

LANKA

GUARDIAN

Vol. 9 No. 23 April 1, 1987

Price Rs. 4.00

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Chandraswamy: returning to his homeland

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Mervyn de Silva



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— Patrick Fernando
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NON-TRADITIONAL EXPORT

Are Sri Lankan babies the island's newest non-traditional export? The illegal baby trade or the adoption racket has become a shocking scandal which is already assuming the proportions of major political issue. Mrs. Bandaranaike relates the problem to the "deplorable commercialisation of life and human values" that has accompanied the 1977 UNP government's "liberalised economy".

Sri Lanka's internationally known Buddhist scholar, the Ven. Dr. Walpola Rahula, Chancellor of the (Buddhist) University at Kelaniya is outraged by the callous disregard for the dignity of the child. An Opposition MP wants to table a motion of no-confidence against the government. Although the official figure given is 1,637 babies adopted by foreigners in 1986, it is the unsavoury aspects of what is obviously a flourishing business that have scandalised the average Sri Lankan — 'baby farms', managers with "political connections", corrupt officials, foreign "contacts" etc.

Money may be the root of all evil but when an import-export firm, located close to our much published Free Trade Zone sends a letter to a West European agency offering Sri Lankan babies for sale, with a rate card

The Lanka Guardian will not appear on April 15th in view of the Sinhala and Tamil New Year holidays. The ninth anniversary issue will be out on May Day.

The Lanka Guardian wishes all its readers a happy and peaceful New Year.

attached, the cold callousness of the commercial approach hints at something rotten deep down in our society today. One step more, and we could take our babies to the weekly tea auctions and sell them along with our most traditional export item.

The Chairman of the Adoption Laws Committee, Dr. H. W. Thambiah states that his report will be submitted to Justice Minister, Nissanka Wijeyeratne before the 10th of April.

CAMPUS UNREST

Youth, said Trotsky, is the barometer of the revolution. A romantic hyperbole? Anyway, nobody but a starry-eyed revolutionary would suggest that Sri Lanka's present discontents, however grave, have the makings of a revolution. Nonetheless, the prolonged unrest and violence in our campuses is food for thought.

Student disturbances and occasional outbursts of violence are quite common to Peradeniya and Colombo. Yet, the chronic violence in recent times have more causes

(Continued on page 4)

TRENDS
+
LETTERS

Unity in diversity

I have been a regular subscriber to the 'Guardian' since its inception and look forward to receiving it here and read every page. The Lanka Guardian and its circle of readers and contributors remain a symbol of hope for the country. I believe, and expect many others will agree with me, that the commitment of this group to peace with justice will someday lead us to unity in diversity. Your efforts in these difficult and trying times will not be in vain.

Silan Kadirgamar

Tokyo,
Japan.

LANKA GUARDIAN

Vol.9 No.23 April 1, 1987

Price Rs. 4.00

Published fortnightly by
Lanka Guardian Publishing Co. Ltd

No. 246, Union Place,
COLOMBO - 2.

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Telephone: 5 47 5 8 4

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M.G.R.: The actor on centre stage

Mervyn de Silva

NEWS
BACKGROUND

The logic of the negotiating process rather than a sense of theatre placed Tamilnadu's leading actor-politician on centre stage. For the same reason, Madras became the main junction for the diplomatic traffic. The Indo-Sri Lankan dialogue, though marked by fits and starts, and sometimes a maddeningly zig-zagging course, was still on track inspite of the ROCKFORT express disaster which finally turned out to be the murderous handiwork of a lunatic fringe TAMILNADU separatist group and not any known "EELAM" organisation.

With jet-set politics the natural style of the ex-pilot premier, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi was flying in and out of Madras last week. His fellow travellers were yet another sign that things were on the move again, and evidently on course. But that's only the hopeful side of current developments in the ethnic conflict, and Indian mediation, which officially still stands suspended; an animated suspension, though. There's still miles to go, a long, long journey home, if by 'home' we mean a negotiated political settlement.

These developments also saw the return of Messrs P. Chidambaram and Natwar Singh — a further sign that Delhi's diplomacy at least was once more on the main track. The sudden entry of former Foreign Minister Dinesh Singh caught many observers by surprise, particularly those who have not fully appreciated that dramatic personnel changes at the top and in advisory circles is also a strong feature of the Rajiv style of government. Messrs Chidambaram and Natwar Singh had been at the job for almost six months. Had they proved failures? Other-

wise, why pull Dinesh Singh out of the Congress closet?

Not given much to concepts, or strategies or long-term policies, Rajiv Gandhi thinks in terms of personalities and instant solutions and looks for the man who proves the quickest problem-solver, the man who can get from Point A to Point B, keeping closely to the flight-path mapped out by Mr. Gandhi. The slightest hint of failure or delay, an impatient and impulsive Mr. Gandhi fires the pilot and looks for a new one. But he is running out of trained and experienced men.

With more than two years now in the top post, Mr. Gandhi reveals more clearly his personal style in handling men, problems and critical situations. The personal interest and the immediate domestic-political consideration are uppermost in his mind. To be able to place hand-picked favourites who enjoy his total trust in the very highest positions of authority is for him the ideal situation. But since he must recognise and serve multifarious group interests, he picks trustworthy persons who represent such interests; if the man is found wanting he selects another representative of the same community hoping that this gesture would help him retain the group's loyalty. If he alienates one group, he balances it off by winning over another. His reward-system is also individualistic. Not just power and authority but the glamour of office or single assignment; sometimes just the publicity that accompanies such an assignment or the mere privilege of being included in Rajiv's inner circle, the limelight in which the court circle lives.

While the Dinesh Singh interlude should be understood I

think in this way, what is more important is to study and understand the political style. Otherwise outsiders, especially those in small neighbouring countries overwhelmed by the Indian factor in their own internal affairs tend to over-interpret Gandhian moves and responses, seeing major shifts and qualitative changes which are simply not there, or vesting such actions, essentially trivial or temperamental, with a Kautilyan subtlety which these cannot possibly bear. The dangers of this tendency are enhanced by the known Sri Lankan temptation, also quite typical, to interpret the actions and declarations of others in such a manner as to serve the needs of wish-fulfilment.

TWIN INTERESTS

Mr. Chidambaram and Mr. Natwar Singh personify in their different ways Delhi's twin interests: the domestic-political (the Congress party and Tamilnadu) and the regional-foreign policy concerns. Their return, Mr. Gandhi's own reliance on them suggests that he has now grasped fully the nature and complexity of Indian interests at stake in the Sri Lankan conflict, and of his own mediatory role.

Delhi's reactions to Mr. Premadasa's visit to Pakistan (see **Pakistan, a loyal ally**) are not yet known. Yet, the visit on its own helped to outline clearly the regional implications. It was Mr. Junejo after all who said that Sri Lanka and Pakistan hold common views on the Indian ocean where 'the security environment', according to him, is "perilous". And it was the Sri Lankan Prime Minister who used the word "ally". (So far, non-aligned Sri Lanka has never boasted any "allies").

Mr. Chidambaram has a dual personality in terms of Mr. Gandhi's needs as mediator. He is a first-rate mind, with an expert's grasp of knotty constitutional problems. He is also an intimate aide of Mr. Gandhi, and the leader's bright young Congress "hope" in Tamilnadu.

If his work as negotiator has proved his professional-intellectual talents, it has also exposed his inadequacies as a Tamilnadu power-wielder.

He really has no clout with the Sri Lankan Tamil leaders, certainly not with the Tamil militants, among whom the LTTE is all-important. This inadequacy increases the importance of MGR, the virtual "godfather" of the "Tigers", and the man who hid him in his own official residence when Delhi cracked down on the militants in 1985.

Can the "godfather actor" deliver? Can MGR persuade the LTTE to accept the December 19 'Ampara formula' as a basis for negotiations?

DELHI'S DILEMMA

A despatch from the well-informed G. K. Reddy to the *HINDU* said that Delhi was "looking" for Prabhakaran. Everybody knows that the LTTE leader crossed the Palk straits sometime ago to take personal command when the LTTE was predicting an all-out army offensive to recapture Jaffna. He had moved his men and arms to the north. How great then is his present dependence on Madras? Is it only political, meaning Tamilnadu opinion and its capacity to influence Delhi? Or has he still to think in terms of future supplies and the safety of his supply lines? Or is the link merely emotional, with a deep sense of gratitude for the protection and patronage that MGR and Tamilnadu have extended to the Tamils, refugees, exiles, armed militants?

If the relative autonomy that the LTTE has recently acquired

is the decisive factor, then MGR's leverage not be all that expensive. But his role cannot be minimised because he is the only political personality to whom the LTTE will readily listen.

Delhi's leverage is also limited for other reasons. It can crack down hard on the militants still living in Madras, and try to cripple their activity there. It can cut off supply lines. The LTTE would then find its firepower weakened gradually, and the armed resistance lose its momentum.

Delhi then faces a dilemma. If Delhi creates the conditions that inevitably lead to the steady decline of the LTTE's fighting capabilities, then the Sri Lanka army can do the rest. This also means that Colombo's dependence on Delhi is considerably reduced. But if Delhi can help drain away the resources of the LTTE and see it appreciably weakened as a military force AFTER it has negotiated a settlement with Colombo and seen it through the first stages of implementation, then the military problem is on the way to becoming "residual terrorism", pre-1983.

With a political accord in place, the army is now sufficiently equipped to deal with that challenge. Mr. Gandhi would then have achieved something between the Punjab and Mizoram. In the first, he isolated the extremists but extremist violence is very much present, though fairly tolerable.

In Mizoram, he brought the MNLF into the mainstream. It is now in office having defeated the Congress. It is to Mr. Gandhi's credit that he welcomed the defeat of the Congress. He put the success of his accord (and therefore of Mizoram and India) above party, just as he did, perhaps not so effectively in Punjab.

A simultaneous ceasefire, a new round of negotiations on the Dec. 19 proposals, following an end to the "blockade" and an exchange of prisoners, are steps

on the way to a first stage no-war, no-peace situation. But the massacre at Serunewa and the attacks on sentry posts and camps — a brutal, characteristically dramatic LTTE double-blow — indicate that the LTTE will have to be dragged to the negotiating table. Only MGR can dare to try that.

TRENDS...

(Continued from page 1)

than internecine conflict between rival student unions. Monks, protesting against lack of dormitory facilities have occupied buildings; students have defied bureaucratic fiat about the restricted use of libraries, and the timing of examinations and all these have become serious grievances just after the protracted struggle for enhanced salaries of academic staff, including full Professors.

The brutal murder (still unsolved) of a popular student leader, was the most dramatic signal that Sri Lanka's educated youth may well be rebels with causes. At this writing, two campuses—Colombo and Kelaniya — remain closed.

ASP'S PAY UP

Two A.S.P.'s have paid 10,000/- and 8,000/- to Mr. Pushpasena Kapugeekiyama as compensation ordered by a three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court, presided over by Chief Justice Hon. S. Sharvananda. Mr. Kapugeekiyama had filed a Fundamental Rights case against the two officers. Once before when a Police Officer was found guilty of violating Fundamental Rights, he was promptly promoted. In another instance, the government paid the costs.

PAKISTAN — a 'loyal ally' — Premier Premadasa

The five-day visit to Pakistan of the Prime Minister Premadasa turned out to be more than a ceremonial visit. In the context of increasing regional tensions, statements and gestures of special goodwill by Pakistani leaders and the Sri Lankan Prime Minister's own responses quickly acquired anti-Indian nuances. Diplomats in Colombo, are studying the implications seriously. This is no surprise, observed a western diplomat. "After all" he said "it is only last month that Indian and Pakistani troops were confronting each other on their sensitive Punjab border, and some people were speculating on a fourth war".

Tense relations between India and Pakistan and India and Sri Lanka have slightly improved. In the first case, with the mutual withdrawal of troops to peacetime positions, and in the Sri Lankan case, with the twelve hour visit to Colombo of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's special envoy, Mr. Dinesh Singh. But the underlying tensions are still strong.

