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From the Editor's Desk

This issue of *Congress News* is a double number covering two important landmarks in the contemporary history of the Ceylon Workers' Congress, namely, the Founding Convention of the South Asian Regional Trade Union Council (SAR-TUC) held at the Taj Samudra Hotel on 29th January 1988, and the Reception at Hotel Hilton International on March 2nd 1988 to release Mr. Thondaman's Autobiography "My Life and Times" and to inaugurate the Thondaman Foundation.

The Founding Convention of the SAR-TUC was hosted by the Ceylon Workers' Congress. Presidents, General Secretaries and Senior office bearers of a number of Trade Unions in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka attended the Convention.

Among aims and objectives of South Asian Regional Trade Union Council (SAR-TUC) are: (1) to enter into dialogue with South Asian Governments to ensure that trade unions participate meaningfully in National and Regional socio-economic developments; (2) To promote regional co-operation and trade union solidarity; (3) To ensure the ratification and implementation of basic ILO standards.

Besides delegates, the Convention was attended by the Observers from several from International Organisations. The General Secretary of ICFTU-APRO and Representatives from ICFTU Headquarters (Brussels, Belgium) were present at the Convention. The Chairman of the Provisional Committee of South Asian Regional Trade Union Council (SAR-TUC), Hon. S. Thondaman, presided at the Convention.

The proceedings have been fully reported elsewhere in this issue. At the conclusion of the Sessions Sri Lanka's Rural Industrial Development Minister S. Thondaman was unanimously elected head of the new organisation which resolved that its members would in future show their solidarity with 80 million workers in the region in their agitation for their rights.

Addressing a press conference after the Convention, its President Mr. Thondaman said that with the founding of SAR-TUC, trade unions in the region would be one unit and would fight for the cause of the workers jointly in the region. With a membership of 80 million in 11 national centres, the Council would become a major trade union force. Mr. Thondaman said that the government should learn to work in close liason with trade unions and vice versa. In particular the new organisation will expect the parent SARC umbrella body to extend its co-operation to the new Trade Union Council

As a first step the SAR-TUC demanded the immediate release of Trade Unionist David now held in custody by the Malaysian Government. The Council was desirous of promoting workers and human rights, stability, amity and progress among workers in the region through strict adherence and basic ILO standards as well as the need for world peace and disarmament.

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The objectives of the Council Mr. Thondaman further said was to promote the welfare of the workers of South Asia and to improve their working conditions and to ensure the introduction, maintenance and the extension of social security and the raising of the standard of living for all the people of the region

The Cover Story is about the release by Mr. Thondaman's Autobiography and the inauguration of the Thondaman Foundation. In this issue we also publish a report of some CWC activities in the plantation areas and about the Saraswathy Puja held at the CWC Headquarters. We have also published book reviews, an article about Subramania Bharati, and also the concluding part of Mr. P. Devaraja's article on the Tamil Conference in Kuala Lumpur.



COVER STORY

EVEN IN TURBULENT TIMES

The pictures on the cover depict the happy scenes at the Hotel Hilton International on March 2, 1988, when Mr. Thondaman's autobiography "My Life and Times" was released and the Thondaman Foundation was inaugurated. Many other pictures too of the same event have been published in this issue and also others from another happy event the Founding Convention of the SAR-TUC. It is to the credit of the Ceylon Workers' Congress that it was able to hold these two functions in the turbulent times in which we live and demonstrate that in the midst of the troubles that stem from killings in the North, East, South and elsewhere, it is possible to have gatherings to show the way forward in matters of consequence to the people of Sri Lanka and even the South Asian region.

In recent months the assassination of political activists and government officials has shocked the public. D.I.G. Terrance Perera, UNP Chairman, Harsha Abeywardene and S.L.M.P. leader Vijaya Kumaranatunga were among the more notable of the victims of the JVP. Communist Party Officials have been killed in the South by the JVP, and in the North TULF leader, former Senator Nadarajah and District Secretary of the Communist Party Vijayanandan were among those killed by the LTTE which also destroyed the office and printing machinery of the Jaffna Tamil Daily Eelanadu. In the Eastern Province too there have been indiscriminate massacres of Sinhala Villagers by the LTTE. It must be mentioned that the only relatively trouble-free area in the country centres around the Plantation Districts. It is generally admitted that the credit for

for keeping the Up-country a peaceful zone must go to Mr. Thondaman and the CWC. At every meeting he has addressed in the plantation areas in recent times he had pointed out that the violence, "like crime, does not pay." In October last in a speech at the Bharathi Festival at Raniwatte Estate, Lindula, Mr. Thondaman had pointed out that the story of the LTTE leader Prabakaran taught the plantation Tamil youth the lesson that they should never be hasty and try to over-reach themselves. "I must admit", he said, "that until recently I had developed a lurking respect for Prabakaran. He not only fought courageously but had also through his version of Satyagraha succeeded in whipping up mass support. He had won the recognition of the Indian and Sri Lankan Governments as a leader of Sri Lankan Tamils and was offered the majority of seats in the Interim Administration. Unfortunately his impatience and over-ambition had spoil everything."

Mr. Thondaman had stressed that the CWC had gradually won the plantation Tamils civic rights because the leadership was patient, tactful and had the vision to move step by step using non-violent and democratic procedures. "We also had the perception to realise the necessity to win the confidence of an important section of the leadership of the majority community. We stood by them and they are now standing by us." He further stated that peoples' strength always brought ultimate victory. Those who had enacted the Citizenship laws believed they had deprived the plantation Tamils of their rights forever. But the CWC was able to win back the lost rights by using the strength of the people. Mr. Thondaman urged the Plan-

tation Tamils to strengthen the CWC so that it would win more rights for the estate workers.

At the opening of a Community centre at Mahacoodoolla Estate at Kandapola, Mr. Thondaman had said he was glad that the estate workers who were dependent on the estate management for everything were now thinking on new lines of developing themselves. "Your forefathers were brought into this country and were settled on the estates", he said. "They never thought themselves as belonging to this country but regarded themselves as members of the villages they came from in South India. Their ambition was to earn and get back. We, their descendants, have to live here. And we have developed a new way of life and new ways of thinking." He added that the plantation Tamils should regard themselves as sons and daughters of Sri Lanka and enter the mainstream of development so that they could live as equal citizens in this country. The Plantation Tamil community is the most backward section in this country. "In education, in employment, in social reconding, in economic status, in nutrition, in housing, in land ownership, and in all other ways we are backward. We must strive hard to catch up with the other communities — the Sinhalese, the Sri Lankan Tamils and the Muslims."

"I am happy", he had further said, "to see most of your children well dressed. They must not only be clothed well but also be fed well and educated well. Teach them basic hygiene. Let us make our youth the envy of others." In his message for Deepavali last October Mr. Thondaman had said that Deepavali was symbolic of the victory of good over evil. It was a day heralding peace and happiness. "I am deeply grieved that at a time such as this the people in the North and the East, particularly in Jaffna, are caught up in a situation full of confusion and suffering. Even as we thought that the long and bitter conflict there was coming to an end and that we were stepping into an era of peace and understanding, we are confronted by this new conflagration in the North... At a time like this, it is important that the country must clearly remember the basic reasons for this conflict and refrain from making the mistakes of the past. It is important that the multi-

ethnic character of Sri Lanka and equality among all its people should be emphasised and reinforced by thoughtful and meaningful measures. There must be strict observance of honour and dignity in dealing with different sections of people of this country..."

This year, unlike in the previous three years, the Thai Poosam festival at the Talawakelle Hindu Temple, at the end of January, was celebrated without any trouble — with the participation not only of all Tamils but also all Buddhists in the area. It will be recalled that terrorist violence at Talawakelle last year had briefly disrupted this famous festival of the town. The history of the temple is over 80 years. Originally the Hindu shop keepers had this temple in a small room under a huge tree. The land belonged to the Talawakelle estate. Subsequently the Hindus of the town obtained this land free from the estate proprietors. The then Superintendent of the estate Mr. P. S. M. Moliniuks is remembered for granting the land free to the temple.

Militants from the North and East have continued insidious attempts to stir up trouble among youth in the plantations. But so far they have not been able to make headway. They still keep trying to disturb the peace and normalcy prevailing there by raising demagogic slogans. The consistent and positive attitudes taken by the Ceylon Workers' Congress, however, have helped to maintain a realistic approach to the ethnic problems in the country and thereby provided plantation youth with correct leadership and guidance. They realise that after four and a half years of violence and fighting, the Sri Lankan Tamils in the North and the East are in a worse position than at the start.

Mr. Thondaman has at all times stressed that everybody in the country should learn to protect human rights and not repeat the mistakes they have made in the past if they wish to preserve the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka. It is absolutely necessary, he has emphasised, that no Sri Lankan should condone, justify or promote violence under any circumstances or deny justice and fair play to any community class or caste or to hurt their sensibilities.

The Sinhala Only Act, the excessive standardisation in the selection for

higher studies were some of the acts of "Violence" against Tamils. The demand for fifty fifty, the anti Sri campaign and the demand for separation were also "violence" against the Sinhalese. Tamil and Sinhalese sensibilities were thus hurt and this provoked physical violence. And what is regarded as "Indian involvement" could have been avoided if the Sinhalese and the Tamils had not indulged in any type of violent attitudes. Indian sensibilities were more over hurt and disturbed by wrong foreign policy attitudes and intemperate speeches by certain Sri Lankan groups and this led to the support for the militants. India and Sri Lanka are now paying a heavy price for this lack of understanding and good neighbourliness. Enlightened Sinhala and Tamil opinion regard to the Peace Accord as fair to all parties involved and that it is a reasonable and practical way out of the impasse; and that the Accord satisfies most of their aspirations and removes most of their fears.

What is essential is that Sri Lankans of all communities must learn from their past mistakes, eradicate all militant movements in every part of the country and also help to rehabilitate all youth who have been misguided — most of whom are sincere, courageous and selfless.

It is unfortunate that many who have so far failed to grasp the true implications of the Peace Accord should want the IPKF to withdraw before they have finished their task under the Accord. Kalawana M.P. DEW Gunsekera had clarified a newspaper report in which in his parliamentary speech he is alleged to have said: "But one thing this Government must do at once is to remove the Indian Army from the country..." Mr. Gunsekera insisted that what he had in fact said was: "we would never like to see a foreign army on our soil. We would like to see the withdrawal of the Indian armed forces as early as possible. The LTTE now demands the immediate withdrawal of the IPKF. It is they who said that they would not trust the Sri Lankan Army and therefore could not surrender arms to them. They preferred to surrender arms to the Indian Army. They did not do that either. What would happen if the Indian armed forces under the present condition are withdrawn all at

once?. We will be back where we were in 1983 and the resultant situation would have an adverse reaction in the South..." According to the report in the *Sunday Times* (21.2.88) The Tamil United Liberated Front (TULF) — still headquartered in Madras — has not changed its position on the presence of the Indian Peace Keeping Force in Sri Lanka in spite of the alleged atrocities committed by them in the North and East, since it would have been much worse if the Sri Lankan Army continued in these areas. The General Secretary of the TULF, Mr. A. Amirthalingam when contacted in Madras, had told the *Sunday Times* that the TULF's position on calling India to even intervene militarily in the conflict between the Sri Lankan army and the Tamil Militant groups remained the same though there were allegations of IPKF atrocities in Jaffna. The reports of the Indian army's conduct in Batticaloa was better he said than their conduct in Jaffna.

We do not propose to get involved in the ongoing controversies or polemics about the Peace Accord or the presence and role of the IPKF, but we must point out that except for certain assurances between India and Sri Lanka regarding geo-political fears, the major portion of the Peace Accord is based on the historic document known as Annexure C and the consensus arrived at on most of the issues raised at the All Party Conference and the Thimpu talks where prominent Sri Lankans (especially Sinhalese) advisers and experts were present.

It is necessary to view the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord in the context of global realpolitik. "Japan is still ruled under the constitution framed under the guidance of General McArthur during the American occupation of Japan. India has not "conquered" Sri Lanka and according to international law it has come as an equal friend, with the moral support of world opinion. If India at any time goes against our interest, world opinion would definitely condemn it and our other friends would support us. There are nearly half a million US troops in South Korea and several hundred thousands in Japan. There are US troops in Britain, all NATO countries and in several other Afro Asian and Latin American countries. The presence of US troops is not

regarded as a violation of the sovereignty of these countries but as a way of safeguarding their national integrity and independence.

Our recent experience and world history show that the support of violence and extremist policies by one side would inevitably lead to similar violence and policies by the other side. Those who oppose the Peace Accord and support extremist policies in the South would encourage such policies in the North which would lead to the continual presence of the Indian Army in Sri Lanka. If we unanimously extend support to implement the fundamental principles of the Peace Accord even with suitable modifications, the Indian army would quickly withdraw. Any violence in the North or South would only prolong the presence, the Indian Army which the opponents of the Peace Accord deplore.

In the North the militants have demonstrated that they are not amenable to reason or democratic processes. Almost every group has killed innocent civilians or their own members or members of their rival groups for the flimsiest reasons.

With the Provincial autonomy and language rights, even if Eastern Province remains separate, the Tamils there and everywhere else in Sri Lanka should be able to live with full security without any discrimination and equal rights to use their language and promote their culture. The Sinhalese should also have equal rights to live even in the North with full security, equal rights and without any discrimination.

The Ceylon Workers' Congress believes that the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement should be reviewed to see how peace and normalcy can be more quickly restored in the North and the East. There is also no doubt that modifications and adjustments in the terms of the Accord have to be made in the light of experience and actual realities on the ground. Already on representations made by His Excellency the President certain major modifications have been effected in the Agreement. In the original text it was agreed that the Sri Lankan Army would remain in the barracks while only the Police Force would look after the law and order and security for the civilians.

The Police Force could not cope up with the situation and the repeated massacres of Sinhalese and Muslim civilians in remote villages have made it necessary to bring the Sri Lankan Army to perform the functions of providing security for the civilians. This was not part of the task assigned to the IPKF and the new modifications must be welcome.

In like manner there are certain problems facing Tamil civilians in the North and the East and these have to be examined in depth so that solutions can be found. It may, therefore, be necessary to effect other modifications in the Agreement to provide security and normalcy to Tamil civilians in the North and East. This is one of the matters the CWC delegation going to Delhi soon is likely to take up with the Indian Government. The delegation will also raise questions about the repatriation of those who opted for Indian Citizenship and also about the situation in which those who have already been repatriated now find in themselves India. There are also a number of matters which stem from the anomalies of the Srimala-Shastri Pact of 1964 which was thrust down the throats of the persons of Indian origin without their consent or even their participation in the talks that preceded the agreement.

We have digressed a great deal from them of the Cover Story but we felt it was necessary to set the release of Mr. Thondaman's autobiography and the inauguration of Thondaman Foundation in its proper setting. As we pointed out earlier, the function at the Hotel Hilton International took place during turbulent and disturbed times. In spite of this there was a large gathering and it symbolised the fact that the correct policies followed by Mr. Thondaman persuaded people of all communities — Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and others — to attend the function and pay tribute to a man who though from a disadvantaged minority is now regarded as a national leader. The Cabinet was present in full strength and parliamentarians, politicians were there to show the respect they had for Mr. Thondaman and their faith in the policies he had pursued.

The autobiography is a story of policies and actions of Mr. Thondaman during his public life. If such policies had been followed by other groups and communities, the country could have been spared the ethnic and other confrontations and conflicts that plague it today. The Thondaman Foundation's main objective is to promote the growth of a Sri Lankan consciousness, and this alone can help this country to achieve peace, amity and national unity.

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Editorial Notes

After prolonged negotiations an agreement was arrived at on increased wages for plantation workers. The offer made by the J.E.D.B. and S.L.S.P.C., after several discussions, was considered inadequate by the CWC. On 14th February the Executive Committee of the Ceylon Workers Congress adopted the following resolution:

"This meeting of the Executive Council of the Ceylon Workers' Congress held in Colombo on February 14th 1988 congratulates the leadership for the carefully planned manner in which it is conducting negotiations for a meaningful wage increase for plantation workers. The council further endorses fully the decision made by the leadership to reject the wage increase offered by the SLSPC & JEDB. The Council authorises the leadership and gives a mandate to continue its preset negotiations and take all steps deemed necessary to reach a successful conclusion.

"The Executive Council of the CWC deplors that surpluses from plantations are being siphoned away as taxes without ensuring an adequate wage to the workers to meet the spiralling cost of living. Workers are under pressure even to obtain their basic needs. The Council calls for an immediate change in this exploitative policy and for the implementation of a meaningful wage increase and increase taxation only there after. The Executive Council calls upon the SLSPC and JEDB to agree immediately to the introduction of a meaningful wage increase and assist in resolving the present impasse."

In the meantime, while the negotiations were pending, there were inspired leaks in certain sections of the daily press that the CWC was on the verge of leading a general strike in the plantation areas for higher wages. Whilst these stories of strikes did not reflect the true situation, so far as the CWC was concerned, there were certain other unions which raised demagogic slogans about strikes to compel the government to increase wages for plantation workers.

His Excellency the President, however, convened a series of conferences at which a satisfactory agreement was reached. The adult daily basic wage was increased from Rs. 23.75 to Rs. 33. Also a Cost Living Allowance, computed at one percent per point increase on the COL Index, is to be paid. There is no doubt that it was on the President's intervention that the latest wage increase for plantation workers came without bitterly strained labour relations and prolonged strikes or go-slows which would have seriously affected the industry. In addition to this it was also decided to adopt a price wage supplement to be computed by the Labour Commissioner in consultation with the Ministry of Finance. Though the agreement was finally negotiated by the CWC & LJEWU, the increase will benefit nearly 800,000 workers some of whom belong to the smaller unions or not in any unions.

Plantation workers, who not long ago were termed as "coolies" have at all times been the last segment in the social and economic welfare schemes of the country. Statistics

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have often been paraded about the low infant mortality rate among estate labourers to show that a great deal has been done to better the conditions of workers in the plantations. But such rose-tinted statistics cannot hide realities. This is now generally recognised.

The *Daily News* in an Editorial recently stated:

"Whether survival in the sordid conditions of life that line-rooms offer is a blessing, could be another matter. For years, estate labour lived in ill-ventilated, damp three unit blocks attached to one another in long rows with poor sanitation and insufficient water. Their children had the most rough and rudimentary education possible. Instinct, not refinement, ruled their lives. They were exploited by overseers, coop managers, clerks and superintendents. In short their lives were but a close shadow of a by-gone slavery. Yet, at public gatherings, at seminars and elsewhere, we were accustomed to refer to their wizened men and women as the backbone of our economy. True they were. Only what Sri Lankan and the British planter, in particular, failed to admit was that our plantation

economy thrived on blood and sweat, on labour which existed at subsistence level. Small wonder, then that in colonial times, line-room deaths were accompanied by drink and merriment. Death after all and often is the end of sorrow."

