, building co-operatives had started a development which was approvingly adopted in the Housing Laws of 1910. Provision of housing on grounds of social welfare was at that time identified with cooperative housing. Building co-operatives could obtain recognition as being mutual societies, provided they subjected themselves to certain restrictions—in particular the limitation of the dividend to be distributed to members to a maximum of five per cent of the paid-up shares, and the assurance that, in case of dissolution of the co-operative, members would not receive more than the paid-up amount of their shares. They were thereby subject to state supervision, but they had extensive concessions from taxation and with access to funds from central Housing funds.

As early as in 1916, mutual housing co-operatives were gathered into a National Federation. This inceptive Federation evolved itself into the Central Federation of mutual Building co-operatives of Austria. In 1929, the office of the Federal Chancellor granted the Central Federation the right of auditing. Although the Central Federation was not a compulsory organisation to which all building co-operatives had to belong, the Federal

(Continued on page 6)

Don't Send Our Children Back To Hell!

The decision by the Swiss Government to deport to Sri Lanka the Tamil refugees has deeply grieved the Tamil People. By doing so the Swiss Government is handing over the helpless Tamil refugees to the not so tender mercies of the Sri Lanka Government from whose persecution these refugees had fled to countries abroad.

Both Sinhalese and Tamils fought for Sri Lanka's Independence. When Independence came, successive Sinhala governments enacted racial legislations calculated to undermine Tamil, society, its culture, language, trade and industry, agriculture etc. The Ceylon Citizenship Act, The Indian and Pakistani Residence Act, The Sinhala Only Act, The Prevention of Terrorism Act, the Emergency Regulations etc. are a few examples. Alongside, the Government started colonising the traditional homelands of the Tamil people with the Sinhalese, and now it is being done at gun-point.

The tacit policy of Sinhala governments to destroy Tamil culture was made obvious when a gang of policemen brutally attacked and disturbed the mammoth meeting of the International Tamil Research Conference held at the Jaffna Esplanade on 10th, January, 1974. Nearly a lakh of people were listening in pin-drop silence, to the speeches delivered by eminent Tamil

scholars who had come from abroad. As a result of the police attack, nine Tamils from the audience were killed on the spot. The foreign scholars were not only shocked at the barbaric attack but had testified wherever they went to the horror of what had happened. This event further strengthened the movement for Tamil rights and triggered off Tamil militant groups. When the Tamil movement was gathering momentum, the Sinhala government sought to suppress it by enacting the Prevention of Terrorism Act. This black Act has given rise to state terrorism of a

by

S. Ponniah

Secretary, Jaffna Parents' Association

kind unknown to the civilised world. It has empowered the police and army to deal with Tamil victims as they like, to torture them to any extent and to take their lives and dispose of their bodies without being questioned. According to the reports of the Citizens' Committee of the Eastern Province the fact of 634 Tamils are still not known. There is wailing in thousands of Tamil homes. From 1980, according to statistics, 15,417 Tamils have been killed owing to state terrorism.

This terrorist Law has been responsible for the torture and death

of thousands of Tamil youths. During their search operations the Sri Lankan armed forces have arrested and subjected them to torture. They are hung upside down for hours, their private parts daubed with chillie powder, their toes and finger nails pulled out, melted rigifoam poured on their bodies, they are made to sleep on bare floors during biting cold weather, half famished and whining with thirst and hunger and they are severely beaten with S-lon pipes. Even completely innocent youths have died in the course of these tortures. This is the reason why Tamil youths are leav-

ing Sri Lanka and taking refuge in the outside world. The terror of torture is in their minds and they are unable to forget the fate of their kith and kin. The only way left to them is to make good their escape to countries abroad.

There are others who are leaving Sri Lanka on grounds of poverty, unemployment etc. The Tamils, however qualified, are unable to get jobs under the Sri Lankan Government which follows a discriminatory policy of a rabid kind. Tamils are denied the right to start any major industry. Their lands are arid and unproductive and they are

compelled to lead a hand to mouth life.

