

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

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4th July 1987

India's Options And Lanka's Directions

Our options will depend on Lanka's directions.

This was Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi's terse, somewhat cryptic observation at a luncheon meeting hosted by the Indian Association of Foreign Affairs Correspondents.

He was replying to a question about India's options if Sri Lanka was not interested in a negotiated political settlement of the ethnic conflict.

The question - and - answer session was telecast by Doordharsan on Monday night (29th June) - the day President J.R. Jayewardene met his National Security Council to discuss the launching of the third - and final - phase of 'Operation Liberation' in the Jaffna Peninsula.

On TV, Rajiv looked not only Mr. Clean but also Mr. Cool. He was unflappable and deftly parried the sharp, probing questions.

After tracing the background of Indian efforts to bring the militants

and the Sri Lankan Government to the negotiating table, Rajiv said "It's up to Sri Lanka to decide whether it wants a negotiated political settlement of the ethnic conflict. The ball is in Lanka's court."

Rajiv noted that following the November 1986 visit by President Jayewardene, the December 19 proposals were evolved for purposes of negotiation - in fact, he said, these proposals go back 7 months earlier.

After some tacking and confusion - characteristic of Sri Lanka's policy on this issue - Sri Lanka had eventually consented to the package being the basis for negotiations.

The launching of the military offensive in the Jaffna Peninsula made it difficult for India to pursue its efforts to bring about negotiations, Rajiv said.

For the last two and a half years, he pointed out, India had tried to help in evolving a negotiated political settlement. But there's some con-

fusion about the directions Sri Lanka is moving in, on the issue. It was up to Colombo to come up with new ideas and new initiatives so that the dialogue on a negotiated political settlement could start again.

Rajiv strongly defended the air-drop of relief supplies in the Jaffna Peninsula: it was India's response to a situation that demanded humanitarian relief. He rejected the suggestion that Operation Poomalai had damaged

(Continued on page 8)

EASY, RIDER

President Jayewardene seems to be signalling to everyone that it is he - and not National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali - who is in the saddle when it comes to deciding on strategies for a final solution to the ethnic problem.

Lalith when he was in America recently was reported to have said the third phase of 'Operation Liberation' would be a limited military operation - whatever that might mean.

Earlier Lalith had announced here that the third phase - and he didn't mean a limited operation - would deal a knock-out blow to the Tamil militants (of course he used the term 'terrorists').

On Monday (29th June) when the National Security Council met, the President ordered the Forces to be ready to execute the 3rd stage at any time. News reports do not indicate that this will be a limited operation. On the contrary, the sky seems to be the limit. Five Brigadiers - Panjapandavar - have been put in charge. Indications are that it will be a full-fledged assault designed to crush Tamil militancy. To hell with civilians. The final solution. Hitler had one too: The end-result? The emergence of the State of Israel.

SL's Complaint

Sri Lanka has complained to the International Civil Aviation Council that Indian aircraft have violated Sri Lanka's air space.

The complaint refers to the Indian aircraft that dropped relief supplies in the Jaffna Peninsula.

An inquiry is to be held.

Why The Hold-Ups?

For the last few weeks, passengers have been made to cool their heels at the Elephant Pass and Paranthan check-points, sometimes for as long as three hours or more.

This undue delay is causing great inconvenience to passengers, particularly those travelling to Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi, Vavuniya and Colombo.

The hold-up at these check-points invariably means that Colombo-bound commuters hoping to catch the 12.40 p.m. train at Vavuniya

miss it. This means an enforced overnight stay at Vavuniya.

Private buses to Colombo reach their destination around midnight after a 20-hour run. Normally it would take about 12 hours.

Will someone in authority do something about this?

When there was a similar situation in December 1986 and January 1987, representations were made to General Cyril Ranatunge who took prompt action to see that commuters were quickly passed through the check-points.

APOLOGY

Mr. Gamini Navaratne,
Editor, SATURDAY REVIEW,
118, 4th Cross Street,
P.O. Box 122, Jaffna

Dear Editor,

Your newspaper of 13th June 1987, has an article on its 8th page titled "ANURA'S BLOOD THIRSTINESS" attributing to me several statements which are incorrect and blatantly false. You have taken these statements from some unnamed "local Tamil daily" and on the wrong assumption that I had made them you have irresponsibly proceeded to make utterly wild, abusive and personal attacks on me.

I have not made any of the "statements" attributed to me either in public or in private.

The article states that "no blood transfusion" "can save Anura". Many consider it a compliment coming from a newspaper that has shamelessly and openly supported the blood-thirsty terrorist murderers.

I hope you will have the courage to publish the full contents of this letter.

Yours Faithfully,
Anura Bandaranaike, M.P.
Leader of the Opposition.

24th June 1987

NOTE BY THE EDITOR: The SATURDAY REVIEW apologises to Mr. Anura Bandaranaike for the publication of the article.

Saturday Review

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THE INDIAN INTERLUDE

— Rajan Hoole

In the last four years Ceylon has witnessed several diplomatic events, unique in the history of diplomacy. Strangest amongst these was the cavalcade of Indian officials, led by Puri and Gupta from KKS to Jaffna. People of all ages forgot their lines, and from a babel of voices the one message, often unspoken that came out clearly was, "India, save us!" This was a message from the hearts of multitudes, which no amount of ritual could subdue. Crowds kissed vehicles which carried relief supplies. Others broke down in tears. Recent events had made clear that they were helpless against the Sri Lankan onslaught. The Indian officials were being welcomed as liberators even without any Indian military presence, and with the sanction of the Sri Lankan government which had received these officials. Such is the irony resulting from Government policies towards Tamils since 1983.

India has been accused of hypocrisy in its expressed concern for the Tamils by Sinhalese as well as by Tamils. Sinhalese have accused India of harbouring motives of subjugating Sri Lanka. Tamils have asked, "why this special treatment for Jaffna? what was India doing when Tamils were being mauled in the East and in Mannar?" A part of the answer, I think, lies in the publicly expressed attitudes of organised opinion in Jaffna. We were

close to saying that we did not want India, notwithstanding events outside Jaffna.