President Zia Ul Huq surprised Mr. Premadasa by calling on him at the state guest house. The break in protocol was read here by diplomats as a very special gesture partly because Prime Minister Premadasa is in fact neither head of Government nor head of state, both posts being held by President Jayewardene. More significant were the remarks of the two Prime Ministers, at two banquets. At the dinner hosted by him, Mr. Mohammed Khan Junejo made two references to the security environment. Mr. Junejo said 'Pakistan and Sri Lanka are situated in an area faced with complex problems. Our concern "Mr. Junejo added" is all the more heightened by the rapidly deteriorating climate of security in the world at large and in our region'. Talking about Pakistani appreciation of the need for good neighbourly, and tension-free relations, Mr. Junejo said that 'the inherent rationale of this policy is reinforced by the perilous security environment prevailing in the area'. No observer

could have failed to note the true meaning of another remark of the Pakistani Premier. He commended Sri Lanka's "just and resolute policy in safeguarding its sovereignty and territorial integrity and right of its people to order their political and social system in the light of their own traditions".

For his part, Mr. Premadasa said Sri Lanka had found Pakistan a "staunch friend and loyal ally". What followed was equally pointed and richer in meaning." It is in time of trouble that the strong links of friendship are truly tested. I know for certain that both Sri Lanka and Pakistan have passed this stern test". Mr. Premadasa's allusion to the Sri Lanka Muslims could not be interpreted correctly except in terms of the Islands ethnic conflict. "The Muslims in Sri Lanka" he said were closely integrated with the other communities. They have prospered in our land and they are a happy and contented lot". Said Mr. Premadasa.

— J. S.

New Anti-subversion Unit Formed

Primal Abeyawardene

A counter-subversion division (CSD), supported by several counter-subversion units at divisional level, has been set up at police head quarters for the conduct of formal inquiries on subversive activity as well as for intelligence gathering purposes.

The new division is headed by an SP, titled director of the CSD, and it reports to the DIG in charge of crimes and operations.

Senior police sources indicated that the authorities were concerned about the large numbers of dissidents attracted to the subversive groups

planning acts of violence and terrorism particularly in the predominantly Sinhala areas.

"These are political activists and their objective is to overthrow the government. They have been recruiting, indoctrinating and training cadres in secret, stealing firearms and committing robberies to raise funds", a senior officer said.

Extreme left groups including the JVP, Sinhala militants linking with like minded Tamils and the Tamil terrorist are under surveillance and investigation by the CSD, senior police sources said.

IGP Cyril Herath has required the existing intelligence wing of the police including the national intelligence bureau (NIB) and the district intelligence bureaus (DIBs) to continue their regular functions and cooperate and co-ordinate with the CSD.

"It is very important that a very close dialogue is maintained between the NIB and the CSD and the two organisations must complement each other", the IGP has said ordering a close dialogue between the two agencies.

— (Daily News)

Natwar Singh upholds united Sri Lanka in Parliament speech

India rules out military intervention in Lanka

NEW DELHI, March 19 (DPA)

India on Thursday ruled out any military intervention on behalf of separatist Tamils and said any solution of the ethnic issue would have to be within the framework of a united Sri Lanka.

Minister of State for External Affairs Kanwar Singh told the Rajya Sabha (Upper House of Parliament) that interceding militarily in the island's dispute would have "grave and serious consequences".

He said India did not desire dismemberment of a neighbouring non-Aligned nation and the Tamil militants were aware of India's stand.

Singh was replying to a debate during which members from both ruling party as well as the opposi-

tion demanded India's military intervention to end the killings of Tamils in Sri Lanka and restoration of human rights.

"We should be hard on facts, soft on words and act gently, firmly and clearly", Singh advised the members, mostly from Tamil Nadu State. He said India had to act in a restrained manner and responsibly in such a situation.

Singh hoped Colombo would stick to its last year's proposals to enable New Delhi to resume its mediatory role between the government and the minority Tamils.

Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi had sent a special envoy to Colombo last week and threatened

to cut off mediation unless the government ended military action against the Tamils in Northern Lanka and lifted the fuel supply embargo on the region.

Singh said that since then India had noticed some improvement and "we are hoping that military activity will be stopped and the (fuel) blockade lifted" so that India could resume contacts with the Tamil groups.

He described the indictment of the Sri Lanka government at the United Nations Human Rights Commission as a "moral defeat" for the island. Sri Lanka President Junius Jayewardene has blamed India for its role in the anti-Lankan resolution.

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U.S. policy on Sri Lanka

R. Chakrapani

WASHINGTON, March 15.

In a comparative assessment of the human rights violations in Sri Lanka committed by the Government and Tamil militant sides, the U. S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Mr. Robert A. Peck, told a congressional hearing that the violations were higher on the official side.

Mr. Peck, who was testifying before the Asian and Pacific Affairs Subcommittee, was responding to a question from its Chairman. Mr. Stephen J. Solarz, as to which side in Sri Lanka was committing more human rights violations.

"If you add up all categories of human rights violations," Mr. Peck said, "the Government agencies are responsible for more human rights violations than the militant side.

He confirmed that the International Red Cross Society had not been given access to the troubled areas by the authorities and said the U. S. Government had supported the Red Cross request that it be allowed to play its traditional humanitarian role. But the request had not been accepted by the Sri Lanka government.

Mr. Solarz convened a meeting of his subcommittee to discuss the current state of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and the Reagan Administration's budget allocation of \$ 16.8 millions by way of development assistance and about an equal sum — \$ 16.5 millions — in P. L.-480 food assistance. Mr. Peck and Mr. James A. Morris, official of the U. S. Agency for International Development, testified for the Administration while a number of academics, including Mr. Manoranjan Dutta, who is also a leader of the Asian Indian community in the U. S., Mr. Stanley Wolpert, Mr. Bryan Praffenberger and Mr. Marshall R. Singer gave their assessment of the situation.

Both in a written testimony and replies to questions from Con-

gressmen Solarz, Mervyn Dymally and Mr. Eugene Atkinson, Mr. Peck said the U. S. role in promoting resolution of the conflict in the island-nation had been generally to encourage negotiations. "We have also been promoting understanding between Sri Lanka and India, because we consider Indian role is very important.

Mr. Peck said: "We have been gratified that our policy and India's policy has been very much parallel." The Tamil issue was one on which India and the U. S. were holding an active dialogue from time to time.

Pause in negotiations: On the current state of the peace process in Sri Lanka, he said there was some kind of a pause in the negotiations between the Government and the Tamil leaders. The last time there was a forward movement in the negotiations was on December 19. Since then there had been a good deal of private contacts to find out means of resuming the stalled negotiations. The Indian Government was also engaged in the negotiations, though for a period it remained aloof following reports of resumption of military activity.

About the prospects of a negotiated settlement Mr. Peck said for the first time, the outline of a solution was evident. "We propose to continue to seek every opportunity to register our support for the negotiating process," he said. The U. S. had made it clear to all concerned that a military solution was neither possible or desirable.

Militants blamed: Mr. Peck generally gave a good chit to the Sri Lanka Government which, he said, with India, was energetically seeking a negotiated settlement but blamed the militants for remaining "intransigent."

Much of the funding for militant activities, he alleged, appeared to come from money sent by militant sympathisers living abroad and

from the proceeds of narcotics smuggling. Many Sri Lankan Tamils had been arrested on narcotics trafficking charges in Europe.

Dominant group: "As we enter 1987," Mr. Peck said, "The LTTE (Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam) has become the dominant militant group. But inter-group fighting continues. Since 1983, the militants have expanded areas under their effective control in the northern province including much of the Jaffna peninsula. The situation in the multi-ethnic eastern province is more confused, with some areas largely controlled by militants and some by the security forces."

Increasingly, the conflict had shifted to the east largely because of an attempt by militants to demonstrate their *de facto* control there.

Political views not clear: About the ideological orientation of LTTE, he said it had a charismatic leader in Mr. Prabhakaran but LTTE's political views were not quite clear. "We have been unable to establish contact with them".

Most of the Tamil groups, he thought, did not have a good deal of education "but they have latched on to Marxist, leftist slogans." Their commitment to Marxism, however, did not seem to be deep.

"Govt. stand correct": The principal obstacle both for a settlement and to participation by the Tamil militants in the negotiations, remained the militant demand that the Northern and Eastern provinces should be merged into one Tamil "homeland" and the Sri Lankan Government was opposed to this. "The Government points out correctly", said Mr. Peck, "that two thirds of the population of the Eastern province is non Tamil (about equal number of Muslims and Sinhalese) and that their interests and concerns must be taken into account."

— Hindu

National Question — an Interim Solution — CP

The Sri Lanka Communist Party (Left) has released the following statement containing the minimum proposals of the Central Committee of the party for an interim solution to the National question. The statement has been signed by the General Secretary of the Party Comrade K. A. Subramaniam on behalf of the Central Committee of the party. The statement reads as follows:

The people of the entire country are undergoing the painful effects resulting from the serious situations to which the present government had been responsible.

The National oppression committed particularly against the Tamil people has resulted in unbearable sufferings. The economy of the country has deteriorated and the people's living standard has been eroded considerably. Defence expenditure incurred for a day is approximately Rs. 20 Million. The entire burden is borne by the working class. Several persons of the UNP have come to realise that the national question cannot be solved by means of a war.

Entire people including Tamils expect a peaceful life. They eagerly await an interim political solution. No one expects that such an interim political solution will be lasting solution to National question. Failure to pay attention to a short term solution and a long term solution may lead to more serious problems. To perceive Sri Lanka's National question merely as a racial problem between Tamils and Sinhalese will lead to a dangerous situation.

National oppression by present chauvinistic government leads to international threat to the country's independence through direct and indirect intervention by neighbouring countries. The U.N.P. since 1977 has been trying to barter our independence to the American Imperialism.

Intended plans by the U.N.P. government to lease facilities of Trincomalee Harbour was thwarted by Indian intervention. Systematic and planned communal violences and pogroms in July, 1983 against the Tamil People by the present government have resulted in Indian direct intervention in Sri Lanka's internal affairs.

The attempt of the Indian government to find a political solution to the National question acceptable to both parties is appreciated. However, Indian government should not impose a solution to meet its regional political interests.

The targets of liberation struggle should not worsen the country's National question. It will lead to the loss of Sovereignty and independence of our country. Threat to Sri Lanka's Independence and Sovereignty is increasing and it is being felt by all sections of the people.

That is why all sections of the people are pressing the government for an political solution to the problem without worsening the Crisis. All forces fighting for the emancipation of Tamils should take this into account. That an interim political solution through negotiations will thwart the emergence of a military dictatorship, put an end to military genocide violence against the Tamils and also give a chance and time to build up a mass organisation by democratic forces and Tamil liberation forces against U. N. P. right-wing parliamentary dictatorship.

The S.L.C.P. (Left) has acknowledged and stressed that the Tamils have a traditional homeland and they constitute a distinct nationality. Our party identifies the traditional homeland of the Tamils by rejecting the government sponsored planned Sinhala Colonisation.

The party Central Committee stresses that an interim political solution should incorporate the

following proposals with a clear guarantee:-

1. Traditional homeland of the Tamils—Northern and Eastern Provinces be granted Regional Autonomous status and autonomous bodies be set up.
2. These autonomous bodies have the right to merge and if necessary to function separately if they decide.
3. Without the interventions of the Central Government these Regional Autonomous bodies should have the maximum independence to manage the affairs of economy, employment, internal security, education, culture, health, social services etc.
4. The Muslims, people of Indian Origin and Sinhalese who reside within these areas should be given the right to establish inner autonomous bodies and there by ensure their basic human rights, language and cultural rights.
5. The autonomous bodies should be responsible for the security of the autonomous areas in the absence of external aggression.
6. Autonomous bodies should have the freedom to set up colonisation schemes within the areas. At the same time the autonomous bodies should have the right to accept or reject any colonisation schemes of the Central Government within their area.
7. Concrete steps should be taken to eradicate discriminations based on nationality, language or caste at the national and regional level.
8. Basic rights of plantation workers, Tamils, Muslims who reside outside North and East be recognised by setting inner autonomous bodies.

