

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

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Towards World War III

KAPPAL, KAPPAL, KAPPAL

(Boats, Boats, Boats)

Many people in shell - shocked Jaffna Peninsula were chanting the above MANTRAM following the news that food, fuel and other scarce commodities were to come across the seas.

Kachan, Kachan, Kachan
(Peanuts, Peanuts, Peanuts)

The little children were chanting, as usual, demanding their favourite bite.

Some 'sober' elements were saying
Kachal, Kachal, Kachal
(Trouble, Trouble, Trouble)

These elements were worried that India's Unilateral decision to send 'Humanitarian Aid' to Jaffna could precipitate a situation where other foreign powers could get involved, echoing

SR — UNMOVED MOVER

The SATURDAY REVIEW has not moved, will not move, come what may.

But for the convenience of the staff, who are hampered by transport difficulties, we have made certain ad hoc arrangements.

This may result in some inconvenience to our subscribers and advertising clients, for which we ask their forbearance.

It is now a war situation, like in Lebanon, and we have to learn to live with the times.

The SATURDAY REVIEW will continue to come out sometimes very lean, may be with only two pages.

But even with two pages we will say what needs to be said, clearly, boldly and loud for all the world to hear.

the view of some astrologers in India and Sri Lanka that World War III might well start in Sri Lanka.

India, at least, appears to have decided!

To intervene actively in Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict (the National Question) but in an indirect manner.

New Delhi could very well have got clearance for the shipments from the Sri Lanka Government for this move. After all, who would (or could) say 'No' to 'Humanitarian Aid'?

No Parallel

There's no parallel between Sri Lanka and Punjab, says Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. He said the Indian Govt. was not bombing or shelling the Sikhs in Punjab, unlike what was happening to the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

A flotilla of 19 boats carrying rice, sugar, flour, pulses and other essential items sailed towards Sri Lanka on Wednesday (3rd June) from Rameswaram.

The Sri Lanka Navy—represented by Mohan Samarasekere—on the instructions of President Jayewardene's Government said 'Nothing Doing'.

The boats were not allowed to enter Sri Lanka's territorial waters.

The boats were anchored off Kachchativu Island—in the Palk Straits

that separates the two countries—for nearly four hours while negotiations were on.

The Sri Lanka Government's position, as voiced by Capt. Mohan Samarasekere to Capt. D. S. Maithre who led the Indian flotilla was that 'there is no famine in Jaffna. The famine is in Tamilnadu. Go and give the stuff to the people there'.

The boats returned to Rameswaram
(Continued on page 8)

Short On Food Stocks

According to officials attached to the Kachcheri Secretariat, Jaffna, 2000 metric tons of rice and 240 metric tons of flour are required for a month.

The last stock-taking at the Kankesanthurai Government Stores was taken on 24th May and indicated

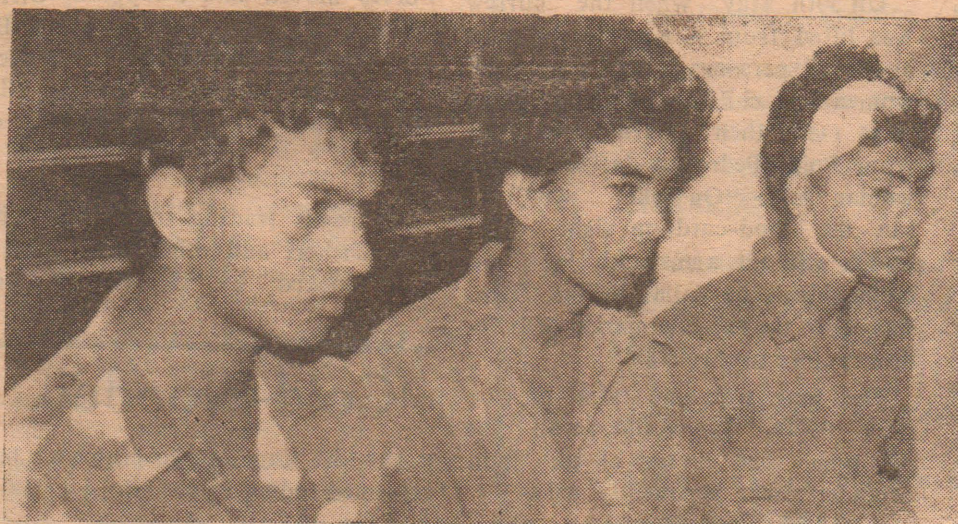
that only 1320 metric tons of flour and 4000 metric tons of rice were available. The last shipment of flour and rice came to K.K.S harbour a month ago and the stocks at present are far too short to meet the needs of 21 Multi purpose Co-operative Stores in the 13 Assistant Government Agents' Divisions in the Peninsula. Moreover, not a single lorry-load of foodstuffs was issued to these MPCs since 24th May.

Immediately after the "Operation Liberation-I" the Government Agent was asked to contact the military authorities and instructed to make arrangements to supply rice and flour to the Co-operatives

Coop Society lorries which—on the instructions of the Jaffna G.A. went to KKS to collect food supplies, after the curfew was relaxed on 1st June, turned back from Tellippallai, empty, when they saw soldiers pouring out from the Palaly and Harbour View Camps.

The lorries flew white flags.

CANNON FODDER



Sunil, Nimal, Piyantha — the 3 Sri Lankan soldiers taken captive, when the Tigers stormed the Jaffna Telecommunication Army Centre on Wednesday morning (3rd June). (See page 8)

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LONG LIVE SR!

Despite all the ha-ho in Jaffna last week—what with shells and bombs falling all over telecommunications, postal services, electricity supplies and public transport paralysed, an indefinite curfew on, and the remaining people in the city in a daze—the SATURDAY REVIEW came out on schedule last week.

Only seven of the employees at our printing establishment turned up—a third of the usual number—but still we managed somehow.

The SR was one of the few establishments in the heart of Jaffna which was functional during the turbulent week.

Even the Government Agent's office—the Kachcheri—remained closed.

There were few shops open to buy a bottle of soda or a cup of tea.

I wish to pay my humble tribute to our Printing Manager, Mr. A. J. Emmanuel and his staff and the Editorial staff who stood by the SR in a very grave crisis situation.

— Editor

P.S. Please pardon the many spelling and other mistakes in the last issue; what was important was that we got the message across.