Following the air-dropping of Indian relief, faces in Jaffna which were fear-ridden, began exchanging smiles. Many who fled Jaffna in fear returned with a newly rediscovered bravado. A similar vacillation of opinion from peace to war can be seen in the south everytime Mr. Athulathmudali returns from Pakistan or the USA raising hopes of crushing the Tamils militarily. Judging by messages coming from friends in the South, the dominant emotion there is a cringing fear of an Indian invasion. Colombo was awash with booze parties when on the 3rd June Indian fishing vessels bringing aid to Tamils turned back. In less than 24 hours India responded with a five thousand year leap in technology. Besides the Antonov transports dropping supplies supersonic Mirages did aerobatic runs over Sri Lankan military bases. Jaffna - folk gleefully exchanged stories, real or imagined, about Sri Lankan Forces scampering into "bunkers"—something they had themselves done regularly when Sri Lankan bombers were overhead.

INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION

Practitioners of diplomacy normally treat it as a trade that has little to do with morality. It is for this reason that they become annoyed with India's persistent use of moral categories, a legacy which they attribute to Gandhi and Nehru. This I think misses the point. As a great power India may see its functions as being similar to those of other great powers. But it is an imperative of Indian policy makers that where possible the form of action should be non-violent. India could have acted along more traditional lines by sinking a few Sri Lankan navalcraft or bombing Sri Lankan bases. By acting as it did, loss of life, both Sinhalese and Tamil, was avoided. An ultimate humiliation of the Sri Lankan state was also avoided. What has been achieved is a respite, during which both sides to the conflict can re-

think their courses without undue loss of dignity. Take away the hyperbole and the hypocrisy that are inseparable from human affairs, and there remains a core of good that the Gandhi-Nehru legacy has contributed to the world of diplomacy. Tamils should not be deceived into thinking that they have been spared the obligation of seeking reconciliation with the Sinhalese. They are going to be our neighbours, for better or for worse.

In the meantime the Colombo press has been accusing India of forcing food on Tamils here while many of its own people are starving. Prominently featured in the Week-end and the Island is an article about a starving group of Tribals and Harijans in Kalahandi, in Orissa. All this may do some good to the people of Kalahandi. It is also well to remember that this exposure is taken from the Illustrated Weekly of India. This humanitarian concern of the Indian press has been largely absent in Ceylon. The press in Ceylon has failed to report on the considerable sufferings of the Tamils, many of whom enjoyed intimate connections with influential circles in the south, in schools, in the professions and in churches. We may thus humbly congratulate India on maintaining in a state of reasonable health the triple institutions of the elected legislature, the free press, and the independent judiciary, on which depend our freedoms and our liberties.

Firing From The Fort

7 civilians, including a women, were injured by firing from the Jaffna Fort on 30th June. There was intermittent firing and shelling from morning. The injured were Sebamalai Parimalar (53), Mahendran Rajan (20), Albert (20) all of Gurunagar. The others who were injured were Nahar Gnanapandithar (35), Usacius (19), Arumugam Pathmanathan and S. Gandhi (20).

SIX MONTH REMEMBRANCE

Born
01-12-56

Demise
04-01-87



OUR BELOVED SON AND DARLING BROTHER TIMOTHY RAVINDRAN SIVAM

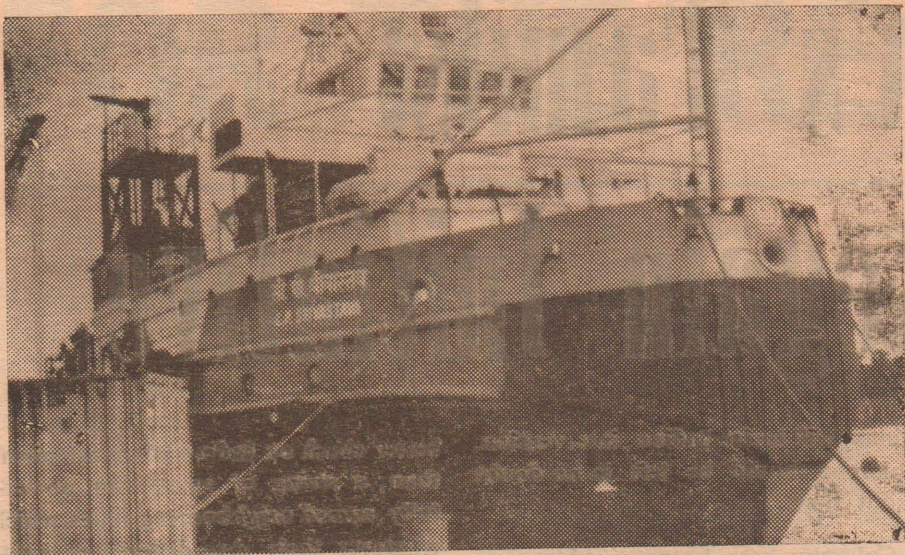
Six months ago you gave us immense shock and plunged us in deep sorrow. Such a cruel blow of fate that stunned us all as death took our dearly beloved brother away. Though your lovable voice and smile cannot be heard or seen it looms fresh every moment in the depths of our hearts dear son. At every turn a memory clicks of one we loved but could not keep. And if memories could build a lane we would walk down that and bring you back again. Oh God, help us to bear this great sorrow.

Almighty God please give eternal rest and comfort him in the shadow of thy wings. Fondly-remembered and sadly missed by your loving Daddy, Mummy, Sisters and Brother-in-Law.

36, Thombai Street, Uduvil East, Chunnakam.

NO WASHING OR CLEANING. APPLY THE CREAM. IT WILL CLEAN COMPLETELY. TOP WOUND DRESSING & FOR ALL SKIN DISEASES, PIMPLES, PRICKLY HEAT, BILE CRACK, DRY SKIN, ITCH, ECZEMA, ETC. GERMAN FORMULA. AVAILABLE AT ALL CHEMISTS & STORES.