9. There should be a guarantee to hold elections at the national and regional level without the intervention of government, armed forces and other.
10. Depressed communities and backward sections of the society given institutional guarantee by way of concessions and facilities in the field of economy, employment and education for their social upliftment. While stressing the above proposals as basis for arriving at an interim political solution our party emphasize the necessity of taking steps to solve the problems that arose in recent years due to warlike situation.

To ease the present turmoil in the country, out party emphasises that the following steps should be taken without any further delay.

1. Prevention of Terrorism act be withdrawn and state of emergency be lifted and all persons detained under the act and regulations be released unconditionally.
2. Those persons who are wanted under Prevention of Terrorism Act and Emergency Regulations be pardoned unconditionally. Charges against them and those who were arrested prior to the enactment of the act and promulgation be withdrawn completely.
3. By withdrawing the Sixth amendmend to the constitution the freedom of expression of the Tamils be respected.
4. Government troops be withdrawn from populated areas of Tamils on a time table and the camps be closed.

5. Home guards be disbanded and that establishment be scrapped.
6. Government should give compensations to those affected for the losses caused by the troops and home guards by way of murders, arson, and burglaries.
7. The government should give facilities to people who were forced to leave their homes, and their villages by the excesses committed by the government troops and home guards, be allowed to return to their homes and restart their vocations peacefully.
8. Government troops and home guards who committed excesses be tried before an impartial commission of inquiry.

The above actions are minimum expectation of the Tamils for the security of their lives and property. If the government tries to keep on its troops and political thugs in the Tamil areas the interim solutions will not be genuinely implemented.

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

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

Ronnie warns donor nations

Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel on Monday told ambassadors from the aid donor nations that it would be "counter-productive to reduce in any way the assistance you have been giving us".

The minister met the ambassadors accredited to Colombo by the donor nations at a dinner he customarily hosts before the June aid consortium meeting. Senior Finance Ministry officials and otheir guests too, were present.

Remarking that democracy was a "tender plant that does not grow too well in Third World soil", Mr. de Mel explained that the West should understand that Sri Lanka had been battling hard to preserve the democratic system in the face of tremendous odds.

In addition to the many other problems related to the present conflict that the country faced,

it had also to battle a disastrous drought.

"Few Third World countries have had to fight so many battles in so short a time", the minister said.

Mr. de Mel, who warmly thanked Sri Lanka's friends in the aid consortium for the unstinted support received in the past, stressed that the causes of tension and conflict were basically socio-economic.

"The prime cause of all conflict is social and economic. . . Any attempt to reduce development assistance in a situation such as Sri Lanka faces now, will defeat the very purposes for which the system of developmental assistance has been evolved".

He expressed confidence that no aid group country would ever be a willing party to exacerbating the Sri Lanka's problems.

— Daily News

A long war for their "homelands"

Patrick Fernando

The peasants of Moneragala have been struggling for the last three years to protect nearly 22,000 hectares of agricultural land, from being given over to Moneragala Sugar Company for large scale Sugar plantation and setting up a sugar factory.

This company is a joint venture between the Government of Sri Lanka and Meta International — a large TNC mainly dealing with Sugar cane planting and Sugar processing. It is said to be an Indian-African company with business centred mostly in African Countries such as Kenya and Uganda.

The land to be given over is populated, and has been well utilized for centuries by the villagers for growing food crops for themselves and for the rest of the population in the country. Altogether there are 48 large and small villages occupied by nearly 850 families with a population of over 4500 within this area.

The people have been aware of the impact of the project on their land, cultivation, life style and environment. Assisted by peasant organisations they have understood the disastrous effect of being reduced to seasonal labour or contract farmers under the company. Therefore over the last three years these people have engaged themselves in a strong struggle to protect their land and their freedom. Understanding the national significance of this struggles many groups, almost all opposition political parties, peasant and labour unions, religious groups, Clergy and lay Women's organisations, Human Rights organisations and intellectuals have voiced their oppositions to this move and the general policy of the Government inviting multinational companies for large scale agribusiness and industry. They

Sinhala Peasants Fight for 'Traditional Lands'

In our Nov. 1st, 1985 issue, we carried an article by GAMINI YAPA titled "Peasant Struggle At Vellassa" — A new stage of Confrontation?". The struggle had already gone on for one year against the attempt by the government to take over the lands belonging to the peasants of Moneragala in order to hand them over to a multinational company for a sugar cane project.

Heroic peasants' struggles have been a prominent feature of Sri Lankan 'mass politics' in British times.

Armed police intervened and 83 persons, men and women, young and old, were arrested. But the struggle was not crushed. Last month fifteen peasants, both men and women, began a fast. For 30 hours monks led by the Ven. Batapola Shri Amonadassi, head monk of the of Shri Kalyaniwamsa Nikaya, preached 'seth pirith' for peace, and the wellbeing of the Moneragala peasantry. Peasants organisations, student groups, and social service organisations have been holding seminars, public meetings and publicity campaigns in support of the struggle. On 13/3 representatives of the Solidarity organisations held a press conference. A report in the ISLAND is re-published along with a document issued by the Patrick Fernando, Solidarity Committee, and D. N. Appuhamy Gen. Sec. All Lanka Peasants Congress.

The cover of our 1/11/85 issue gave special prominence to the protest movement in Moneragala. The boxed item said "MONERAGALA PEASANTS STRUGGLE — AN IMMINENT CONFRONTATION?"

have supported this peasants struggle in various ways.

The resistance had retarded the company's efforts over the last three years to displace the villagers and clear the land. People have met the Government officials at district and national level, launched peaceful protests preventing company's advance. peasants have been arrested and taken to courts, when they expressed strong protest.

Recently the company has intensified its land grabbing, supported by the state machinery disregarding the strong opposition expressed so far. Therefore it has now become necessary to call for widest possible support to this peasants struggle and to bring pressure on the Government against this intrusion into the life of the people.

THE PEASANTS OPPOSE THE PROJECT BECAUSE the land that they have developed for many decades without any form of Government support is the only means of living for them and for their next generations.

They grow a variety of crops such as maize, kurakkan, sorghum, cowpea, green gram, vegetables, lime, plantains, mangoes and yams etc. They get an additional income (apart from food) almost every week throughout the year, by selling their products in the three main weekly fairs (in Dombagahowela, Siyanbalambuwa and Pallepola). The farmers in this area are the foremost suppliers of maize to the Fats and Oils Corporation. During the lime season 12 lorry loads of lime (approximately 400,000 limes) go out to Colombo

and other cities. Similar quantities of plantains, manioc and vegetables are sold every week during the respective seasons. Under the company the farmer incomes would be much less and only once a year or so, each farmer family cultivates between 3 to 5 acres of land surrounding the villages, the valuable forest reserves such as the Haddawa (2000 acres) protected so far by the people to preserve their water sources would be cut down by the company's project.

They would be reduced to seasonal laborers under the company or contract farmers growing only sugar cane. Even those to be settled in nearly 4 acres sugar cane plots each will not have land ownership, but could be removed if they do not adhere to company's conditions and accept its prices.

The people have a long history and a long established cohesiveness, in their agricultural life, mutual understanding and cooperation in social, economic and religious activities. Out of the 48 villages that come within the project area 22 are traditional villages having a history of over 100 years, 17 have existed for 25 — 40 years and the remaining 9 have become settlements during the last 10 — 15 years. Villages such as Madugama and Polgahagama are said to have been key centres in the 1818 rebellion against British Colonial regime, that produced its well known military leaders.

Some land has been declared as "Village land" by 1930 with villagers having rightful ownership. Others have been allotted by Land Settlement Officers visiting the area once in 10 years

or so after investigation into their long occupation and development as villages. Other small plots of 2 acres each have been given to settlers on 99 year lease under the Land Development Ordinance for village expansion.

There are also villagers having obtained annual permits, renewed every year. Many Buddhist temples, some very old, will go under the company plantations or will be surrounded by it isolating them from the village communities.

People are well aware of the destructive impact on the natural environment and the danger of large stretches of sugar cane being abandoned, by profit motivated companies due to fall in profits. As it happened in places like Negros Islands in the Philippines.

Peasants resist land take over for sugar cultivation

Armed policemen have been used in Moneragala in the government's continuing efforts to crush growing unrest among peasants struggling to prevent their traditional lands being taken over by a sugar multinational.

A spokesman for the Peasant Solidarity Committee, Patrick Fernando told a news conference last week men in camouflaged uniforms and armed with automatic weapons were among a contingent of policemen deployed in Moneragala to prevent Wednesday's fast by the peasants.

He said the fast by about 15 peasants was organised at Kodayana, Siyambalanduwa in Moneragala to draw attention to the peasants' three year long struggle to prevent the Moneragala Sugar Company from taking over their lands for sugar cultivation.

The peasants fear the take over of about 54,000 acres around Siyambalanduwa by the company a joint venture between the India-African MNC, Meta International and the Government will drastically change their traditional way of life reducing them to labourers

or sugar cane growers of the company, he said.

The take over would result in mass unemployment not only among the peasants and their children but also among small traders in the area and those transporting food from the fertile agricultural lands in Moneragala to the rest of the country he said.

The peasants had realised they could not continue their struggle alone in the face of state repression and had decided to broaden their agitation and get the support of political, human rights and other mass democratic organisations throughout the country, he said.

Mr. Fernando said one reason for the intensity of the struggle was that the 25 villages which were to be taken over under the original plan were ancient ones, where villagers had cultivated their land for centuries growing their own food crops, which was their main livelihood.

Two of these villages, Madugama and Polgahagama, were supposed to have been key centres in the 1818 rebellion against the British colonial rulers.

He said the peasants decided to intensify their struggle after several rounds of talks with company and government officials and numerous petitions sent to Members of Parliament failed to produce results.

Under pressure from the peasants it was decided to change the original plan under which the 25 villages were to be cleared, he said.

But he said the peasants even opposed the new plan which leaves the villages intact since they would have no means of living when the surrounding areas were bulldozed.

He said the peasants were demanding the removal of Meta International and other agribusiness companies or that they be allowed to operate only on the condition that the peasants retained their cultivated land and settlement areas.

They were also demanding an immediate halt to the legal harassment and intimidation of peasants who had resisted the take over of their land by the company. Eighty three farmers had been prosecuted for trying to stop the company bulldozing their gardens.

— Rohan Gunasekera

— The companies have obtained a guarantee from the Government for a 14.5% profit irrespective of World Market Sugar prices. Thus already all the people in Sri Lanka pay a much higher price for sugar (Rs.15 per kilo) compared to the price possible for imported sugar (around) Rs.5/— per kilo). Since international prices are bound to remain low the people will have to continually subsidize the company.

The predicted prices of sugar produced in Pelwatte (by a similar Government MNC joint venture) will increase further upto about Rs.20 per kilo.

The whole Country should oppose this because...

This struggle forms an important part of the bigger struggle against the general policy of inviting foreign MNCs, Government has recently decided to to invite big foreign and local companies to the developed areas under the huge Mahaweli Diversion Scheme — constructed at a cost of nearly 42 Billion rupees, mostly foreign loans and aid.

Already MNCs such as the British — American Tobacco — operating through its branch the Ceylon Tobacco Company controls a very large area of agricultural land, through controlling production and marketing of small farmers. Food production is being replaced by tobacco. The National Milk industry has been recently given over almost completely to Nestles Ltd. who collect milk throughout the country from small producers. The danger of this being replaced by imported milk powder, rejecting the locally produced milk is visible. Consequences of such happenings in other Third World countries are well known.

The Agribusiness MNCs almost totally control the paddy sector, through the "Green Revolution" strategies started in Sri Lanka since 1960s. Paddy production has become almost impossible for poorer small farmers who form a majority of Paddy farmers

in the Country. Large profits flow out to these MNCs, while small farmers are compelled to mortgage, lease out or sell their plots, caused by very high costs of agricultural inputs and simultaneous high cost of living. Rapid worsening of poverty among the rural population has led to over 42% of children and a large number of mothers being seriously malnourished (officially admitted figures).

wages low, and silencing protests and political activity in general is an intensifying tendency.