The Day Of The 'Lions' (Jackals?)

At last, the Government has announced that Vadamarachchy area (the Northern-most and North Eastern portions of the Peninsula) had been brought under the rule of the 'Lions'.

Charred bodies, skeletons, and ruined buildings and houses were left in the "conquered land".

The operation was initially an air-borne one, comprising the services of helicopter gunships, 12 light aircrafts and three seaplanes. Security Forces from the camps of Valvettiturai, Point Pedro, Thondamanaru and Palaly, numbering about 3,500 were later pressed into service. Another division of equal number was on stand-by at the Palaly Army Camp pending orders in the event of a sudden necessity.

Light aircrafts began the carpet bombing of areas adjacent to the main road which links Valvettiturai and Point Pedro. On the very first day of the so-called "Operation Liberation", that was on 26th May, the bombings left more than 3000 houses and 100 business establishments in shambles. The exact number of the casualties could not be verified but some of the eye-witnesses who escaped the bombing and managed to come to Chavakachcheri told the SATURDAY REVIEW that more than 30 people were killed on that day alone.

Several gruesome stories of massacres are now emerging from the refugees who had made all their way through the barren lands of Varany in the nights and reached Kodikamam and Chavakachcheri.

Some of the refugees even dared to cross the Vallaiveli in the night and came to Jaffna.

On 30th May when the curfew was lifted from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. about 50 persons comprising men, women and children carrying white flags made their journey on foot from Point Pedro to Jaffna. An old woman said: "On the way" we saw the blood-curdling sight of 20 bodies without arms and legs on either side of the Vallai bridge. There was also the tell-tale marks of bulldozers close to this site".

The long trek and tales of woe were plenty. One would recall the old poem The charge of the light brigade which pertinently asks—

"Theirs not to reason why
Theirs but to do and die".

People left their cherished possessions for a haven of refuge from the cruel onslaught.

They travelled light and by night—some through Varany and some through Vallai—because their only hope was to cling to dear life—the primordial human instinct.

There was no one to offer even a cup of cold water. Up to the boundary of Vadamarachchy, it was the story of the Deserted Land. The long journey to Thenmarachchy had sapped their energies to the fullest. They had no strength to make one step further.

Said one refugee:—"In keeping with the Government announcement which was repeatedly announced through 'Radio Jaffna' we took refuge in a temple. At that time we saw three bombers circling over head. Then suddenly there was a deafening sound. We fell to the floor. The bomb which had been actually aimed at the temple fell in the compound. Some of us escaped. But the others were not as lucky. 14 people who had taken refuge in the temple were killed. The injured were not able to receive first aid. I don't know what had happened to them".

75 people were bombed to death at the Muthumari Amman temple at Alvai on 29th May. More than 100 were injured. The injured could not be taken to the base hospital at Manthikai because the Security Forces had already occupied the hospital.

In another incident Uduppiddy Thachchapillaiyar temple and Nelliady Mootha Vinayagar temple were bombed. In all these temples the people had taken refuge and even hoisted a white flag on top of the Rajagopuram.

At Uduppiddy, a Multi-purpose Co-operative Stores and the market were bombed and later the Security Forces moved into Uduppiddy Girls' College and put up a mini camp. By that time the bombers had wreaked their havoc and left ruins in the vicinity, an 'all-clear' assurance of course.

All roads leading to Jaffna, Chavakachcheri and other exit points were blocked by Security Forces

either by a mini-camp or a make shift camp. From these camps were fired shells continuously from every direction.

The Nelliady Madhya Maha Vidiyalaya had been converted into a camp. From thence Security Forces armed also with swords and knives ventured on a killing spree. The late Tiger Leader, Pandithar's mother, was cut to death after identification. Similar fate met the late Sathianathan's (Shankar) family. The entire family—father, mother, sisters and brother—were reportedly made chopped meat.

In this sadistic orgy at least 80 people were killed. Among them were three newly-wed couples.

The week long operation by Security Forces sent thirty thousand people into Chavakachcheri and other areas as refugees. The refugees are continuing to pour into Jaffna—which itself is fast becoming a land of refugees. Several boat-loads of people have left for Rameshwaram.

"We have no jungles here to hide. Where can we go?" Such was the mournful cry of a middle-aged Government Servant which tugged at one's heart strings.

According to the official statistics released on 31st May, 29 soldiers had lost their lives in the current military operation, while 165 have been injured. On the Tamils' side, the Government said that 165 "terrorists" were killed and 437 "terrorists" injured or arrested. However, our statistics (not yet fully prepared) differs considerably. The Forces have lost three lieutenants, six 2nd lieutenants and 75 soldiers; 210 soldiers have been admitted to the Sri Jayewardene Hospital. Some of the injured Security personnel have been reportedly sent to Pakistan for medical attention.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have lost 13 of its cadres, while 20 from the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation (EROS) were said to be missing.

The civilian casualties exceed 270.

'Cold-Blooded Slaughter' — Rajiv

The Sri Lankan Government has informed Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi that it completely rejects Rajiv's charge that hundreds of Tamil civilians have been killed by Sri Lanka's Security Forces in the 4-day

offensive launched on Tuesday (26th May).

The BBC, in its Friday newscast (12.30 p.m.) said Rajiv Gandhi had fiercely denounced the killing of hundreds of Tamil civilians in the Jaffna Peninsula, as 'cold-blooded slaughter'.

Evelyn Rutnam Institute

The Evelyn Rutnam Institute for Inter-cultural studies, Jaffna, owes its origin and its present shape to Dr. James T. Rutnam, a political activist, trade unionist, social worker and an enthusiastic seeker of knowledge and patron of scholars during his long and eventful career. It was established by the Rutnam family in memory of the graceful and accomplished Evelynnee Wijeyratne whom he espoused in 1932, for promoting the cause of academic and intellectual advancement, human fellowship and intercultural understanding.

Dr. Rutnam, one of the most widely travelled men of his generation in the island, who had cultivated friendship with local and foreign scholars and university academics, established the Evelyn Rutnam Institute, in close proximity to the uni-

versity of Jaffna so that it could be complementary to the University in its functions.