C. P. Srivastava

India's Mercy Mission



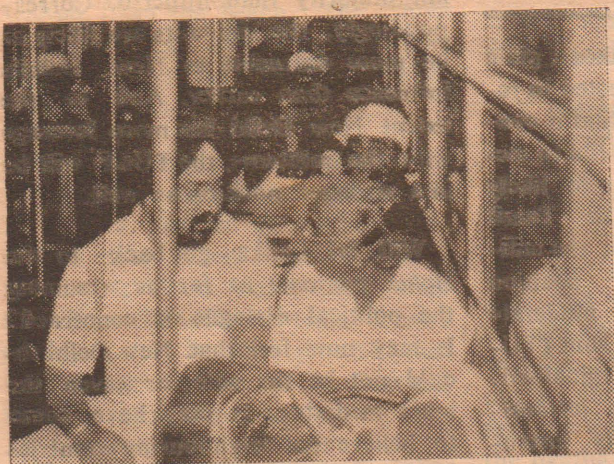
Indian First Secretary Puri and Capt. Gupta



Medicine packs being loaded into lorries



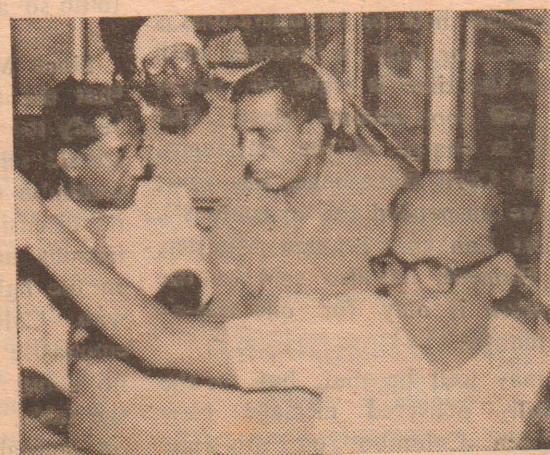
Mr. Lionel Fernando, Civil Coordinating Officer of the Jaffna District, Sri Lanka Red Cross officials and Colombo media men watch the unloading of the relief supplies.



Mr. Puri chats to Jaffna Red Cross President Mr. Balasubramaniam



The crowd at Tellipallai waiting to greet the Indian High Commission officials and the Indian Red Cross representatives



Medical Supdt. Dr. S. Nachchinarkiniar, chats with Indian Red Cross officials
Pix: Courtesy, UTHAYAN

Respite For Lanka's Tamils:

New Delhi Must Regain Initiative

The following commentary appeared in "The Times of India" on 12th June:

Having achieved its present objectives in the Jaffna peninsula, where it now controls over 40 per cent of the land area, Colombo has announced its readiness to resume peace talks. The Sri Lanka National Security Minister, Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, has said: "While the consultation process goes on there will still be time for peace initiatives if anyone wants, and we will try for peace talks". He has also denied that the Sri Lankan Army had any intention of capturing Jaffna town, which the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the main militant group, still commands. "There is no plan to take the town. There never was", Mr. Athulathmudali says. "You can't. You can take the territory, but you have to consolidate and we do not have enough troops to do everything at once".

It is an eloquent comment on the alienation of the Tamil minority from the Sri Lankan Government and the Sinhalese majority it is seen by the Tamils to represent that Colombo has to refrain from reestablishing its writ in Jaffna for fear that any attempt to do so would only reinforce that alienation.

Relief Supplies

It is over a week since New Delhi airdropped relief supplies over the hard-pressed population of the Jaffna peninsula. That action, however, did not deter Colombo from pursuing its military plan. Whether the present halt in its operations is permanent or only a breather until it feels the time is right to renew them will soon become clear. The officer in charge of the onslaught, General Cyril Ranatunge, has said: "I have suspended the operations". The Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, Mr. S. Hameed, has also said that the suspension is only for one-and-a-half months.

It may well be that, but for the forcefully delivered message New Delhi sent Colombo on 4th June the latter might have intensified and prolonged its offensive. If that is the case, then its bellicosity, directed at

the Tamil minority, has been contained for the time being. Certainly, it was immediately after India's action that Colombo made conciliatory gestures to those on whom it was until then raining death, terror and destruction.

The question now is whether Colombo is interested in not merely resuming negotiations but in doing so under Indian mediation and with New Delhi playing the role it did at the time the 19th December proposals were formulated. Colombo has been trying to involve other countries, both within the region and without, in seeking a resolution of its ethnic conflict.

Within the region, both Bangladesh and Nepal have shown some interest in playing the mediator's role between India and Sri Lanka—as if the conflict were between them, and not between the Tamil minority and Colombo. And it is thanks to Col-

ombo's decision to exercise the military option that the militants now have much wider support among the Tamils than ever before. The attempt to use SAARC as a forum to censure India also bespeaks Colombo's attempt to bring more parties into resolving the conflict.

ations will invite Indian intervention. Colombo should be left in no doubt about that.

Colombo has been making out that New Delhi's mission on 4th June has damaged New Delhi's credibility as a non-partisan mediator. If anything, New Delhi's action has shown that it is not prepared to allow all that it has worked over four years to accomplish to be liquidated on the battlefield because Colombo has decided to throw in the negotiations towel. As for New Delhi being able to "deliver" the militants to the table, its capacity to do that has been enhanced by the 4th June mission since it has demonstrated to the Tamil minority that New Delhi will not allow it to be decimated by the Sri Lankan Army.

Role Of TULF

In any event, details about who should represent the Tamils can be

better check on Indian "expansionism" than a string of small but powerfully armed neighbouring states which whatever their own differences, would be united in wanting to contain Indian "hegemony"?

To guard against being taken for a ride a second time by Colombo, it would be advisable for New Delhi to lay down a time-table should fresh talks based on the 19th December proposals begin. There should be a deadline, and an agreement that concedes a fair measure of autonomy to the Tamils while yet preserving Sri Lanka's integrity must be hammered out within it. It should also include specific follow-up measures.