Thus the Peasant struggle in Monaragala is of National significance as part of the overall resistance to the economic strategy imposed by the international capital and their local collaborators.

We therefore appeal to you to extend solidarity by

MAIN PEASANT DEMANDS

(1) The sugar multi-national presently operating and any other companies planning to intervene should leave and allow the peasantry living in this region to develop their own agricultural production which would suit their way of life and meet the needs of the country and not the needs of international traders.

(2) If the companies are to continue operation, then the peasants must be allowed to retain their cultivated lands and settlement areas.

The immediate demands in the peasants' campaign:—

(i) Halt the legal harassment and intimidation of the peasants who have resisted the take-over of their lands by the Company — especially the prosecution of 83 farmers (both women & men) who have been most active in preventing the bulldozing of their gardens.

(ii) Halt the various subtle pressures on the villagers to make them leave their lands.

(iii) Halt the harassment and intimidation of the various peasants' organisations — such as the pressures being brought by the State security agencies and the pro-government political elements in the area.

Over the last 10 years huge foreign loans obtained and spent for massive infra-structure development projects and for liberalized imports etc have compelled tremendous burdens on the poor, high cost of living low social welfare and subsidies to the poor etc.

Suppression of Trade Union and democratic rights to extract these from the people, by keeping

(1) Sending letters, Telegrams to the Government of Sri Lanka, and the company authorities.

(2) Giving this issue publicity and mobilizing support nationally and internationally.

We request you for urgent action since the operations of the Company have been accelerated and the peaceful protest of the people are likely to be suppressed.

THE LEBANON FEELING

You are rudely thrown out of bed by the sound of another explosion, and go to bed with the walls of your apartment falling. Houses and streets feel so awkward about your being there, for they have unintentionally led others wrongly believe that this is another human habitation linked to concerns that underlie living or a kind of existence. Almost every minute you have to watch, be on your guard when the familiar takes on a menacing meaninglessness. Of a nightmare, and the world would be thrown at your face. in a hundred splinters of glass, and an overwhelming avalanche of concrete rubble. Perhaps you will not suddenly be there. The tanks will then roll by burying you under their surveillance re-kindling some nervous immolated hope of another maimed life for the next abrupt day, when the sky falls across your shadow.

— Tilak A. Gunawardhana

Terrorists are surrendering by the dozen — Lalith

Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, National Security Minister said he did not intend disclosing the armed forces' strategy as military strategy was something that required a lot of understanding, judgement, perception and knowledge. The President had all those qualities which were necessary to decide matters of strategy.

He said he did not intend talking about the military pattern in Jaffna which had changed. Some were happy and others weren't. But there were a few matters he wanted to pinpoint.

Firstly, although the internecine battle between the terrorists had reduced to a large extent in Jaffna, in the eastern province it was different. There the LTTE was not having its way. A tremendous battle was on between them and the EPRLF and the remnants of TELO and PLOTE.

During one of those battles in Karativu, a few days ago, the security forces had taken into custody some of the terrorists who were very glad to be taken by the forces. In Tamil Nadu too, these battles were going on with kidnappings etc.

In the last few weeks, something new had been observed. Wherever the forces had re-established full control, the Tamil inhabitants, who had fled, were returning. For example, in Killinochchi, there was a time when no one could go along the main road when the terrorists controlled Paranthan without making a detour. Now however, there was no such thing, everyone travelled though Killinochchi town.

He said he was surprised at the extent to which the terrorists had neglected the health of the people in the areas they occupied. Several people had come to the

forces for medication and the soldiers had even cleaned the sores of ordinary people.

In Kattuwan, the people went away when the forces took control. But after talking to the civilian authorities, they were persuaded to come back. As far as the people in Kattuwan were concerned, the security forces had brought about a certain degree of normalcy there.

Despite this, the terrorist propaganda machinery in Madras was saying the forces were committing genocide. Yet Tamils were leaving India and coming to Sri Lanka. Here, they can travel to Vavuniya, Batticaloa and Trincomalee by train. It may not be as safe for them in Tamil Nadu.

The people who were talking of genocide should see the people coming over from Tamil Nadu daily at Talaimannar. Their IDs were checked and they were helped to get back to the places they left. They complained that their boats were being held in Rameswaram and he appealed that the vessels be released.

People will have noticed in the papers that there had been an increase in the number of attacks on terrorist targets and a reduction of civilian casualties. This was certainly due to the success of the armed forces. But this could not have been achieved, if the people did not co-operate by pointing out the terrorist camps.

Information was beginning to flow in much more freely now. Large numbers of Tamils are giving information because they have tasted LTTE control and they don't like it. As a result of their resistance, there had been a high degree of success. He wanted to thank these people,

particularly the Tamils among them, for doing that.

Kokkadicholi was another place to which large numbers of people were going back. The propaganda mills in Madras were very distant from the realities here.

Another development was that the number of terrorists who were surrendering was going up. They used to come in groups of two and three. Suddenly they are coming in tens and twelves.

There was a rumour that a large number wanted to surrender but he did not want to talk about it till it happened. They were fed-up and know that the LTTE want this to go on. Some come with their rifles and they get Rs. 25,000 each for them.

The others are looked after and all are rehabilitated. Some are lucky enough to go abroad. He appealed to all those young men involved in a battle they could not win, to give up.

Despite recent accusations, the government was not seeking a military solution. The military can only gain territory but only politics can win the people over. The government wanted to hold elections where the security forces had established full control. Some were even talking of an UC election in Trincomalee. After all, there were elections in Punjab and Mizoran. The government stood committed to the proposals made by the President last year. They presented the framework for a solution to the problem by looking after the interests of all communities.

In areas where the military had gained dominance there will be elections. The LTTE was not

(Continued on page 14)

Imperialists behind all this — Dinesh

Mr. Dev Gunasekera (CP - Kala-wana) said Indo-Lankan relations had strained during the last 30 days. The government's military action in the North and East had escalated and innocent civilians too had been victimised.

He said when President Jayewardene briefed the opposition leaders recently of the situation in the North and the East he too had made his own suggestions at the briefing and government had adopted some of those suggestions.

He cautioned India that she should not succumb to Tamil Nadu pressures on the crisis here. India should not interfere in the affairs of this country but should resume her peace efforts.

The LTTE was adding fuel to fire. They were increasing the hardship of the people in the North and the East by their intransigence. If the opportunity

for a negotiated settlement is lost now, it could be lost for ever. Bloodshed and widespread destruction would result, the country's economy would be ruined and neither India nor Sri Lanka would benefit. The imperialists, for their own ends were playing the double game in the current crisis, he said.

Mr. Dinesh Gunewardena (MEP-Maharagama) said the government should take the people into its confidence and tell them the real situation in the country. The people ought to know if there was a real threat to the security of the country, because only then would they correctly respond to the situation.

If there was a threat of a foreign invasion, and the government were to get another foreign army to deal with it then the division of the country would be permanent.

Referring to the possibility of India attempting to annex this country, he referred to an Indian paper by Prof. Wilson, and said that Mr. Chelvanayakam had envisaged this country becoming a part of an Indian federation. He had also said that in such an eventuality, this country would be represented as two units.

"He alleged that there was an attempt by the western imperialists to dismember India." The happenings in the North and East were connected with what was happening in India.

Referring to an article titled "War by proxy imminent", he said arms manufactured in Italy had been received by the LTTE. It was childish to think that Prabhakaran had stolen them from America.

The LTTE received international support. There were documents proving this. Arms shipments proving this. Arms shipments have come via Singapore into Sri Lanka. Western imperialists were behind all this.

The governments should control every inch of this country. Only if there was complete control would any attempt to dismember the country be effectively thwarted, he said.

The national Security Minister should make a statement with regard to those under detention. There were persons being held for more than 18 months. This was illegal under the PTA.

The villages in the East and Ampara were wiped out as a result of releasing persons supporting Prabhakaran. The Arawanthalawa incident was one such instance.

The government had kneeled under the conditions laid down by India and Prabhakaran. The government's policies changed from season to season and therefore no one could have confidence in them he, said.

Terrorists are . . .

(Continued from page 13)

talking of devolution but of traditional homelands.

People thought we were going to suffer a series of defeats. We should not oscillate between despondency or over optimism, he said.

The spectre of Eelam is receding to an extent where some people are saying 'Eelam over my dead body'. The government should try to resolve the problem with the least number of deaths. "A certain page of this book was turned in February this year, so don't distrust this government, don't make us the whipping boy," he said.

"We can press home a military advantage and the LTTE knows they cannot win militarily. They have to come to the negotiating table and it is then that the elusive political solution could be found."

MY FARMER

*My farmer has the look of a man, but not quite one
Who has been discharged from a non paying ward
Feeble, starved, needing some exercising
Of the village spirits, the Peretheya
The Huniyamdeviya to put him back on his feet.
He never heard birds sing to him,
If ever, it was the song of the loan
That he had taken to tide over drought
An indifferent harvest, a child having died
Of prolonged malnutrition, the cases in the courts
Interminable litigation to save his foothold
From the pitiless boundaries that constantly shrink
And now almost at the mud walls
That enclose a tale that the one door prevents
A Passer-by from ever knowing.*

— Tilak A. Gunawardhana

PRESS BRIEFS

(Translations by Lanka Press Monitor of reports in the Sinhala and Tamil press)

Not A Humanitarian Approach!

The editorial is on the unreasonable arrest of over 240 persons from the Up-Country on the grounds that they did not possess National Identity Cards. The editorial says that police and other security authorities who arrest people for non-possession of National Identity Cards should know first of all who are entitled to National Identity Cards and who are not. Those who are below the age of 18 years and those who had obtained Indian Passports to leave for India under the Sirimavo-Shastri Pact and other agreements are not required to obtain identity cards. Those who obtained Indian passports to leave for India under the Sirimavo-Shastri Pact are unable to leave for India due to the suspension of the ferry service. They are refused employment on estates. As a result some of them come down to Colombo seeking employment. They do not possess National Identity Cards but possess only the Indian Passport issued by the Indian High Commission.

The editorial stresses that people of the plantations who gave their blood and sweat for the economic uplift of this country are now awaiting repatriation to India, without any possessions. They should be treated humanely. They should not be inconvenienced and harassed by the security authorities. The editorial says in conclusion that this kind of inhuman treatment should not be permitted in the future.

— VIRAKESARAI, 23/3

The price of baby

The Catholic diocese of Negombo held a mass rally yesterday to voice their concern over the degradation of aesthetic values in Sri Lanka.

Some of the slogans at the rally were * Ban the import of 'blue films' * A pup is Rs 1000 * A pigging is Rs 800 * A baby is Rs 500. * Are we dancing disco while 'tiny Rome' is on

fire? * Do not make infants a commodity in the open market. * We do not need 'blue films, drugs and prostitutes. * 'oh mother, 'oh father, are dollars more precious to you than us? * Do away with infant farms * Ban ponographic literature. * Are we going to close our eyes till Negombo is destroyed?

— DIVAINA 23/3

The People should be alert

We have confidence in our judicial process but the men who manipulate the emergency orders can use them to the disadvantage of innocents as was seen when Communist leaders were harassed under these laws stating that they had connections with the racial riots of 1983.

The people should be alert as the Government tries to drive the country towards a police state.

— ATHTHA 21/3

LTTE Captures Soldiers

5 soldiers were killed and 13 were injured in a dawn attack launched by Tamil extremists on the Jaffna-Pannai Army Guard point. A senior officer of the security section said another 8 soldiers were missing. According to reports reaching the 'Virakesari' the 8 soldiers were captured by the extremists and are kept hostages. It is reported that as a prelude to the Pannai attack, Tamil extremists launched mortar shell attacks on the Jaffna Fort Camp and security forces also returned fire.

The Pannai Guard Point was attacked while this exchange of fire was going on. The security forces' bunker and former Chest Hospital building are reported to have been damaged extensively. The extremists launched the attacks for nearly 45 minutes and it remains a mystery as to how the extremists got there. It is believed that they got there along the coast. Other camps in the Peninsula which were alerted launched mortar shell attacks. The extremists had escaped in a boat taking the captured soldiers with them as hostages.