The *Daily News* further pointed out:

"That it was probably on an estate that the theory first grew that poor wages bring in good harvests; that want and hunger spur men to greater effort and keep them better disciplined. Of course, the world our green hillsides has witnessed the efforts of exploiting labour too far. The world, today, has seen that workers respond better to improved conditions of living, that education enhances their skills and usefulness; above all, that adequately paid servants, when they are treated with dignity, can be responsible, loyal and enterprising as serfs never can. It was a sound move, then, to extend the benefits of the latest salary increase to estate workers as well. For once they have not been forgotten not treated to mere remnants."

The Editorial also stressed that the conditions of workers of small holdings also needed careful attention. The Editorial concluded on a high note:

"Meanwhile there are other sound reasons for encouraging estate workers to identify themselves with their plantations. There have been efforts, as we know to embroil them in terrorist activities. To their credit, they have generally kept clear of any separatist or violent movement. The relationship between estate labour and people from nearby villages has grown closer in recent years. Education could well ensure fuller understanding and greater friendship. Estate workers, then, must be paid a wage that will enable them to feed their children on more than a bun, roti and plain tea. That is often sadly their diet. Fortunately, the ministry of education has

taken steps to upgrade the quality of most estate schools. Undernourished children rarely derive the best out of any facility provided. With improved wages, estate labour can aspire to a better quality of life; to a better role in the security, progress and destiny of this country."

The Editorial in the *Daily News* is an indication that a new wind is blowing in circles which earlier believed that a "coolie" must be kept in his place and that he should work hard on low wages, under bad conditions without proper education facilities for their children.

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SPEECH BY
HON. DR. NISSANKA WIJERATNE
MINISTER OF JUSTICE

Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Mr. Thondaman, the Honourable Speaker, Ministers, Members of Parliament, distinguished visitors, ladies and gentlemen.

The function today partakes almost of a religious nature. We are honoured not merely with the presence of distinguished members of the Sangha and honoured members of the Ramakrishna Mission. But all of you would have seen from the commencement of today's ceremony, elements of a religious nature which is integral to Hindu culture, a culture that emanated in India and with Buddhism has intermingled in the fashioning of the life and traditions of the people of Sri Lanka. Mr. Thondaman has brought out for the reading of the public of our country, a book on his life and times. Mr. Thondaman is, in many ways, one of those rare persons in history who stand at the watershed in the story of a country. He represents a feature of which we in Sri Lanka can well be proud of. The coming, the contest and the accommodation of streams of people who from time to time have enriched the national life of Sri Lanka. Our history, at least our recorded history, speaks and honours a foreigner who arrived in our country nearly 2,500 years ago. If Vijaya is claimed with pride as a founder of our race, it is necessary for us to acknowledge that he came from abroad. And so is it with the great Mahinda. And that is why, whatever the contests have been, not merely the enrichment of the national life of our country by people who have come from abroad, but the capacity they have shown to go through travails and to assist the processes of reconciliation, that is why Mr. Thondaman represents a great and valuable feature in the stream of our national life and stands out today

as one of those rare ornaments in the public life of this country. In reading Mr. Thondaman's book I am sure many of you will wonder why it is so subjective as he himself has pointed out time and again — the present holds the key to the past as it does for the future. And he has drawn on the inspiration of the golden thread that binds Hindus — the Bhagwad Geetha, to point out that courage and being immersed in the present is a way of life and the only way of life that ensures continuance into the future drawing on the guidance of the past to take one forward. Centuries ago, Vatchanattu Devari said, "Munvaicha kaal pin veika maateyn." "The step forward laid shall not be taken back." That has been a characteristic whether we agree with him or not at times, he has always displayed. I believe he credits this strength of character to his illustrious father. Quite often his courage and his ability to move in the best interests of his committed cause have earned for him suspicion and hatred. But time has proved the wisdom of his actions and the need to accommodate so that ultimately from the thesis and antithesis a sane compromise would emerge. That is the essence of pragmatism, a feature so sadly lacking in our national life. Mr. Thondaman has gone through difficult times. He has also been placed in the unfortunate predicament on many occasions, to be also suspected by those whom he served for either the lack of rashness in taking or advocating their cause. All people expect their leaders to be so committed to their beliefs that they should display lack of reason, lack of balance, lack of fairplay, lack of tolerance and lack of understanding. Mr. Thondaman has not been diminished by the inadequacies of those who support him or the vituperations of those who have criticised him.

Today we have witnessed not merely the presentation of his book, but we have participated in an acknowledgement of the Foundation that has been established through his inspirations. It begins with an ideal, worthy of a great man and a citizen. For the first objective that the Foundation professes to establish here, is the growth of a Sri Lankan consciousness. If Mr. Thondaman has emerged from his class commitment, from his loyalty to the people he sought to serve and immersed himself in a wider concept, surely that should be an inspiration to the entire nation. He has sacrificed his wealth, he has given of his time. Loneliness has been his companion in his long journey, but it has been a journey of great endeavour and rich reward. He has seen the emergence of the people among whom he grew to a state of dignity and to acceptance within the framework of our national life. Neither they nor we, nor even the British who brought its people here are solely to blame for the tragedies of the past.

His book places in perspective and fairly gives to the people of this country that measure of understanding which sometimes our own people have lacked. **If the Ceylon Indian Congress matured into the Ceylon Workers' Congress, if an alien identification was replaced with a national colour, if the few unions he has nurtured have embraced the people of Sri Lanka and if he has had the courage to join with us as a brother member of the Government chosen by the people, it is for us to appreciate the ideals that inspired him and the courage that directed him on this course of his life.** The illustrious writer of the Mahawansa referred at the conclusion of every chapter to the high ideal that motivated the great kings of our country and suggested that the happy state was where the ruler and ruled are one. "If governor and governed, if leader and led, if director and directed have common aspirations and are always sympathetic and understand correctly what is good for those they claim to serve, and if at times their

(Continued on page 10)

SPEECH BY

HIS EXCELLENCY J. N. DIXIT

HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR INDIA IN SRI LANKA

Respected leaders of all the religions of Sri Lanka who create and signify the collective religious consciousness of Sri Lankan society, Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Mr. Speaker Sir, Respected Mr. Dahanayake, Honourable Ministers, Honourable Members of Parliament, my colleagues from the Diplomatic Corps, brothers and sisters.

I must begin by saying that I consider myself privileged and deeply honoured in being given an opportunity to participate in this function. It is a privilege and an honour because we are gathered here today to celebrate the life of a man. To acknowledge the meaning of that life through a book which he has written, which has been released today, and to join in the joy of the creation of a Foundation in his name which all of us are confident will have meaningful contributions to make to the Sri Lankan people in terms of the objectives of the Foundation as defined in its articles. I do not know how to compartmentalise and speak about so integrated a life as that of Mr. Thondaman. I would like to say something about him as an individual. Something about him as a trade unionist, a trade union leader and something about him as a leader in the top echelons of the power structure of this beautiful country. I had received an advanced copy of the book so that I could know something more about a man whom I have had the privilege and honour of knowing and from whose guidance I have benefited in my assignment here. Reading through the book, specially the narrative of the earlier part of his life in this Island, the lines of a very famous Poet of Urdu and Persian of my country, Josh Maliha Badi came to my mind. He said, "Kam hai mera

thagayur nam hai mera shebab meranara enkelabu enkelabu enkelab." "The task and meaning of my life is changed, changed for progress. My name therefore is youth eternal youth and my slogan is revolution, revolution and revolution again." Whatever little I knew of Mr. Thondaman, his life indicates that the first part of the couplet he has lived and of course he is still young in his idealism, in his vibrance and his dedication to the service of his people. Some things in the constitution of an individual's nature never change. But out of all of his achievements about which I may say something later, the one achievement which has impressed me most is his going off to school without telling his parents and creating general bedlam in his family long ago and far away in Tamil Nadu. If a young person in a semi-rural background, howsoever affluent his family may be, in fact if that family is affluent, it is more orthodox and more strait-jacketed. That a very young boy from such a closeted environment could move on, on his own initiative in search of knowledge at a very young age was indicative of what Mr. Thondaman is made of. His early life in which he describes the experiences that he went through in his country of birth — India, and the experiences that he went through in the country of his adoption, Sri Lanka clearly indicate a certain inner strength. It is not a strength inspired entirely by ambition. It is a strength inspired by an instinctive awareness of the challenges of history that he faced. He was the inheritor of a mixed background. He came to an entirely new environment where of course his father, by sheer dint of his

industry and ability, had done well. But for him it was an experiment and adjustment in the sense that he found himself transformed from an atmosphere where the social implications of his existence were not questioned to an atmosphere where the entire atmosphere was such that the Tamils of Indian origin, despite whatever their status, whatever their ability, were not equals. They were not a community which had the privilege — I shouldn't call it the privilege — which had the essential human right of being accepted as an equal part of society. There were socio-economic reasons for it. I agree with the Hon. Minister of Justice that socio-economic forces governing societies at given points of time are immoral and elemental. It is no use blaming one or the other about why some things happened, but the fact is that they happened and Mr. Thondaman lived amidst such happenings. I will now dilate on his transforming himself from a manager and a partner of his father's enterprises to a political leader.

He joined the Ceylon Indian Congress and if anybody gave a new orientation to the trade union movement in this country on the matrix of typically Sri Lankan national consciousness, Mr. Thondaman should be one of the main names on that list. I do not claim much knowledge about the history of the trade union movement in this country, but whatever little I know makes me feel that the trade union movement was — and I use the word deliberately, it was either afflicted by half absorbed Leftist ideologies or suffered from the abrasion of the ethnic phobias affecting society. From the last decade of the last century to the mid-fifties, these trends which I have mentioned seem to me to be valid. I am subject to correction but this is what I understand. Of course it was accidental that the largest labour force in your society happened to be of Indian origin in an organised sense. It is in this context that Mr. Thondaman's role as a trade union leader acquires meaning. He certainly advocated the cause of Tamils of Indian origin — the estate labour. He suffered for it but there was

a capacity for struggle and also a capacity for detachment which characterised his leadership. During the difficult period, in the latter part of the third decade of the century and the fifties, the handicaps from which the movement suffered are too well-known for me to express. But perhaps Mr. Thondaman believed in the Hindu scriptural admonition of the Hindus that, as the Geetha says, "Bithwawa jithwawa brukshisi bithwawa brapsasi swargam jithwawa brukshisi mahin thasamad uthishthakantheya yuddhayaka thanaschaya." A rough translation would be, "If you expire in the process of your struggle, the very virtue and the values of your struggle shall bless you into an identity with the supreme realtor. If you win the struggle you shall certainly enjoy the fruits of the struggle and distribute the fruits to your followers." And therefore the only correct approach towards the struggle of existence in whichever form one faces it is to stand up and fight for one's convictions, one's objectives, one's ideals." I think Mr. Thondaman personifies this ideal, this dictum.

I mentioned detachment. He was elected to Parliament in 1947. Then he was disenfranchised, he had to go out for every many years. While he continued his leadership and his capacity to inspire the movement personified, the next ideal mentioned in the Katopanashud — again the Hindu scriptures. I wish I knew enough of the other scriptures to quote, but his approach was, "Yodrishcha ladasantushtu dhondua deeto vimathsara." "Be at ease in the fulfilment or the non-fulfilment of your desires. Be happy with the predicament which you face, but in the process discipline your consciousness and your mind in such a manner that it rises above petty competition or an inclination to meaningless conflict." It is this quality which the Hon. Minister of Justice also mentioned. His capacity to temper his desire for change with moderation, or to put it in Edmind Burke's words, "He has the disposition to preserve with an ability to improve." That is what transformed the Ceylon Indian Congress to

the Ceylon Workers' Congress as a potent force representing the interests of a very vital part of Sri Lankan community.

Mr. Thondaman as a politician is recent in our memory compared to his long list of achievements and activities. I do not wish to talk about the entire range of his success since he became a Member of the Cabinet and a member of the top leadership of the country. I would only like to speak in terms of my own experience of him as a political leader. **In my three years I have found him an objective and enlightened judge of developments and events. I have found in him a clinical and dispassionate guide in perceiving undercurrents of the complex political trends characterising Sri Lanka. I have found in him an extraordinary combination of detachment, but imbued with a deep sense of patriotism towards Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka as Sri Lanka and the people of Sri Lanka as the people of Sri Lanka — not compartmentalised into ethnic straitjackets. Whenever he talked of policy, whenever he gave me advice or suggestions about the events in which we are involved in, his was a composite, eclectic vision of unified multi-lingual, multi-religious, multi-ethnic Sri Lanka.** I should not say this, but in my political experience of this country he is amongst the few who constantly cautioned me against being carried away, even by the passions of my ethnicity. I come from the South, I represent a very complex country and it was always an edification to sit with him to temper one's inclinations with the advice, moderation and objectivity. He has been, I would say, not only a supporter but an inspirer of the rather difficult agreement which India and Sri Lanka have signed to resolve the ethnic problems and to bring peace and normalcy not only to Sri Lanka but to bring about normalcy and to restore the affection and friendship between India and Sri Lanka. His support has been a great source of strength. His future advice, I am confident, will be a very vital factor in remedying imbalances and orienting our cause if we go wrong.

It is therefore with a deep sense of respect and affection that I pay my homage to Mr. Thondaman and his leadership. We live in difficult times and at such times we do need a Saumya-moorthi Thondaman. Saumyamoorthis is one of the names which we have given, at least in North India, to Lord Vishnu and Lord Krishna. "Saumya" is a quality of great and pleasant gentleness. But also the concept and quality of Saumya denotes great firmness and strength. The philological origin of the word "Thondaman" is also equally significant. "Thonda" in Sangam Tamil means an area of geographical and political significance. "Man" if you go to the Sanskrit origin of the word comes from the word "manan". He who minds, he who protects or he who takes care of the Thonda is Thondaman. So he has lived upto his name. The proof of it is the galaxy of people who are assembled in this Hall to join in this auspicious occasion to wish him well.

I would end by just referring to the objectives of the Thondaman Foundation. The first, the second and the seventh objectives warm the cockles of my heart. They say that the Foundation is established to promote and nurture the growth of the Sri Lankan consciousness, that comprehends clearly the multi-ethnicity of Sri Lankan society and acknowledges the political importance of developing mutual respect and equality among different communities in the country. The second objective states, "To eliminate inequalities among peoples and communities in regard to the basic rights of food, clothing, shelter, education, cultural and human development to strive towards the upliftment of the under-privileged weaker sections of society. Objective No. 7 says, "To sponsor, encourage and assist the development and enhancement of art, culture and literature and foster understanding and appreciation of the multifaceted, creative abilities of the different sections of the people of Sri Lanka. Historian Toynbee said that history is usually a process of challenges and responses. And if we try to speculate

on the role of the individual in the cyclical process, I suppose periodically individuals emerge who can precisely comprehend the nature of the challenge and have the innovativeness to design the response. Mr. Thondaman is one such person. When one looks back on his long life, one can only say about his book. He has titled his book his *Life and Times*, but again there are very few individuals among us who give sufficient meaning to their lives which make their times significant. I only end by saying that his life to all of us Indians of a pre-partitioned generation — pre-partition of India signifies the admonition of again a great Urdu Poet who later on became one of the great advocates of Pakistan, Alam Iqbal. He said, Qudeckokar bulandithna kihar thakdeer se pehele kuda bandesehut pusche batha there rasakyay." "Raise thyself to such heights of ability, consciousness and performance that before a decision is taken on each step of your faith, God himself will ask you what is your desire." Mr. Thondaman is such a man and it is a privilege to be living in his life and his times. Thank you very much.

Speech by Hon. Dr. Nissanka

(Continued on page 7)

courage leads them to apparent contradictions, but nevertheless to stand criticism, then they are justified in claiming what a life and what a noble life have I led and how unique have been the times in which I have lived and during which I have served." To you Mr. Thondaman, as one who for many years have looked at everything you have done critically and have had the courage to see you and speak to you and express any doubts, I have come to the conclusion that some greater force impels you that compels you to the path of wisdom, understanding and reconciliation when all of us sorely need blending and harmony that life may continue to exist in our blessed land. Thank you.