Following Sri Lanka's military offensive, President Jayewardene will be in a much stronger domestic position. He has now placated the hardliners, including his Prime Minister Mr. Premadasa, and the Buddhist clerics. He can now afford to take bigger political risks and make greater political concessions to the Tamil minority than hitherto. Correspondingly, the militants are likely to be more amenable to New Delhi's influence than earlier. And to the extent New Delhi has more leverage with the militants, the TULF will be in a stronger position as well.

Will Sri Lanka go back to the *status quo ante* as far as resuming the political dialogue is concerned? It may now feel that New Delhi should not be the sole or even the main mediator. It may have come to believe that neighbouring countries as well as some others beyond the region which are friendly to it should be associated with the negotiations. New Delhi will have to make strenuous efforts to resist any such attempt to widen participation in the search for a resolution of the conflict beyond the three parties directly involved—Colombo, Tamil representatives, both militant groups like the LTTE as well as the moderate TULF, and New Delhi. The involvement of other parties can only delay, even obstruct, a settlement since each of them will have its own interests to further.

The next few days will indicate whether Mr. Athulathmudali's state

(Continued on page 7)

by

A. S. Abraham

ombo's decision to exercise the military option that the militants now have much wider support among the Tamils than ever before. The attempt to use SAARC as a forum to censure India also bespeaks Colombo's attempt to bring more parties into resolving the conflict.

Outside the region, Britain, the Commonwealth, or even the UN, may be sought to be involved. Though Colombo appears to have given up for the time being trying to put India in the UN dock, it could try to do so again at an appropriate time.

Since Mr. Athulathmudali has said that the Sri Lanka Government is ready for peace talks, New Delhi should seize the initiative by asking Colombo to undertake not to resume its offensive and to renew the negotiations under New Delhi's auspices. In the light of its past experience with Colombo, New Delhi must emphasise that this time there can be no going back on what is settled at the table. Nor can follow-up action on mutually-agreed proposals be delayed indefinitely. And, however infertile the talks might seem to be, the resumption of military oper-

settled once Colombo makes it plain that it is genuinely interested in resuming negotiations and that it continues to rely on New Delhi to mediate a solution. It is quite likely that, after the suffering the Tamil people have been through, the militants will be in a stronger position than ever and that the moderate Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) will be further marginalised. After all, it is Colombo's intransigence that has been largely instrumental in hardening Tamil positions to the advantage of the militants and at the TULF's cost. Nevertheless, there is every reason for New Delhi to try and give the TULF an important role in any fresh talks. The sooner these can begin, the better.

New Delhi cannot overlook the possibility that Colombo may again engage in negotiations only to draw them out as much as possible while it strengthens its defences, military and diplomatic. Following the June mission, it has already spoken of approaching Pakistan to help it build an air security system. There are other countries, in the region and outside it, who would be only too willing to help. What could be a

FOR THE RECORD

22-6-87: Shelling on Sunday 22nd June towards Atchuvely at nine in the morning and five in the evening from the newly established mini camp at Idaikadu damaged the Church of St. Joseph. Shelling from the Palaly camp caused damages to the Maha Vidyalayam at Katuvan. Tharmasuthar (11), Selva Chandra Devi (35) and Selvam Vallipillai (68) suffered severe injuries and were admitted to Telliappalai hospital.

23-6-87: On 22nd June two youths were cycling along Nachimar Kovil Road towards Ilakanawathai in Uduppiddy area, when soldiers who were crouching in the bushes by the roadside fired at them. One of them Selvam Jeyam (20) died on the spot, the other attempted to escape but the soldiers chased him and fired at him. In the random shooting 13 year old student Somasundaram Susantha who was standing at the entrance to her house was struck by a bullet and died instantaneously. Her sister who was beside her was injured and admitted to Manthikai hospital.

24-6-87: S. Kathiravelu (48) who was fishing near the beach at Keerimalai was shot and killed by soldiers. Two others who accompanied him had a lucky escape. Kathiravelu's body could not be retrieved from the beach. The three fishermen had obtained prior permission from the Security Forces before setting out to fish.

A landmine explosion close to the Valvettiturai Army camp claimed the lives of a number of soldiers and injured many others whilst wrecking a truck in which they were travelling. The Govt. Media Centre admitting the incident reported that one soldier died in the incident and fourteen were injured.

In two separate incidents earlier at Vadamarachchi, five soldiers were killed and 15 seriously injured. On 21st June soldiers in a search operation ran into a landmine. Four soldiers were killed on the spot. On the 23rd, on a similar incident one soldier was killed and fifteen were injured.

According to informed sources nearly 2,250 members of the Security Services were reported to have deserted during the last one and a half years. Navy and Air force personnel were also reported to have secretly deserted. The authorities are trying to trace their whereabouts.

25-6-87: Security Forces moved out of Thondamanaru and Valalai

camps and attempted to advance towards Atchuvely but in a direct confrontation with the militants they were not able to make any headway, in spite of shelling from both these camps and helicopter cover. Two helicopters fired 50 calibre mortar shells into civilian areas which caused the death of one person Rasammah Chelliah (60) and injured five others S.Rahu (18), Ganesh (17), Albert (16), Mahalingam (40) and Vijayan (30). In this encounter the Batticaloa District leader, Rasa Ponnampalam also died.

26-6-87: Aid to Sri Lanka from India in the form of 800 tons of food items reached Kankesanthurai harbour in the Vessel 'Island Pride'. The local officials headed by the Government Agent, M. Punchalingam and the Acting Secretary, Ministry of Rehabilitation Mr. Lionel Fernando together with the First Secretary, Indian High Comm. H.S. Puri Captain Gupta and Sri Lankan Red Cross officials were on hand to meet the Indian Red Cross officials D.K. Chowdry, K. Venugopal, R.K. Saika, Kalisakar, S.A. John, and Mohan Narayan. The journalists who came in another vessel were not permitted to land.