Jaffna became deserted when news spread about the attacks. Shops put up shutters, schools were closed and offices did not function. Reports said that helicopters and aircraft were hovering overhead. It is further reported that attacks were launched on the Navatkuli, Palaly and Kanke-santhurai camps and mortar shells were launched from those camps in return.

Security chiefs conferred Monday morning in Colombo and a team of security officers of the Joint Operations Command led by Security Chief General Cyril Ranatunga rushed to the Palaly camp.

It is reported that until yesterday afternoon no helicopters landed at the Mandaithivu. Army medical team of the Jaffna Fort was providing medical and surgical treatment to the injured soldiers. Details of damages due to shell attacks are not known.

Three extremists were reported killed when government forces of the Kilinochchi camp returned fire, on being attacked first by the extremists. Transport Services remained paralysed after the incidents.

— VIRAKESARI

In the memorandum the Tamil prisoners have stated that more than 3,000 Tamil youths are being kept in detention in various places under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and most of them are in detention for more than 18 months. The prisoners have also demanded better facilities for them in the prisons and detention camps.

— VIRAKESARI, 24/3

Five Soldiers 'Exhibited' By "Tigers"

Five soldiers were kept on "exhibition" at Ariyakulam junction in Jaffna by the 'Tigers'. A "Tiger" notice board contained their names.

It was said that these five soldiers were captured by the "Tigers" during the attack, on the Chest Clinic. In this attack, Arun, a division leader of the "Tigers", was killed, it was said.

— THINAKARAN

Analysing the Geneva resolution

Susantha Dias

The thrust of official propaganda on the subject has been, that a covert Indian attempt to gain acceptance at the CHR for an Argentine sponsored Resolution which was politically motivated and blatantly one-sided and intended to blacken Sri Lanka's name in an HR context, was thwarted by SLG's diplomacy, which brought about a watered-down Resolution accepted by consensus with SLG's acquiescence. The political reality seems somewhat different.

Context

2. Sponsorship of the Resolution was not by Argentina alone (and this is a democratic Argentina, whose elected Government is taking action against HR violations by its predecessor Junta), but also by Canada and Norway, two important donors whose goodwill we need.

3. The Resolution was set firmly within an HR framework for, in its preamble the CHR claimed to be guided by universally accepted rules of international humanitarian law, and in its operative section the CHR called on SLG specifically to cooperate with the ICRC in disseminating and promoting such law. The CHR has thus gone on record that there is an adverse HR situation here which requires cognizance and comment, whilst identifying the SLG specifically and alone as requiring to upgrade its HR performance.

4. The Resolution is to be seen as the outcome of a three-year watching brief which the CHR has maintained over the HR situation here, because it recalls the CHR's decision of 1984 and notes the Reports of its Special Rapporteur on torture and of its Working Group on enforced or involuntary disappearances (both presumably in respect of the SL situation). That is to say, that the CHR now deems the situation to have

so deteriorated during that 'probationary period' as to warrant inscription of a resolution.

Import

5. The prospect initially facing SLG was acceptance by a majority of a highly critical resolution damaging to SLG's international standing. The outcome, claimed to represent a diplomatic victory, has been a consensual resolution which, as will be spelled out below, is not only critical of SLG's HR performance (vide paragraphs 3 & 4 above) but undermines the foundation of SLG's position, that it is engaged in fighting a terrorist threat to law and order. Moreover, the Resolution as adopted implicitly recognises the validity of the Tamil claim that it is engaged in resisting (even if violently) a diminution of its HRs and fundamental freedoms. It is a moot point, whether or not it is preferable to be called by some 'a scoundrel' whilst a few others testify to your goodness, or be said by all to be 'a cad'.

6. The Resolution calls upon "all parties and groups", without identification or distinction, to forswear violence and negotiate a peaceful settlement. In as much as there are only two parties to the internal conflict situation under reference, SLG and the Tamil militants, this equates the two in terms of responsibility for violence, and undermines the 'terrorism — law & order' argument.

7. It also calls on all parties and groups to pursue a negotiated political solution "based on principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms". In as much as it is the State or Government (SLG) which has the role and responsibility to uphold and apply HRs and fundamental freedoms in respect of all its citizens, and the only other combatant in the conflict

situation is a militant-armed section of the Tamil community, the implication is inescapable that the conflict itself is deemed by the CHR to constitute a diminution if not violation of HRs and fundamental rights of Tamils.

8. The only comfort the SLG may draw from the Resolution is that the CHR has called on the Tamil militants **also** to desist from violence and negotiate a peaceful settlement.

Conclusion

9. The outcome has been, therefore.

- (a) that the CHR has gone on record, having watched the situation for three years, that there is an adverse HR situation here which warrants cognizance and comment by it,
- (b) that this situation stems from an internal conflict between parties it equates in respect of responsibility, and
- (c) that the conflict lies within a context of diminished or violated HRs and fundamental freedoms which require to be restored by a negotiated political solution.

10. India could not have wished for a better preparation of the diplomatic ground, as it were, in respect of any future initiatives she may contemplate on behalf of the Tamils. One must then ask: might it not have been a clever diplomatic move by India to work for a toughly-worded resolution, which could then, in bargaining, be exchanged for a milder but consensual one, committing the entire international community in support of her perception and approach?

U. S. State Dept. on Sri Lanka crisis

U. S. interests in Sri Lanka derive from its strong democratic traditions and its more recent economic success, both of which serve as proof to other developing countries of the efficacy of the political and economic system we advocate. Sri Lanka is, moreover a good friend of the United States. The Sri Lankan government recently agreed to upgrade the capabilities of long-existing VOA facility, part of a global effort to improve the effectiveness of these broadcasts. We have also been pleased by Sri Lanka's moderate voice in multilateral forums, and by its general policy opening its ports to visits by ships of all nations.

Sri Lanka's principal problem, and our principal concern, is the current spasm of ethnic conflict between the majority Sinhalese, who make up 74 per cent of the population, and the Sri Lankan Tamils, who migrated to Sri Lanka from South India centuries ago, and who currently comprise approximately 12.5 percent of the population.

Sri Lankan Tamils live throughout the country, including Colombo, but are heavily concentrated in the north and parts of the east. Sri Lankan Tamils have always occupied prominent positions in government, commerce, and the professions. Many are university graduates and significant land owners. At one time 40 per cent of the university students were Tamils. Tamils believe that since independence, successive governments dominated by Sinhalese have discriminated against them in such areas as access to education and jobs. **Sri Lankan Tamils considered government measures after 1956 to promote the use of Sinhala, at the expense of Tamil and English, to be particularly discriminatory.**

In the mid-1970's, many Tamil leaders and frustrated youths began to feel that the only way

for them to redress their grievances was to separate the Tamil-majority areas from Sri Lanka and form an independent Tamil state, to be known as Tamil "Eelam", the political leaders, joining together under the banner of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), contested the elections of 1977 on a platform of independence, and won all fourteen seats in the northern province and two seats in the east. **Tamil Youths, not confident that the political process would provide redress for the grievances or allow the creation of a Tamil state, formed militant groups and turned to armed struggle as the political process lagged in achieving their goals.**

The Tamil militants represent a very heterogeneous group, but all proclaim the goal of a Tamil state which would include the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka. Total militant strength is probably no more than 10,000 with members drawn from young, unemployed Tamil males. Since 1983, five militant groups have been the most prominent. These are the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), the Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS), and the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PTOTE).

Although united by the cause of creating a Tamil state, these different groups do not form a unified fighting force. In fact, the last year has been repeated attacks by the LTTE against other militant groups. The most hard-line group, the LTTE, has engaged in an apparent campaign to absorb or wipe out the other groups to ensure its dominance of the militant movement.

Ideologically, all militant groups espouse Tamil nationalism mixed with varying degrees of Marxism. the LTTE and EROS are considered to be the most dogmatic of the groups and are likely to

seek to impose single-party rule should they gain power. They have indicated that if they achieve control of the multi-ethnic eastern province, they may force out its Sinhalese residents. In the areas now controlled by the militants, such as the Jaffna peninsula, tax collection, licensing, police duties, and judicial functions have been established by the militants without normal democratic procedures. Laws are enforced in a harsh and unpredictable manner, with militants resorting to summary executions of alleged informants or other suspected traitors. Although many Tamil residents of these areas are sympathetic to the goals of the militant groups and see them as their main defence against the government's security forces, **many observers believe that a free election would bring the moderate Tamil leaders of the TULF, rather than the militants, back into power.**

In response to the Tamil insurgency, the Sri Lankan security forces have grown substantially, especially during the past year. Before the insurgency, the army was largely a ceremonial army, with limited training and weaponry. It clearly did not have either the training or experience to wage a protracted guerilla struggle. Since 1983, the security forces and police have doubled in size and expenditures on defence have grown accordingly. The armed forces' manpower now exceeds 35,000. The police has grown in size to 20,000, which includes over 1,000 special task force personnel specially charged with, counter-insurgency operations. Civilian militia groups have been formed, especially in the east, and their size now approaches 15,000. There has been no need for conscription, since there have been more applicants than can be accommodated.

We estimate that about 4,400 people were killed or wounded in the conflict during 1986, including 800 members of the security

forces. As many as 100,000 Sri Lankans have left Sri Lanka since 1983 and over 200,000 were displaced internally in the last two years alone. In recent months there has been a small return flow of Sri Lankan Tamils from South India.

In a notable development, the government has recently made an effort to improve the training and discipline of its security forces. The government has distributed information on human rights to its troops and formed teams to teach soldiers Tamil and encourage respect for Tamil culture. Discipline within the army has improved. In the recent military actions in the north, there have been virtually no allegations of human rights abuses by the Sri Lankan army. This appears to demonstrate the Government's concern with human rights. Unfortunately, this cannot be said for the police special task force which was accused of summary executions of a large number of Tamil civilians in an incident last month in the eastern province. We have encouraged continued efforts in this area to address the full range of human rights concerns.

Quite obviously, a negotiated solution to the conflict is urgently needed. The Sri Lankan Government, with the determined assistance of India, is energetically seeking a negotiated settlement to the conflict.

The militants, however, remained intransigent. They continue to insist on an independent state which would include both the northern and eastern provinces. They refused to participate in negotiations, propose any compromise formulations that might be acceptable to them, and continued the armed struggle. It became increasingly clear to both the Sri Lankan government and the Indian government that an effort had to be made to bring the militants into the peace process. Recent negotiating efforts have focused on this objective.

U.S. Policy

A negotiated settlement offers the only hope for resolution of the tragic conflict in Sri Lanka.

We support the unity and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka, a democratic government which we maintain very warm and friendly relations. We admire the statesmanship displayed by President Jayewardene and applaud the detailed and far-reaching proposals put forward by his government. We have also urged the Government of India to remain constructively engaged in the search for a negotiated solution and have praised the very positive Indian role during the past year. We have made clear to all concerned that we do not believe that a purely military solution to the conflict is either possible or desirable.

Since the most effective way to end human rights abuses in

Sri Lanka is to end the ethnic strife itself, we believe our strong support for a negotiated solution makes an important contribution in the human rights field. We do not, however, believe that efforts to reduce and eliminate human rights problems need await a final settlement; quite the contrary, greater attention to the safety and well-being of Tamil civilians innocently caught up in the conflict will help restore the trust and confidence between the communities which will be required to make any settlement viable. To this end, we have maintained an active, though largely private, dialogue with the government both on general human rights issues and individual cases.

The Commission on Human Rights on the Situation in Sri Lanka

Guided by the universal declaration of human rights, the international covenant on civil and political rights and the universally accepted rules of international humanitarian law,

Recalling its decision 1984/111 of 14 March 1984.

Taking note of the report of the special rapporteur on torture and the report of the working group on enforced or involuntary disappearances.

1. **Calls upon** all parties and groups to respect fully the universally accepted rules of humanitarian law.