My Life and Times - 3

SPEECH BY HON. R. PREMADASA

PRIME MINISTER

Venerable Sirs, Honourable the Speaker, Honourable Ministers and Members of Parliament, Your Worship the Acting Mayor of Colombo, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

We are all assembled here today to take part in two important events. The official release of the Honourable Saumyamoorthi Thondaman's autobiography which is titled as 'My Life and Times' is the first event. The second event is the inauguration of the Thondaman Foundation. The person at the heart and core of both these events is our very good friend the Honourable Minister of Rural Industrial Development. Today, ladies and gentlemen, we are inspired by his life and by his lifestyle. We are also here to felicitate his contribution to public life and his achievements. It is interesting to note that his autobiography reflects four major facets of his life. Firstly he records here the struggles he had to face in the early part of his life. Mr. Thondaman did not have the privations of physical want. He was quite wealthy. But he had to contend against the unfriendly world, the hostile world. The period of his youth was the heyday of the British Raj. We can all remember what hardships, particularly in the mental outlook of our people that this period of overlordship imposed on the young and freedom loving sections of our people. Mr. Thondaman waged a stiff and relentless war against those forces. He was successful in the end. **This book, his autobiography, contains very interesting information on the social life, on the economic and on the political life of our country. Actually, it will be of immense help, not only to the casual reader, but also to the research student.** Secondly, this publication records in faithful detail Mr. Thondaman's complete dedication and service to the cause of his people. The cause of his people among whom his lot was cast; namely the Tamils of Indian origin in Sri Lanka. As you all know, the estate worker population of our country has

been among the most depressed and underprivileged sections. In many ways, their plight was a blot on the conscience of our nation. Mr. Thondaman's services to this section of our people are almost legendary. He sacrificed an easygoing life that he inherited. He willingly accepted a hard life of trials and tribulations for the cause of the estate worker. By his own hard work and by his own imagination he has forged what is today one of the most powerful trade unions in this country. Ladies and gentlemen, the third important fact of his life is his dedication to justice and fairplay. Mr. Thondaman entered the legislature about 41 years ago as an elected member for Nuwara Eliya in 1947. He continued to serve till 1952 and in July 1960 he was appointed as a nominated member. He continued to be a nominated member till 1970. In 1977 he was elected as the third Member of Parliament for the Nuwara Eliya-Maskeliya electorate. On the 6th of September 1978 he was appointed Minister of Rural Industrial Development. **Mr. Thondaman is a firm believer in the democratic process. He has always upheld democratic institutions. He has consistently proved his faith in the ballot as against the bullet. He has pursued a path of non-violence.** Fourthly, Mr. Thondaman is not a narrow communalist, communalist, in the sense of confining his interest and support to one community alone. He has always been able to take a broader view, a larger and wider perspective in all matters. Now at a time when narrow ethnic issues are trying to separate us, he has proclaimed his faith in the unity and in the territorial integrity of our country. Ladies and gentlemen, we are a cosmopolitan society. In such a society it is inevitable that there will be tensions over the rights and over the obligations of different groups. You cannot avoid that. Mr. Thondaman has shown us how tensions can be resolved without prolonged frictions, without violent confrontations. He is one who believes that the rights of the few should be

gained through the cooperation of the many. Then, and only then are the gains of the few fully ensured by the goodwill of the many. In cultivating that goodwill, Mr. Thondaman demonstrated that mutual trust is the first requirement for good relations. He knows, ladies and gentlemen, that it is in this way that justice for the few can be achieved with no injustice to the many. From time to time, those in a country like Sri Lanka have to arbitrate, have to resolve confrontations between different groups — ethnic groups, economic groups, social groups and also age groups. Mr. Thondaman's career illustrates that such controversies can be successfully reconciled through peaceful consultations only if the participants have trust and confidence in each other. **Over the years, there have been difficult and sometimes tense negotiations with Mr. Thondaman. But through all of them, his sensitivity to the large interests of the entire community has always matched his dedication with the special interests he represents.** He is one of the very few who have realized the fundamental fact of our political life. What is that? He knows that only the one who earns the absolute trust of the many can fulfil the just aspirations of the few.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, the Thondaman Foundation that is being inaugurated today will undoubtedly cherish and support many worthwhile causes in our country. I have also brought with me a cheque to the value of Rs. 100,000 from the Sevana Fund. We are contributing to the Thondaman Foundation because we find that the objectives include social, economic and cultural development in human settlements. So at the end of my speech I will hand over this cheque to Mr. Thondaman so that we will be able to contribute our mite to this worthy Foundation. Now, ladies and gentlemen trusts, funds and foundations play a very significant part in the social life of affluent nations both in Europe and in America. Unfortunately, not many of the affluent in our country have been inclined to make use of their wealth in this way. I wish many would do so in the future. Education of the less privileged I am told will be the major beneficiaries under his Foundation. And this is not surprising because Mr. Thondaman has been interested in this subject all his life. As he says in his autobiography,

My Life and Times - 4

Vote of Thanks by

MR. S. P. AMARASINGAM

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. The organizing committee has entrusted me with a very pleasant task of thanking all of you who have been kind enough to come here today. In particular, I must thank the Chief Guest and the two Guest Speakers for having been able, in spite of their very heavy schedules and time, to participate in this function. You will all agree with me that the Chief Guest and the two speakers have done their little homework by familiarizing themselves with the contents of the book 'My Life and Times' and also about the objectives of the Thondaman Foundation.

About the Chief Guest, the Hon. Prime Minister, Mr. Premadasa, everything about him is known and there is very little that I can add. Born in a humble family, a self-educated man, his rise in the political firmament of this country is meteoric. What the future will bring, what the future has in store for him, I cannot predict, but he is comparatively young and as the old saying goes — the sky is the limit for him. The Hon. Premadasa is the creator of many organisations, many institutions and many movements, and he has attained national, regional as well as global recognition.

In his Excellency, J. N. Dixit, we have the most eminent High Commissioner India has sent to Sri Lanka. I have only met Mr. Dixit at receptions briefly, but I have watched with interest and admiration his efforts to tame the tigers and look after the IPKF. His command of

he has had formal education only for a period of five years, but he says he has been a student all his life. Thereby he continues to be a student even today. Now that shows his wisdom and also his humility. That is the spirit that can make this Foundation great. That is the spirit that can move mountains.

Ladies and gentlemen, before I conclude, I consider it my duty to make a reference to the late Mrs. Kodai Thondaman. We all know that she was

the English language is supreme and his familiarity with Sanskrit and other Indian languages is profound and he switches from one to the other with consummate ease. His Excellency, Mr. Dixit has already contributed a great deal to Indian diplomacy in the region in this period. He has served in Bangladesh and Afghanistan and Sri Lanka. The most crucial phase of what I would term the Indira era in Indian history.

The Hon. Minister of Justice Dr. Nissanka Wijeyratne makes friends with his disarming smile and winning ways. He is versatile in many matters. He is a good Buddhist. He honors Oribundu of Pondichcheri and he visits Sai Baba in Bangalore. As I sat listening to him I was reminded of the torrential eloquence of his father, E. A. P. Wijeyratne, later Sir Edwin Wijeyratne. Sir Edwin was one of the finest orators this country has ever produced. In the spacious days of the thirties and forties when oratory was still a grand business in this country, politics was often settled on public platforms and history was made there. Today, when public speaking has been reduced to the stuccato firing of machine gun style, one has to listen on occasions like this to the words of men like Dr. Nissanka Wijeyratne for a little good oratory. Finally, I wish to thank every one of you once again for accepting the invitation of the Organizing Committee to be present here today. This is, I know, a tribute to the unique phenomenon that is Saumyamoorthi Thondaman. Thank you.

a paragon of virtue and a tower of strength to Mr. Thondaman. I know very to what extent Mr. Thondaman was affected by his beloved wife's demise. However he has been able to mitigate that loss through the fund of goodwill of our people that he has built up over the years. Well, ladies and gentlemen, this is a very happy occasion for all of us. I am glad that I was able to join you all in felicitating my friend, my colleague, Mr. Thondaman. Thank you.

SUBRAMANIA BHARATI: POET PATRIOT AND PIONEER

For nearly fifty years now, September 11 of every year is set apart by Tamils wherever they might live as *Bharati day* in honour of Subramania Bharati who died on September 11, 1921 at the young age of thirtynine. His increasing sway over the Tamil mind of today is salutary, and even revolutionary. He looked forward to changes that were desirable in Indian conditions of living. He voiced the aspirations of a large section of the Tamils and, even if some of his hopes have not been realised and he has not proved prophetic, the educated Tamils and the illiterate ones having his verses read to them think him as the tallest and most stalwart among patriots, poets and pioneers that Tamilnadu has produced.

In Tamil opinion he should have got the Nobel Prize for Literature. This might sound like a tall, most chauvinistic claim. But by what he did during his brief lifespan of thirtynine years, forced to earn his living by his pen with nothing to fall back upon and called upon to face a hostile establishment both native and foreign, Bharati achieved a miracle. During his lifetime he was acclaimed as poet, as the most convincing and sincere patriot of his day, and as a person who could give effective voice to a whole people. He sang of the yearning to freedom from foreign yoke of the man in the street, the brahmins as well as the harijans. He called for a total revolution in political and economic setups. Alone among the poets of India who often gloried themselves on their spiritual aspirations rather on their material ones he admonished people to earn wealth and extolled the workers, including the workers like himself, in poetry. He sang of world movements towards liberty and equality and fraternity among women, and was behind no man in advocating the right causes of women's freedom from male dependence, education, status.

"If a half of you remain unfree, how will you achieve freedom?" he asked men. "You talk of chastity; let both men and women be chaste. Chastity

KA NAA SUBRAMANYAM

should not be the privilege of one set of people among us!" He called upon women to become legislators and educators, officials, and doctors. He advocated reforms of the widest kind and rather than quiescence he advocated a violent overthrow of the establishment if necessary.

Initiated by Sister Nivedita into the ardour of patriotism and the need for women's uplift and intensive working for the cause of freedom, he began his literary career looking up to Bengal for inspiration and leadership. He found inspiration both in the song *Vande Mataram* which he translated into Tamil and in the writings of Rabindranath Tagore and to the speeches of Bipin Chandra Pal. He arranged for Pal to lecture to Madras audiences and he once chided Mahatma Gandhi for pleading having no time to preside over one of his meetings. He is said to have told the Mahatma: "The loss is yours!"

Most of Bharati's days were spent in penury. He earned a pittance as a sub editor but is on record saying how happy he was that a Tamil editor could earn a thousand rupees a month. He wanted his books of poetry to be distributed free to the poor, a feat that was to be made possible by the affluent paying more than four times the published prices voluntarily. Like all ideal dreams this was not possible; most of his poetry remained unpublished during his lifetime to be found most palatable by a growing generation of young men.

He struggled to educate his wife about his ideals but like many a husband did not succeed too well. Very few could understand him while he was alive though many of a later generation were to find in his writings great wisdom, literary effect and a national effectiveness.

Like most great poets Bharati was a most integrated person in himself. He

would give away what he had if he felt the other needed what he had. He was hungry but when he had a morsel of food he would share it with the ever-hungry crows and birds and beasts. He sang of all creation being kin to him like many a visionary but what was more he practised it giving away his last shirt or his last rupee as the case may be. A band of totally devoted disciples kept him going and he had to resort to opium in some hungry hours.

Setting out as a journalist, he was fiery and forceful and the British government found him a thorn in their flesh. They would have arrested him after a brief career as journalist, within three or four years of his setting up as a journalist, and he fled one evening to Pondicherry. He was the first among the exiles that were to gather in Pondicherry, the French pocket. V. V. S. Iyer, a disciple of V. D. Savarkar and colleague, joined him and later Shri Aurobindo was to make Pondicherry his headquarters till his death. The Pondicherry period was his most productive and most creative period. From patriotic fervour and nationalist poetry, he emerged as a bhakti poet in the traditional manner singing a series of great songs about Krishna, imagined as servant, boss, guru, colleague, and as woman in the role of beloved, tilting the *nayakanayaki bhava* of traditional singers of bhakti. He wrote considerable prose of which a few stories, parts of two novels, and an imaginative excursion into other and better worlds are available today and are marvels of creative expression. He wrote an absurd fable in verse entitled *The Nightingale* asking his readers to find a parable meaning and significance in it; it is great verse. And he wrote the episode of the vow of Draupadi from the *Mahabharatha* in the epic manner but in metres and words that the most ignorant could follow. He made Draupadi in her dire grief a symbol of modern unfree India of his days.

He wrote much other and shorter verse, insisting on telling the people

what was to their good. He observed that Auvaiyaar the old woman poetess of the Tamils was the greatest of poets as most other Tamil poets of any significance were brought up more or less on her moral axioms. He wrote a new set of alphabetic moral maxims, trying to improve on Auvaiyaar and making her modern. He addressed poems to children asking them to read, to play, to think for themselves to be careful about money, to get rid of caste ideas and the like. He was moralistic not exactly didactic or preachy; what he said he said with inner conviction which came through unmistakably through his words. He himself observed that if you had truth in your heart the truth came through in your words. He had a full understanding of the literary craft which like a sculptor decides on using one stone as floor slab and another as a sacred one for divine idol.

Bharati sang of world political events — the fall of Belgium, the Russian Revolution, the coming of Mahatma Gandhi, the need for freedom to develop freely and he sang of the political stalwarts of his day from Tilak to V. O. Chidambaram.

Subramania Buharati was a revolutionary in his patriotism and his politics but he was a traditionalist in his faith and spiritual yearnings, but traditional with a difference. His Hindu pantheon consisted of a few non-Hindu gods and goddesses like the Buddha and Allah and others. He believed in the coexistence of Gods of varying kinds with men of varying kinds in peace. He sang of India having as many as eighteen languages but she spoke with a single voice. Alas yet too much of a dream, this single voice phenomenon. He sang of one human family economically free of want, willing to work at anything that offered and always alive to the common goal of life, human happiness. His wants were simple an acre of grain yielding farm, with a few coconut trees and human company alive to culture.

Apart from the considerable body of verses he left us, he was the author of many prose articles. Like in his verse, in his prose also he demonstrates that he knows his mind and says what he has to say straightforwardly with as few words as possible avoiding innuendoes. He has a flexible prose style which is the despair of his younger

CHANT THE NAME OF BHARAT

*"Bharat-Desh" who say the name
Shall kill the fear of penury
And overcome the pain of hate.*

*On silvery, snow-clad mountains we
Shall roam and on the western ocean
Sail in ships, in every hamlet
Raise a temple and proudly claim,
"This, this is our Bharat-desh."*

*To Sri Lanka we shall build a bridge
Or raising Setu make a road;
And cultivate the hinterland
With overflowing Bengal floods;*

*From mines dug deep we shall extract
Gold and other minerals
Which we shall sell in distant lands
And buy the things we need at home.*

*Pearls in our southern sea abound:
And on the west coast foreign traders
Come in crowds and, bringing goods
We favour most, our favours seek.*

*In moonlight on the Indus waters
We shall sport in rowing boats
Singing with girls from Kerala
Songs in dulcet Telugu.*

*Wheat from the Ganges region will
Be bartered for Kaveri betel-leaves.
With Kerala ivory we shall reward
The lion-like poets of Maharashtra.*

*Instruments we shall make to bring
To Kanchi the voice of Kasi pandits:*

*To Rajput warriors we shall give
Gold from good Karnataka.*

*We shall pile up in every street
Mountains of silk and cotton garments,
which we shall sell to all the world
For durable commodities.*

*Weapons we shall make and paper,
Establish factories and schools;
Tireless, upstanding, heads erect,
We shall speak Truth and dare and do
Deeds heroic.*

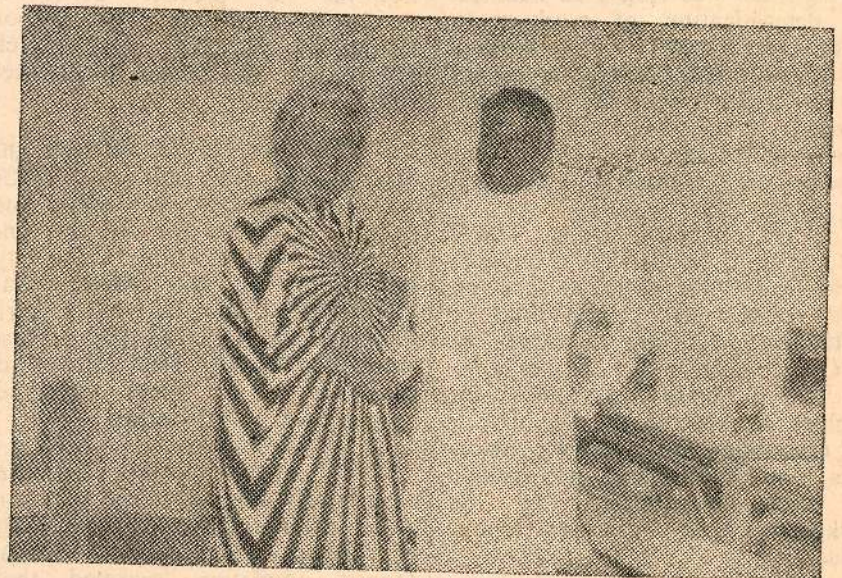
*Umbrellas we shall make; and ploughs,
Jute-bags and iron-nails; vehicles
That run and fly; and mighty ships
That set the whole world trembling.*

*Mantras we shall learn and tantras
For our service; we shall measure
The sky above and the fish in the
the ocean*

*We shall explore and thoroughly know
The moon's disc, and shall also master
The science of sweeping
thoroughfares clean.*

*Great poems we shall write, paint fine
Pictures, foster arts and raise
Rich forests, factories, furnaces,
Rejoicing in all kinds of work.*

*Like nectar we shall cherish Tamil
Avvais words: "Two castes alone
There are — the Noble who are just
And ever ready to help others:
And the Base who are not."*



Ms. Betty Bothroyd M.P., Deputy Speaker in the House of Commons paid a courtesy call on the Hon. Minister of Rural Industrial Development Mr. S. Thondaman recently.

contemporaries and even now defies the present generation of writers. He handled journalistic themes like reform, women education, the arts and letters as well as many topical as well as eternal themes. Apart from an excursion into translating the *Gita* into Tamil with a very explicit commentary, he did not do much spiritual writing as it can be called. But the spiritual was never very distant from his consciousness. Many of his poems speak of his spiritual concern for himself and for others.

Apart from prose and verse, he experimented as a writer dissatisfied with traditional forms on a kind of prose poetry which found publication only after he died and which is not popularly studied even now by those interested in Bharati. As an independent poet he was troubled by the limitations which Tamil prosodic laws imposed on him;

grammatical rules and pundit's regulations are strict especially in a decayed set up and they should have irked Bharati much to make him experiment with nonprosodic verse. Both Whiteman and the Vedic chants seem to have guided him in this experiment which has been a line adopted by quite a few of the new poets who came up in Tamil since the thirties.

All in all, the works of Subramania Bharati in prose and verse and something between which might comprise of a thousand five hundred closely printed pages form what might be called the Bible, offering the guiding principles of living for the Tamils. For the writers of today be it in verse or prose or new verse, Subramania Bharati's works are a never failing source of a constant inspiration. They rouse you to expression and action. They make you

think about the basic things of life. They never fail to inspire even the most dim-witted among the Tamils, the politicians. Bharati brought a quickness to Tamil prose and verse that makes it both vibrant and full of life.

The Tamil language has a distinctive line of poets from the Sangam Age to this. Subramania Bharati is most distinctive, topical as well as eternal, meaningful to present and coming generations of men and significant as a total figure of the Indian and Tamil renaissance. He inspired his colleagues and continues to inspire future generations of men. The India of Bharati's dreams is the India of a large and sane section of the Tamil people and every one who reads Bharati takes a vow to realise that dream.

*By Courtesy
Indian & Foreign Review*

TUCP HOLDS SUCCESSFUL ONE DAY NATIONWIDE STRIKE

The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines - led one day nationwide strike on Oct. 16, 1987 was very successful in industrial factories even as it did not fare as expected in the transport sector

The strike was staged to manifest the determination of workers to pursue their demand for an immediate P10 across the board daily salary increase and a wage-price indexation scheme. It was supported by other unions affiliated with the Labor Advisory and Consultative Council.

So far, reports from TUCP affiliates said about 400 companies in Metro Manila and 250 in other urban centers experienced total or partial stoppages as thousands of TUCP members either stayed home or staged mass walkouts. This number is expected to rise after a full accounting of the strike is made. This number also does not include the companies affected by the walkouts staged by other labour groups.

In Cebu, a bailiwick of the Associated Labour Unions-TUCP, the entire waterfront was paralyzed

because of mass walkouts. Scores of companies in Cebu and Mandaue were also affected by the strike.

In Bacolod, TUCP members walked out of the sugar centrals. Skeleton workforces were left however to prevent permanent damage to equipment. The transportation in Bacolod was severely affected as few buses plied their routes.

In Tacloban, Leyte, teachers and drivers affiliated with the TUCP staged mass walkouts causing suspension of classes for one day and crippling transportation in the city. Employees of the Metropolitan Water District and the Leyte Electric Cooperative, all TUCP affiliates, also joined the strike. The delivery of basic services by these companies however was not disrupted.