Construction work in connection with the Institute commenced in 1979 and was completed in 1981. The foundation stone of the main

by

building was ceremonially laid by Prof. Howard Wriggins, the U.S. Ambassador in Sri Lanka, on 28 October 1979 and the Institute was formally inaugurated by Donald R. Toussaint, the U.S. Ambassador on 10th May 1981.

The Institute, which is an ornament to the environs of the University as

an architectural monument, has as its main components a reading room, a conference room and an apartment originally intended for providing accommodation to visiting scholars. As there is sufficient ground space for extension work the founder had mooted the idea of constructing an additional structure with provision for a large hall and several rooms.

The Commencement of work on this project has become an urgent necessity on account of the require-

Prof. S. Pathmanathan
Director Evelyn Rutnam Institute

ment of additional floor space for the activities of the Institute.

The founder who is enfeebled by age vested the Institute with Jaffna College, the premier educational institution of the American Mission in the island, in 1986 and presently, the institute is under the management of the Board of Directors, Jaffna College. An endowment fund has to be raised with the aid of well-wishers and fund-giving agencies for the purpose of developing the Institute and sustaining its programme of activities. The Institute which is a non-profit making institution, if properly managed and adequately supported, has the potential of developing into a foremost centre of academic and intellectual activity and as a channel of communication among scholars engaged in the study and exposition of the values and traditions associated with different culture systems of South and South East Asia.

OH RAMA

Rama, Rama
where art thou,
in our hour
of need?
In Madras,
some say.
In New Delhi,
others say.
But wherever you are
we pray to thee.
The Kovils are full,
also the churches.
Give us our daily bread
and sarees for the ladies.
Save our lives
from gun and bomb.
Save our sons from Boosa,
Simple prayers,
humble prayers.
Do you hear,
Oh, Rama?
Or have you gone deaf,
by the constant din of shells and
bombs?
Oh Rama, Oh Rama.

— Gamini Navaratne

THE LIBRARY

The Library of the Institute contains a collection of approximately 10,000 volumes of books, periodicals, unpublished monographs, manuscripts and papers pertaining to the History, Art, Archaeology, Religion, Philosophy, Politics and Society of South Asia in general and Sri Lanka in particular. This impressive collection which could hardly be surpassed by any one of its kind in the whole island, was with a few notable exceptions, part of the personal collection of the founder which he had accumulated over a period of five decades. A substantial body of materials for post-graduate research in various fields of study are to be found in this collection. The founder was also a regular subscriber to many local and foreign periodicals and professional academic journals till recently. The library provides a free readers' service and is accessible to all and all books, periodicals and other materials are available for reference and consultation in the reading room on all days of the week except Sundays and Public Holidays when the Institute will remain closed.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

The Seminar programme at the Institute initiated since its inauguration was interrupted since its first Director, Dr. K. Indrapala, went abroad on leave in 1984 and subsequently resigned from University service. A new series of the Seminar programme has been started in November 1986. Participants are mostly university academics and the seminars are mainly of post-graduate and post-doctoral standing.

Papers presented at seminars will be made available for sale and the prices of such papers shall be determined by the management, in accordance with the costs of preparation. Applications for membership of the seminar will be entertained by the Director and those who gain admission are obliged to pay a membership fee of Rs. 50/- annually. All members of the Seminar will receive copies of all papers presented for discussion. A council appointed by the Director shall be responsible for conducting and organising all work pertaining to the seminars. Visiting scholars from all parts of the island and from abroad will be invited to present papers and deliver lectures at the Seminar on themes confined to the respective areas of their specialization and study.

A major undertaking of the Institute will be the publication of a professional academic journal of international standing. Scholars of eminence working at universities in different parts of the world will be incorporated into the membership of the Editorial Board. The Institute would sponsor also the publication of monographs of quality when facilities for such work would be made available. The photo-copying service which has been suspended will be revived and made available for the benefit of academics and the student community under circumstances conducive for such service.

JAFFNA, OH JAFFNA

*You who parch and fret in the din of the day,
Learn to draw strength from your inner pool of quietness
You who are so learned of books,
Learn now of men.*

*I see your children lying dead and your innocent neighbour's corpse,
unable to win the family's bread.
Let the man in you stand out even when,
the walls around you are crumbling.
Which is the greater sin?
Will one boil let the rest of the body be whole?
Which, oh which, is the greater sin?*

*Bad leadership, callousness for the next man?
Loss of faith in the latent goodness in man
that I am unable to draw out?
Being engrossed in the dead VS dead and forgetting there is a solution,
that there could be a solution?
Knocking down the fight's purpose in the mounting heat,
shrugging off my neighbour's calamity with just another bleat?
Being scared to step out,
that our sick and sad and lonely lay forlorn?
Or, taking more than what I need?
When all around me are babes, begging for their fill?
Oh let me count my every weakness and be mindful of my ignorance
Remorseful that I am not a better man or woman.
But happy in that I have a heart that can heed
the whispers of my innerbeing, my true self
Let me search my heart and ask.
Dear Heart, what is the solution you want?
What is the solution your brother across the border needs?
Remember, oh remember that
Only goodness will triumph in the end
and act that Jaffna may be whole
and her eruptions all healed.
Let me be an instrument of peace.
Let me be His instrument of peace.*

— MANI

Plantations: Past, Contemporary And

From the end of the first quarter of the 19th century to the present day—a period of more than 150 years—the plantations have been a crucial and even a determining element in the social economy of Sri Lanka. In a seminar on development, a study of the plantations is therefore entirely legitimate. But the seminar by its general theme sets the parameters of this discussion of development and hence the parameters of the present study on the plantations. If it is development from a people's perspective that is the concern of this seminar, our intention in this paper is also to examine the plantations from the standpoint of the people.

It is therefore necessary to make explicit what we mean by People. The term is here used in contradistinction to the elites or to the holders of power in society. The people are those who do not hold power in this society. They are the overwhelming majority. They are those who are spoken of by the elites. They are also spoken to and they are often spoken at but they are hardly ever spoken with. They are those whom the elites would want to lead as they would lead dumb sheep. They are those for whom decisions are taken. They are considered too ignorant to take the decisions themselves. The elites—despite the struggles for power among themselves and despite all noises appearances to the contrary—are basically of the same mind in regard to the people. To the elites the interests of the people take second place, even though the people are the majority. The elites are therefore not the people in this use of the two terms.