2. **Calls upon** all parties and groups to renounce the use of force and acts of violence and to pursue a negotiated political solution, based on principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

3. **Invites** the Government of Sri Lanka to intensify its co-operation with the International Committee of the Red Cross in the fields of dissemination and

promotion of international humanitarian law and invites the Government of Sri Lanka to consider favourably the offer of the services of the International Committee of the Red Cross to fulfil its functions of protection of humanitarian standards. Including the provision of assistance and protection to victims of all affected parties.

4. **Expresses the hope** that the Government of Sri Lanka will continue to provide information to the Commission on Human Rights on this question.

This is the first ever resolution adopted by the human rights commission on the human rights situation in Sri Lanka. It reflects the widely felt concern among the Commission members that the human rights situation in Sri Lanka is indeed serious enough to be worthy of attention. The Human Rights Commission is the principal organisation dealing with the human rights. In addition to the states represented in the Commission it has several non-governmental organisations who participate in commission's work as observers.

INTERVIEW

Ethnic conflict and development

N. Ram

This is part of THE HINDU'S interview on the situation in Sri Lanka with Mr. Gamini Dissanayake, Minister of Lands, Land Development and Mahaweli Development.

Mr. Gamini Dissanayake: You all are Tamils, you're interested in a different dimension of Tamil life, not merely from the political point of view — it's a great culture, it's a great tradition, and I feel rather sad that they have only the LTTE today to be their spokesmen.

N. Ram: As Minister of Lands, Land Development and Mahaweli Development, you are very much concerned with development — not just as a concept, but as a major ongoing venture. You are the prime director of a major project which, under normal circumstances, would have attracted much attention in a country like India (with an active independent press) but which, under the present circumstances, does not. Again, this point has been made: that the cost of any ethnic conflict for a developing country (regardless of official claims) is high; there's always a link between the developmental process and the diversion of not just material resources but energies, moral concentration, political concentration. I could ask your Finance Minister the same question. But how do you feel about this dilemma, as a leading Sri Lankan politician? What have you lost in the bargain as a nation? In other words, I am asking you for an insider's assessment of the correlation between the developmental imperative, as you perceive and respond to it, and the issues, connected with the 'ethnic conflict, that you have focussed upon?

Mr. Gamini Dissanayake: Yes My view is that any form of

development cannot be artificial. Any form of development must be the release of the natural energies of the people. In relation to the decisions that we have taken we may have made some mistakes, but overall we have made the correct decisions. A vast country like India or the Soviet Union or the United States of America can look at an entirely different development process — because they have got vast natural resources. India has iron ore, it's got oil, it's got steel, millions of acres of forestry. But in a small country like Sri Lanka, the greatest asset is its geographical location — as a mid-point in journeys from Europe to the Far East, as a country of great scenic beauty which has a talented people with very high literacy. So taking these factors into account...

N. Ram: And a higher "quality of life" in relation to the per capita income — economists have pointed this out — than India... a definitely higher Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI), as these things are compiled...

Mr. Gamini Dissanayake: Yes In relation to all that, the policies this Government has followed are logical, relevant and timely. Now in relation to the problems that we see on the ethnic front, in juxtaposition to the development process, it is something that we would like to face now than later! Because at the moment we've only laid the foundations for the development process. For example, the full benefits of Mahaweli will be felt 15 years later. Now the Tamil

militants are not banishing Mahaweli systems, why? Because it would... be for their benefit also. I've just negotiated the development of System A, one of the biggest systems in Mahaweli, with the Soviet Union. They're coming to do System A, that is in and around the area between Trincomalee and Batticaloa, about 157,000 acres of land. We're not concerned with the ideological stance (at least I have not been). I've looked at it as a development process.

Then in relation to the land distribution in the predominantly Tamil areas and the Muslim areas, we've worked out a very good rational, reasonable solution with the two Indian Ministers, particularly Chidambaram on his first visit here (April-May 1986).

We would like to look at the ethnic process as another facet of the very development that we unleashed. Perhaps if we had a controlled economy, perhaps if we had a regimented system, these problems might not have arisen. But development itself sets in motion certain forms of action. Insofar as Mahaweli is concerned, what we have done is on all fours with what we have done for the last 2,500 years — a highly developed hydraulic system with the added factor that any country which has to have a stable future needs an assured power base, electricity, energy, which we are getting through Mahaweli and the other development schemes.

On the non-power side, I started in the North and the East some of the irrigation and agricultural projects which had been on the drawing-board for the last 30 years and not started. For example, in Mannar, 500

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Denial of bail under the PTA

Desmond Fernando (Secretary, Civil Rights Movement)

Denying bail is a very drastic step because it punishes the innocent as well as the guilty and facilitates the paying off of private grudges by making false complaints. When a breadwinner is so held for months on end a whole family may starve. Indeed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Sri Lanka is a party, rightly provides that release on bail should be the rule and remand pending trial the exception. The test of the relevant article is given below.

At a recent meeting CRM discussed the need to draw attention to the extraordinary provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) which provides that, once an accused is indicted he shall be remanded till the conclusion of the trial. Such provision is common in other legislation dealing with offences concerning national security; however one usually looks a little further and reads "provided however," and then there is provision that the Court of Appeal may grant bail in "exceptional circumstances", or that bail may be granted if the Attorney-General consents. Even such provisions have been subject to the criticism of being too restrictive. In the case of the PTA, however, one looks with growing incredulity for such a provision. It is not there.

In other words, the offence may be comparatively minor, for persons are charged under the PTA for failure to volunteer information to the police as well as for more serious offences involving violence. The defence, the prosecution, the police, the judge, may all agree that there is no danger of the accused interfering with witnesses or absconding or otherwise misbehaving, and that there exist exceptional circumstances which manifestly merit release on bail. Yet there is no

way this can be granted. The "conclusion of the trial" may take years, yet the accused, whom the law presumes to be innocent and who may eventually be acquitted, is condemned, by no decision or wish of anyone in authority who has given his mind to the facts of the case, but by the way the law has been framed, to spend the waiting period behind bars.

To this one must add the fact that the accused may have spent eighteen months or more in detention before being charged. The result is an arbitrary punishment of a dimension totally unacceptable in a democratic society.

The compulsion that the court "shall, in every case, order the remand..." is, furthermore, a serious down grading of the role and function of our judiciary.

Ironically, if convicted, the accused is better off so far as bail is concerned. For then the PTA provides that he may in exceptional circumstances be released by the Court of Appeal pending appeal.

Already many PTA detainees have been held for long periods without trial. Some trials are proceeding, others are imminent and are likely to be long drawn out. The problem of bail is thus an increasingly urgent one.

CRM wishes to make it clear that it maintains its criticisms of other aspects of the PTA. However these are not repeated in the present statement, which focusses special attention on the aspect of bail.

CRM calls on the government as a matter of urgency to empower the judiciary to grant bail in cases under the PTA.

The Article

Anyone arrested or detained on a criminal charge shall be brought

promptly before a judge or other officer authorized by law to exercise judicial power and shall be entitled to trial within a reasonable time or to release. It shall not be the general rule that persons awaiting trial shall be detained in custody but release may be subject to guarantees to appear for trial, at any other stage of judicial proceedings, and should occasion arise, for execution of the judgment.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9 (3).

Ethnic conflict...

(Continued from page 19)

million rupees (Sri Lanka)... I've been working on Giant's Tank, which we could not carry on because of the...

N. Ram: which was to be World Bank-aided, IDA...

Mr. Gamini Dissanayake: IDA. It took about two years to negotiate that. Then, except for the Jaffna district... Mannar, Mullaitivu, Vavuniya, we have negotiated three integrated rural development projects. There are quite a few Sinhala districts which haven't got those integrated rural development projects — even today MPs from Anuradhapura are coming and asking for one — because it goes into the very heart of the village: electricity schemes, houses, sports facilities, dairy development, agricultural development, small irrigation canals — all come within the ambit of the integrated (rural development projects).

One can't be happy that there's a problem like this: it conflicts with a very highly accelerated development process. But I would rather face it now than face it later — because, then, you're doing that development on an artificial foundation.

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Gorbachov's challenge to the West

"Once again, Mikhail Gorbachev beat Ronald Reagan to the punch" wrote *NEWSWEEK* in hailing a 'Breakthrough' on Arms Control. An American cartoonist, more sympathetic to Mr. Reagan, a hostage to US opinion over IRANGATE, saw Mr. Gorbachev as an enterprising supersalesman trying to rescue the hostage by an arms deal he could hardly refuse, so desperate as he was for some PR success, especially an international one. The Indian analyst, C. Raja Mohan also recognised Mr. Gorbachev's skill for timing important initiatives. "The Soviet leader has once again seized the highground of disarmament diplomacy" he wrote in the editorial page of the *HINDU*.

Dmitri Simes, senior associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, is no radical

peacenik but conceded that "Gorbachev is a leader" who makes unthinkable things happen". He listed Mr. Gorbachev's moves on Sakharov, the crusade against bureaucracy and corruption, his economic reforms, his proposals for drastic cuts in nuclear weapons, leading ultimately to their elimination, and his compromise offers to help a settlement on Afghanistan. Politics is an art of calculated risks, and up to now the Soviet leader has practised it masterfully" said Simes in an article to the *Washington Post*.

With the exception of France, the reaction of America's European allies, were extremely encouraging. Even Mrs. Thatcher had to admit, perhaps a bit grudgingly, that it was a "good step forward". Her Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe was more forthright. The

offer "could transform for the better the whole atmosphere in which arms control talks and East-West relations are conducted".

Probably the most interesting response was that of the West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Moscow-Bonn relations had nose-dived after Mr. Kohl's ridiculous reference of Mr. Gorbachev's gift for diplomacy as a talent comparable to that of the Nazi propaganda maestro, Dr. Goebbels.

The Bonn correspondent of the *Financial Times* Peter Brute reported:

West Germany has begun pressing for a new superpower summit meeting this year, and in an important political declaration here yesterday Chancellor Helmut Kohl said Bonn accepted Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev's talk of "new thinking" in Soviet Foreign policy.

Presenting his new Government's political programme to the Bundestag, Mr. Kohl said of the Soviet leader: "We take him at his word". The remark places him firmly on the side of his Foreign Minister, Mr. Hans Dietrich Genscher, and is likely to annoy Washington.

East-West relations were on the move again, he said. Bonn welcomed a planned meeting next month between Mr. George Schultz, the US Secretary of State, and Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, his Soviet counterpart, "and we advocate a new summit meeting during this year," he said.

The Chancellor's comments are also an important political victory for Mr. Genscher, whose Free Democrat (FDP) party did well

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GORBACHEV TO REAGAN'S RESCUE



And now, trading arms with hostages.

Trading arms for hostages

YUGOSLAVIA

An attempt to stem inflation

Besides its role as a founder of the nonaligned movement, socialist Yugoslavia has two other claims to fame. One is that its federalism guarantees genuine autonomy to its republics and thus ensures its various nationalities cultural dignity, economic well-being and a large measure of political power to manage their own affairs. The other is "self-management" whereby labour and management in all major enterprises decide matters jointly to attain the twin goals of economic efficiency and a satisfied workforce playing a vital participatory role.

Ethnic disturbances some months ago in the autonomous republic of Kosovo, an area of chronic turbulence that borders Albania, thrust once more to the fore the question of ethnic nationalism in socialist Yugoslavia.

Now labour unrest has caused a serious crisis in a country that was heavily dependent on the IMF and western aid and credits. Inflation is rampant. The IMF/which had imposed restraints from 1980 withdrew last May. Aleksander Lebl, the FT correspondent in Belgrade, reported:

An apparently divided Yugoslav Government yesterday added a partial roll-back of prices to its politically controversial wage controls in an attempt to stem inflation running at an annual rate of 130 per cent.

The decree, which manufacturers have five days and retailers eight days to implement, requires that price increased by more than 20.3 per cent this year must be cut to their level of December 31 last year and remain there for the next three months.

The move is a response to mounting trade union complaints at the one-sided nature of the wage measure, which the Govern-

The Yugoslav Government recently attempted to play down the significance of the current wave of industrial unrest but said it would have a new social compact on prices and wages scheme drawn up by early July, writes Aleksander Lebl in Belgrade.