A further 70 refugees from Sri Lanka reached Ammupattinam in Tamil Nadu on 24th June.

A delegation of leading Hindus met President Jayewardene to acquaint him of the atrocities perpetrated by the army at Vadamarachchi during "Operation Liberation." They told him that more than 1,000 persons had been killed. The bombing of civilian areas should cease forthwith as military action would never put an end to the ethnic problem, they stressed. The President regretted the deaths of civilians caused by the bombing and exhorted them to bring Velupillai Prabhakaran the leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam for talks to end the strife.

27.6.87: People in various places in Jaffna staged fasts during the week urging India to recognise the rightful struggle of the Tamil People. All schools in the District also joined in the move. The school children further demand that the Sri Lankan Government should forthwith release the students taken into custody by the armed forces. The security forces should also refrain from turning schools into mini camps.

The First Secretary of the Indian High Commission, M.S.Puri visited

a refugee camp at Mallakam and saw for himself the conditions prevailing there. The refugees, most of them in tears told him of their ordeal.

People who attempted to view the 'Island Pride', the Indian vessel discharging food cargo at the Kankesanthurai port were shot at by Security Forces. As a result 5 persons were injured, one of them S. Thavarasa seriously.

Officials of the Jaffna Branch of the Red Cross complained bitterly to the officials of their Indian counterpart that they had been completely ignored by the Sri Lankan Red Cross during the last four years. Since December 1983 the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society had not given them any assistance, they complained. As a result they were not able to obtain relief from Geneva as well.

Shelling and Rifle fire from the Army camp in the Jaffna Fort continue to take their toll daily. In the Kottady and Bankshall Street areas. Many are injured daily by gunfire. Ravichandran of Jaffna suffered injuries on the 26th and a shop was damaged. Shoppers at Small Bazaar in Bankshall Street have been victims of pot shots by the fidgety army sentries. Shells too have landed in the Kottady area which has now become a virtual no-man's land due to heavy shelling. On the 27th, three persons, including a Muslim, were injured in Bankshall St. when the Fort sentry sniped them.

28.6.87: Mr.K.Venugopal of the Indian Red Cross after visiting the Jaffna Hospital in the company of the Medical Superintendent and other officials said that the hospital had experienced the scourge of war which no other hospital in the world had gone through. No other hospital had experienced a shell attack like what had taken place in this hospital.

One hundred and twenty five refugees consisting of forty women, thirty children and the balance made up of men left Velanai on 23rd June for India. When they were in mid-sea, they were told that they would reach India in half an hour. It turned out to be wishful thinking. A Sri Lankan gunboat came alongside as if from nowhere. The sailors took the keys of the engines and left them adrift, at the mercy of the wind and waves. Early next morning they came back and towed the boat to Kankesanthurai where they were kept in custody for 3

days. Later on with the exception of 23 persons, the rest were released.

29.6.87: Captain Gupta of the Indian High Commission along with Indian Red Cross personnel went around the environs of the Jaffna Fort and Grand Bazaar to see for themselves the damage caused by the recent aerial bombing. He was able to hear the repeated rifle fire from the Fort at unseen targets. Their inspection was abruptly terminated when some of the shots were directed towards the Grand Bazaar area where they were at that time.

The relatives of the thirty one fishermen from Gurunagar who were brutally massacred by navy personnel on 9th June 1986 in the sea around Mandaitivu met Captain Gupta and related their woes to him. The Captain was visibly moved to tears at that tragic narration.

30.6.87: There was a confrontation between the Tiger militants and the Security Forces at Muttur on 28th June, when the forces surrounded the militant camp. Nine militants including the Area Commander, Major Gajendran, lost their lives. According to a release, the Security Forces succeeded in their attack due to an informant.

Lalith's Warning

In an interview to a West German newspaper, "Die Welt" according to the Daily News of 30th June Lalith Athulathmudali, the Minister of National Security has stated that the threat posed by the Janata Vimukthi Peramuna was containable, as the present Government had got wind of its activities in the early stages. In reply to a question about a possible Indian invasion he said Sri Lanka would use Gandhian tactics to face it. He, however, cautioned that anyone contemplating a forcible entry into Sri Lanka should remember that the majority of Tamils live among the Sinhalese and if anybody invades Sri Lanka the whole question of the vast majority of Tamil people who live among the Sinhalese will become a serious problem.

Confrontation

In a confrontation at Muthirikulam in Mullaitivu District on the morning of 30th June, 12 soldiers were reported killed and some arms captured by the Liberation Tigers.

Reconnoitering Sea Plane

After quite some time, a sea plane was seen overhead in the evening sky around Jaffna town and its precincts on 30th June. Who knows what is to come?

Don't Touch This Blood-Stained Money!

Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

In the 18th June 1987 issue of the SUN there is a news item which says "Government will shortly grant loans to civilians in the North to reconstruct their houses which were damaged in terrorist violence".

The operative words in this communique is "grant loans" and that too for houses damaged "in terrorist violence".

What a canard! Every house in Vadamarachy had been broken into by force, doors and windows smashed, many houses razed to the ground with bull dozers after military helicopters dropped leaflets asking people to run to temples, kovils and churches. This wanton destruction was carried out by the army in its bid to crush the Tamil spirit and the community's resistance to the genocidal thrust of the present rulers of Sri Lanka.

It is therefore, my earnest appeal to all Jaffna Tamils, that they should not get humiliated further and lose their self respect by obtaining this "blood stained money" to reconstruct their damaged houses.

These destroyed houses should remain as permanent monument of the mass destruction of innocent people and property recently carried out by the military in Vadamarachy. Visitors to the peninsula should see these mass destructions and write about them. Also they should remain a constant reminder to the future generation of Tamils about their fate in a Sinhala dominated Government as the Fijians are trying to do with their Indian - origin compatriots.