On the plantations of Sri Lanka 97.5 per cent would be the people. They are the manual workers, often called unskilled but really—especially the pluckers—uncommonly skilled. The elites would be 2.5 per cent, constituted by the highest level of management of the plantation, and the middle grades of clerks, factory officers, teachers and dispensers, unless some of the elites deliberately opt to take their ideological stand with the people.

For the purposes of this paper the plantations in Sri Lanka will be examined in three periods: the past, the contemporary and the future. The past will cover the period between the opening of the coffee

plantations towards the end of the first quarter of the 19th century and the Land Reform Law of 1972. The contemporary will cover the period from 1972 to date. The brief study of the future will be in terms of an examination of alternative possibilities of development during the remaining years of this century.

THE PAST

Several Britishers invest the beginnings of their plantations in the island with an aura of adventure and romance and of a call to civilize the natives. Thus *The Ceylon Miscellany* of 1866: The rise and progress of coffee planting in Ceylon is undoubtedly the most remarkable phenomenon that the island has ever seen since the days when the yakkos (aborigines) were compelled to make way for the human race (Aryans) and Tennent: The mountain zone which for centuries had been mysteriously hidden from the Portuguese and the Dutch was suddenly opened to British enterprise in 1815..... and British capitalists introduced the cultivation of coffee into the previously inaccessible high-

tse initiative needed. They imported labourers from South India.

The energy, the enterprise, the initiative led to the establishment of the plantation system in Sri Lanka which is erroneously considered by many to be a capitalist system: "The British period witnessed the rapid growth of capitalism a phenomenon which owed much to plantation agriculture. The plantation served as the agent to introduce capitalist concepts and it was equally so the vehicle through which these ideas continued to expand throughout the 19th century." By the time coffee collapsed in the 1880s, there had emerged in the country a dual economy. One was a highly developed, organized, foreign-owned, capitalistic plantation economy producing for export in the central highlands. The other was a tradition bound, primitive, self-sufficient, subsistence-peasant economy.... "The installation of the capitalist mode of production in the Kandyan highlands... this study seeks to contribute to our understanding of 'classical colonialism'."

by

Paul Caspersz

lands. By the Singhalese of the maritime provinces, long familiar with the energy and enterprise of Europeans, these results are regarded with satisfaction. But the Kandyans, brought into more recent contact with civilization, look on with uneasy surprise at the effect it is producing. The silence of their mountain solitudes has been broken by the din of industry, and the seclusion of their villages invaded by bands of hired labourers from the Indian coast. Closer to our own day, Jennings:

As soon as the Kandy Road was opened it was realized that a new source of profit, greater than cinnamon, offered itself. The first coffee estate was opened by Mr George Bird who was known as "Gampola Geroge". In 1825 Mr Bird was the only unofficial "European" in the Kandy District... In the same year Britain reduced by one half the import duty on coffee.... During the same period the emancipation of slaves in the West Indies caused a heavy fall of production, and Ceylon stepped into the breach. People poured into the Kandyan hills. Usually they were British, for they alone had the money to invest and

We must lay the ghost of this alleged capitalism of the plantation system once and for all time. In our view the plantations in Sri Lanka did not usher in a period of capitalism to replace the feudalism of pre-colonial social formations. Not that the plantation system left feudalism untouched, but the plantation system led to an inter-articulation between old and new modes of production in which some of the worst features of feudalism were retained without, indeed, any of the inherent compensations of feudalism. In the complex inter-articulation there were also certain pseudo-capitalist features which were so compelling as to mislead analysts, such as the three quoted above into describing the plantation system as capitalist.

The plantation system has been held to be a capitalist system because it has the following attributes: (1) exchange relations, involving wage labour and market orientation; (2) the deliberate generation of a surplus: the produce of the plantations was not for subsistence but for sale; (3) the largeness of scale; (4) the use of capital.

The first three attributes were present in pre-plantation modes of pro-

duction, and yet no one would call these modes capitalist. Monetization of the economy did not begin with the plantations but was widespread in the Kandyan economy. Ever since the end of the long period of human history during which food was gathered or produced only for the subsistence of the producers, productive activity had led to the creation of a surplus and, during the long period of Sri Lankan feudalism the surplus at certain times seems to have been quite substantial, leading to the construction of gigantic irrigation schemes and buildings for the palace and the temple. Some of these works can by no stretch of imagination be conceived as having been conducted as small-scale operations: the displacement, concentration and deployment of labour would necessarily have been on a large scale.

We are left with the question of the use of capital. The fact that capital is used in a mode of production does not make the mode capitalist. At least in the form of variable capital, it is possible to argue that no production is possible in any mode of production without the use of capital. What makes a mode of production capitalist is first the use of constant capital and secondly the constantly increasing proportion of constant capital used in production in relation to variable capital. In capitalism what is technically called the organic composition of capital keeps changing over time in favour of constant capital. This does not happen in the plantation system.

Secondly, what makes a mode of production capitalist is the use not of merchant capital but of industrial capital. The former would be the use of capital for buying and selling at a profit and was the type of capital made available by and to the agency houses in the heyday of the plantations in Sri Lanka. Both merchant and industrial capital would, I tentatively suggest, have their components of both constant and variable capital, but in industrial capitalism both forms of capital, but especially constant capital, play a role which is very different from their roles in merchant capitalism. In merchant capitalism the role is simply to increase monetary profit. In industrial capitalism the role is to increase the productivity of ever smaller quantities of labour and only through this process to increase monetary profit.



Future Patterns

It is for these reasons that the capital used in capitalism is dynamic, restless, ever looking for new technologies of production. The capital used in the plantations is static, lethargic, and there is hardly any quest for new technology. The plantation system is therefore not a capitalist system.

There are two other reasons, perhaps easier to comprehend, why the plantation system cannot by any means be considered to be a capitalist system. An examination of these two reasons will also show up the inherently anti-people character of development of a country through a plantation system and hence should be attempted at some length. The first is the role of labour in the plantation system. The second is the spread effect of the plantations on the surrounding social formations and modes of production.