Officials are concerned that reports of the strikes might worry the country's creditor nations. But any suggestion that Yugoslavia should return to the International Monetary Fund for stand-by credits was unjustified, they said.

The Government yesterday stressed that while the law was in force it had to be obeyed. But government representatives admitted that the present law to freeze wages at the level prevailing during the fourth quarter of last year was unfair to some

organisations.

Yugoslavia has been gripped by a wave of industrial unrest over recent days in response to the law. This has come at a bad time for the Government which is wrestling with triple-digit inflation and a worsening external position.

The government also admitted that the current legislation was passed hastily, that it was of poor quality and that the civil service, which itself had been depleted because of poor pay rates, had implemented it badly.

On the present debt problem, official said the current policy on wages was in response to creditors' demands on inflation control, and a decision to lift interest rates, control the money supply and depreciate the dinar was on the IMF's advice.

ment introduced at the start of this month, to roll pay levels back to their average level in the last quarter of last year. This has caused an unprecedented rash of protest strikes.

Evidence of Government disarray under the pressure of the economic crisis was evident yesterday. Only half-an-hour before the official Tanjug news agency carried news of the price roll-back, senior ministers were telling a news conference that price controls would be counter productive.

Mr. Milos Milosavljevic, a vice prime minister responsible for the economy, and four cabinet ministers, said price controls would add to shortages and be a step backward from the introduction of market laws.

As inflation has mounted, Yugoslav governments have introduced several forms of price controls, which the international Monetary Fund criticised during its 1980-86 supervision of the economy under successive standby credit arrangements. The IMF ceased detailed supervision of Yugoslavia last May, since when inflation has accelerated further.

Yugoslav officials are likely to find themselves under pressure to return to a closer relationship with the IMF when they meet representatives of western government creditors in Paris on March 30.

Yugoslavia owes western governments and banks about \$19bn (£11.9bn) and is approaching a crucial phase in renewing rescheduling terms.

An unusual feature of Yugoslav hyper-inflation is the degree to which many commodity prices are already controlled.

Since last summer, many products, including foodstuffs, farm machinery, textiles, furniture, ceramics and tools, have been under some form of control. Nevertheless, in January and February this year retail prices rose by 14.8 per cent, an annual rate of increase close to 130 per cent.

Meanwhile Yugoslav Prime Minister, Mr. Mikulic, has made a frantic appeal to the 12 members of the EEC to 'revive their flagging trade ties and boost their cooperation with Yugoslavia, for political and economic reasons' writes correspondent Quentin Peel from the EEC headquarters in Brussels:

The Yugoslav Government has appealed to all 12 member states of the EEC to revive their flagging trade ties, and boost their co-operation with Yugoslavia — for political as well as economic reasons.

A personal letter from Mr. Branko Mikulic, the Yugoslav Prime Minister, was sent to all the EEC foreign ministers, and discussed this week at their annual council meeting. It spelt out his government's concern and dissatisfaction at what he described as "stagnating" co-operation between Yugoslavia and the Community, and the deteriorating pattern of trade.

Mr Mikulic underlined that 85 per cent of his country's trade deficit, and 65 per cent of its bilateral debt servicing obligations were with EEC member states. Yet the share of the Community in the overall foreign economic relations of Yugoslavia was "falling considerably."

The letter hinted at the Yugoslav Government's concern at its increasing dependence on trade with Eastern bloc countries, and the resulting threat to its non-aligned stance. "We believe that in this context it is of crucial

importance to provide more scope for Yugoslav exports to the Community market, which as you will agree is a prerequisite for the expansion of our relations," Mr Mikulic said.

The foreign ministers reached no clear conclusion in their discussion this week, but they agreed that the whole subject of Yugoslavia, and their political and economic links, should be an important item of their agenda at the forthcoming informal meeting next month.

Some member states are inclined to take a sympathetic view of the Yugoslav Government's economic, and therefore political plight, but others are more inclined to insist that it must put its economic house in order before it can expect more generous trade treatment.

Mr. Mikulic said in his letter to all the ministers that his government was aware of its part in halting the negative economic conditions in the country. "We are making great efforts to overcome the economic difficulties we are facing today," he said.

"It is in Yugoslavia's long term and lasting interest to develop stable, equitable and compressive co-operation with the European Community, on the basis of mutually agreed principles."

Gorbachov's. . .

(Continued from page 21)

in the January general election dispute (or perhaps because of) constant attacks on his handling of foreign policy by right-wingers in Mr. Kohl's coalition. Soon after the election, Mr. Genscher called on the West to pay Mr. Gorbachev's reforming zeal greater heed.

Mr. Kohl, who narrowly failed to break former chancellor Helmut Schmidt's record 164 minute Government Declaration (given at the start of each new parlia-

ment), will probably have irritated the US by pressing for a nuclear test ban such as the one recently ended by the Soviet Union and scoffed at by Washington.

The Indian analyst, C. Raja Mohan summed up fundamental implications of the offer, not just for the superpowers, but for a world in search of disarmament and a stable peace, in these words:

The recent Soviet offer on Euromissiles is an important initiative to break the arms control deadlock over Star Wars at the Reykjavik summit and the collapse of the Soviet nuclear test moratorium. By agreeing to delink the question of Euromissiles from Star Wars. Mr. Gorbachev has breathed fresh life into the arms control process which appeared to have reached a dead end, after arousing worldwide expectation at the Iceland summit with the U.S. President, Mr. Ronald Reagan, last October.

Mr. Gorbachev's offer on Euromissiles is indeed a coup of sheer political genius. By untying the Reykjavik package, he brought into public view the Western commitment to atomic weapons and nuclear deterrence. But agreement or no agreement, the European security debate is unlikely to be the same ever again. Mr. Gorbachev is daring the NATO leaders to join him in the quest for a nuclear-free Europe. But the million dollar question is: would the West be prepared to enjoy the fun of living without nuclear weapons?

If the West wants to join him, it would have to discard its basic tenet of the nuclear cut — that nuclear weapons are the indispensable guarantors of Western civilisation and freedom. If the West refuses to join him, its leaders would have the mortification of telling their people that the arms control proposals they were espousing over the past many years were a gigantic deception. Either way they would be conceding an unbelievable political victory to Mr. Gorbachev and the Soviet Union.

The Oslo Seminar on Sri Lanka

(Summaries of written contributions by Sri Lankan participants)

Professor Karthigesu Sivathamby:
The human rights factor in the Sri Lanka ethnic conflict: a review of the development since the 1983 outburst

Any analysis of the situation in Sri Lanka will have to deal with how violations of human rights actually constitute the core of the problem, and how such violations have determined the attitudes and actions of the affected party, namely the Tamils, towards the State and the character of the political solution itself.

1983 constitutes a landmark in the history of the ethnic conflict, as it became clear that it was to the north and the east that the Sri Lankan Tamils could fall back. Security measures taken by the State since the 1983 riots include night curfews and declarations of Security Zones and Prohibited Zones in the north and east, and surveillance of Tamils in non-Tamil areas.

The character of the ethnic violence changed after the attacks on the Dollar and Kent farms in Mullaitivu District and the incident at Anuradhapura. Retaliation attacks have led to the killing of hundreds of unarmed civilians.

Amnesty International has published reliable and impartial reports on human right violations: arbitrary killings, "disappearances", arbitrary arrest and detention, and torture. These violations have led to dislocation and disruption of civil life. They are committed by members of the armed forces, which in the north and east are completely Sinhala.

Tamils were forced to leave their homes for safety and security reasons; on 30 September 1986, there were over 100,000 displaced persons, most of them staying in refugee camps. Governmental assistance to them is limited.

With India acting as mediator, a ceasefire was arranged in 1985 between the militant organizations

and the Sri Lankan government. Consequently, two rounds of talks were held in Thimpu, Bhutan, which however broke down. A common Committee to Monitor the Cessation of Hostilities effectively ceased to function after an incident in Jaffna.

At the moment, negotiations at the political level are being conducted through the good offices of the government of India. It is clear that without the participation and sanction of the militants, no implementation of any agreement is possible.

Due to the activities of the armed forces, especially the attacks on civilians and air attacks, the ties between the Tamil people at large and the militants have become stronger.

In reply to the disruptions of normal life, the Tamil community has established local Citizens Committees. They are a means to have contacts with the military and civil authorities, to seek redress for damage done and inconveniences caused. They are non-political organizations working on an adhoc basis. The Citizens Committees have gained credibility with governmental authorities and the militant groups. A Coordinating Committee has been formed to coordinate the work.

Because of the growing opposition and violence between the governmental armed forces and the Tamil people and militants, the Citizens Committees face more difficulties in exercising their monitoring functions. Other bodies are being developed, to fulfil basic needs and perform social work on the village level.

With the people becoming increasingly dependent on them, the militant organizations are becoming a political force speaking on behalf of the Tamil community. Their role should also be seen against the context of the development of political and social radicalism among the Tamil youth,

struggling for nationalism and social egalitarianism.

The demands of the militant groups have to be taken stronger into account when searching for a political solution for the present crisis. The Tamils demand a special constitutional arrangement, in which their safety as persons and security and continuity as an ethnic group are maintained within a defined geographic area. The ethnic issue has to be solved as a Tamil issue, and the government should not try to pose the problem as being one of an overall constitutional situation for the nation state of Sri Lanka as such. Guarantees should be given for the implementation of a negotiated solution, which should be presented in clear terms to all ethnic groups in Sri Lanka, also and especially to the Sinhala population, which has to agree on any solution being reached.

Professor Shelton Kodikara:
Provincial Councils revisited—devolution of power and ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka

The causes for the escalating violence, terror and destruction in Sri Lanka go back for many years. Also, there has been a continuous quest for a negotiated political solution of the ethnic conflict.

The proposals made by the Government of Sri Lanka to solve the crisis have varied, and are varying. The proposals for devolution of powers to Provincial Councils are in principle a fair compromise in the direction of provincial autonomy within the framework of a unitary state. However, it seems necessary to involve the political parties and the Tamil militant groups in the negotiating process, to strengthen a consensus of all parties involved.

Until now, non-Tamil opinion has not been involved in, or informed in detail on, the negotiating process. Especially the comments made by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party SLFP, the main

oppositional party with a certain constituency among the Sinhala population, seem relevant for reaching a longterm solution. Relevant points in their criticism are:

- there will be no guarantee for an end to civil disobedience and terrorism as long as not all parties are behind the proposals.
- there are tensions between the existing Constitution for a unitary state and the proposed federal structure of government.
- a number of important issues relating to the extent of devolution of legislative, executive and judicial powers to Provincial Councils do not yet seem to be solved.
- the proposals for the creation of Provincial Councils will exacerbate sectorial, group and communal feelings.

The Sri Lanka parliamentary tradition is against a state structure resembling federalism, and it is hard to see how the Parliament can amend the Constitution against the will of its Tamil members, or against the Tamil units in the new system. It has to be clearly settled whether Sri Lanka will primarily be a federal or a unitary state. What appears to be at fault with the present principles for devolution of powers in Sri Lanka is that more of the federal characteristics of the Indian Constitution are incorporated than of its unitary characteristics.

The powers of the Union Government in India are very strong, and in times of emergency, the control of the Union Government over the States is total. Laws made by Parliament prevail over state laws, and the Parliament can change the territorial structure of the States. These powers have been used in practice.

In the present proposals for devolution of powers in Sri Lanka, there are no clear definitions of the powers of the Central Government and of the units. There is also a lack of

consensus on the unit of devolution itself. A way out of the present impasse might be the creation of five units with Regional Councils. The Tamil demand for a linguistic unit can then be accommodated in a new Northern and Eastern Region, with Ampara joined to a new Southern and Eastern Region. In addition, there would be an enlarged Central Region, a new Western Region, and an enlarged North-Central Region.

It is necessary that India should underwrite a negotiated political settlement, as it becomes involved in its implementation so long as it affords sanctuary to Tamil militant groups.