The good world cannot fail to see reason in the exodus of our children as refugees. In view of the stigma to which Sri Lanka is exposed, its Government takes great pains to get some country to deport Tamil refugees to Sri Lanka. Unfortunately Switzerland, of all countries, has fallen a victim to Sri Lanka's machination. Tamils, in their misery and utter helplessness, are asking for refuge, relief and protection from terrorism, but Switzerland is exposing them to torture and death: for these Tamil refugees, however innocent, will be treated as terrorists by the Sri Lanka Government in keeping with its propaganda abroad. Any country must respect the right of even aliens to go to any other country of their choice instead of being compulsorily deported to a country where torture and death await them.

The Swiss Government must examine its conscience to see whether it is proper or just to condemn a race of people to execution for securing some advantages for itself. It is not an adequate answer that the first 20 Tamil refugees are safe in the South of Sri Lanka, for such an attitude will only help the Lankan Government in its ethnic policy of disintegrating Tamil society by taking its members out of their native habitat and planting them in an entirely foreign environment.

Dont send our children back to hell!

The Sri Lankan Government is trying to pressurise the Indian Government to force the Tamil militants in South India to accept the terms offered, on the specious ground that India is for the unity of Sri Lanka while the Tamil militants

IDENTITY

AND HOMELAND

want a separate state. The Tamils of Sri Lanka have stood for an independent and sovereign Sri Lanka,

living unitedly within the framework of an autonomous region. Though the cry for Eelam was raised in frustration, after twenty five years of democratic struggle, it is well known that genuine devolution of power to the Tamils in their homelands will be accepted in a united Sri Lanka.

The Indian government is aware that the Sri Lankan government is not prepared to accept the fact that the Tamils of Sri Lanka have a separate identity, which they will never allow to be taken away from them. The only way of ensuring this is to have a homeland where they can manage their internal affairs without any interference from anywhere. The Tamils have lived in the North and East of Sri Lanka for thousands of years.

The Indian Government is well aware of how the Tamils, both upcountry and indigenous, have been

treated by the Sinhalese leaders since independence and why the Tamils feel that the Sinhalese still are not prepared to accept their separate identity. That is why the proposed Provincial Councils are to be enforced alike all the nine provinces of the island to emphasise that there is nothing special given to the Tamils.

by

Kumar

The Tamils of Sri Lanka have no hope of the Tamil identity being recognised by either of the Sri Lankan parties who have ruled Sri Lanka since independence.

The only hope is that the international community will help to halt this racial oppression of the minority people.

LAMENT OF A LAYMAN

The leaders who promised to tell us the Truth are not in our midst-some are no more, while others are abroad, settled comfortably.

The religious leaders who assured us of God's Providence have left our shores for greener pastures.

The people who placed their implicit trust in God and said He would protect, are fleeing, while those who are prepared to take things as they come are in the forefront.

The Law Courts which should act as Guardians of the Law are functioning through the back door.

The Police who should protect the people are never seen.

The National Press and the Government media vie with one another to tell the untruth.

The politicians prevaricate and hoodwink the gullible.

The Government who earlier served the people, for instance constructing Houses and repairing roads, is now shelling the self-same roads and houses.

But as the saying goes-You can fool some of the people all the time and all the people some of the time-but not all the people, all the time.

—Patrick Balrajah

Since early civilization man has been propagating plants as a source of food for his consumption as well as for domestic animals. With the passage of time, plants were propagated for clothing, shelter and finally as ornamental plants, all of which are well rooted in modern civilization. Pioneer human endeavour in agriculture was to provide suitable environment such as adequate water, correct temperature, nutrients in the form of organic manner, enough sunlight. Further, he protected the plants from infection and diseases by the use of proper pesticides.

The propagation of these plants started from a seed or a seedling. This process led to the loss of desired plant characters such as high yielding, pest-resistant, drought resistant etc. Plant propagation through seeds had many limitations. The main limitation was the presence of disease already present in the seed or the seedlings. Further, the use of seeds or seedlings did not produce an exact copy of the desired parent plant. During fertilization of the male and the female reproductive cells fuse and the formation of zygote makes provision for natural change in genetic characters of the new plant. This problem of instability of genetic characters during propagation was overcome by a technique known as cloning. This process of cloning in-

volves the fusion of vegetative structures or the vegetative and reproductive parts of two different plants. In addition to this method plants are also propagated where parts of plants are directly planted in the soil from which new plants grow. In plant hybridization methods, different organs of the plants with desired characters were grafted to a wild plant

entiate into shoot the leaves and the roots. This differentiation could take place stepwise where first shoot system is initiated followed by the roots or vice versa. During this process some of the callus cells are made to develop structures typical of cells of the shoot system such as the development of chlorophyll and the ones in the root system with root hairs etc. Ones

cells especially tobacco plant cells. The second method is to fuse two plant cells into one with the desired character. This method is known as protoplasmic fusion. These techniques are being made to clone the nif gene (nitrogen fixing gene) from the blue green algae to paddy plants. The success of this attempt will help the paddy plants to be independent of fertilizers particularly the artificial ones, whose residues in the soil is one of the cause of metabolic disorders in humans.

