

**PRESS RELEASE**

# THE CEYLON CYCLONE APPEAL COMMITTEE

Hon President: Lord Fenner Brockway; Vice Chairman: Lord Willis;

Sponsors: Lord Avebury, Jack Jones, Stan Newens MP, Bob Hughes MP, John Hunt MP, Robin Hodgson MP.

Committee: Alf Lomas (London Co-op), Tony Gilbert (Liberation), Michael Hawkes (Christian Aid),  
Maggie Burns (Christian Aid), Rev. Graeme Jackson (Methodist Church), Mrs. J. Cashmor  
(Anglo-Asian Conservative Association), Iain McDonald (Church of Scotland), Martin Walker (Secretary).

The first attempt to tap the generosity of Britain's Labour Movement for the relief of a major disaster in the Third World is launched today.

The cyclone which hit the island of Ceylon in November last year killed over a thousand people and left more than 100,000 homeless. It also destroyed the communications, the plantations and the livelihood of an entire region. Rice paddies were poisoned by the salt water from the tidal wave. The coconut plantations were uprooted, roads, bridges and people swept away.

The Ceylon Cyclone Appeal has been launched to help the stricken people of eastern Ceylon with the long-term recovery from this disaster. The immediate needs of food and shelter have been met. We now appeal to the labour movement in particular, and to the British public in general, to donate funds to help these people rebuild their lives and their livelihoods.

Many of the victims were Tamils from the tea plantations, whose plight deeply moved the British people when it was exposed on TV and in the press. The labour movement in particular responded to the sufferings of fellow workers, many of them employed by British companies. The appeal committee is dedicated to helping all the victims of the cyclone, irrespective of race or creed.

The committee is working closely with Christian Aid, who will collect and allocate all the funds that we raise. The press conference to launch the appeal will take place on Monday, 12th March at the "Punch" pub (Fleet Street) at 11.30 a.m. and you are invited to send a representative.