If one tours France, they could see several buildings destroyed by the invading Nazi army during the last war. One French man told me that they are kept as they were, to show future generations of Frenchmen how their neighbour dealt with their country. They also remind the Frenchman that Hiflers can again rise in Germany and they should be vigilant.

A parallel situation exists in Jaffna and the people of the Peninsula should preserve all their damaged dwelling places as a monument of the destruction caused by the 1987 campaign of the Sri Lanka Army in the Jaffna Peninsula. A destruction

carried by a "5 Star Democracy" and a "Dharmista Society" in the making!

Jaffna

A Northerner

Satan's Ally

Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

Your diagnosis of the malady afflicting the Catholic Hierarchy, especially the South as "Tribal Catholicism" is far too mild. It is an "Immunity Deficiency Syndrome" acquired by goose-stepping and cohabiting with a Government which has time and again been a self-confessed ally of Satan.

The line in the Nicene Creed could now be well purged as the Church is now neither One, nor Catholic nor Apostolic. The hierarchy in the South has done sweet little to alleviate the sufferings of the people in the North and East, although they have been shouting themselves hoarse in their ears, except to make an "ad limina" visit to the North by a segment of the hierarchy which probably never had a consensus because nothing happened except for a brief communique.

In contrast the Catholic Hierarchy was different during the time of Schools Takeover by the Government of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party headed by the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike. It used the mothers as puppets to chant the Rosary in pouring rain on the road to Katunayake to invoke the wrath of the Mother of God on the Government. In fact it would not be far too surprising to find some of them who had taken part in that demonstration in the present "Circus".

If not for the timely intervention of Good Gracious Gracias, the Bombay Prelate, the irate Government would have brought the Catholic Church to its knees. A left paper at that time characterised Cardinal Gracias as the "Vatican Troubleshooter."

It would take a Spiritualist of a very high order from the Vatican to exercise this satanic influence now manifest in the Church and place it on an even keel.

Jaffna

A Catholic

Who Violates Whom?

Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

Sri Lankan Government is of the view that the Indian Government

should obtain prior approval before they bring relief supplies to refugees in Sri Lanka.

I would like to know from the Sri Lankan Government whether the thousands of Sri Lankan Refugees who have gone to India and are still going, land in India with the approval of the Indian Government?

The refugees are allowed to enter the Indian soil on humanitarian grounds. The same rule should apply to relief supplies to refugees in Sri Lanka.

What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

Colombo

Peter Silva

LETTERS

Friends Or Neighbours

Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

India is now allowed to bring the food items to Jaffna. Why couldn't the Sri Lankan Government have allowed this earlier and avoided all the ill feelings between India and Sri Lanka?

Sri Lankan politicians, the Colombo Press and many people of the majority community shouted out ad nauseum that it was the people in India and especially in Tamil Nadu who were starving and that it is they who should be sent the food items. In fact the Captain of the Sri Lankan Navy who spoke to the Indian Official who came with the flotilla of boats carrying the food items to the people of Jaffna was reported to have told him that he should take the food items to Tamil Nadu as the people there were starving.

Now, has the starvation there vanished within these few days that Sri Lanka has decided to allow the food items to be brought in to the people of Jaffna. It was also said that there was no need for any food items from India for the people of Jaffna as there was plenty of food there for another six months. Has this stock of food been exhausted within these few days?

There need not have been any loss of love or loss of face if the Sri Lankan Government had allowed the Indian government to bring the food items when the Indian Government requested the Sri Lankan Government for permission to bring the

food items to the people of Jaffna who were not having enough food items.

What friendly relations we would have had if we had acceded to the request of Indian Government! Sri Lanka sacrificed that to get some hollow assurances from countries far off and countries which have some axe to grind with India.

Let us not forget the fact that it is one's immediate neighbour who will and can come to one's assistance more speedily than any friends or relations who are far away and that it is not prudent to antagonise one's immediate neighbour.

The things that some of our politicians, the Colombo Press and some people are saying against India and its leaders are, apart from being vulgar and provocative, unwise and injurious to our own selves.

Colombo

Arul

Left's Failure

Editor
SATURDAY REVIEW

I hope the press statement issued by the Sri Lankan Marxist Leninist Centre in the S.R. of 20th June 1987 will be an eye-opener to some of the left parties and other working class organisations of Sri Lanka. I am sure, the centre would have sent this statement to the Colombo based newspapers also and their having not published the statement is understandable. They only give prominence to matters like demonstrations by members of the Buddhist and Catholic priesthood who are racists first and religious priests second. This country is in a mess today because of these people dabbling in politics and reactionary parties making use of them.

As mentioned in the press statement it is a matter of shame that no major section of the working class or left movement has, as yet, raised a finger against the continuous acts of barbarity being committed by the Government against a section of its own people while world-wide organisations such as Amnesty International have raised strong protests at these atrocities. However, in fairness, it must be mentioned that there are some left parties and trade unions such as the C.M.U., All Ceylon Teachers' Union etc. who have consistently demonstrated against the Government's actions. Even recently the C.M.U with more than 95% Sinhala membership organised a protest

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U.S. Congressman Condemns Killing Of Tamils

Representative Mervyn M. Dymally U. S. House of Representatives condemned Sri Lankan Army actions which have caused high civilian casualties among the Tamil minority on the Jaffna peninsula. The Army is dominated by soldiers of the Sinhalese ethnic community. European and Indian news sources estimate the number of civilian men, women and children killed range between 200 and 500.

Congressman Dymally, the second ranking Democratic member of the Asian and Pacific Affairs Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee said, "The Sri Lankan Government prohibits access not just

to reporters but also to such humanitarian organizations as the Red Cross and Amnesty International. The Government maintains this closed door policy despite international pleas to at least allow humanitarian groups have access. That secrecy is a major reason we can only estimate the civilian casualties." Dymally continued, "The Government of Sri Lanka is responsible for the human cost of this offensive. That cost will undoubtedly be higher because the Government prohibits the International Committee of the Red Cross from practicing its humanitarian mission."