Research projects have been already started at the Department of

THE IMPORTANCE OF PLANT TISSUE CULTURE

of the same species. These two methods are known as vegetative propagation which do not involve nuclear fusion and segregation. An extension of such a technique led to the discovery of plant tissue culture where instead of using plant parts such as stems or roots, different tissues were used from which new plants are propagated.

Pioneer tissue culture technique was started by G. Haberlandt in the year 1900. The first economical use was adopted in 1952 where virus free plants were produced via tissue culture. In 1960 this procedure was adopted to commercialise virus free orchids. Later, Professor Toshio Marasinghe, a horticulture and plant physiologist, at the University of California, Riverside, USA gave a new dimension to tissue culture. Since 1960 more than 70 companies have sprung across the USA. They supply disease free, cheap cloned plants. Since tissue culture involves the propagation of new plants from plant tissue they cannot be directly planted in the soil because such specialised tissues cannot resist soil micro organisms and also they do not have proper structures to absorb soil nutrients. Therefore, these plant parts have to be grown on artificial sterile medium rich in basic nutrients which could diffuse into the cells of the explant cells. These explants are grown in defined synthetic medium which contain the necessary nutrients and growth factors such as hormones in specific proportions.

Propagation of plants through tissue culture involves three main stages. First, the tissue in the explant should be able to divide and form an undifferentiated mass of cells. This undifferentiated mass of cells is known as callus. Callus formation stage is the amplification stage. This is followed by the differentiation phase where the callus is made to differ-

the callus is formed it has to be transferred to another growth medium with appropriate ratio of different plant growth hormone such as cytokinin and naphtholacetic acid (NAA). when the plantlets in the test tube reach a considerable size they are removed and separated into individual plantlets. These plantlets are put back again in appropriate growth media in a conical flask and incubated. Most of the tissue culture process takes place at 20 °C and with 3000 lux of light intensity. Ones the plantlets

by

Dr. T. Vinayagamoorthy
University of Jaffna

reach an appropriate size in the conical flasks they are transferred to the soil where they grow in pots with natural source of nutrients.

A large number of disease free plants could be propagated in a very short time, with minimum space, and the desired traits intact. Gerbera daisies grown from seeds normally take from seven to nine months to bloom. Using tissue culture process daisies will flower in 90-100 days, at half the cost. 1000 lilies a week could be grown on 30 square feet of shelf space compared to one half acre needed to grow the same number of lilies in pots. The tissue culture plants break faster for new shoot and are early flowering. Propagation of plants through tissue culture provides avenues for the introduction of new desirable traits into the plant. This process of introduction of new genetic traits is known as genetic engineering. Introduction of new genetic traits to plants could be carried out in two ways. New genes could be introduced via a vector genetic element known as plasmid. Presently the Ti plasmid (Tumour introducing) plasmid has been used to introduce new genes into plant

Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna, where we have been successful in propagating carrot plant from tissue from the root cambium and propagating maize plants from embryo culture. These were carried out mainly to perfect the basic techniques of tissue culture. New research projects in tissue culture involve the study of plant growth factors, and the biochemistry of horticultural plants such as mango and cash crops such as chillie, brinjals. In addition attempts are being made in our la-

Coop Way....

(Continued from page 4)

Ministry for Social Administration as the highest supervising authority expressed the wish that it would be well if all mutual building co-operatives join the Federation and had their auditing done by the Central Federation. Apart from the active support in the creation of co-operative agencies, the Austrian Government also extended its assistance in the form of preferential treatment.

During the first ten post-war years, the number of co-operatives rose from 102 in 1945 to 248 in 1955. The number of dwellings built by co-operatives increased from 15,958 in 1945 to 107,183 at the end of 1965. A total membership of 29,131 as at the end of the Second World War increased to 115,596 members at the end of 1965.