By a series of changes which they introduced into the customary traditions and norms governing the ownership and use of land in feudal Ceylon, the foreign colonial powers brought about a situation in which, towards the end of the first quarter of the 19th century, land was available for planting with coffee according to the plantation system. But the persistence of the feudal ethos and practices prevented the emergence of a parallel supply of indigenous labour to prepare the land and plant it with coffee. "No temptation of wages, and no prospect of advantage", wrote Tennent when plantation coffee had already been several years in existence, "has hitherto availed to overcome the repugnance of the Sinhalese and Kandians to engage in any work on estates, except the first process of felling the forests". And, considering the prospects of tea, he wrote, "Should it ever be thought expedient to cultivate tea in addition to coffee in Ceylon, the adaptation of the soil and climate has thus been established, and it only remains to introduce artisans from China to conduct the subsequent processes."

Reluctant or outright refusal of the local population to accept employment on the foreign-owned colonial plantation or extractive industry enterprises is by no means peculiar to the plantation enterprise in Sri Lanka. In his excellent study, *The Export Economics*, Jonathan Levin notes that "Where an indigenous population existed, it was generally indisposed to take up wage labour in mines or plantations". But even

Levin, succumbing to the standard Western stereotypes of Asians and Africans, errs when he seeks reasons for the unavailability of local labour: The chief obstacle to availability of local labour lay in the character of the existing local economy. The indigenous subsistence culture was usually a self-contained social and economic unit, creating in its members only those social and economic wants which it was traditionally able to satisfy. A demand for goods which only money could buy did not exist among the members of these subsistence economies and there was no incentive to earn money wages in the export industries. A demand for money and for money goods was to arise only later, through contact with the merchandise and culture of the outside world.

At least in so far as Sri Lanka is concerned, the classical reasons given by western writers for the poor response of local labour to the demands of the plantations, namely, the Levin argument of a non-mone-

"So much bloodless arid documentation passes for sociology these days that one tends to forget the final purpose of the sociologist—to present us a total response to a community, its habit's of action and feeling, its values and motivations"

tized economy and its resultant culture and the congenital laziness of the Sinhalese peasant, are certainly without foundation in fact.

Indeed, it is not even true that the Sinhalese categorically refused wage-labour on the plantations. Not only did they exhibit their innate prowess as woodsmen in the initial clearing of the forests, they also accepted employment on the plantations in numbers that were not inconsiderable. It is true that where they accepted such work, they preferred not to accept residence on the plantation, but to commute from their village base, that they were less willing to work in unaccustomed cold and hill-country climates than in the mid- and low-country; that they were relatively more numerous in rubber and coconut plantations than on tea. But many did accept work on the plantations and, when they did, they worked efficiently and were not less productive than Tamil workers.

The Sinhalese showed reluctance to work on the plantations for reasons that were valid and justifiable. Plantations wages were usually lower than what they were in the peasant sector and there were far fewer op-

portunities for supplementary income on the plantations than in the villages. Own-garden farming was often found to be more profitable than working for the low wages given on the plantations. There was much defaulting of wages on the plantations while the kanganies (labour gang supervisors) and labour contractors often arrogated to themselves a part of the wages due to the workers. Finally, the peasants quite rightly preferred the freedom of the village to the regimentation and near slavery of the plantation.

If the Sinhalese peasants showed reluctance and even repugnance in the matter of accepting plantation wage labour, neither could the British rulers have been enthusiastic about enlisting them for permanent service on the estates. The Great Rebellion of 1817 and the Rebellion of 1848 took place in the Kandyan provinces and the British could not but have noted the deep dissatisfaction of the masses with their rule. So when the Sinhalese refused to work and an alternative source of cheap labour offered itself in South India, where the British were already in control, the British planters were doubtless greatly relieved.

Compared with the Kandians, the South Indians were a 'peaceable and

easily governed race'. And Michael Stenson, writing sensitively about the Indian workers in Malaysia, says sombrely: Recruited largely from the untouchable (or adi-dravida) castes of South India society, the Tamil and Telugu labourers were probably the most obedient, indeed, servile labourers then available in the colonial world. They were ideally suited to a form of production that had been initiated with slave labour...

The British in Malaysia preferred the Indians to the Chinese and the Malays; in Sri Lanka they preferred the Indians to the Sinhalese. The reason is that they were more docile slaves.

Labour of this mould is far from being the type of labour found in the capitalist mode of production but is entirely in accord with the slave mode of production. Indeed, the origins of the Sri Lankan 19th century mode of plantation production must be traced back to the slave sugar plantations set up by the Portuguese in the Canary Islands in the 15th century. From then until today the plantations have not been able to shed the slave character of its labour-force. While capitalist labour is untied to the land, plantation labour is plantation-bound. Where the for-

mer is mobile, the latter and the latter's children were sometimes bound for life to the same plantation owner and always bound to labour on a plantation. Where the relations between capitalist and worker are impersonal, those between plantation owner and labourer extended to a form of proprietorship of the former over the latter's entire existence. The female in the capitalist system is particularly disadvantaged more because of external social formations than because of the system itself, which the female in the plantation system is disadvantaged because of the inherent organizational features of plantation production.

The capitalist mode of production does not make for development of the people, but it contains the potential for its own overthrow into a people's system. The plantation mode ossified social relations making them impervious to change so that even after radical changes in ownership as in Cuba and in our country there have been no changes in the mode of production.

The conditions of labour on the estates in the 19th century were so appallingly inhuman that there is grim humour in the Kandyan Peasantry Commission Report when it writes: The Government also took steps to make the conditions of labour attractive to the Indian Tamil. Legislation was passed securing the rights of immigrant labourers. Medical facilities were made available to estate labourers—indeed the provision of such facilities for the indigenous population became of secondary importance. The labourers were exempted from road and gansabhawa taxes; railway travelling was allowed to them at less than half the normal fare.

Th citation makes three points: legislation promotive of rights; medical facilities; financial easements. It will be possible and useful briefly to comment on the reality in regard to these three points only without attempting to encompass the entire social history of the plantation people.

LEGISLATION PROMOTIVE OF RIGHTS

Undoubtedly there was legislation that was passed in the 19th century in regard to the plantation worker. The earliest and most important were the Master-Servant laws of 1841 and the 1860s. Of these Michael Roberts says: There is nothing that spotlights the partiality of the administrators of the 1830s and 1840s as much as the attempts by Governors Wilmot Horton and Mackenzie to slip Ordinances that were blatantly weighted in favour of employers past the very noses of the Colonial Office.....The new Labour Ordinance (No. 11 of 1865) will make advances safe and a better hold on our Coolies" said one (a planter); it's "an immense boom," said another. Their satisfaction raises doubts whether the Master-Servant Law of 1865 protected employees adequately, even in theory.