In Manila, transportation facilities were hardly affected as the transport unions did not deliver on their pledge of support. The Light Railway Transit employees picketed their offices from 7 to 9 in the morning, stranding thousands of commuters during those peak hours.

The Philippine Air Lines Employees Association which earlier threatened to disrupt operations in the airports continued on with their normal work but they wore black armbands to manifest their support for the strike.

The media considered the Aklasan ng Bayan (as it was called) a fare more successful and peaceful display of worker power as compared to the KMU-led Welga ng Bayan on Oct. 12

Most newspapers commended the TUCP leadership for showing concern for the public by not disrupting public utilities even if it had the capability to do so.

As whole, the TUCP nationwide strike was a success. It was able to communicate to the national political leadership the message that workers deserve what they demanded. At the same time, the TUCP earned public admiration and praise for the peaceful conduct of the strike.

DEMOCRITO T. MENDOZA
President

THE GANDHIAN WAY TO LIBERATION

K. S. RAMAMURTHI

"GANDHI'S CONCEPT OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE" — A Study with reference to Thoreau's influence on Gandhi, By Harpinder Kaur, Intellectual Publishing House, New Delhi; pp. 128, Price Rs. 75/-

Mahatma Gandhi has never failed to inspire the young and the old. This little book is written by a young Delhi University scholar. At least three generations separate her generation from Gandhi's. The book proves beyond doubt that the so-called "generation gap" is no hindrance to understanding Gandhi. The author launches on her voyage of discovering Gandhi in a truly academic spirit; yet her veneration for him is obvious.

The sub-title is perhaps unnecessary. It is relevant only because Thoreau lived and died before Gandhi was born and had left behind a legacy of ideas on what is broadly called civil disobedience. But Gandhi would have been Gandhi even if no Thoreau had lived. This is not to under-rate Gandhi's indebtedness to Thoreau but to emphasise that no one — not even Ruskin — had a total hold on Gandhi. Gandhi may have imbibed ideas from many thinkers but he was essentially a man of action and theory divorced from action was of no use to him. The most significant observation he ever made was: "*My life is my message.*" He was all the time experimenting and one would despair to find consistency in his writings. He was not bothered at all if any inconsistency was pointed out to him. His reply would often be: "I move from *Truth to Truth*".

As the author points out, Gandhi and Thoreau agreed on one idea — that the citizen has the right and duty to disobey the laws of the State if their "enlightened conscience rebelled against them". This was only the kernel. Gandhi had in him the instinct to rebel against any injustice. Scholars differ on when Gandhi first read Thoreau's essay on

Civil Disobedience but the first reference to it was made in his paper, *Indian Opinion* on September 7, 1907. The book must have been read by Gandhi not much earlier than 1907 since his treatment of it in subsequent issues of *Indian Opinion* bore all the signs of a newfound discovery. It is likely that he found in Thoreau confirmation of ideas which he had himself independently visualised and indeed put them into practice. By 1907 he was already in the thick of the passive resistance struggle in South Africa as he himself says in a letter to Thoreau's biographer, Henry Salt: "*My first introduction to Thoreau's writing was, I think in 1907, or later when I was in the thick of the passive resistance struggle...*" However, Gandhi has acknowledged that in writing his famous book "Hind Swaraj", first published in 1908 (not 1909 as stated by the author) he had "but endeavoured humbly to follow Tolstoy, Ruskin, Thoreau, Emerson and other writers..."

The evolution of Gandhi's political philosophy must be studied independently of what others may have contributed to his thought processes. It needs a sublime perception to grasp the significance of the pristine truth that he propounded, namely, that the weapons of love must make the weapons of hate as useless as possible. He called this *Satyagraha*. He distinguished it from "passive resistance". In his own words: "In passive resistance non-violence is adopted as a matter of outward form; the basic motive of love, as it is understood to be functioning in *Satyagraha*, remains absent. Hatred becomes the prime mover".

It is impossible to conceive of the weapon of love as the supreme weapon in the present circumstances, as it was in Gandhi's time. Gandhi's great achievement lay in creating for this idea a certain degree of acceptance among the people whether South African blacks or people in the Indian sub-continent. His initial rebellion was against racial segregation in South Africa. It was not that Indians alone were discriminated against. All non-

whites were victims. His struggle in South Africa was his instinctive response to what he saw as an injustice, whoever the victims.

One phase of his experimentation with Truth ended in South Africa and a new phase began when he returned to India in 1915. Between then and 1921 Gandhi's concept of civil disobedience was maturing. The quintessence of his philosophy as it emerged in 1921 may be put thus: "*...a new force had been born into the world, before which fleets and armies and all the methods of material civilisation would prove useless...*"

Very soon more creative ideas were thrown up. Since the core of *Satyagraha* was self-suffering, Indians had to be made self-reliant and fearless. The "Charkha" had a deep inner significance in this context. It was not meant to make Indians eke out a living. It was a great creative idea to communicate a message to the illiterate masses. He realised that if Indians would learn to spin their own thread and weave their own cloth in their homes, they could stop buying British cotton goods. The poorest Indian in the smallest village, who was so despondent that he could not protest against anything, felt suddenly important. He could defeat the British Empire simply by sitting in his hut quietly spinning thread.

Nine years later, Gandhi was again in quest of an idea to involve the whole people. "I am furiously thinking night and day", Gandhi said, "and I do not see any light coming out of the surrounding darkness". Finally, out of his prayers and communion with God came the answer. The solution was as simple as the spinning wheel-salt. He was at his creative best in the salt *Satyagraha*. It was a magnificent conception which at one stroke and with no violence undermined the prestige of the British government. It was as if a magician, with a wave of his hand, was bringing the entire people of the sub-continent under his spell. The author places the Dandi march on the same pedestal as Christ's last journey to Jerusalem. Gandhi liberated his people from fear and once fear had been conquered, freedom was as good as won.

By Courtesy
Indian & Foreign Review

LABOUR AND SOCIO ECONOMIC STATISTICS OF SRI LANKA

PUBLISHED BY COPSITU

Trade Union Leaders such as Industrial Relations Officers, Bargaining Agents and Union Negotiators need timely, accurate, reliable and relevant statistics to present their case most effectively.

In recent years, trade unions have shown equal and important interest in the field of statistics. They have felt that their capacity to undertake statistical surveys, studies and effective and timely use of such data in their representations is central to sustained collective bargaining efforts and successful contract enforcement principles.

The latest publication of "*Labour and Socio Economic Statistics of Sri Lanka*" by the Conference of Public Service Independent Trade Unions (COPSITU) proves to be the most outstanding work in this field. It certainly excels to be the most complete and composite work of this nature.

Until recently Labour leaders, Industrial Relations Officers, Negotiation

experts and Labour Tribunal monitors were very badly handicapped in gathering vital labour relation statistics in a single and complete publication. They were compelled to refer to various publications made available by various authorities.

Although there was a pressing demand for a single and complete publication containing all the relevant and essential statistical information on labour relations, yet no one ventured in this field because of its vastness and near impossibility.

The bold and pioneering effort made by the COPSITU to bring out a single and complete publication containing all the relevant and related information will certainly be appreciated and admired by all those who are concerned with labour relations.

The innovative publication of the COPSITU makes the task of industrial relation officers very simple. The publication contains nearly 100 tables and

presentations dealing with every aspect of industrial relations and related fields. They will find this creative and impressive publication an invaluable aid to understand current trends and developments in the socio economic sphere as well.

The publication contains investigative primary data gathered by COPSITU itself on new and challenging areas as well as secondary data obtained from the publications of the Department of Census and Statistics, Central Bank of Sri Lanka, Ministry of Plan Implementation, Ministry of Public Administration, Department of Labour, Treasury, ILO, ICFTU, PSI etc.

Statistics on wages, salaries and other compensation, consumer price indexes, Consumer expenditure surveys and standard family budgets are presented in the publication with a view to help trade union leaders to shape their policy on wages.

Consumer price indexes, cost of living indexes and how they are prepared, findings of the consumer expenditure surveys are presented in a comparative fashion. These presentations provides valuable insight into the welfare of the particular segments of the population and reveals the amount of income required for given families to maintain specified standard of living.

The publication is priced Rs. 50/- and can be obtained from the Secretary, COPSITU, No 10, Bambalapitiya Drive, Colombo 4.

Trade Unions and Trade Union Membership
(48% OF THE UNIONISED MEMBERS ARE IN PUBLIC SECTOR)

Year	No of Union's functioning at end of year	Total No. of Unions which sent return	Membership
1948	101	58	158,178
1949	142	82	129,327
1950	185	101	127,809
1951	237	124	235,457
1952	257	187	299,103
1953	259	207	309,031
1954	283	209	312,178
1955	310	222	360,127
1956	352	178	262,149
1957	576	255	522,266
1958	631	327	731,020
1959	821	440	823,821

Year	No of Union's functioning at end of year	Total No. of Unions which sent return	Membership
1960	900	587	739,063
1961	973	642	789,349
1962	1,026	721	863,316
1963	1,052	771	1,169,100
1964	1,133	897	1,422,143
1965	1,232	869	1,217,538
1966	1,245	883	1,257,529
1967	1,239	936	1,455,008
1968	1,231	889	1,347,873
1969	1,230	809	1,287,305
1970	1,364	684	889,712
1971	1,600	393	774,548
1972	1,578	—	—
1973	1,644	590	1,217,740
1974	1,592	412	398,446
1975	1,568	482	1,266,271
1976	1,578	535	1,066,429
1977	1,636	602	1,399,902
1978	1,450	485	967,795
1979	1,309	675	1,440,720
1980	1,213	452	1,336,440
1981	1,139	533	1,666,374
1982	1,221	558	1,784,226
1983	1,227	583	1,772,114
1984	1,068	576	1,806,173
1985	957	580	1,565,394

Source: Sri Lanka Labour Gazette, Administration Reports.

Minimum Wage Rate Indices of Government Employees

Year	Technical and Clerical		Minor Employees		All Central Government Employees		Government School Teachers	
	Nominal Wage Rate Index	Real Wage Rate Index	Nominal Wage Rate Index	Real Wage Rate Index	Nominal Wage Rate Index	Real Wage Rate Index	Nominal Wage Rate Index	Real Wage Rate Index
1952	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1954	101.4	100.3	102.4	101.3	101.9	100.8	101.2	100.1
1955	106.9	106.4	110.4	109.9	108.7	108.2	110.2	109.7
1956	108.7	108.5	113.0	112.8	111.0	110.8	113.2	113.0
1957	111.2	108.2	116.0	112.8	113.8	110.7	113.9	110.8
1958	122.3	116.5	130.4	124.2	126.7	120.7	117.4	111.8
1959	122.3	116.3	130.4	124.0	126.7	120.4	117.4	111.6
1960	122.3	118.2	130.4	126.0	126.7	122.4	117.4	113.4
1961	122.3	116.7	130.4	124.4	126.7	120.9	117.4	112.0
1962	122.3	115.0	130.4	122.6	126.7	119.2	117.4	110.4
1963	122.7	112.4	130.4	119.9	126.7	116.5	117.4	107.9
1964	122.3	109.0	130.4	116.2	126.7	112.9	117.4	104.6
1965	122.3	108.7	130.4	115.9	126.7	112.6	117.4	104.4
1966	122.3	108.9	130.4	116.1	126.7	112.8	117.4	104.6
1967	125.4	109.2	136.2	118.6	131.3	114.4	119.4	104.0
1968	140.1	115.4	163.0	134.3	152.6	125.7	129.6	106.7
1969	144.4	110.6	168.0	128.6	157.3	120.4	132.5	101.5
1970	157.2	113.8	182.6	132.4	171.3	124.0	141.1	102.1

Year	Technical and Clerical		Minor Employees		All Central Government Employees		Government School Teachers	
	Nominal Wage Rate Index	Real Wage Rate Index	Nominal Wage Rate Index	Real Wage Rate Index	Nominal Wage Rate Index	Real Wage Rate Index	Nominal Wage Rate Index	Real Wage Rate Index
1971	157.2	110.9	182.9	129.0	171.3	120.8	141.1	99.5
1972	157.4	104.4	183.4	121.6	171.7	113.8	141.2	93.6
1973	163.0	98.6	194.2	117.5	180.1	108.8	144.3	87.3
1974	181.5	97.7	220.5	118.7	202.8	109.2	159.1	85.7
1975	197.4	99.6	246.3	124.2	224.2	113.1	171.8	86.6
1976	206.9	103.1	262.2	130.6	237.2	118.2	181.6	90.5
1977	209.2	103.0	266.1	131.0	240.4	118.3	184.7	90.9
1978	234.5	103.1	308.7	135.5	275.2	121.0	203.9	89.7
1979	272.5	108.1	372.4	147.6	327.2	129.7	234.7	92.9
1980	299.2	94.2	417.5	130.5	363.9	114.6	254.5	80.1
1981	337.7	90.0	482.2	128.5	416.1	101.1	283.8	75.7
1982	441.3	106.1	636.5	153.0	548.3	131.8	360.2	86.6

Source: Central Bank of Ceylon — Annual Reports

I.L.O. Conventions Ratified by Sri Lanka

Convention No.	NAME	Date of Registration of Ratification by the I.L.O.	Remarks
4	Night Work (Women) 1919	8.10.51	(denounced)
5	Minimum Age (Industry) 1919	27.09.51	
6	Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) 1919	26.10.50	(denounced)
7	Minimum Age (Sea) 1920	2.09.50	
8	Unemployment Indemnity, 1920	25.04.51	
11	Right of Association (Agriculture) 1920	25.08.52	
15	Minimum Age (Trimmers and Stokers) 1921	25.04.51	
16	Medical Examination of Young Persons (Sea 1921)	25.04.51	
18	Workmen's Compensation (Accidents) 1925	17.05.52	
26	Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery (1928)	9.06.71	
29	Forced Labour, 1930	5.04.50	
41	Night Work (Women) (Revised), 1934	2.09.50	(denounced)
45	Underground Work (Women), 1935	20.12.50	
58	Minimum Age (Sea) (Revised), 1936	18.05.59	
63	Statistics of Wages and Hours of Work, 1938	25.08.52	
80	Final Articles Revision 1946	19.09.50	
81	Labour Inspection 1947	3.04.56	
89	Night Work (Women) (Revised) 1948	31.03.66	(denounced)
90	Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) (Revised), 1948	18.05.59	
96	Fee Charging Employment Agencies (Revised) 1949	30.04.58	
98	Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining 1949	14.12.72	
99	Minimum Wage Fixing Machinery (Agriculture) 1951	5.04.54	
116	Final Articles Revision, 1961	26.04.74	
131	Minimum Wage Fixing, 1970	17.03.75	
135	Workers Representations	16.11.76	

Sri Lanka has expressed its willingness to ratify the following Conventions.

- 95. Protection of Wages
- 106. Weekly Rest (Commerce and Offices)

Source Dept of labour

Employment Rate* By Sex and Sectors

Sector	1971 Census of Population	1980/81 Labour Force Survey
All Island		
Male	85.7	87.6
Female	60.9	77.0
Total	81.3	84.7
Urban		
Male	83.0	85.5
Female	52.4	70.7
Total	76.6	81.4
Rural		
Male	86.6	88.1
Female	72.6	78.4
Total	82.6	85.4

$$* \text{ Employment rate} = \frac{\text{Employed population}}{\text{Economically Active Population}} \times 100$$

Source: Dept. of Census & Statistics

Number of Industrial Accidents Settled and Compensation Paid

Year	Number of Industrial Accidents Settled			Compensation paid		
	Fatal	Non-Fatal	Total	Fatal Rs.	Non-Fatal Rs.	Total Rs.
1970						
1971	19	2,937	2,956	25,545	220,472	246,017
1972	17	2,772	2,789	90,582	250,952	341,534
1973	15	2,560	2,575	101,040	229,031	330,071
1974	7	2,170	2,177	45,540	225,754	271,294
1975	135	1,054	1,189	730,955	298,115	1,029,070
1976	160	1,026	1,186	893,821	253,982	1,147,803
1977	149	1,569	1,718	1,011,792	310,446	1,322,238
1978	202	864	1,066	1,507,089	135,255	1,642,344
1979	105	799	904	1,432,342	139,071	1,571,413
1980	176	629	805	1,522,400	121,448	1,643,848
1981	144	840	984	1,393,931	1,245,600	2,639,531
1982	200	966	1,166	1,860,000	234,698	2,094,698
1983	206	665	871	1,115,728	217,454	1,333,182
1984	459	403	862	—	—	2,582,983
1985	201	340	541	2,981,536	225,000	3,206,536

Source: Department of Workmen's Compensation.

PLANTATION-NEWS & VIEWS

Mission to spread message of meditation

The 3-day Yagna, the Hindu religious sacrifice conducted according to Vedic rites, conducted at Nuwara Eliya Lankeswarar kovil, to usher in peace for Sri Lanka concluded yesterday with blessings from Sri Shivabala Yogi Maharaj.

Said Swamiji, "Peace is Sri Lanka's urgent need. The Yagna will bring back peace to this beautiful country".

The 53-year-old Swamiji who became a Bala-Yogi at the age of 14 is now at Nuwara Eliya personally supervising the Yagna. The temple itself was built in 1978 on Swamiji's direction to consecrate the Lingam he found in the Gadawari river.

Rural Industrial Development S. Thondaman and Regional Development Minister C. Rajadurai took part in the ceremonies.

The short-statured Swamiji with a flowing beard and captivating, magnetic face will also give darshan and conduct meditation at Bandarawela, Badulla, Hatton, Matale, Kandy and Colombo before he returns to Bangalore in South India on March 14.

Meditation is the medicine Swamiji ministers to every one. "Meditate at least an hour every day and you will attain internal and external peace", he says.

"Mind is always turbulent, wandering, uncontrolled. All your energy is dissipated by this rambling mind. You rein it, and calmness comes to you", he adds.

Swamiji's mission is to spread the message of meditation. He has initiated over two million of his devotees worldwide to meditation.

He decries the short cuts to meditation, what he calls commercialised meditation. "You don't make money of meditation. It's an art and science which you must practice to achieve peace with themselves and with the world", he says.

He adds that meditation lowers blood pressure, cures diabetes and improves the general health of the meditator.

Question: Can you prove it scientifically? Have you got doctors to study the effects of meditation?

Swamiji: Doctors themselves come to me to be initiated on meditation. They tell me meditation lowers blood pressure and cures many diseases. I am not interested in organising scientific studies as I am not interested in selling meditation.

Swamiji gives darshan, distributes consecrated vibhuti to patients and conducts bajanas which he explained as preliminaries to the practice of meditation.

"My main mission is to minister to the spiritual needs of the people. The people come to me to satisfy their material needs also. In order to uplift them to the spiritual plane I have to practise these preliminaries", he smiled.

I left before meditation started. Swamiji took an apple, blessed it, and gave it to me. I accepted it, and took a hard look at his face. His gleaming eyes penetrated me. I felt calm, a sort of peace within me.