This survey shows that the activity of building co-operatives in Austria gained an ever increasing prominence in the housing economy of that country. The co-operative principle of mutual economic self-aid is still the valid principle of housing in Austria becoming increasingly capable of standing on its own developed economic basis.

laboratory to produce dwarf palmyrah palm and drought resistant coconut palm through tissue culture. The outcome of these endeavours will definitely have a direct impact on agriculture and horticulture.

THE NIGHTS OF SILENCE

*So hopeful
were the nights bygone.
But alas!
This night is awful.*

*Solitude,
Darkness and silence
No wind;
No whistling of leaves
And a starless night.
A distant street lamp
Dimly illuminates a denuded tree.*

*Clouds;
Resembling my mind
A silent war between hope and hope
against hope
Rages within me.
I stare at
The wide wide world —
Being and nothingness!*

— SIVARANJITH

SENDERISTAS STEP UP ATTACKS

Peru's President Alan Garcia was in India from 23rd January to 29th January. On the eve of his visit, guerrillas from the Communist Party of Peru — better known as Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) — shot and killed three policemen at the Indian Embassy in Lima in an assault aimed at discrediting President Garcia's visit to India. The Guerrillas also seized the offices of two news agencies in Lima, Reuters and Cuba's Prensa Latina on 28th January. They forced the employees to send messages denouncing Garcia's visit to India as a manoeuvre aimed at catapulting him into third world leadership.

"We are carrying out a campaign" states a communique from the Communist Party of Peru, "denouncing the base genocide by the fascist and corporative Government of Alan Garcia".

Excerpts from the communique.

Following in the foot steps of its predecessor, the APRA government of Peru since being elected has resorted to genocide against the People's War, masking it with pompous demagoguery, with the conspiratorial support of electoral opportunism, as is evidenced by *Aqomarca*, *Umaru*, *Bellavistay Llocllapampa* crimes committed by the Armed Forces and Police of the Peruvian state.

The reaction sinisterly aimed its guns against the prisoners of war, planning their genocidal annihilation, and carried it out on October 4 of

Interim Solution

(Continued from page 3)

peacefully. 8. Government troops and home guards who committed excesses be tried before an impartial commission of inquiry.

The S.L.C.P. (Left) calls upon mass organisations, personages, patriotic forces, democrats and others to firmly press the government to take steps on these lines.

Our Party is very clear that this interim solution will not be a lasting solution to the problem within the present social set up, and until the advent to power of the working class through a mass revolution there cannot be a lasting solution to the national question. However, our Party's stand is that the solution we suggest, will to an extent ensure that there won't be repetitions of the present situation in the future and bring about sanity for the present.

last year with the cowardly and brutal assassination of thirty combatants in the *Lurigancho* prison—an abominable crime, also unpunished, that only the victorious people will punish.

On 18th June 1986, in *El Fronton Lurigancho* and *Callao*, the prisoners of war rose up in rebellion against the new genocide under way, after repeated public denunciations to the courts and authorities themselves of the massacre the Government and their Armed Forces were plotting. They rebelled in defense of the revolution and their own lives, issuing twenty-six very just and reasonable demands.

On the 19th, the APRA government headed by Alan Garcia, after its grotesque farce of manipulating the so-called "peace commission", unleashed the most perverse and sinister extermination operation: mobilizing the Army, the Marines, the Air Force and police forces, under the Joint Command, the government carried out the most monstrous genocide, killing hundreds of prisoners of war—guerrilla fighters and sons and daughters of the people—soaking themselves once again in the fiery blood of the people. Let Alan Garcia, his Cabinet, the Joint Command, the armed forces and police be struck with indelible ignominy

that the people will never forget and that only the people will punish!

The combatants of the People's Guerrilla Army, prisoners of war, proclaiming "It's right to rebel", fought heroically and daringly, achieving a landmark of heroism, valor and courage that history will cherish as exemplary of the heroes that only a people's war can bring forth.

The glorious death of these prisoners of war in battle is wrapped with the blood already spilled. And thus, the communists, the combatants and sons and daughters of the people armed, pledge an unwavering commitment to follow their shining example and, by advancing the People's War, to serve the world revolution.