"While the Government of President Jayewardene has been emphasizing a negotiated settlement in its public statements, it seems that all along the Government has been intent on pursuing the military option," reflected Dymally. "This is a grave miscalculation. It will not lead to a settlement; rather it will only serve to undermine the moderates and polarize the Tamil minority, destroying any hope of a lasting settlement."

Rep. Dymally said that he is planning an urgent official visit to India and Sri Lanka to convey the concerns of the U. S. Congress to both

Governments. "In India, I will urge Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, to continue his mediator efforts despite this major setback for peace in the region," said Mr. Dymally. "In Sri Lanka," the congressman continued, "I will impress on the Government the need to use peaceful means to resolve the ethnic conflict, because there is no such thing as a successful military solution. This latest offensive only confirms the Tamil conviction that their chance of equality within Sri Lankan society is minimal. It merely strengthens the case for separation."

Left's Failure

(Continued from page 6)

march and demonstration which was unlawfully prevented from taking place by the Government.

It is high time that all progressive parties and working class organisations realise that the Tamil problem is due to the continuous discrimination by successive Sinhala chauvinistic dominated governments since independence and that the Tamil youth have resorted to armed struggle when all previous non-violent and peaceful protests have failed. But there can be no military solution to the problem and in the interest of the whole country it is necessary for all the progressive forces to unitedly protest against the Government's repression of the human rights of the Tamil people, including their right to self-determination.

Jaffna

P. Selvaratnam

Respite For....

(Continued from page 4)

ment means it appears to. New Delhi should, however, take him at his word and offer to help resume the political dialogue under its mediation. Should Colombo's response be equivocal or half-hearted, New Delhi must warn it against renewing the offensive against the Tamils. New Delhi must not allow itself to be lulled into a false sense of complacency, as has happened previously. The mere resumption of negotiations will not be enough after what has happened in the last few weeks. The talks have to have a definite direction and must conclude within a reasonable time.

No Choice Left

Should it, however, become apparent that Colombo is interested in

The Jaffna Christian Union (JCU) organised a function to mark the visit of the new Bishop of Colombo, the Rt. Rev. J. J. Gnanaprasam, on the 20th of June at St. John's College. The Rt. Rev. D. J. Ambalavanar presided. It will be remembered that the last such visit by the then Bishop the Rt. Rev. Swithin Fernando was two years ago. A train of events followed involving a tragedy at St. John's. At a time when communication and mutual understanding are breaking down between the North and South of this country, the visit of the Bishop ushers in new hope.

Of the speakers, Bishop Deogupillai of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Jaffna spoke of the Christian Church in Ceylon being divided along communal lines. He expressed the belief that Bishop Gnanaprasam being appointed by God, is well placed to bring about under-

negotiations only on the basis of what little it is prepared to give the Tamils after having humiliated them, then New Delhi will have no choice but to tell it that, in that case, Colombo will not be able to exercise the military option once more. True, this will provoke regional and even some global opposition. But New Delhi's refusal to draw the line here will entail even higher political costs in the form of a demonstration of its powerlessness despite its strength and size. If New Delhi wishes to give up playing a regional role of any substance, then it will shrink from doing whatever is necessary to compel Sri Lanka to settle its ethnic conflict quickly, peacefully and through Indian mediation. Anything short of this would be tantamount to accepting that India has no leadership role in a part of the world where history and geography combine to give it a natural preponderance.

Bishop Gnanaprasam Welcomed

standing. This was because he was Bishop of the people of Jaffna as well as those of Colombo.

The President of the YWCA, Miss Navaratnasingam said that they lost their home because of military action. She was referring to their Headquarters declared open by the Canadian Ambassador.

Bishop Ambalavanar delved into history to remind the Bishop of Colombo of one of his illustrious predecessors, Bishop Strange of Calcutta who succeeded Bishop Heber a famous poet and hymn writer. Ceylon in the early 19th century was a province under the Bishopric of Calcutta. On a visit to Jaffna Strange was made aware of the American Mission Church at Manipay being destroyed by fire. On his return, Strange sent aid towards the rebuilding of the church. Ambalavanar expressed the hope that the new Bishop will make a similar effort towards the rebuilding of the many churches recently damaged in Jaffna by the Government's military action.

In his interesting speech addressing the Bishop as "My Lord" Mr. Sam, Sathiasivam anecdotally referred to the time when the then Prime Minister Lloyd George was pulled up by their Lordships for repeatedly addressing them as "gentlemen" Lloyd George apologised saying "I am sorry to have called you gentlemen". Having known the Bishop for long he expressed his confidence that though having to be addressed now on as 'Lord' the Bishop will not cease to be a gentleman.

Mr. Sivagnanam, the Municipal Commissioner spoke on behalf of the people of Jaffna. The Rev. Govindarajan and the Ven. Sam. Hor-

shington spoke on behalf of the Methodist and Anglican Churches.

Perhaps, one feeling that needed expressing was that the church was a universal body that transcends race. More than understanding Christians on both sides of the divide must be co-workers, working towards the common goal of Christian ideals. This was the message by an old gentleman of eminence, who served as Secretary of the JCU in days when it was a grass roots organisation dependent on local funds, wanted to deliver. But his request to be given an opportunity to make a brief welcome address could not be accommodated as it came too late. In reply, the Bishop of Colombo said with feeling, "I know and I understand what is happening here. People in the South are unable to understand. I must try, and I must somehow get it across."

Prior to his visit, the Bishop had requested that there should be no Tamashas to mark his visit. Although this request was appreciated by the people, it was not obeyed by the parishes, as indicated by the numerous, albeit simple parties that had been arranged. The Bishop jested that this showed how seriously his orders are taken. In contrast, the Bishop's installation in Colombo, took place on the 29th May at the height of "Operation Liberation" with dignitaries of the State in attendance. The delegation that left Jaffna on 26th May to attend the installation, had to turn back at Chavakachcheri, upon learning that a curfew was in force. Notwithstanding all this, the installation was a grand occasion, organised by the Bishop's flock in the south.