We learn to live with each other

— Thonda

The Indian Tamil community will have to learn to live with the other communities in the country, with their only safeguards being self-reliance and self-confidence, once the provincial council system comes into operation. Minister of Rural Industrial Development Mr. S. Thondaman, in an interview with the "Sunday Times", said: "If it had been a District Council system it would have helped us as a community". He explained that the proportional representation of the Indian Tamil community in a district council system would have been of some significance. In a provincial council system the pro-

portional representation of the Indian Tamils as a community would be negligible.

This was nothing new to the Indian Tamil community in Sri Lanka, he said adding that he was confident that they would manage without the safeguards written into the law of the land, as they had survived for so long as "stateless" citizens.

Solid power of the workers enabled me work for the estate Tamils

— Thondaman

The estate children have the ability and talent to learn like the children of the other communities, but they were not provided with the right facilities earlier. Hence the parents in the plantations should now stop worrying about trivial personal problems and seriously consider providing their children with better conditions for studying, said the Minister of Rural Industrial Development S. Thondaman addressing a gathering at the opening ceremony of a building at Talawakelle Tamil Maha Vidyalayam.

Associated with him at this function were the Circuit Education Officer, Marimuttu, Talawakelle UC Chairman, Padmakeerti Hemachandra and P. Chandrasekaran.

Continuing Mr. Thondaman referred to the 1950 period where a small school building was constructed for the estate Tamil children. Just that day arrangements were made to open the building the majority community people have forcibly occupied the building and the Tamil people could not do anything but returned home, sad. This situation had now changed, because of the solidarity of the workers.

The Talawakelle Tamil Maha Vidyalayam housed in the dilapidated factory had progressed satisfactorily. The number of children receiving education has increased to over one thousand. The GCE Ordinary Level and

(Continued on page 24)

SIXTH INTERNATIONAL Conference — Seminar of Tamil Studies

— P. DEVARAJ

The Malaysian Government had provided financial assistance and extended support in other ways for the 6th International Tamil Conference in Kuala Lumpur. The implicit political understanding and good relations between Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed and Dato S. Samivellu might have been a causative factor but probably there was much more to it than cordiality between two personalities. With the shadow of political arrests darkening the country some saw in the explicit support to the conference a calculated move in the game of political chess. A friend who had a penchant for dramatisation described the situation as surrealist the meaning of which it was difficult for casual observers to discern.

There was an apparent contradiction between the inexorable drive of the Bhumi Putra policy to consolidate further the pre-eminence of Malay and support for a conference which aimed at creating a re-awakening among Tamils for their language, culture and way of life. The Tamil conference might have been viewed purely as a cultural affair which will not in anyway impinge upon the overall Malaysian ethnic policies but on the other hand it might have been thought that a clear encouragement and support for the conference will help to ward off criticism about the large scale arrests and extremism in Malay ethnic policy. The situation had to be understood in the context of the pressures and constraints and in the background of the complex political scenario that was unfolding in Malaysia. Some saw in the developments the harbinger of new dimensions in ethnic accommodation. The Malaysian model it was argued was resilient enough to allow for changes and adjustment to reach new levels of concord.

Whatever may have been the speculations, analysis and predictions about the future there was no mistaking the profound impact the 6th Tamil Conference was making on Malaysian Tamils. At the opening sessions conference

Chairman Dato Samivellu had appealed to scholars who had gathered there to help steer to safety Tamil language, culture and symbols of Tamils' life which he said were being tossed about by mighty waves in mid-ocean. This was an expression of concern as well as a hope for the future. Perhaps the tears that so spontaneously flowed from the Tamil lady's eyes after listening to the oratory of Karunanithy and the sentimentality of the taxi driver symbolised at once the fears and the hopes of the Malaysian Tamil people.

A Tamil academic who was attending the conference said "I have been inspired by this conference to think about my roots. I am going to seriously study Tamil, I want to read Tamil literature from tomorrow." Another Malaysian who was standing, close by drinking tea along with us remarked "Tamils are talking too much about the past. We must think of the future. Can Tamil meet the challenges of the Scientific era? He said he was in the computer field and was at the conference to take part in a discussion on computers in Tamil. A young Malaysian student who had a professorial air about him joined the discussion. "We need the past. We need to look at our roots. Looking at the past and imbibing our cultural heritage does not mean that we do not look into the future." He adjusted his glasses and continued in a carefully modulated voice. "The past, present and future are all interlinked. What has to be criticised is the superficial eulogising of everything that comes from the past. We should look in a rational way at the past, draw inspiration from our traditions and seek from it elements upon which we can build the future." The serious faced young student had certainly made a point. Several others who were nearby joined the circle and the discussion continued. It was a delightful and unforgettable experience.

Animated discussions on the conference topics could be heard every

where; in corridors leading to lecture halls, during tea, in the special buses that were transporting delegates, in the dining halls, and in rooms.

Academic programmes on the different sections were taking place simultaneously in various halls. One had to choose his area of interest and select the discussion in which he wanted to participate.

On the second day of the conference I gravitated to the lecture hall where the 1st session on linguistics was being held. This was not because I had any special knowledge of linguistics but it was due to a curiosity to find out what the Japanese scholar Susumo Ohno and Professor R. E. Asher were going to say about Japanese-Tamil linguistic relationship which was the topic of their papers. I remembered how a Sri Lankan academic scoffed at the idea of any relationship between Japanese and Tamil when someone mentioned about studies being undertaken in this area. I was very much interested to get an idea as to what the two scholars had to say on the subject.

Both Dr. Susumo Ohno and Professor R. E. Asher are internationally reputed Scholars. The evidence that had been marshalled by them on the subject was very impressive. Many outstanding linguistic scholars were present in the audience and the discussion was lively. Later the same day I listened to a talk in Tamil by a Sri Lankan researcher Manonmani Senmugadas on certain comparative aspects in Japanese and Tamil literary traditions. The next day I was present at the sessions where A Sanmugadas presented a paper on "A comparison of Japanese-Tamil ... quality words"...

There appeared to be considerable interest in studying Japanese-Tamil linguistic relationship as well as comparative studies in literary and cultural traditions.

Just before I went to listen to Professor Asher and Dr. Susumo Ohno I spent about 45 minutes in the literature sessions. The discussions were in Tamil on "Ilango" the poet who authored the Tamil classic Cilappadikkaram. I was able to listen only to part of the first presentation entitled 'Nature Poet Ilango' by Dr. Indumathi but was there

(Continued on page 24)

South Asian Regional Trade Union Council (SARTUC)

Founding Convention Held on 29th January 1988

AT HOTEL TAJ SAMUDRA, COLOMBO

"The formation of the South Asian Regional Trade Union Council opens a new Chapter in the History of the International Trade Union Movement" stated Hon. S. Thondaman at the organisation's founding convention (SARTUC) held on 29th January 1988 at the Hotel Taj Samudra, Colombo. Mr. S. Thondaman delivered the inaugural address at the convention in his capacity as Chairman of the Provisional Committee of SARTUC.

Mr. Thondaman pointed out that Sub Regional Organisations can play a significant role in developing collective self reliance. The SARC nations have already identified several areas of co-operation and are moving forward faster than was originally envisaged. He further stated that Trade Unions in the South Asian countries can contribute greatly to the concept of regional co-operation by strengthening contact among themselves and creating an institutional framework.

The idea of forming the SARTUC had been originally mooted in May, 1985 during a meeting of the South Asian Trade Union leaders that took place in Pattaya, Thailand. Since then several exchanges of ideas had taken place. In November 1987 a meeting of South Asian Trade Union leaders affiliated to ICFTU took place in New Delhi. Consequent to this a Provisional Committee was set up with Mr. S. Thondaman as Chairman and Shri Gopeshwar (General Secretary, Indian National Trade Union Congress) as Secretary.

The aims and objectives of the SARTUC as set out in its charter are as follows :—

- (a) to promote the welfare of the workers of South Asia and to improve their working conditions and quality of life through the establishment of full employment, the eradication of poverty, the improvement of working conditions, the introduction, maintenance and extension of social security and their raising of the standard of living for all people in the region ;

(b) to accelerate economic growth, social progress and workers access to these in the region and to provide all workers the opportunity to form free and democratic trade unions and free access of collective bargaining ;

(c) to promote and strengthen free and democratic trade unions and collective self-reliance among trade union organisations ;

(d) to contribute to a collective consciousness through mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another's problems ;

(e) to promote trade union solidarity and regional co-operation ;

(f) to "strengthen co-operation" with sister trade union organisations in other developing countries ;

(g) to strengthen co-operation among themselves in the international forums on matters of common interest ;

(h) to co-operate with international and regional trade union organisations with similar aims and purposes ; and

(i) to ensure that free and democratic trade unions participate meaningfully in national and regional economic and social development.

The convention was ceremonially opened by the lighting of the Traditional Oil Lamp by representatives of the Trade Union delegates and international observers to the accompaniment of a special composition of Mrs. Arundathi Sri Ranganathan a well known artiste. This was followed by a rendering of the composition "Melodies of South Asia" also composed by Mrs. Sri Ranganathan supported by the Orchestra of SLPC.

Welcoming the gathering Mr. M. S. Sellasamy, General Secretary of Ceylon Workers' Congress said that the messages received from throughout the world clearly demonstrate the realisation of the importance of the new organisation. It was a great privilege for Ceylon Workers' Congress to organise and host the founding convention and associate itself with a new forum that would continue the legacy of the trade union movement in South Asia.

Mr. M. P. Sundaram, International Representative of Ceylon Workers' Congress briefly explained the background to the formation of South Asian Trade Union Council.

Messages of Greetings were received from the following :—

1. Shri Rajiv Gandhi
2. Mr. Francis Blanchard, Director General ILO
3. Mr. S. Nakatani, Assistant Director General, ILO for Asia and the Pacific
4. Mr. John Vanderveken, General Secretary, ICFTU
5. Mr. V. S. Mathur, General Secretary, ICFTU-APRO
6. Mr. Amal Mukherjee, Chief of Workers Plantations Branch-ILO
7. Mr. P. P. Narayanan, President, ICFTU.
8. Mr. G. Botterweck, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
9. Mr. Wholey, Asian American Free Labour Institute
10. Mr. Sterling Smith, Commonwealth Trade Union Council
11. M/s. Julia Bardos, Canadian Labour Congress

Mr. Gopeshwar, General Secretary of the Provisional Committee of SARTUC said that 5 countries were involved in SARTUC with 11 national trade union centres having about 8 million membership. This

Region had above 110 million population with several complicated problems of huge population, unemployment, under-employment, defence etc. The work of SAR-TUC would be to assess problems of the Region particularly organising the unorganised and also stabilising economic development. He mentioned the meetings of ICFTU Working Party with the Soviet leader Mr. Mikhael Gorbachev, General Secretary CPSU and Mr. Ronald Reagan, President of U.S.A. for peace, security and disarmament. He also said that the SAR-TUC would work in coordination with SAARC, ILO and other International Bodies. He said that working class was one without frontiers and only their active cooperation and thinking would help.

The delegates and invitees paid homage to late Khan Abul Ghaffar Khan by observing two minutes silence.

SESSION II

Following its formal inauguration the meeting moved on to its business sessions as set out in the provisional Agenda. Hon. S. Thondaman chaired the session.

AGENDA ITEM I:

Adoption of the Agenda

Mr. P. Devaraj introduced the Provisional agenda, copies of which had been circulated in advance to the participants. He explained that in formulating this agenda the agendas sent by member unions had been taken into consideration. He also explained that a 'Draft Charter' and 'Logo' were being submitted for consideration. All these have been annexed with the provisional agenda. These could be considered by the participants when the relevant items of business were taken up by it.

The meeting adopted the provisional agenda prepared by Ceylon Workers' Congress. A copy of the Agenda adopted by the meeting appears as Annex ...VII.

AGENDA ITEM 2:

Comments from Members

The Chairman observed this was an important item and it provides an opportunity for all participants to express their views.

The following delegates addressed the convention :—

1. Mr. U. Prohit, HMS, India
2. Mr. Delwar Hosseinkhan, JSP, Bangladesh
3. Mr. Hem Raj Giri, NLO, Nepal
4. Mr. S. L. Passey, INTUC, India
5. Mr. Lutfer Rehman, BJSL, Bangladesh
6. Mr. Jaya Peri Sundaram CWC, SRI LANKA

AGENDA ITEM 3:

Consideration of Logo

Several 'Logos' were designed for discussion at the meeting.

The Logo adopted by the member appears as Annex... VIII

AGENDA ITEM 4:

Charter/Constitution Discussion

The draft Charter and constitution were taken up for consideration. Several members expressed their views. The meeting appointed the following Drafting Committee for finalising the Charter, the constitution and the Resolutions for the Convention:

Shri V. S. Mathur	Chairman
Shri Gopeshwar	Member
Mr. M. P. Sundaram	"
Mr. Thampan Thomas	"
Mr. Dalwar Hossainkhan	"
Mr. P. Devaraj	"
Mr. Lutfer Rahaman	"

After detailed discussions the Committee finalised the charter, the Constitution of the Council and the resolution. The final Draft Charter appears as Annex...IX

AGENDA ITEM 5:

Consideration of Funding Schedule

Introducing this item, Shri Gopeshwar referred to the special meeting of Trade Union leaders from South Asian countries held at New Delhi in November 1987. In accordance with the decision of the special committee meeting, the funding schedule for SAR-TUC was roughly drawn.

It was decided in this convention that the cost of running SAR-TUC shall be met out of an annual membership fee to be fixed by the Executive Boards and contributions from friendly

organisations acceptable to the Executive Board.

AGENDA ITEM 6:

Head Quarters/Secretariat

The meeting unanimously decided to locate and establish the SAR-TUC Secretariat at such place as the General Conference of SAR-TUC shall determine from time to time. The INTUC undertook to establish the first secretariat immediately in New Delhi.

AGENDA ITEM 7:

Appointment of Executive Council

It was decided to have an Executive Board which would be responsible for the management of the affairs of the SAR-TUC. It should consist of a representative nominated by each member based on membership subject to minimum of one representative for member organisation.

The Executive Board shall elect from among its members the following:—

- (a) President.
- (b) One Vice President from each member country
- (c) General Secretary who shall also exercise the function of Treasurer.
- (d) Representatives of member organisations.

The following were elected as members of first Executive Board of SAR-TUC.

President

Hon. S. Thondaman

General Secretary

Shri Gopeshwar

Vice Presidents

1. Mr. M. P. Sundaram CWC, Sri Lanka
2. Mr. Thampan Thomas INTUC, India
3. Mr. Hem Raj Giri NLO, Nepal
4. Mr. Md. Dalwar Hossainkhan BJSP, Bangladesh

AGENDA ITEM 8:

Topic Assignment to Technical Committees

When this item was taken up for discussion it was decided that chairman and General Secretary will finalise this matter.

AGENDA ITEM 9:

Close of Sessions

Mr. P Devaraj proposed vote of thanks.

In the evening a cultural pageant was held in honour of the delegates. The cultural pageant started with a traditional Kandyan Dance by Piyasara Silpathipathy group and included the following:—

Sinhala Song

Maya Damayanthi

Bharatha Natyam

Priyadharshini Ranga Cumarasamy

Tamil Song

Arunthathy Sri Ranganathan

Muslim Song

A. J. Careem

Unity in Tythem Dance Duet

Kandyan & Baharatha Natyam

Priyadharshini Ranga Cumarasamy & Sharmalee Peiris

English Song

Lincoln De Silva

Hindi Song

Victor Wijeyawathe

Drum Orchestra

Mridangam; Kalasuri

T Ratnam

Gadam K. K. Achuthan

Tabla R. Vardharaja

Kandyan Drum

Piyasara Silpathipathy

Temple Dance

Shri Hariram & Shrimathi Useni Hariram

Orchestra

Violin

D. D. Gunasena
Tissa Sri Perera
Shelton Wijeyaratne
Edward Perera

Flute

M. W. Peries

Sitar

W. P. Fonseka

Guitar

Antony Serenda & Rohan Fonseka

Clarinet

A. J. Careem

Mridangam

T Ratnam

Gatam

K. K. Atchuthan

Tabla

R. Varadaraja

Cymbals

A. Govindaraja

The programme was organised and choreographed by Arunthathi Sri Ranganathan.

The comperer of the pageant was Ravi John.

SIXTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

(Continued from page 21)

for most of the presentation of the next paper by Professor Pon Sourirajan. This paper was devoted to an analysis of the character of Mathavi in Cilapadikkaram. With profuse quotations the lecturer extolled the poet on his brilliant portrayal of the character Mathavi who though born a courtesan fell deeply in love with Kovalan the hero of the epic and was faithful to that love till the end. His exposition won wide applause. I had to leave early because I wanted to be at the linguistic sessions.

Later I heard that there was a heated debate on Dr. Pon Sourirajan's presentation. The Kannagi-Mathavi character analysis is an old pre-occupation of scholars of the epic but never seem to be failing to draw interest and passionate discussion. I would have loved to spend more time and perhaps get into the debate about Mathavi and Kannagi but one had to use his time as best as he could under the circumstances.

(to be continued)

Mr. Marimuttu and Mr. Chandrasegaram also spoke. Mr. Govindarajan a key member of the organizing committee thanked the chief guest, guests of honour, parents, students and well wishers for participating in the function.

Plantation News and

(Continued from page 20)

Advanced Level examination results were satisfactory.

The present estate children are very lucky. In 1948 every electorate in the Up-country had a Tamil representative yet there were no facilities for education of the Tamil children. Today a single representative looks after all the electorates. This was not due to Thondaman but remember that this is due to the solid power of the workers. said Mr. Thondaman.

He said that the initial six year period of a child was the most vital period. During this period a child's skills develop. Because of this reason the parents in the cities like Colombo send their children to Montessori schools. Therefore if our community were to

progress our children also should be given these facilities. Every crèche in the estate should be converted to Montessori school. This needs finances and the estate workers should voluntarily contribute should the need arise. Parents too had to sacrifice a part of their wages monthly.

Mr. Padmakeerti Hemachandra thanked the school committee for inviting him for that function. He said that he was very happy to see that the estate children take an interest in studies and not make of the educational facilities provided.

He referred to the unfortunate incidents at Talawakelle in 1984 and said that such type of incidents would not recur in the future. Peace was important not only for the welfare of the different communities but for the prosperity of the country.

Congress News (Black & White) RATE CARD

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SARASWATHI VIZHA AT CWC HEAD OFFICE

"The people should think of planning their expenses and leading an orderly and prosperous life; they must learn to save. If we are economically strong other communities will begin to respect us. We can raise our heads in the national mainstream." Remarked Hon. S. Thondaman, President of the Ceylon Workers' Congress and Minister of Rural Industrial Development at the Navarathry Day Celebrations held at the Ceylon Workers' Congress Office.