FUTA CALLS OFF PROTEST

The Federation of University Teachers Associations (FUTA) called off its protest on 2nd February in response to a University Grants Commission (UGC) offer whereby interim salary increases for University teachers will range from Rs. 400 to Rs. 750 per month. Negotiations will continue towards a restructuring of salaries. The protest consisted of a refusal by University teachers to perform extra-academic duties. The present agreement is a comedown from the original demand of a flat interim increase of Rs. 1500/-. This is a recognition of the widespread feeling that the government will go to extreme lengths to counter any trade union action regardless of political consequences.

The protest in Jaffna had its own peculiarities. Though Medical heads resigned on 5th January lectures and laboratory classes have continued. The MTA was addressed by the Vice Chancellor on 8th January, who told them that he will keep the University open and that their scholarship and leave applications were piling up unattended on the UGC Chairman's table. Though resenting this arm twisting the Medical teachers insisted that they kept classes going for the sake of the students. They also became concerned that they were being seen as giving into bullying, but did not get down to handing in the keys. One Medical teacher said that if concern for students was paramount, it would have been more honest to have followed the USTA which did not join the protest on 5th January.

The USTA was to join the protest on 3rd February the day after

the FUTA called off the protest. Others commended the USTA for a gold medal for its excellent prognostication.

Pressure from the VC's office resulted in some heads breaking ranks to attend the senate meeting on 23rd January. Dissenting heads who had come under heavy criticism complained that there was a good deal of hypocrisy around. They po-

inted out that a Medical head who was very influential in getting the MTA to join the protest had taken care not to resign his coveted seat in the University Council, though resigning his headship. It only goes to show that the affairs of the University involve a web of interests stranger than what meets the eye.

—OUR UNIVERSITY CORRESPONDENT

APPRECIATION

Kathiravelu Vallipuram

Hailing from a respectable family of Thiccum in the Vadamardchi area and born a son of the leading businessman Vallipuram Kathiravelu, the late Mr. K. Vallipuram, like many an elite of Vadamardchi, received his education from the prestigious Hartley College, Pt. Pedro. Young Vallipuram excelled in his studies and successfully completed the Cambridge Senior examination securing several distinctions.

In the tradition of most of the educated Tamil youths of the forties, he too, entered the Govt. Clerical Service and served in many departments at several stations winning the admiration and esteem of both his superiors and subordinates alike. To crown his career in State service, he was promoted to the Sri Lanka Administrative Service on the results of a competitive examination and was holding posts

of A.G.A., A.F.C. and A.C.P. till his retirement on reaching age.

In his retirement, he actively engaged himself in social work to serve humanity at large. To recognize his philanthropic service, he was most appropriately appointed a Justice of the Peace for the Pt. Pedro Judicial District. People from all walks of life flocked to him for assistance, guidance and help. He was the Patron of Thiccum Central Community Centre until his demise. As a voracious reader of both Tamil and English books, he possessed a considerable collection of several volumes of treasured books which he had willingly donated to the Thiccum Central Community Centre Library only a fortnight before his death on the 25th of November 1986 as if he had a premonition of his death.

May His Noble Soul attain Moksha

—S. V. Ganesan

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

Occasionally words must serve to veil the facts. But this must happen in such a way that no one becomes aware of it; or if it should be noticed, excuses must be at hand, to be produced immediately.

— Machiavelli

More than one thousand soldiers were pressed into service assisted by three helicopters gunships and Italian made Sia-machetti light bomber aircraft to cover an area twenty five square miles. People were lined up and shot and their heaped-up bodies were carried away in tractors.

Three days before the operation the Special Task Force (STF) personnel reportedly took away a large quantity of tyres from the Bus Depot.

The week-long operation launched on 28th January by the Security Forces, in Kokkatcholai Batticaloa left hundreds of civilians dead and several thousand people cowering in the jungles. From the first reports available to us, 45 Tamils including men women and children were asked to get out of their houses and shot dead in Ambilathurai; in Mahiladitheevu, 23 workers—seven of them were children around the ages 14 and 15—of Serendib Seafoods Ltd., were gunned down. In Manmunai 14 Tamils were killed. According to the State-controlled daily 'Thinakaran,' 10 persons died in the jungles off Kokkatcholai while hiding. The deaths were attributed to poisonous snake bites.

On the third day of operation, the death toll reached 90.