(To be continued)

NEGOTIATION OR HOODWINKING?

Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

Your issues of the previous weeks have reproduced in full the details of the proposals drafted by the two Ministers of the Government of India and the Sri-Lankan President on 19th December, 1986. This was done presumably with the intention of making the public aware of what was good or desirable in these proposals. In this connection let me be permitted to make the following observations. Is the Sri-Lankan Government really sincere when it proclaims that it wants a negotiated settlement? The following facts point to the contrary.

1. Two days after the 19th December proposals, the President sends Ambassador Tillekeratne post-haste to New Delhi, informing the Indian Government that he will have difficulty in implementing these proposals because the Members of Parliament in the Amparai District were opposed to it.
2. On 1st January the Government started what is virtually a blockade of the Jaffna Peninsula. This was done, it is claimed, to forestall the militants taking over some of the functions of Government. But the militants did no such thing. On these grounds the Government stopped not only fuel from coming into the Peninsula but also such items like aluminium products, batteries, bicycles and spare parts of vehicles, milk foods and even medicines intended for the General Hospital. Can anyone believe that these acts were done to hinder the activities of the militants?
3. The Government resumed in full force its offensive in all parts of the North and East. One feature of this offensive was the indiscriminate bombing and shelling of innocent non-combatants and even patients warded in Hospitals. There can be little doubt that all this was done with the full knowledge of the authorities concerned.
4. Jayewardene says that on 19th December certain proposals were put forward and that he has not agreed to them yet. He keeps on reminding Mrs. Bandaranaike, that his party and the SLFP were agreed on opposition to Belam, linkage of North and East and "terrorism" and that there was no need for Mrs. Bandaranaike to oppose him. Mrs. Bandaranaike has openly said that she is totally opposed to the 19th December proposals. How then can Jayewardene solicit her support?
5. Premadasa has asserted that anybody who works for a negotiated settlement without destroying the "terrorists" is a traitor to a country.

The above mentioned are all facts openly published in all daily newspapers. Do these point to a decision on the part of the Government for

a negotiated settlement? Certainly not. They point quite clearly to what the real intentions of the Government are. This is not to be taken as steps to a negotiated settlement on the basis of the 19th December proposals—or any other—but to hoodwinking the public, particularly those in countries abroad which are giving aid, while at the same time doing everything to suppress the Tamils by brutal military means. The Government of India has seen through this game and has made necessary utterances to make the world understand them.

In these circumstances delving into the virtues of the 19th December proposals is a fatal exercise, because the Government has obviously no intention of doing anything about it. If it has, it could easily have implemented the Annexure 'C' proposals worked out with Mr. C. Parthasarathy. The Annexure 'C' and 19th December proposals have very much in

LETTERS

common. The Government which now talks about the 19th December proposals could easily have implemented the Annexure 'C' proposals three years ago and avoided all the bloodshed of innocent people.

The truth is that the Government has no desire to comply with the legitimate aspirations of the Tamil people. It wants to force its own dictates on the Tamil people, after crushing the resistance of the militants. That is why one has to agree with the position taken by the spokesman of the LTTE, Dr. Balasingham that there can be no talking either on the 19th December proposals or any other basis unless the Sri Lankan Government puts a stop to the brutal military oppression of the Tamil people. This is the cardinal fact to be considered and not the 19th December proposals. The Government's decision to halt military operations during the New Year holiday period was an utter farce—meant again to deceive foreign observers. You yourself had published in your columns the number of times the so-called cessation of hostilities was violated by Government. If the Government really thinks in terms of allowing the Tamils to administer their own areas then what is the necessity for so many military camps?

These military camps are there because the Government wants to continue the present administrative arrangement left behind by the British, without any serious alternative and forcibly make the Tamils

accept this. It must be noted that the administrative set-up in this country at present was created by the British, and before them the Tamil areas never came under the control of a Central Government. The Tamils want to reassert their freedom and as long as the Government continues to refuse this, Tamil resistance will continue, 19th December proposals or not.

Jaffna

I. R. ARIARATNAM

Human Rights

Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

The minorities' struggle is a struggle for emancipation and international human rights. Their basic human rights are for self determination and to maintain the identity of their own personality. There shall be no peace in the world as long as human rights are not restored to their rightful place; only then discrimination will end.

In today's society with all its instruments of control, abuse of power is infinitely more dangerous than more discrimination. In politics as in religion, arrogance is a threat to the natural order of life, to the pattern of mutual respect and understanding on which our society lies.

Today in Sri Lanka the Tamils have suffered and are suffering so much anguish by the loss of thousands of lives, scores injured and hundreds and thousands humiliated, raped and the self-respect of an important ethno-cultural community so grievously hurt; all men in this country and elsewhere who accept a moral basis for society could look forward to informing themselves of the fact and the racist animus that lies behind. It is only on such a basis and on a new sense of values based on full respect for human rights that a meaningful dialogue between the Government and Freedom Fighters should take place and peace restored for the Tamils and Sinhalese who have lived in peace and amity for thousands of years as one family.

Annaicoddai

A Sinnadurai

Thesawalamai

Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

Mr. G. Ratna Mallawaratchy, a Sri Lankan in Minnesota, has written on "Thesawalamai" in the Island issues of the 16th and 17th March. He says, "we as a nation should be ashamed that we have retained Thesa-

walamai as part of the law of the land, a piece of legislation that condones slavery, high castes, low castes, dowry and such other socially repulsive issues."

Dr. H. W. Thambiah and Dr. G. L. Peiris, the first Sri Lankan to be awarded the D. Phil (Oxford) at the age of twenty-four, have contributed much to the legal literature of this country. But in none of their works have they said anything derisive about Thesawalamai. On the other hand Dr. Thambiah in his 'Principles of Ceylon Law' refers to three large sections of the people governed by local custom. Kandyan Law applies to Kandyan, Thesawalamai to the Tamils of the Northern Province of Ceylon, the Muslim Law to the Muslims. The Roman-Dutch Law is applied to the Low-country Sinhalese, the Tamils of the Eastern Province, the Burghers and Europeans.