— A Christian

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

Lalith's Leg-Pull

John Elliott of the Financial Times was one of those who accompanied National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali when he visited Vavuniya on 5th June after it was 'liberated'.

The last paragraph of the article he wrote (6th June) reads:- "With a glance to foreign journalists to ensure we were listening he said 'Indian food be careful, diarrhoea, you know.' He appeared to acknowledge an implied threat by India to intervene again if Government forces renewed their attacks on the Tigers but laughed: 'It's like a big brother trying to bully a small brother — the small brother goes between the legs of the big brother.'"

Note by Editor: The umpire signals a leg bye. But who's the wicket keeper? Lalith or Rajiv?

Students Decide To Boycott Exams

Students in the Jaffna District will boycott all public examinations till their demands are met.

Student Demo

Several thousands of students from all over the Jaffna Peninsula marched on Wednesday (1st July) from the Jaffna University to the Regional Education Office at Muthirasanthi, shouting slogans against the setting up of mini Camps in schools, the arrest and detention of teachers and students, and demanding the immediate release of teachers and students still in custody.

This demonstration was staged following a decision taken by the Inter-College Students' Association on Monday (29th June).

At the end of the march, the Students' Front held a meeting at Muthirasanthi, where it was unanimously decided to call for an end to all forms of military activity.

They also decided to boycott all public examinations till their demands are met.

A memorandum embodying the students' demands was handed over to the Regional Director of Education.

Off To Netherlands

One of the leading young contemporary Sri Lankan Tamil poets, R. Cheran, is off to the Netherlands on a CEBAMO sponsored Fellowship to do his Master's Degree in Development Studies at the prestigious Institute of Social Studies (ISS) at the Hague.

He is a Science graduate of the University of Jaffna.

Cheran—the second son of Mahakavi, the pioneering modern Tamil poet of Sri Lanka—has published two collections of poems, critical articles and reviews. He has been actively involved in drama and the arts generally.

Like father, like son.

This decision was taken at a meeting—summoned by the newly-formed Inter-College Students' Association—held at Kailasapathy Auditorium on Monday (29th June).

The decision means that the GCE (A/L) Exam which begins on 25th July will be boycotted by Jaffna students due to sit it.

Any student who moves out of the Jaffna District and sits this Exam elsewhere should be considered a traitor, some speakers said.

The decision to boycott all public exams will help to draw the attention of the international community to our plight. International opinion can pressurise the Sri Lankan Government to mend its ways, some speakers said.

India's Options....

(Continued from page 1)

India's image in the neighbourhood or in the rest of the world. Nor had it affected India's mediatory role. On the contrary, he asserted that the net results are positive.

He said an accord had been reached with Sri Lanka on the distribution of relief supplies to Jaffna; this made dialogue possible again. (A commentary on this accord will be published in next week's S. R. — Ed.)

When a correspondent remarked that the talks between Sri Lanka and India had proved fruitless, Rajiv disagreed. He said both countries had gained a lot during these talks. Perhaps it was time now to change the level and the method, bring in more political initiative. But he didn't elaborate on this point.

INDIA WILL CONTINUE TO SEND RELIEF SUPPLIES TO JAFFNA.

While Rajiv said this at the luncheon meeting, back here in Sri Lanka, the Government gives the impression that the party is over: no more relief supplies from India. The situation is getting curiouser and curiouser.

The demands put forward by the students are:

- * Release forthwith all students and teachers who are in custody.

- * No student should be arrested without the knowledge of the Principal.

- * Stop turning schools into mini Army Camps.

- * Army Camps which have been set up in schools should be closed down immediately.

- * During school hours there should be no military activity.

The students decided to stage a demonstration on Wednesday (1st July) to back up their demands.

Then Rajiv turned his attention to India's neighbours—and Sri Lanka's friends—Pakistan and China.

Pakistan has an active nuclear programme but has not gone nuclear yet, he stated. Neither did he have any facts at his disposal to back up reports that Sri Lanka had entered into a pact for mutual assistance with Pakistan.

As for China, there had been some increase in the level of Chinese troop movements in Tibet. India had taken note of it. There was no border problem because India hasn't occupied an inch of Chinese territory. Nor was there any confrontation between the two countries as the Western media tries to make out.

At this stage, a correspondent remarked that India seems to be having trouble with all her neighbours.

Rajiv's response: We want to improve our relations with our neighbours. But this will not be done at the expense of our national interests and security. Our options are within the constraints of our national interests.

Let me assure you India's interests will never be allowed to suffer.

GET THE MESSAGE EVERYONE —ESPECIALLY SRI LANKA?

'Recognise Our Struggle'

The Eelavar Munnani has urged the Indian Government to recognise the Tamil-speaking people's struggle.

This request was made by the Munnani in a memorandum it presented to Shri H.S. Puri, First Secretary of the Indian High Commission when he was in Jaffna last week.

Some of the other points urged in the memorandum are:

Recognise the Tamil-speaking people's homeland; Condemn the Israeli, Pakistani, American and British presence and role against the oppressed Tamil-speaking people in Sri Lanka; Condemn the occupation of our homeland by the Sri Lankan Forces with the aid of international mercenaries; Recognise the liberation organisations as Social-Defence Forces.

Jamming Allegation

According to a news report appearing in the Island of 1st July, 1987, the Indian Press has accused Sri Lanka of jamming radio links with New Delhi and Madras on the distribution of relief supplies in the Jaffna Peninsula. A UNI report has also stated that the port authorities had given wrong information on the depth of draught and thereby caused damages to the relief ship *Srivatsava*. A UNI correspondent had been literally thrown out of a van by Brigadier Gerry de Silva, Commander of the Security Forces in Jaffna, the report alleges.

Transport Crawls

Transport services between Colombo and Jaffna came to a crawl between Vavuniya and Jaffna on Tuesday (30th June) due to movement of troops from Vavuniya to the North.