The Government Media Centre—the mill which churns out lies and half truths—has reported, on 1st February: "The stories of human shields and 200 killed are part of a terrorist disinformation campaign supported by certain foreign and South Asian individuals intent on destabilising not only Sri Lanka, but India as well".

The Media Centre report further states that "In the Batticaloa District troops searched an abandoned Sea Food Processing Factory and found 12 sticks of gelignite, 40 electric detonators, 100 yards of wire, and some EROS and LTTE literature".

We do not know how the said gelignite sticks were used in prawn

culture. Much has been said by the Media Centre but however the facts did emerge when Mr. Victor Santiapillai Managing Director of the Serendib Sea Foods Ltd., rebutted the Media Centre and stated the facts. Here's his Version:

"When I telephoned the head of the Media Centre, Dr. Tilak Ratnakara, yesterday to ascertain from where he had obtained all this information, he replied "from authoritative sources"; when I suggested to him that the least he could have done was to verify his information from the company that was responsible for the venture he said "in any case it is a terrorist farm and I don't have to discuss the matter with you" and he put the telephone receiver down.

"It is this kind of boorishness and blatant lying on the part of offici-

by

A Special Correspondent

als operating the Media Centre that has brought disrepute and ignominy to the government and the country and made a joke of the Media Centre. The clumsy way in which last Wednesday's security operation at Kokkatcholai has been handled by the Media Centre has brought in its wake more adverse publicity for Sri Lanka than otherwise and has forced the investors and Chief Executive of Serendib Seafoods Ltd. to be involved in a public confrontation, which we would have preferred to avoid in the interests of promoting investment in this country at a time when accelerated investment is surely needed.

"The facts — contrary to the Media Centre's flights of fancy are as follows: Serendib Seafoods Ltd, is an FIAC approved public company with a 50/50 shareholding of a group of foreign investors (mainly US and British) and a broad-based group of Sri Lankan investors including three institutions viz. the National Development Bank, the Export Development Board and the Capital Development and Investment Co. Ltd.

"The company has pioneered prawn culture in Sri Lanka and was the

Kokkatcholai Massacre

MEDIA CENTRE

VEILS THE FACTS

first to export cultured prawn from Sri Lanka in April 1985. Its farm (there is no factory or processing plant) is located in Manmunai adjacent to the village of Mahuladithivu, about two to three miles from Kokkatcholai.

"On 1 January 1987 a Sri Lankan, Mr. Karunaratne (now shot dead) who had worked for Serendib Sea Foods Ltd. the company since its inception, was appointed the Farm Manager in pursuance of the company's policy of replacing foreigners with trained Sri Lankans. Mr. Bruce Cyr was to continue his connection with the Manmunai farm in the capacity of a Visting Agent, while his main responsibility would be to develop a new farm on the west coast.

"On my last visit to Batticaloa, I met Mr. Sumith de Silva, Coordinating Officer for the Batticaloa area, on 17 January 1987 and int-

about any of our Batticaloa staff, they should let us know quietly and we would take action discreetly to get such persons out of the company.

"I repeated this request to Mr. Sumith de Silva on 17 January 1987, when I met with him and he assured me and my two colleagues that he had no such reservations and would give every support to a development project in the area that offered employment opportunities. How these same good men became terrorists on 28 January 1987 confounds me.

"Against this background, I totally reject the Media Centre's charge that the 22 Serendib Seafoods staff members (plus 12 still missing) who were shot by the security forces were terrorists. The Centre must find some other more intelligent and plausible ways of handling such incidents."

According to the Virakesari, Kumaramappa, the LTTE leader of Batticaloa, in a press release stated that none of their cadres were killed. Only two of them sustained injuries.

The LTTE press release maintains that 27 Commandos were killed while the Government said only 13 were killed.

The Batticaloa Citizens' Committee had sent an urgent telegram to President Jayewardene calling for an independent inquiry into the killings of civilians which were considered "the worst single incident of rampage by the Security Forces in the East." Meanwhile Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, Minister for National Security has reportedly told pressman that an inquiry into the Kokkatcholai incidents would take place.

The Media Centre can certainly teach Machiavelli a thing or two about veiling the facts.

Uma Escapes

Uma Maheswaran, the Madras-based leader of the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), narrowly escaped on assassination bid by PLOTE dissidents on Wednesday. The dissidents shot dead Uma's close associate Amuthan and smashed up the office.