The celebrations were presided over by Mr. R. P. Ratnam, Finance and Administrative Private Secretary.

Mr. Thondaman in his address added :—

"As a unique community with an ancient tradition we must strive to preserve and foster our arts and culture. To the members of our community the basic necessity is education. Only education can help us to safeguard our individuality and progress both materialistically and intellectually. Malnutrition is rampant. Physical growth of our children is stunted. We must learn to balance our income and expenses. If our children are malnourished they will be backward in education.

"Everyone should understand the significance of Saraswathy Vizha and strive to organise his life accordingly.

"We are providing all the facilities for the hill country children to advance in the field of education. Saraswathie Poojas of this nature will inspire our children to make use of these facilities and be more enthusiastic in their education. That's why our forefathers have been worshipping Saraswathy, the Goddess of Learning.

Mr. V. Annamalai, Finance Secretary, Ceylon Workers' Congress and Member of the Kandy District Development Council in his address remarked :

"Durga Devi, the Goddess of Valour blessed our people to be bold and strong. It's through Her Grace that I am talking to you here. At this celebration let us resolve that the Ceylon Workers' Congress, a massive Organisation with broad based membership should have its

own headquarters building. That building, the Ceylon Workers' Congress Mansion, should reach to the skies. Let us place this resolution at the Almighty's feet and proceed with constructive action to achieve this aim.

"If everyone of you co-operate to run the Ceylon Workers' Congress Administration smoothly and efficiently it will be possible for us to progress in our work honestly and steadily."

The Chairman, Mr. R. P. Ratnam in his address remarked :

"Navarathry is a festival ceremonially observed to honour the three Forces! Mother Parasakthy symbolises the forces of valour, intellect and wealth. We allocate three days for each of the three deities, Durga, Luxmy and Saraswathy. Today is Vijaya Thasamy.

"On this day children are initiated into the field of education. And on this day workers too offer pooja to their implements. This is a tradition established by our forefathers. We must follow their noble footsteps and lead exemplary lives. Our knowledge, wisdom, education, patience, valour, wealth and all other resources should be channelled constructively. Then only can we achieve peace of mind. Education and wealth alone will not help us to lead a contended life. We must put

our wisdom and valour to good use to protect our wealth.

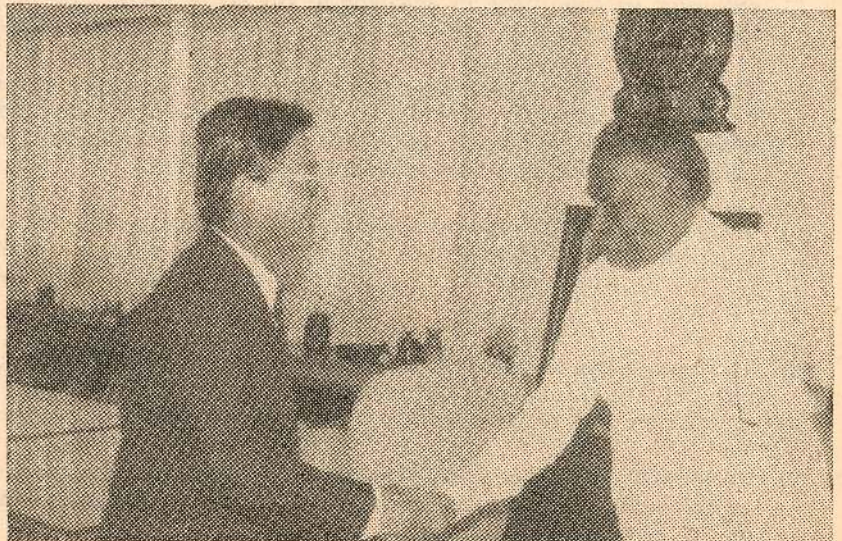
"Once a year in September we celebrate Navarathry. All the Hindus observe this festival. According to our forefathers, without God's grace man becomes beastly. When we are assembled here unitedly without any distinction of caste, religion or language the blessings of Goddess Sakthy are upon us."

In his vote of thanks Mr. V. Letchumanam said :

"When our thoughts are pure and directed towards the Almighty the impurities in our minds, disappear. When our mind, words and body are purified we will be able to progress in our life. Navarathry offers us the opportunity for this self-purification. We are a culturally rich community. It is therefore fitting that this festival had included our traditional arts, Baratha Natyam and musical items in its programme. We are grateful to the artistes who have come from far away places to perform at this Festival. We also thank the Chief Priest of Sivan Temple, Captains Gardens and his assistants for the religious ceremonies conducted on this occasion."

The celebrations ended with Baratha Natya recital by Miss Logeswari Periyasampillai, Veena recital by Miss. Saratha Devi Gunaratnam accompanied by Mr. Ketheeswaram on Mrudangam.

The New Ambassador for Korea in Sri Lanka, His Excellency Mr. Bong Kyu Kim paid a courtesy call on the Hon. Minister S. Thondaman at his office recently.



MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION
OF
THONDAMAN FOUNDATION

1. The name of the Company (hereinafter called the " Foundation ") is THONDAMAN FOUNDATION.
2. The Registered Office of the Foundation will be situated in the District of Colombo.
3. The Objects for which the Foundation is established are :—

PRIMARY OBJECTS

- (1) To promote and nurture the growth of a Sri Lankan consciousness that comprehends clearly the multi ethnicity of Sri Lankan society and acknowledges the crucial importance of developing mutual respect and equality among the different communities in the country.
- (2) To eliminate the inequalities among peoples and communities in regard to the basic rights to food, clothing, shelter, education, cultural and human development, to strive towards ensuring social justice and work towards the upliftment of the underprivileged weaker sections of society.
- (3) To award, grant and provide bursaries, scholarships, prizes, donations, financial aid and assistance in other forms for the advancement, diffusion and propagation of education and knowledge and establishment and maintenance of schools, libraries, cultural centres, research and laboratories, to give financial aid and assistance to institutions of higher education of any kind, to afford any deserving persons an opportunity of repairing, entering upon or engaging in any trade, occupation or profession and to organise and maintain training centres and institutions for the development of individuals and their skills.
- (4) To promote, encourage, engage and assist in activities which are intended to give relief to various forms of poverty and distress by granting donations and other financial aid or assistance and the establishment and maintenance of orphanages, homes for the destitutes, orphans, aged and poor, alms-houses and the rehabilitation of persons affected by disaster and calamities.
- (5) To give financial aid and assistance for the prevention and cure of all kinds of diseases, illnesses and the establishment and maintenance of hospitals, nursing homes, health clinics, convalescent homes and other institutions whose object is to provide relief to the sick, mentally or physically handicapped and disabled persons.
- (6) To improve the health of young children by the provision of food, clothing, medical and surgical assistance, including the setting up of nursing institutes for the treatment of children suffering from malnutrition, disease or accident, and to provide care, nursing and attention as may be required for their proper treatment.
- (7) To sponsor, encourage and assist the development and enhancement of art, culture and literature and foster understanding and appreciation of the multi faceted creative abilities of the different sections of the people in Sri Lanka.

ANCILLARY POWERS

- (1) To collect and receive money or articles by voluntary contributions, collections, subscriptions and donations from public bodies and others or from the proceeds of entertainments and to organise, conduct, control and manage any entertainment to collect funds for any of the objects or purposes of the Foundation.
 - (2) Subject to any restrictions either now existing or as may from time to time be imposed by law, to purchase, take on lease or in exchange, hire or otherwise acquire and sell and otherwise dispose of or deal with any movable or immovable property and any rights or privileges which the Foundation may think necessary or convenient for the carrying out of any of its objects.
 - (3) To borrow any monies required for the purposes of the Foundation upon such securities as may be determined.
 - (4) To invest and deal with the monies of the Foundation which are not immediately required upon such securities, and in such manner as may from time to time be determined and to vary, sell or otherwise deal with any such investments.
 - (5) To make, draw, accept, discount, endorse, negotiate, buy, sell and issue bills of exchange, cheques, promissory notes and other negotiable or transferable instruments or securities and to open and maintain banking accounts for the Foundation.
 - (6) To buy, sell, mortgage, lease, lend, dispose of any assets of the Foundation, in whole or in part.
 - (7) To do in Sri Lanka or elsewhere all such acts, deeds and things incidental or conducive to the attainment of the objects of the Foundation.
4. The income and property of the Foundation, whensoever derived, shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects as set forth in this Memorandum of Association, and no portion thereof shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise howsoever or by way of profit to the members of the Foundation. Provided that nothing herein shall prevent the payment in good faith of reasonable and proper remuneration to any officer or servant of the Foundation, or to any member of the Foundation in return for any services actually rendered to the Foundation nor prevent the payment of interest at a rate not exceeding 5 percent per annum on money lent or reasonable and proper rent for premises demised or let by any member to the Foundation, but so that no member of the Board of Trustees shall be appointed to any salaried office or any office of the Foundation paid by fees, and that no remuneration or other benefit in money or monies worth shall be given by the Foundation to any member of such Board except repayment of out-of-pocket expenses or interest at the rate aforesaid on monies lent or reasonable and proper rent for premises demised or let to the Foundation.
 5. No addition, alteration or amendment shall be made to or in the regulations contained in the Articles of Association for the time being in force, unless the same shall have been previously submitted to and approved by the Registrar of Companies.
 6. The fourth and fifth paragraphs of this Memorandum of Association contain conditions on which a licence is granted by the Registrar of Companies to the Foundation in pursuance of Section 21 of the Companies Act.
 7. The liability of members is limited.
 8. Every member of the Foundation undertakes to contribute to the assets of the Foundation in the event of its being wound up while he is a member, or within one year after he ceases to be a member for the payment of the debts and liabilities of the Foundation contracted before he ceased to be a member and of the costs, charges and expenses of winding up and for the adjustment of the rights of the contributories among themselves such amount as may be required not exceeding Rupees One Hundred.
 9. If upon the winding up or dissolution of the Foundation there remains after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities any property whatsoever, the same shall not be paid to or distributed among the members of the Foundation but shall be given or transferred to some other institutions having objects similar to the objects of the Foundation which shall prohibit the distribution of its or their income and property amongst its or their members to an extent at least as great as is imposed on the Foundation under or by virtue of Clause 8 hereof, such institution or institutions to be determined by the members of the Foundation at or before the time of dissolution, and in default thereof by a judge having jurisdiction in regard to charitable funds, and if and so far as effect cannot be given to the aforesaid provision then to some charitable object.
 10. True accounts shall be kept of the sums of money received and expended by the Foundation, and the matter in respect of which such receipt and expenditure take place and the property, credits and liabilities of the Foundation, and subject to any reasonable restrictions as to the time and manner of inspecting the same that may be imposed in accordance with the regulations of the Foundation for the time being shall be open to the inspection of the members. Once at least in every year, the accounts of the Foundation shall be examined and the correctness of the balance sheet ascertained by one or more properly qualified Auditor or Auditors.

We, the several persons whose names and addresses are subscribed, are desirous of being formed into a Company in pursuance of this Memorandum of Association.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Designation</i>	<i>Address</i>
1. Hon. Savumiamoorthy Thondaman	President Ceylon Workers' Congress and Minister of Rural Industrial Development	54, St. Michael's Road, Colombo 3.
2. Mr. Savumiamoorthy Kumaravel Ramanathan	Agriculturist	2/2, Mayfair Flats, Colombo 7.
3. Mr. Savumiamoorthy Arumuga Ramanatha Thondaman	Agriculturist	9 2/2, Mayfair Flats, Colombo 7.
4. Mr. Muthu Sangaralingam Sellasamy	Gen. Secretary, Ceylon Workers' Congress	P. O. Box 1294, Colombo
5. Mr. Jaya Perisundaram	Vice President, Ceylon Workers' Congress	P. O. Box 1294, Colombo 7.
6. Mr. Veloo Annamalay	Financial Secretary, Ceylon Workers' Congress	P. O. Box 1294, Colombo 7.
7. Mr. Periannan Devaraj	Governing Director, Congress Labour Foundation	P. O. Box 1294, Colombo 7.
8. Mr. Sarvatnaman Ponniah Amarasingam	Attorney-at-Law	21/5, Bullers Lane, Colombo 7.
9. Mr. Mariapillai Radakrishnan	Attorney-at-Law	64, Keyzer St., Colombo 7.
10. Mr. Muni Kundanmal	Company Director	330/1, Galle Road, Colombo 3.
11. Mr. Pemsit Seneviratne	Chairman, Janatha Estate Development Board	Vauxhall St., Colombo 2
12. Dr. Ahangamage Tudor Ariyaratne	President, Sarvodaya Movement	Rawatawatta, Moratuwa.
13. Mr. Chandra Schafter	Company Director	15/1, Ekanayake Avenue, Nugegoda.
14. Mr. Arunasalam Yesuadian Samuel Gnanam	Company Director	31, Collingwood Place, Colombo 6.
15. Mr. Michael Gnanapragasampillai Wenceslaus	Company Director	185, Grandpass Road, Colombo 14.
16. Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne	Chairman, Sri Lanka State Plantation Corporation	18, Gregory's Road, Colombo 7.
17. Mr. Veeyanna Theyna Vaana Deivanayagam Pillai	Company Director	267, Sea Street, Colombo 11.
18. Dr. Abdul Majeed Mohamed Sahabdeen	Company Director	10, Ward Place, Colombo 7.
19. Mr. Ramasamy Vijayapalan	Company Director	Jayaluxmi Stores, Maliban Street, Colombo 11.

Witness, to the above Signatures at Colombo this _____ day of _____ 1988.

Attorney-at-law and Notary Public.

ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION
OF
THONDAMAN FOUNDATION

1. The Regulations contained in Table 'C' in the First Schedule to the Companies Act No. 17 of 1982, subject to the Articles hereinafter contained and the modifications hereinafter expressed shall constitute the Regulations of the Foundation.
2. The number of members of the Foundation shall not exceed thirty.
3. The Subscribers to the Memorandum of Association and such other persons as the Board of Trustees shall admit to membership of the Foundation shall be the members of the Foundation.
4. The Foundation is established for the purposes expressed in the Memorandum of Association.

INTERPRETATION

5. These articles shall be construed with reference to the provisions of the Companies Act No. 17 of 1982 and terms used in these Articles shall be taken as having the same respective meanings as they have when used in that Act.
6. In the interpretation of these articles, except where excluded by the context :—
 - (a) Words importing the singular number only shall include the plural number and words importing the plural number only shall include the singular number.
 - (b) Words importing the masculine gender shall include the feminine gender and vice versa.
 - (c) The word "Foundation" means the THONDAMAN FOUNDATION.
 - (d) The Board means the members for the time being of the Board of Trustees hereby constituted.
 - (e) Words importing persons shall include Corporations.
 - (f) Subject as aforesaid, any words or expressions defined in the statutes shall, if not inconsistent with the subject or context, bear the same meanings in these presents.

GENERAL MEETINGS

7. The first General Meeting of the Foundation shall be held at such time not being less than one month nor more than three months after the incorporation of the Foundation and at such place as the subscribers to the Memorandum of Association may determine.
8. A General Meeting shall be held once in every calendar year at such time (not being more than fifteen months after the holding of the last preceding general meeting) and place as may be determined by the Board or in default, at such time in the third month following that in which the anniversary of the Foundation's incorporation occurs and at such place as the Board shall appoint. In default of a General Meeting being held, a General Meeting shall be held in the month next following and may be convened by any two members in the same manner as nearly as possible as that in which meetings are to be convened by the Board.
9. The abovementioned General Meetings shall be called Ordinary General Meetings; all other General Meetings shall be called Extraordinary General Meetings.
10. The Board may whenever they think fit convene an Extraordinary General Meeting. Extraordinary General Meeting shall also be convened on such requisition, or in default, may be convened by such requisitions as provided by Section 128 of the Act.

11. Twenty one days notice at the least (exclusive of the day on which the notice is served or deemed to be served, but inclusive of the day for which notice is given) specifying the place, the day and the hour of meeting and in case of special business the general nature of that business shall be given in manner hereinafter mentioned or in such other manner, if any, as may be prescribed by the Foundation in General Meeting, to such persons as are under the regulations of the Foundation entitled to receive such notices from the Foundation; but with the consent of all the members entitled to receive notice of some particular meeting, that meeting may be convened by such shorter notice and in such manner as those members may think fit.
12. The accidental omission to give notice of a meeting to, or the non-receipt of notice of a meeting by any member shall not invalidate the proceedings at any meeting.
13. No business shall be transacted at any General Meeting unless a quorum of members is present at the time when the meeting proceeds to business; save as herein otherwise provided, three members personally present shall be a quorum.
14. If within half an hour from the time appointed for the Meeting a quorum is not present, the Meeting, if convened upon the requisition of members, shall be dissolved, in any other case it shall stand adjourned to the same day in next week at the same time and place, and if at the adjourned meeting a quorum is not present within half an hour from the time appointed for the meeting the members present shall be a quorum.
15. The chairman of the Board of Trustees shall preside at every General Meeting of the Foundation.
16. If at any meeting the Chairman or the Vice-Chairman is not present within fifteen minutes after the time appointed for holding the meeting, the members present shall choose some one of their number to be Chairman.
17. At any General Meeting a resolution put to the vote of the meeting shall be decided on a show of hands or where a poll is demanded by any member present on a poll. In the case of an equality of votes the Chairman shall be entitled to cast a vote in addition to the vote to which he may be entitled to as a member. Votes must be given personally. At every meeting every member present in person shall have one vote on a show of hands or upon a poll.

MANAGEMENT

18. (a) The affairs of the Foundation shall be managed by a Board of Trustees not-exceeding ten members of the Foundation inclusive of Life Trustees as hereinafter provided and the executive power of the Foundation shall be vested in them.
- (b) The Foundation shall elect at any time and from time to time two persons as Life Trustees to hold office during their lifetime. The Life Trustees shall always be the Honourable Savumiamoorthy Thondaman and his descendants.
- (c) The Ceylon Workers' Congress, a trade union having its registered office at No. 72, Ananda Coomaraswamy Mawatha, Colombo 7, shall at all times be entitled in writing to nominate to the Board three Trustees.
- (d) The Foundation may elect at any time and from time to time five persons as Trustees and subject to this Foundation being approved as an Approved Charity under Section 31 (9) (a) of the Inland Revenue Act No. 28 of 1979 or any other similar provision and so long as such approval shall subsist include an official of a public institution.
19. If any member of the Board shall be temporarily absent from Sri Lanka or otherwise temporarily unable to function he may appoint an alternate from and among the members of the Foundation. The member so appointed shall not hold office for a period longer than that applicable to the original member in whose place he has been so appointed and shall vacate office if and when the original member returns to Sri Lanka or is once again able to function.