Bhikku Mandawala Pandawanse: A look at the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka

The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka has international aspects, and is being discussed in international fora. However, there seems to be a lack of correct information in many writings and discussions.

The paper highlights two major misconceptions, "The Buddhists are killing Hindus", and "All Sinhalese are anti-Tamil". The conflict has to be placed within the social, political, historical and cultural background of the island.

The Sinhalese community, which constitutes 74% of the total population of Sri Lanka, feels itself confronted with and threatened by the ethnic links between the Tamils in Sri Lanka and the over 50 million Tamils in Tamil Nadu, India. After independence in 1948, there was an alliance between Sinhalese and Tamil capitalist politicians, without much racial hostilities. The plantation Tamils of recent Indian origin were deprived of their citizenship and right to vote. On the contrary, some well-to-do Tamil businessmen were granted citizenship. A group of Buddhist monks made an appeal for the rights of plantation workers.

During the July 1983 riots, Sinhalese provided shelter to many Tamils who were threatened by hooligans. The Bhikku Orga-

nization for Humanity was established by young Buddhist monks after the July 1983 incidents. It has organized seminars to educate Buddhist monks and others on the ethnic problems. Expositions were held to expose human rights violations in Sri Lanka, and a bi-monthly journal has been published. It contains articles on the limited value of chauvinism, contributions of Tamils to Buddhist literature, texts on racial harmony and violations of human rights. A peace mission to Jaffna was planned, but had to be cancelled because of the Anuradhapura massacre. It is difficult for both Tamils, and Sinhalese who do not support the ruling party to obtain employment in the public administration. Both Tamils and Sinhalese are victims of ill-treatment by law enforcement personnel.

The relatively high percentage of Tamils in professions which require higher education can be explained through the system of missionary education established during British rule.

The Bhikku Organization for Humanity believes that the character of the problems in Sri Lanka is mainly economic, determined by unemployment and poverty. Also, there is a lack of mutual understanding between Sinhalese and Tamils. The last problem could partly be overcome by the learning of each others' languages, the translation of literary works, and the establishment of a Tamil-Sinhala friendship association. Both Tamil and Sinhala should be official languages.

Both Tamil chauvinism and Sinhala chauvinism have a deteriorating impact on Sri Lankan society. It is unrealistic that Tamils claim an Eelam state comprising 61% of the coast line and 33% of the land for only 14% of the population. The Tamils constitute a minority in the East, and there have been conflicts between Tamils and Muslims. A solution towards the devolution of powers to regional units is valid when there are guarantees that it does not lead to further violence.



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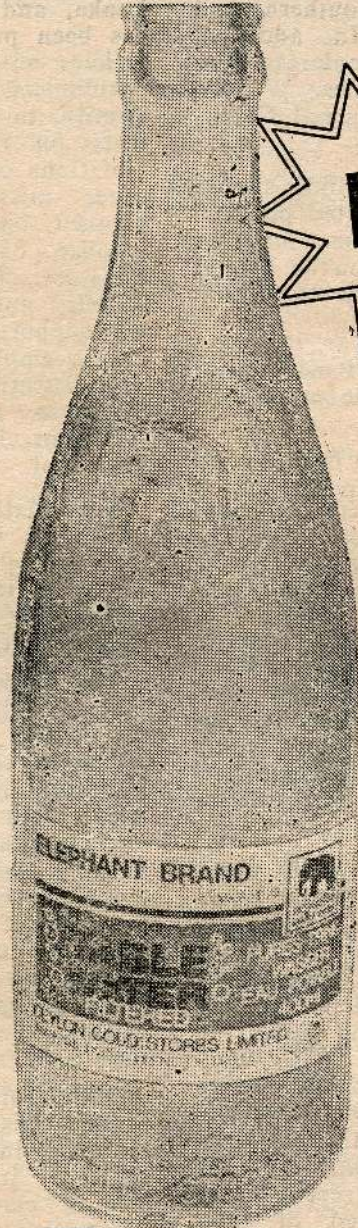


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The Political Search

Prabhu Chawla in Madras

The return of the jetset Nemi Chand Gandhi alias Chandraswamy last month to the country's shores, after more than six months of hiding abroad, was shrouded in mystery and secrecy. Haunted by fears of being nabbed by finance officials for stashing away money abroad, the paunchy and bearded 37-year-old Chandraswamy, who has made international headlines with his high-level international connections, quietly slunk into Madras via Sri Lanka.

But a pleasant surprise awaited him in his five-star suite in a hotel owned by one of his followers. Instead of the income tax sleuths of his nightmares, it was a gaggle of admiring — and influential — celebrities who engulfed him in a warm and collective embrace. Among his visitors were ministers from Sri Lanka, film stars, industrialists and important members of the ruling AIADMK. Emboldened by his new-found confidence — and friends — Chandraswamy was soon back at his valuable best: "I returned home after receiving depressing news about growing communal tensions and a threat of civil war. Now I intend to mobilise all Hindu religious leaders so that all of them can speak in one voice on various issues" he intoned.

If he can afford to talk big, it is simply because he believes he has hit the bigtime. Even if the public is unsure of whether he is to be taken seriously, some of the most influential people in the world appear to have entertained no such doubts. He shot into prominence last year when his name was associated with a \$500 million (Rs 700 crore) deal for the sale of London's exclusive Harrod's departmental store. British newspapers alleged

that Chandraswamy was the middleman between the sellers of the prestigious store and the fabulously rich Sultan of Brunei who had concealed his identity. His name is also associated with the legendary Saudi Arabian businessman and arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi and Chandraswamy's influence soon showed — Khashoggi turned vegetarian under Chandraswamy's influence.

But he is also undoubtedly a godman who loves the good things of life. Enconced in an air-conditioned room, draped in an expensive kurta and lungi and a heavy gold necklace dangling from his neck, the swamy is obviously not enamoured of material sacrifices. While in India he is constantly surrounded by over a dozen attendants. He drives around in an air-conditioned Mercedes which he claims belongs to one of his disciples.

Probably to dispel the impression created by his five-star life-style, Chandraswamy says: "I am not hawking myself for commercial monetary gains like Rajneesh and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi have done abroad. My relationship with both Indians and foreigners is purely spiritual.

However, he is better known as a tantric who can prepare instant horoscopes and warn people of the dangers that lie ahead. He and his American doctor have also reportedly cured many influential politicians of various health problems.

And now the sybaritic swami has decided to exercise his powers in his homeland. Soon after his arrival, Chandraswamy set the wheels of his grand plan rolling. During the last four weeks he has met a truly impressive list of political personalities — chief

ministers Ramakrishna Hegde and Farooq Abdullah, Union ministers P. V. Narasimha Rao and Natwar Singh, important Congress (I) MPs like Arif Mohammed Khan — and Menaka Gandhi to poort. To cap it all, he has even been able to obtain a half-hour audience with the President, Giani Zail Singh. Chandraswamy is now in the process of getting in touch with acting Akal Takht Head Priest Darshan Singh Ragi, though for what purpose is currently unclear.

Considering that his interest lies to a large extent in Hindu unity, it is an odd collection of people to meet. But the man is essentially trying to meet leaders with diverse followings to gauge the country's political situation and assess what precisely his role can be. With opposition leaders, he discussed their prospect vis-a-vis the Congress(I) and with ruling party members he tried to analyse the level of their disenchantment with the prime minister.

At another level, he visited Tirupati and the Vaisnava Devi and spoke to Hindu leaders. In addition, he contacted student leaders from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat and Maharashtra and constituted a small committee, who would criss-cross the entire country during the next few weeks to mobilise support for him. With a cornucopia of unlimited funds to back him, Chandraswamy seems to be placed quite nicely, thank god.

The swami's logic goes that in a religion-dominated country like India, the right person can carve the right niche for himself: "We, who are preachers and tantriks, can offer unbiased views because we are not attached to

any party or group individuals. I have advised the King of Jordan and the Sultan of Brunei. Why don't you ask them about the kind of benefit they had from my views". In India as well, there seems to be no dearth of people who believe in his abilities. Film personalities like Hema Malini, Sridevi, Raj Babbar and producer Ramanathan have quickly clambered into his bandwagon.

Indeed, it is the role of a master mediator that Chandraswamy is obviously trying to play. And to establish himself, he will probably have to play the Hindu card. Back home in India, he has reactivated his Vishwa Dharmayatan, a charity organisation he floated five years ago. Operating from a rented but palatial house owned by the wrestlercum-film star Dara Singh, the trust's main job now is to provide both financial and manpower support for renovating and reconstructing dilapidated Hindu shrines all over the country. Last fortnight, Chandraswamy arrived in Jabalpur following trouble over the construction of a village temple. He not only participated in its building but also made a donation of Rs 5 lakh. If Chandraswamy is to be believed, his supporters intend to participate in all major charity and religious programmes in as high-profile a way as possible. During the last few months, he has brought in over \$1 million (Rs 1.40 crore) as donations to various socio-religious organisations. Claims Chandraswamy: "My aim is to help everybody in distress and bring all of them on one platform so that they can prepare an agenda for national reconciliation. I am a sadhu and a sadhu doesn't have any personal ambitions".

He has displayed some interest in Punjab and was in the thick of the plans of various Hindu organisations to stage a goodwill march from Hardwar to Amritsar. Top religious leaders like Jai Muni Sushil Kumar and Swami Vam Dev have had confabulations with him. However, his stand — like a number of other things

about him — on this issue is somewhat confusing. While on the one hand he has been talking with people like Dharshan Singh Ragi, on the other he has also offered to organise a march by 50,000 militant Naga sadhus through the state of Punjab as a symbolic deterrent against terrorism.

But it is the Sri Lanka crisis that he seems to have set his heart to make a mark. He has met AIADMK ministers, Tamil militant leaders as also Sri Lankan ministers. That intentions cannot be laughed away was established even earlier when, in February, he landed in Sri Lanka as a government guest. In fact, before returning to India last month, he met Sri Lanka President J. R. Jayewardene and sought his views on how the island's ethnic strife could best be sorted out.

Religion and politics have always been familiar bed-fellows in India and the attempts of the international jet-setting and well-heeled tantrik to carve a niche for himself in Indian politics will be an interesting exercise to watch.

— *India Today*

Ethnic conflict . . .

(Continued from page 20)

Also, I can tell you this. If there is a return to normalcy, the type of capital inflow into the North and the East will be so phenomenal, in relation to the smallness of our country, that everything that these boys have been fighting for, they will get — short of a generation! Because there has been international sympathy for the Tamil cause, there's no two words about it. And they felt that there was a grievance — and I must say there was a grievance. But most grievances under democratic systems get postponed — until it bursts out as a wound. And they've got to see this now.

If the phrase that Mr. (G.) Parthasarathy used when he visited

me (or rather, which I used and he jumped at it and said, "well that's the word, *modus vivendi*")... if there has to be a *modus vivendi*, I feel it is the provincial council system which should be discussed to its last, final detail. I don't say that anybody should trust anybody in (our type of) system of government — that I can understand. Because there are issues of substance and formalities of procedure; so, finally, whatever we may discuss, the bureaucrats will decide on other things! So without yielding any ground, we can rationally sit down and discuss to the last detail what should be the amount of devolution, what should be the powers, the interrelationships between various institutions within the Province, and between the Province and the Centre.

But I do feel that the time has now come when the Tamil youth must realise that they must build a future. Otherwise, their whole area is bleeding and, as you know, in government departments and government corporations and institutions, you merely don't destroy those institutions overnight. It takes a hundred years sometimes; they can limp along. Sri Lanka can never be destroyed — that's survived for 2500 years. It'll go on, but we'll have to spend more money on the military, we'll have to spend more money on defence. But it will go on. And, ultimately, those who suffer will be the Tamil youth in our country — and I see no reason why they should suffer, because they can be a great national asset. We can use their energies to build our country.

And I think the Sinhalese people also have learnt a great lesson which they will never forget — that they should not be parochial. And, by and large, the Sinhalese people are a good and a generous people — large-hearted good people. And I think that, given the leadership, they could respond to live with the Tamils as they should — as equal citizens of our country.



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