Thesawalamai is the customary Law applicable to the Tamil inhabitants of Jaffna. This system of law has prevailed in Sri Lanka for several centuries. Governor Simons had these laws codified in 1706, because the then ruling masters, the Dutch, felt that local inhabitants would consider themselves wronged if the European Law be applied to them without due consideration of native customs (Thesawalamai) according to which civil matters have to be settled.

The Thesawalamai Commission which sat in 1930 has said: "it should be remembered that the Thesawalamai represents a large body of customary Law. It is not easy and it would be extremely unsafe for a Commission to decide whether each and every one of the customs should or should not be regarded as law... (emphasis mine). At page 204 in his book "Principles of Ceylon Law", Dr. Thambiah says: "When the revised legislative enactments were published in the year 1938, The Commissioner under the revised Legislative Enactments Ordinance, Mr. Basanayake, was given ample powers to omit any obsolete provisions of the Thesawalamai code. Perhaps realising the difficulty.... he chose not to omit many obsolete provisions."

What does the term "Malabar inhabitants of the Province of Jaffna" mean? In Tharmalingam Chetty Vs. Arunachalam Chettiar (45, New Law Reports, page 414) justice Soertz has answered this by saying "the Thesawalamai is applicable to Tamils with a Ceylon domicile and a Jaffna inhabitancy."

(Continued on page 7)

We set out below the details of the incidents that occurred in the Jaffna Peninsula from 24th May onwards :

On 24th May, about 9 a.m., three bombers and two helicopters gave cover to a large number of soldiers who moved out of the Elephant Pass Army camp towards Kurinchathivu but met with stiff resistance from the militants of the LTTE and had finally to return to base. Casualties, though not confirmed, are said to have been high among the Security Forces. There were no casualties among the militants. However, the indiscriminate bombing damaged roads and houses.

Bombing of Atchuvally and Idai-kadu areas on 24th May resulted in damage to sixteen houses.

On 25th May, six bombers and two helicopters started the bombing of Jaffna in the morning. Simultaneously, the gunboats from Mandaitivu camp began shelling the coastal areas. In keeping with the "humane" appeal made by the security forces, through radio and pamphlets, people sought refuge in churches and temples. Some people had sought the haven of St. James Maha Vidiyalya, but the shell which was fired around 7 p.m. dashed their hopes. Manuel Ragini (12) a pupil of the school,

Jayakumari (31), Tarciscius Tharaini (6), Tharma Saroja (22) and Anton Cyrician (3) lost their lives. Two other bodies were unidentified.

Tharma Rajamohan (3), Antony Rekson (2), Innasimuttu Pamini (9), Innasimuttu Pavitha (6) and five others who were also injured were admitted to hospital.

Suthumalai Amman Kovil was another target for the bombers, which sprayed bombs on devotees who had assembled there in the afternoon

FOR THE RECORD

at the flag-hoisting ceremony, resulting in many deaths. A gram-seller was also a victim. Among the dead were Vettivelu Shanmuganathan (50) and his seven-year-old son as well as Pathmanathan Piratheepan (12). The Iyer of the Temple, Akampara, were also injured.

Jaffna was bombed once more on 30th May. Six bombers and a helicopter took part. About 2 p.m., the heavy guns in the Jaffna Fort opened up. The bombers took over from about 2.30 p.m. and this aerial attack went on till about 4 p.m.

ROLL OUT THE BARREL

The night of 27th May saw severe bombing of Jaffna by the Air Force. About 6-15 p.m. four bombers, together with the infamous barrel-roller, the Avro, and a helicopter indulged in an hour-long raid which damaged civilian homes and targets quite distant from militant bases or even remotely connected with the militants.

The historic Sivan Temple was hit; the Nallur Temple also suffered

damage. Many shops and houses were not only damaged but set on fire by incendiary bombs. The Windsor Theatre suffered damage and some shops on the same road were destroyed.

A house behind Our Lady of Refuge church was also hit.

Shops and houses in close proximity to the Vannai Sivan Temple were burnt out. Seven bodies were recovered from the temple.

At Nallur, Leelawathie Rasiah, K. Ravindran (31), Thuthikanthan (19) were grievously injured.

St. Anthony's Medical Centre and Dental Clinic at Hospital Road were completely destroyed.

JOY RIDE

On 30th May, the diplomats of Pakistan, Britain, France, America, Canada and Japan were reportedly flown over Jaffna and other parts of the Peninsula.

The Indian High Commissioner Mr. J. N. Dixit thought this exercise too funny for words. In a Press release, he pointed out that there was no thrill looking down 4,000 feet below from an aircraft. India was too well aware of what was happening and did not join the aerial ride, he said.

PRABHA, BEWARE

Lt. Gen. Cyril Ranatunge is purported to have said in Colombo on 31st May that no sooner V. Prabhakaran, the LTTE leader, was killed, then all aggression against the people of the North would cease. What a sad commentary on the battle-scarred General! So many civilians should be mercilessly mowed down for the scalp of one man and one man alone!

Thesawalamai...

(Continued from page 6)

In a changing world Jaffna too has changed. Many early customs are in disuse now. Slavery was abolished by Ordinance 20 of 1844. There are no slaves in Jaffna now. So it is in South Sri Lanka. But long ago slavery existed there as well. Dr. F.A. Hayley in his book 'Sinhalese Laws and Customs' at page 135 states, "any person of whatever caste might become a slave, and the low caste man might himself have slaves though not as a rule of a higher-caste than himself." Now let us get on to the question of caste. The various castes in Jaffna are Brahmans, Vellalas, Madapallis, Fisher, Chiviars, Washermen, Barbers and so on. Mr. Mallawarachy cannot hide the fact that among the Sinhalese too we find different castes — Goyigama, Karava, Salagama Durava Navadanna, the untouchable Rodiya and so on. There are untouchables among the Tamils too. We are now in the year 1987. The old caste system is job-based. The Karava are fishermen. Similarly the Tamils too have the fisher-caste. Today many bright boys and girls from the so-called lower castes have risen to be doctors and engineers.