BORROWING POWERS

20. The Trustees may exercise all the powers of the Foundation to borrow money and to mortgage or charge its undertaking and property or any part thereof, and to issue debentures, debenture stock and other securities, whether outright or as security for any debt, liability or obligation of the Foundation.
21. The first Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and one other member of the Board shall be elected at the first and inaugural meeting of the Foundation.
22. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and one member of the Board subject to the preceding Article shall be elected at every Annual General Meeting of the Foundation and shall hold office until the next Annual General Meeting.
23. Three Trustees shall constitute a quorum of the Board for the transaction of business.

24. Save as herein otherwise specifically provided questions arising at any meeting of the Board shall be decided by a majority of votes and in case of an equality of votes the Chairman of the Meeting, in addition to his original vote, shall have a second or casting vote.
25. The Board may in order to fill any casual vacancy occurring between Annual General Meetings by resolution elect to hold office as a Trustee until the next Annual General Meeting at which his successor is elected, any person who would have been eligible for nomination as a Trustee.
26. No Trustee shall be entitled to any compensation or remuneration for his services as such.
27. The Chairman shall :—
- (a) (i) have general supervision over the business affairs of the Foundation ;
 - (ii) preside at meetings of the Foundation and of the Board ;
 - (iii) Sign all by-laws with the Secretary or such other officer as the Board may appoint for the purpose ; and
 - (iv) perform such other duties as the Board may determine.
- (b) The Vice-Chairman shall :—
- (i) preside at meetings of the Board in the absence of the Chairman ;
 - (ii) perform the duties of the Chairman in his absence or at his request ;
 - (iii) perform such other duties as the Board may determine ;
- (c) The Secretary shall :
- (i) keep the minutes of the meetings of the Board and of the Foundation in the books provided for that purpose ;
 - (ii) see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these by-laws or as required by law ;
 - (iii) see that all books, reports, certificates and all other documents and records required by law are properly kept and filed ;
 - (iv) have custody of the Seal of the Foundation ; and
 - (v) perform such other duties as the Board may determine ;
- (d) The Treasurer shall :—
- (i) keep books in which will be entered the receipts and expenses and assets and liabilities of the Foundation ;
 - (ii) have charge and custody of and be responsible for all funds and securities in the name of the Foundation in such bank, trust, company or other depository as may be determined from time to time by the Board ; and
 - (iii) perform such other duties as the Board may determine.
28. A resolution in writing, signed by all the Trustees for the time being entitled to receive notice of a meeting of the Trustees shall be as valid and effectual as if it had been passed at a meeting of the Trustees duly convened and held.
29. The Seal of the Foundation shall not be affixed to any instrument except by the authority of a resolution of the Board of Trustees and in the presence of a Trustee and of the Secretary or such other persons as the Board may appoint for the purpose ; and that a Trustee or secretary or other person as aforesaid shall sign every instrument to which the Seal of the Foundation is so affixed in their presence.
30. The Office of Trustee shall be vacated if the Trustee :—
- (i) without the consent of the Foundation in General Meeting holds any other office of profit under the Foundation ; or
 - (ii) becomes insolvent or bankrupt ; or
 - (iii) becomes prohibited by law from acting as a Trustee ;
 - (iv) is found lunatic or becomes of unsound mind ; or
 - (v) resigns his office by notice in writing to the Foundation.

ACCOUNTS

31. The Board shall cause proper books of account to be kept with respect to :—
 - (i) all sums of money received and expended by the Foundation and the matter in respect of which the receipt and expenditure take place ; and
32. The books of account shall be kept at the registered office of the Foundation or at such other place as the Board may think fit and shall always be open to the inspection of the Trustees.
33. The Board shall from time to time determine whether and to what extent and to what times and places and under what conditions or regulations the accounts and books of the Foundation or any of them shall be open to the inspection of members and no member (not being a Trustee) shall have any right of inspecting any account or book or document of the Foundation except as conferred by statute or authorised by the Board or by the Foundation in General Meeting.
34. The Board shall from time to time in accordance with Section 143 of the Act cause to be prepared and to be laid before the Foundation in General Meeting such profit and loss accounts, balance sheets and reports as are referred to in that section.
35. A copy of every balance sheet (including every document required by law to be annexed thereto) which is to be laid before the Foundation in General Meeting together with a copy of the Auditor's Report shall not less than twenty - one days before the date of the meeting be sent to all persons entitled to receive notices of General Meetings of the Foundation.
36. Auditors shall be appointed and their duties regulated in accordance with Sections 156, 157 and 158 of the Companies Act.
37.
 - (a) The Board may by resolution appoint other Committees of the Trustees or of such other persons as they deem suitable to assist and advice them and may delegate any of their powers to any such committee ;
 - (b) Any such Committee so appointed shall in the exercise of any powers that may be delegated, conform to any regulations that may be imposed upon it by the Board ;
 - (c) The Chairman and the Vice-Chairman and the Secretary of the Foundation shall be ex-officio members of all such Committees ; and
 - (d) Such Committee may elect its own Chairman and such Chairman shall be responsible for the convening of meetings of the Committee and shall have the general supervision, of the conduct of the duties delegated to the Committee.

NOTICES

38. A Notice may be given by the Foundation to any member either personally or by sending it by post to him to his registered address, or (if he has no registered address within the Island) to the address, if any, within the Island supplied by him to the Foundation for the giving of notices to him.
39. Where a notice is sent by post, service of the notice shall be deemed to be effected by properly addressing, prepaying and posting a letter containing the notice, and unless the contrary is proved to have been effected at the time at which the letter would be delivered in the ordinary course of post.
40. If a member has no registered address within the Island and has not supplied to the Foundation an address within the Island for the giving of notices to him, a notice posted up in the registered office of the Foundation shall be deemed to be duly given to him at the expiration of twenty-four hours from the time when it is so posted up.
41. Notice of every General Meeting shall be given in same manner here in before authorised to every member except those members who having no registered address within the Island have not supplied to the Foundation an address within the Island for the giving of notices to them. No other person shall be entitled to receive notices of General Meetings.
42. Alteration of these Articles from time to time may be made only after the approval of the Registrar of Companies and then only at :—
 - (a) An Annual General Meeting with Twenty - One days' Notice by the Secretary ; or
 - (b) An Extraordinary General Meeting Convened for that purpose.
43. The provisions of Clause 9 of the Memorandum of Association relating to the winding-up or dissolution of the Association shall have effect and be observed as if the same were repeated in these Articles.

We, the several persons whose names and addresses are subscribed to the Memorandum of Association hereby agree to the foregoing Articles of Association.

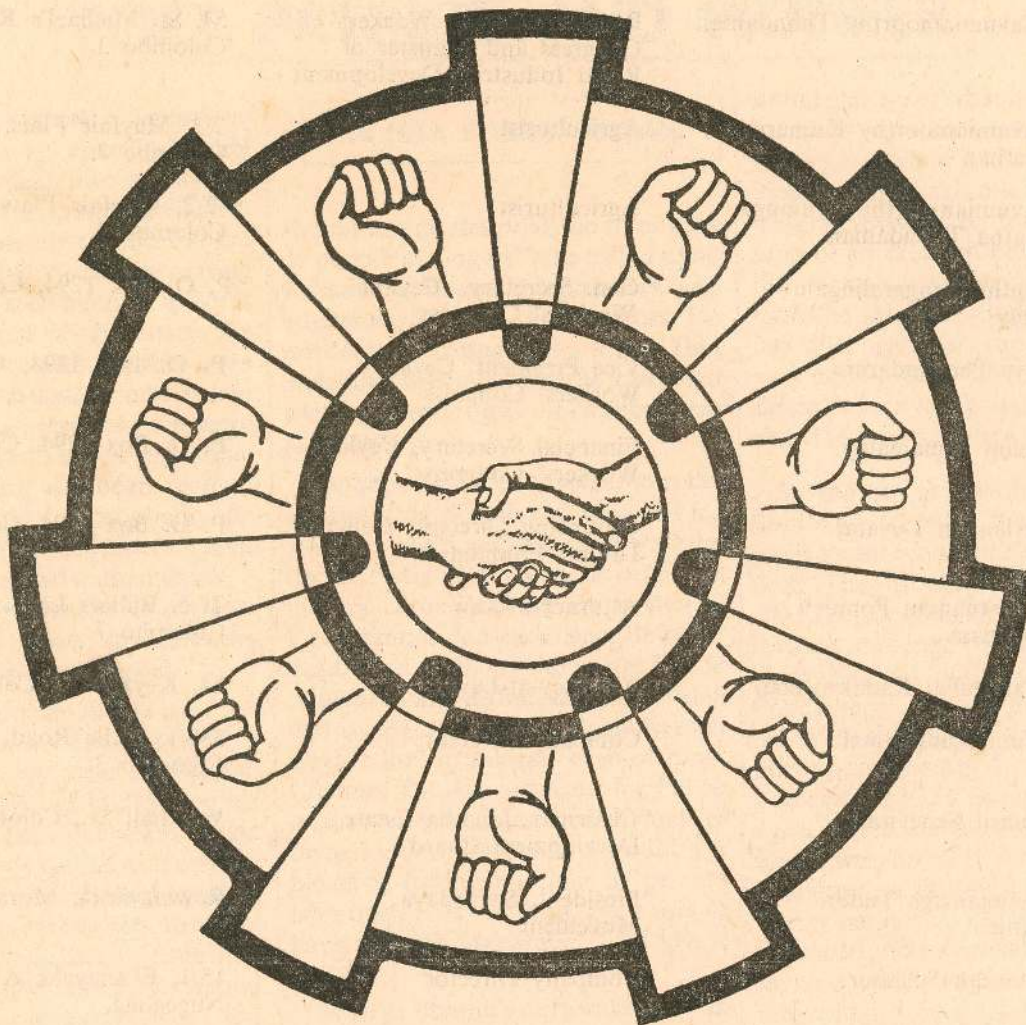
	<i>Name</i>	<i>Designation</i>	<i>Address</i>
1.	Hon. Savumiamoorthy Thondaman	President Ceylon Workers' Congress and Minister of Rural Industrial Development	54, St. Michael's Road, Colombo 3.
2.	Mr. Savumiamoorthy Kumaravel Ramanathan	Agriculturist	2/2, Mayfair Flats, Colombo 7.
3.	Mr. Savumiamoorthy Arumuga Ramanatha Thondaman	Agriculturist	9 2/2, Mayfair Flats, Colombo 7.
4.	Mr. Muthu Sangaralingam Sellasamy	Gen. Secretary, Ceylon Workers' Congress	P. O. Box 1294, Colombo
5.	Mr. Jaya Perisundaram	Vice President, Ceylon Workers' Congress	P. O. Box 1294, Colombo 7.
6.	Mr. Veloo Annamalay	Financial Secretary, Ceylon Workers' Congress	P. O. Box 1294, Colombo 7.
7.	Mr. Periannan Devaraj	Governing Director, Congress Labour Foundation	P. O. Box 1294, Colombo 7.
8.	Mr. Sarvatnaman Ponniah Amarasingam	Attorney-at-Law	21/5, Bullers Lane, Colombo 7.
9.	Mr. Mariapillai Radakrishnan	Attorney-at-Law	64, Keyzer St., Colombo 7.
10.	Mr. Muni Kundanmal	Company Director	330/1, Galle Road, Colombo 3.
11.	Mr. Pemsit Seneviratne	Chairman, Janatha Estate Development Board	Vauxhall St., Colombo 2
12.	Dr. Ahangamage Tudor Ariyaratne	President, Sarvodaya Movement	Rawatawatta, Moratuwa.
13.	Mr. Chandra Schafter	Company Director	15/1, Ekanayake Avenue, Nugegoda.
14.	Mr. Arunasalam Yesuadian Samuel Gnanam	Company Director	31, Collingwood Place, Colombo 6.
15.	Mr. Michael Gnanapragasampillai Wenceslaus	Company Director	185, Grandpass Road, Colombo 14.
16.	Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne	Chairman, Sri Lanka State Plantation Corporation	18, Gregory's Road, Colombo 7.
17.	Mr. Veeyanna Theyna Vaana Deivanayagam Pillai	Company Director	267, Sea Street, Colombo 11.
18.	Dr. Abdul Majeed Mohamed Sahabdeen	Company Director	10, Ward Place, Colombo 7.
19.	Mr. Ramasamy Vijayapalan	Company Director	Jayaluxmi Stores, Maliban Street, Colombo 11.

Witness, to the above Signatures at Colombo this

day of

1988.

Attorney-at-law and Notary Public.



SAR-TUC

South Asian Regional Trade Union Council

FOUNDING CONVENTION

29-1-1988

TAJ SAMUDRA, COLOMBO (SRI LANKA)

SOUTH ASIAN REGIONAL TRADE UNION COUNCIL
 FOUNDING CONVENTION
 29th JANUARY, 1988
 TAJ SAMUDRA COLOMBO, (SRI LANKA)
 INAUGURAL SESSIONS

AGENDA

08.45 A.M.	— INVITEES TO BE IN THEIR SEATS	— ADDRESS BY HON. S. THONDAMAN CHAIRMAN, PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE SOUTH ASIAN REGIONAL TRADE UNION COUNCIL
09.00 A.M.	— LIGHTING OF THE TRADITIONAL OIL LAMP — MELODIES OF SOUTH ASIA COMPOSED BY ARUNTHATHI SRI RENGANATHAN	— CONCLUDING REMARKS BY SHRI GOPESHWAR SECRETARY, PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE SOUTH ASIAN REGIONAL TRADE UNION COUNCIL
09.15 A.M.	— WELCOME ADDRESS BY MR. M. S. SELLASAMY GENERAL SECRETARY CEYLON WORKERS' CONGRESS	10.00 - 10.15 A.M. — TEA
09.25 A.M.	— SOUTH ASIAN TRADE UNION COUNCIL — THE BACKGROUND BY MR. M. P. SUNDARAM INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE, CEYLON WORKERS' CONGRESS	10.15 - 10.30 A.M. — ADOPTION OF AGENDA 10.30 - 11.40 A.M. — COMMENTS FROM MEMBER ORGANISATIONS
09.35 A.M.	— MESSAGES FROM INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES — INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION — INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS — FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG — AMERICAN ASIAN FREE LABOUR INSTITUTE — CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS COMMONWEALTH TRADE UNION COUNCIL	11.40 - 12.00 P.M. CONSIDERATION OF LOGO 12.00 - 12.30 P.M. — CHARTER/CONSTITUTION DISCUSSION 12.30 - 01.30 P.M. LUNCH 01.30 - 02.00 P. M. — CHARTER/CONSTITUTION DISCUSSION (Contd.) 02.00 - 02.30 P.M. — CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING SCHEDULE 02.30 - 02.45 P.M. — HEAD QUARTERS/SECRETARIAT 02.45 - 03.00 P.M. — APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL 03.00 - 03.15 P.M. — TEA 03.15 - 03.45 P.M. — TOPIC ASSIGNMENT TO TECHNICAL COMMITTEES 03.45 P.M. — CLOSE OF SESSIONS 04.00 - 05.00 P.M. — PRESS CONFERENCE

Welcome Address Delivered by

M. S. SELLASAMY

*General Secretary, Ceylon Workers' Congress
At South Asian Regional Trade Union Council
Held at Hotel Taj Samudra on 29th January, 1988.*

Respected, President, Brother Thondaman, Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen! Allow me on behalf of the Ceylon Workers' Congress to extend the most cordial welcome to all those who have accepted our invitation and are present here today.

The Ceylon Workers' Congress considers it a great privilege to host in Colombo the Founding Convention of the South Asian Regional Trade Union Council. We know that the founding of the SARTUC is one of the most significant events in the history of the International Trade Union Movement.

We note with great pleasure the presence of our sister organisations from all over South Asia along with our comrades from the global labour community.

We have also received messages from various organisations and personalities throughout the world. All these clearly demonstrate the realisation of the importance of the new organisation for which we are laying the foundation today.

We embark upon this enterprise with the knowledge and the hope that our new endeavour will fit into and strengthen the existing solid pattern of our movement. The more fronts upon which we can find common ground and support, the stronger our cause becomes.

The CWC is proud of its tradition built on militancy and the sweat and blood of noble workers and trade union activists. As we walk further along the path of fraternal co-operation we cannot but remember those brave sisters and brothers who

have gone before us and who have shown us the right way to build trade union solidarity not only with words but with their very lives.

Confrontation to the extreme has been an all too familiar condition for us. However, it has been this very confrontation that has been the spur to action. We should view our history with pride as we labour in a just and great cause. So long as we maintain our ideal of worker's rights through our movement will struggle remain united and victorious.

The CWC is glad to be associated with a new forum that will continue the legacy of our movement in South Asia.

I am looking forward to participating and discussing with all of you during the course of this short but eventful day.

Again, let me extend all fraternal greetings to you on this happy occasion.

Thank You

Address by

M. P. SUNDARAM

*Representative, Ceylon Workers' Congress,
At the Founding Convention of SARTUC
Held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 29 January, 1988.*

Brother Chairman, distinguished guests, fellow trade unionists, brothers and sisters.

Let me at the outset thank you for having given me the pleasure and opportunity of participating in this Founding Convention of SARTUC and acquainting you with the circumstances and events which have led up to this historic development.

I happen to be in the fortunate position of having been associated with the sequence of events from the inception and this perhaps explains why you have called on me to say a few words on this occasion.

The idea was first mooted at a meeting of the Executive Board of the ICFTU in May 1985 in a dis-

cussion which took place on an item on the agenda relating to an event concerning another sub-regional grouping. In my intervention in that discussion, as CWC's representative on the executive Board, I expressed the view of the Ceylon Workers' Congress that the time was opportune for the affiliates of the ICFTU from South Asia to take the initiative in the formation of an organisation which could articulate the concerns and promote the interests of South Asian Workers. I took the opportunity of the presence of Brothers Gopeshwar, General Secretary of the INTUC and a Vice President of the ICFTU.

Brother Kulkarni, of HMS and Brother Mathur, General Secretary of ICFTU-APRO at the meeting to

discuss the proposal with them. They received the idea with great enthusiasm and this was indeed a tremendous encouragement. On reporting this positive reaction to you, Brother Chairman, you promptly responded by offering to convene a meeting of the South Asian affiliates of the ICFTU in Pattaya, Thailand in August 1985 to coincide with the meeting of the ICFTU-APRO Executive Board in order to discuss the proposal and obtain a consensus. Brother Mathur, with whom I had further consultations was fully supportive of the CWC initiative. You, Brother Chairman, accordingly wrote to all South Asian affiliates of the ICFTU convening the meeting in which you explained the proposal and set out an agenda which included the adoption of a Constitution for the new organisation and the election of Office bearers. At an informal discussion held in Geneva to take advantage of the presence of the workers' delegates at the ILO Conference in June 1985 it was agreed that the meeting to be held in Pattaya should be followed by a meeting of representatives of South Asian Trade Unions in New Delhi. At the meeting which you chaired Brother Chairman

(Continued on page 43)

Inaugural Address Delivered by

Hon. S. THONDAMAN

*Chairman, Provincial Committee South Asian
Regional Trade Union Council Founding Convention—
On 29th January, 1988 at Taj Samudra Colombo*

FRIENDS :

I am deeply honoured that I have been entrusted with the responsibility of being Chairman of the Provisional Committee of the South Asian Regional Trade Union Council and of delivering the inaugural address at this historic Founding Convention.