Whereas, the son of a high-caste man may run a modern laundry or a firm of undertakers. So with everybody doing every other type of job, caste is just disappearing. If Mr. M. is really interested in this "shameful" thing called "slavery," he could do much useful research in Minnesota and Minneapolis libraries and reading "ROOTS" by Alex Hayley may be a good start, i.e. if he has not read it already!

Will Mr. M please tell us whether Thesawalamai laws insist on the operation of the dowry system and are the Tamils alone dowry grantors in this Island?

Sir Alexander Johnstone, Chief Justice during the early part of British rule is said to have reported to His Majesty's Government, "No people can be more attached to their ancient institutions than the inhabitants of the Province of Jaffna and nothing is more calculated to secure their respect for the administration of justice than the strict adherence on the part of the Courts whenever circumstances shall permit to those customs which the experience of Judges has shown to be applicable to their station and which have therefore contained all the force of the law."

Thesawalamai is not against the Sinhalese, or Muslim or Burgher or Malay or even the Chinaman. I am certain, Sir, that no intelligent reader will fail to realise this. The

need of the hour is mutual respect and understanding and not bitterness.

N. Deva Rajan

Jaffna

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— Director

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

TOWARDS WORLD WAR III

(Continued from page 1)

An intriguing question was why over a hundred foreign journalists were also part of the boat-loads.

The 'confrontation' on the sea over, five Indian Air Force transport planes escorted by four Mirage-2000 fighter planes—built under licence in India—parachuted food and other supplies all over Jaffna Peninsula on Wednesday evening.

Manna from the skies?

This could have a deadly impact.

Legally speaking, India could be accused of violating Sri Lanka's air space—an act of war.

How will Sri Lanka's 'friendly' countries react to this situation. Clearly, it's a challenge to them as well.

A purely internal problem—Sri Lanka's ethnic problem—has now been fast turned into an international problem.

Government's Second Thoughts

The Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) announced on Thursday afternoon (28th May) that the Sri Lanka Security Forces had surrounded Valvettiturai where the Chief of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Velupillai Prabhakaran and his lieutenants were holed up.

Later announcements said if Prabhakaran and his associates attempted to escape or tried to surrender they would be shot on sight.

On Friday afternoon (29th May) the same SLBC announced that Prabhakaran had ordered that any Tiger deserter would be shot on sight!

31st DAY REMEMBRANCE



Kanthar Sivanadian
(Retired Teacher, Jaffna Hindu College)
Born: 17-10-1913 Died: 7-5-1987
Thiththi: 6-6-1987

Affectionately remembered by
Wife, Children and Family
45, Customs Road, Negombo.

WILD NORTH

That was the week that was.

Seven glorious days of Hollywood Wild West-style stuff.

Wild is too mild a word for what happened in the Jaffna Peninsula last week.

The glory was in the gore. Blood and thunder in plenty.

The Injuns were getting shot from the land, the sea and the air.

Like in the Hollywood films, the superior race appeared to be winning decimating the inferior race, destroying their abodes, herding the remainder into special reserves (refugee camps).

A fine scenario to titillate the audiences in the South.

The film script was from President Jayewardene (not President Ronald Reagan, as some people seem to think), directed by National Security Minister Lalith Athulath Mudali with General Cyril Ranatunge as executive director.

Let's have more of it.

— G. N

TIGERS STORM TELECOM CENTRE

The Telecommunications Office, adjoining the major Army camp in the Jaffna Fort, which had been converted into a mini camp was stormed by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the early hours of 3rd June.

In the battle which lasted nearly two hours many soldiers were killed or injured; three soldiers were taken captive. The official version claimed that about "40 soldiers had been injured and three were missing".

The 3 soldiers taken captive are Sunil, Nimal and Piyantha.

The building which housed expensive telecommunication equipment was gutted. The Army's occupation of this building had completely cut off Jaffna from the rest of the world.

Both J.R. and Rajiv have thoroughly mishandled Sri Lanka's ethnic problem. India's intervention in Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict—in the way it did—portends more trouble for Sri Lanka as a whole and for the South Asian Region. World War III could well start in Sri Lanka.

Telecom Soldiers Charred

Twenty two soldiers, including a second lieutenant, lost their lives when the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) stormed the Telecommunication Exchange on 3rd June. This was a mini Camp adjoining the Main Camp in the Jaffna Fort.

Nine of these died in the building itself and the others at hospitals where they were admitted.

Eighteen of the injured were admitted to hospitals both in Colombo and Anuradhapura.

According to Dr. Mendis, Chief Medical Officer of the Military Hospital, Colombo, seven of the injured

admitted to his hospital were in a serious condition.

Second Lieutenant R.T. Wimalawardana, who died, was a Technical Officer, Telecommunications. Among the others who died were Privates M.R. Dayananda (31), Lokubanda (29), Rajasena Wadugoda, A. Kumaratunge (31), Senevaratne (26). Many bodies were charred beyond recognition.

Razed To The Ground

The continuous shelling from the Army Camp in the Fort combined with the bombing and strafing by helicopters during the last five days have resulted in at least two hundred buildings being destroyed in the Grand Bazaar area and its environs: storeyed building, both big and small, have been razed to the ground so that now from the army camp one can have a clear view up to the Bus Stand without the use of even binoculars.

Day Of Mourning

The Government of Sri Lanka announced on Thursday (4th June) that Friday would be a day of mourning, for the 29 Bhikkus (Buddhist Priests) killed by unidentified persons on 2nd June in the Amparai District.

OBITUARY

Dr. Luther Samuel Gunaratnam—Former DMO Point Pedro. Beloved husband of Ariam devi (Nee Senathirajah), Loving father of Uthayakumaran (Uthayan—Jaffna University), Indrakumaran (Bubby), Beloved brother of Navamani Mills, Dr. Luther Jeyasingham—former President Jaffna College, Luther Thuraisingham Sironmany Rajaratnam, Luther Rajaratnam, Malar Balakrishnan, and the late Luther Selvarajah.

Brother-in-Law of A.C. George, Dr. Dharman Senathirajah, Dr. Raju Senathirajah, the late Rev. K.J. Mills, Pushparani Jeyasingham, Alice Thuraisingham, Benny Rajaratnam, Ahlahmalar Rajaratnam, A. Balakrishnan, and Rani Selvarajah.

Died under tragic circumstances on the 27th May. Burial took place at St. John's Burial Grounds on the 28th. Friends and relations please accept this intimation.