The formation of the SARTUC opens a new chapter in the History of International Trade Unionism. It is a significant step forward in further strengthening the solidarity of the working people in our region. Today we are laying the foundation for transforming high ideals and noble intentions into a living reality.

The need for solidarity is most acute in areas of Development Co-operation. Our nations are caught in the web of many modern complexities. North-South disparities manifested in the form of Trade imbalances, quality of Life, and standard of living plague us. The International Economic Order of which we are an integral part, is based on a Division of Labour, which as always relegates us to a second or third position. This reality puts us as citizens of Third World Countries and particularly our members who are the human manifestation of this reality at an even greater disadvantage. The only reasonable response to these seemingly insurmountable odds is a collective one.

These problems have been the subject of discussions at international forums such as the UNCTAAD AND THE GROUP OF 77. However Third World Nations have realized that the most effective alliances are those closest in economy, Ideology and Geography. The idea of collective groupings among Third World Nations has been successfully initiated in many regions of the world. Starting first with regional groupings in Latin America, Africa and Asia, along ideological lines also, countries have grouped together in movements such as the Non-Aligned Movement in order to negotiate a better deal for themselves from the first and second worlds.

Advantages have been seen in the concept of sub-regional organisations, bringing together close neighbours within a more formal institutionalized framework for co-operation. The Gulf Council for Co-operation, The Association of South-East Asian Nations, and most recently our own Sub-Regional Organisation of SAARC, The South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation.

The SAARC is not only the newest of these sub-regional groupings but it is also distinguished from the others by the presence of some unique characteristics.

It was formed independently of any real or perceived external threat, and opinions are more centrist and less polarized than in other instances.

The region as we know it is also differentiated by the Geographic and Demographic size of India. She encompasses three quarters of the land area and population and 70% of the region's gross national product. India herself has been most conscious of her position in the region and has within the context of SAARC made every effort to bring her disproportionate power into balance with that of the other SAARC nations.

Pakistan whose Post-Independence History has been marred by unwelcome conflict, has joined enthusiastically in the SAARC spirit of co-operation. She has taken advantage of the SAARC forum to initiate discussions outside of SAARC agenda with her neighbours. These initiatives have been much welcomed and have done much to reduce the level of tension among Pakistan, India and Bangladesh.

Bangladesh must be given a particular mention in the context of SAARC in that it was her foresight and persistence beginning some six years ago which ultimately brought about the founding of the Association. Perhaps Bangladesh understood better than most countries in the Region the need for co-operation having been born through war.

Nepal a relatively small country in geography but one blessed with enormous resources. — Its potential for generation of Hydro-Electric Power alone will make Nepal an Economic Contender of some significance in the future.

Bhutan the second Land-Locked Kingdom in the association, has just recently emerged from a period of self-imposed isolation. She has quickly assumed her role in International and Regional Politics.

The Maldives a beautiful collection of Atolls in the Indian Ocean, has also taken her place in international politics only recently. Her profile on the international scene has grown quickly since she achieved independence 22 years ago. Despite her small size, she succeeded in showing strong economic growth over the past five years.

Lastly my own country of Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka referred to as the Jewel of The Indian Ocean, has recently seen her political and economic hopes dashed on the rocks of ethnic conflict.

As part of the South Asian configuration, events in Sri Lanka have demonstrated most vividly that all parts of the sub-continent are deeply affected by each other. Events in any one country have repercussions and reverberations throughout the region. Even internal political matters cannot be entirely contained and overflow to affect our neighbours.

Our countries have all been subject to the influences of the Geo-Political and Geo-Ethnic pattern of our Region. All of us were victims of many imposed changes during the time of British Colonial Rule. In the Post-Independence Era we have experience of shifts in population of at magnitude. My own membership continues to be profoundly affected by these events. The plantation workers have been greatly traumatised by mass moves between Sri Lanka and India. Our brothers in India are not properly settled. Those of us in Sri Lanka are continuing to languish without citizenship rights.

The most recent and vivid manifestation of our mutual links has been the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord. The Accord is an excellent example of how two countries can recognize the manner in which the problems of one involve the other.

As we know, the accord has met with many difficulties in the months after its signing. These set-backs do not alter the fundamentally sound elements of the accord and the continuing need for India and Sri Lanka to understand each other and to work together to resolve the issues.

Although there is conflict all around us, there have also been indications that all sides are ready to begin looking at solutions. We have had enough of dying and killing. The time is long overdue for peace. The vehicle of peace is in our hands: The Accord. The only solution is implementation of the provisions of the Accord. We can wait no longer for ideal conditions to manifest themselves. We must show good faith and a willingness to invest in our own peaceful future by moving ahead with the setting up of interim administration in the northern and eastern provinces and the devolution of power.

I raise these issues here not only because they are foremost in my mind but because they serve as an object lesson to all of us. We have seen how two of our number can co-operate together to deal with serious internal issues. The problems of Sri Lanka are not foreign to the other nations of SAARC. Let us hope that we can all learn from Sri Lanka's bitter experience and through co-operation strive to avert future calamities of a similar nature.

The seven nations of SAARC are the inheritors of great resources, traditions and Civilizations. However our history has also been marked by strife and conflict. In coming together we must recognize that despite the differences which may tend to separate us we have many things in common which should be used to bind us together.

The realities of poverty, illiteracy and underdevelopment are present in all of the countries of SAARC. As was realized by Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh, these difficulties are great but they are not insurmountable. Positive emphasis and unified action can help all of us in the struggle to conquer them.

The Trade Union movement has been cognisant of the enormous strength in unity and solidarity. It is The Trade Union movement that has taken up the cause of the masses through collective Action. We have

fought for workers' rights in the workplace, for the dignity of a decent wage and proper living conditions. We have fought to remove the injustice of inhuman working and living standards of our members.

Through all the years of struggle, the Trade Union Movement has learned that within a collective entity there must be recognition of minorities and diversity. We must ensure that we are continuously vigilant of the need to recognize and give play to our differences within the collective whole.

The idea of collective self-reliance is one that builds upon our experience. The positive lesson learned by the Trade Union Movement over the years can clearly be brought to bear on the collective self-reliance theme.

All of the SAARC leaders have accepted the need for collective self-reliance but have also recognized the need for caution when dealing with a fledgling organisation. They have perceived that the existence of bilateral issues is not antagonistic towards the SAARC Agenda of Collective self-reliance. Rather it seeks the strength of the collective while respecting the individuality of the participants. In this way, the concept underlying SAARC is different from that underlying for example the European Economic Community or even that of ASEAN.

The EEC is perhaps the oldest and most tried experiment in regional co-operation. However, the EEC does not strive to completely maintain the individual integrity of its members. Rather it wishes to replace certain elements of individual sovereignty with the exercise of Supra-National Power.

The SAR-TUC like the SAARC itself must be committed to the concept of collective self-reliance. We are a grouping of Trade Unions and consequently we have in common the greatest single asset in the region, that of the workers. We must however take cognisance of the fact that we all toil in different ways and in different areas. Within our collective there are distinct groupings such as rural workers and industrial workers, private sector and public sector. Although we may work in different settings and our specific need may vary we all have the bond of work which unites us.

While the SAARC itself attempts to promote people-to-people contact, the SAR-TUC must focus on contact among working people. We, the Trade Unions of South Asia, have the power to make the idea of contact, among working people a meaningful reality.

We can take the lead in this area, as we have done in so many others and direct our governments towards the achievement of this end.

As always, there are many forces preventing understanding among us. We as Trade Unionists know the face of the opposition only too well. These are the same forces that are set against the rights of the workers. We have encountered them and fought them successfully on many occasions. We can do so again through the SAR-TUC. However, we must endeavour to achieve a wider impact in this struggle and seek to influence our respective governments to foster the forces of understanding and propriety.

The sands of time are running out for the people of South Asia. The escalation of social tensions resulting from the development strategy practised hitherto give cause for a critical re-appraisal and the fashioning of a new approach consistent with the real needs of the people. The trickle-down theory of development which formed the core strategy of past UN Development decades is a proved failure because it failed to recognise the fact that economic and social development must go hand in hand and that development needed to be people oriented. There has been a lack of appreciation or misunderstanding in the past on the part of Governments of the positive role which trade unions as peoples' organisations - can play in development and the need to harness their expertise and resources in the task of nation building. The trade union movement in South Asia is ready, able and willing to assist in this task.

The ever increasing challenges faced, by the South Asian people and the steady erosion of the living standards of workers and toilers call for strenuous efforts by the South Asian trade union movement to marshal its resources not only to defend and promote the interests of workers but to play a decisive role in the formulation and implementation of economic and social policies in

(Continued on page 39)

Address by

S. NAKATANI

Asst. Director-General

for ILO Activities in Asia and the Pacific.

Hon'ble Mr. Thondaman, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentleman, I thank you for your kind invitation to attend the Founding Convention of the South Asian Regional Trade Union Council but regret that due to prior engagements, I am unable to personally address you on this auspicious occasion. However, I have asked Mr. K. Duraiappah, our Regional Adviser, Workers' Activities, to read my message.

The initiative to establish a South Asian Trade Union Council is indeed a step which I consider is in the right perspective as it provides a useful forum at the sub-regional level for an exchange of information and expertise. As you know, the ASEAN Trade Union Council which was inaugurated in Manila on 11 August 1983 with the purpose of promoting the trade unions, social and economic interests of workers provides a similar forum for the ASEAN region. To day, trade union leaders from South Asian countries who are assembled in this picturesque city, are reaffirming the concept of freedom of association and their common concern for promoting the well-being of workers through social justice. It was here that the leaders of commonwealth conceived the idea of Colombo Plan as a co-operative venture for the economic and social advancement of the peoples of South and South East Asia.

I believe the founding of SARTUC will promote co-operation, understanding and brotherhood among workers and trade unions in the South Asian region. It can become a much needed vehicle through which the resources of its vast membership may be mobilised to enhance the rights and aspirations of the workers in the region. At the same time, I hope SARTUC will in future pave way for developing and strengthening not only the socio-economic links among them but also for promoting industrial, rural and co-operative pursuits for the benefit of workers. These activities would thereby contribute to national development.

Efforts to eradicate poverty and raise the living standards of the rural workers in this region have to be continued relentlessly. A large number of rural workers remains unorganised. The ILO believes that for successful rural development, rural people should have the opportunity to participate in development schemes and this can be possible only through organised representation. The organised sector can contribute immensely to the promotion and development of such rural workers' organisations.

South Asia is rich in its culture, natural resources and a mass of humanity. It is also riddled with massive unemployment, illiteracy, poverty, malnutrition, and paucity of basic needs. The ILO's main aim is to achieve social justice for all but the road is not so smooth. Freedom of association, collective bargaining, fair wages, paid holidays and welfare, adequate training, social security, all these require a tripartite approach.

The SAARC member governments in a spirit of co-operation have agreed to establish a number of technical committees and study groups in areas such as meteorology, telecommunications, civil aviation, and the role of women in development. Women constitute a major work force and to develop their potentiality, a concerted move is necessary. Workers' education will therefore become one of the major activities in creating an awareness among them. SARTUC can no doubt play a major role, particularly in the role of women in development.

I would like to refer to the significance of international labour standards which stem from the ILO's aims and purposes. By its Constitution, the ILO is committed to seeking the realisation of certain normative objectives, with a view to ensuring that all human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, are able to pursue their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, economic security and equality. All member States by virtue of their

membership have a common responsibility to work towards the attainment of these goals which were set by the representations of governments, employers and workers many years ago.

In conclusion, let me take this opportunity of wishing the Convention every success and bright future.

Hon. S. Thondaman . .

(Continued from page 38)

the national, regional and international spheres which will ensure accelerated economic and social development and contribute to the eradication of the scourges of poverty, hunger, disease, un-employment, under-employment and exploitation of labour in this strategic and densely populated part of the world.

In this context and in the light of the formation by the Governments of South Asia of an Association for Regional Co-operation it is both opportune and imperative that the free trade union movement in this Region should consider the establishment of a representative organisation capable of articulating its concerns and serving as an effective instrument to bring about much needed economic and social reforms in policies and structures.

Today we are only beginning the task of forging a new body which will actualize the concept of solidarity on yet another level. There is much work yet to be done.

I am pleased that Colombo was selected as the site of the founding convention and that the Ceylon Workers' Congress has been afforded the opportunity of organising and hosting this event.

The CWC is firmly committed to the SAR-TUC and is prepared to place its resources at the disposal of the new council.

I have great confidence that the South Asian Regional Trade Union Council will further strengthen the Trade Union Movement of South Asia and that it will also contribute towards the regional co-operation and collective self-reliance envisaged by the SAARC Nations.

I look forward to our discussion and deliberation of today and to many more such meetings in the future. May this be the beginning of a long end.

Thank You.

Charter of the South Asian Regional Trade Union Council

(SAAR-TUC)

We, representatives of Trade Union Organisations of South Asian Countries Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

1. **DESIROUS** of promoting worker and human rights, stability, amity and progress among workers in the region through adherence to basic ILO standards and peaceful settlement of all disputes,
2. **CONSCIOUS** that in an increasingly independent world, the objectives of right to work, social justice, freedom, peace, disarmament and economic prosperity are better achieved by fostering mutual understanding, good relations and collective consciousness among sister trade union organisations in the region,
3. **AWARE** of the common problems, interests and aspirations of the workers of South Asia and the need for collective action and enhanced co-operation within their respective political and economic systems and cultural traditions,
4. **CONVINCED** that collective regional co-operation among the trade union organisations of South Asia is mutually beneficial, desirable and necessary for promoting the welfare and quality of life of the basic worker interest in the region, including right to employment and organising the unorganised,
5. **CONVINCED** further that fraternal, economic, social and technical co-operation among the trade union organisations of South Asia would contribute significantly to national and collective self-reliance,
6. **RECOGNISING** that increased co-operation, contacts and exchanges among the trade union organisations of the region will contribute to the promotion of a regional collective consciousness and understanding amongst the working people,

7. **RECALLING** several meetings held in connection with above objectives leading to this Founding Convention,
8. **REAFFIRMING** their determination to promote within an institutional framework and **NOTING** the positive history of regional trade union co-operation,

DO HEREBY

Agree to establish an organisation to be known as the South Asian Regional Trade Union Council.

ARTICLE I

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. The objectives of the SAARC-TUC shall be :
 - (a) to promote the welfare of the workers of South Asia and to improve their working conditions and quality of life through the establishment of full employment, the eradication of poverty, the improvement of working conditions, the introduction, maintenance and extension of social security and the raising of the standard of living for all people in the region;
 - (b) to accelerate economic growth, social progress and workers' access to these in the region and to provide all workers the opportunity to form free and democratic trade unions and free access to collective bargaining ;
 - (c) to promote and strengthen free and democratic trade unions and collective self-reliance among trade union organisations;
 - (d) to contribute to a collective consciousness through mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another's problems ;
 - (e) to promote trade union solidarity and regional co-operation to strengthen

co-operation with sister trade union organisations in other developing countries;

- (f) to strengthen co-operation among themselves in the international forums on matters of common interest;
- (g) to co-operate with international and regional trade union organisations with similar aims and purposes; and
- (h) to ensure that free and democratic trade unions participate meaningfully in national and regional economic and social development.

ARTICLE II

PRINCIPLES

1. Co-operation within the framework of the SAAR-TUC shall be based on respect for the equality, integrity and political independence of each trade union organisation, non-interference in the internal affairs of other trade unions and mutual benefit.
2. Such co-operation shall not be inconsistent with other national, regional, and international obligations.

ARTICLE III

MEMBERSHIP

1. Any free and democratic trade union in South Asia may become a member of the SAAR-TUC subject to its application for membership being accepted by the Executive Council.

ARTICLE IV

GENERAL CONFERENCE

1. The General Conference shall be the supreme governing body of the SAARC-TUC.
2. The General Conference of the SAAR-TUC shall take place every two (2) years.
3. Representation at the General Conference shall be on the basis of membership of one delegate, being either the General Secretary or his/her alternate of the SAARC-TUC.

4. Each member shall be free to send additional representatives who shall have the status of delegates but shall not have the right to vote.
5. The Agenda for the General Conference shall be prepared by General Secretary and approved for recommendation to the General Conference by the Executive Board.

ARTICLE V

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Standing Committee

1. There shall be an Executive Council responsible for :
 - (a) the implementation of policies and management of the affairs of the SAARC-TUC between General Conference;
 - (b) review of the progress of co-operation under the SAARC-TUC ;
 - (c) decisions on new areas of co-operation.
2. The Executive Council shall consist of a Representative nominated by each its members.
3. The Executive Council shall select a number of officers from among its members :
 - (a) President — This position shall rotate among member organisations in alphabetical order every year ;
 - (b) Three (3) Vice Presidents;
 - (c) General Secretary who shall also exercise the functions of Treasurer.

The officers noted under (b) and (c) shall be elected from among the members of the Executive Council.

4. The Executive Council shall meet as often as may be necessary but in any event not less than once a year.
5. The General Secretary shall, with the consent of the President, call meetings of the Executive Council. He/she shall also be responsible for the preparation of

the Agenda and other relevant documents.

6. The quorum for a meeting of the Executive Council shall consist of not less than one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of its members.

ARTICLE VI

TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

1. There shall be Technical Committees comprising representatives of member organisations which shall be responsible for the implementation, co-ordination and monitoring of the programmes within their area of co-operation.
2. They shall have the following terms of reference;
 - (a) determination of the potential and the scope of regional collective co-operation in agreed areas;
 - (b) formulation of programmes and preparation of projects;
 - (c) determination of financial implications of programmes and projects;
 - (d) formulation of recommendations regarding costs and funding;
 - (e) implementation and co-ordination of programmes and projects;
 - (f) monitoring of progress in implementation.
3. The Technical Committees shall submit periodic reports to the Executive Board.

ARTICLE VII

HEADQUARTERS

1. The Headquarters of the SAARC-TUC shall be located and established at such place as the Executive Council shall from time to time determine.

ARTICLE VIII

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

1. The cost of running the SAARC-TUC shall be met out of an annual

membership fee to be fixed by the Executive Council and donations from friendly organisations acceptable to the Executive Council.

2. All travel expenses for attending meetings of the SAARC-TUC shall be borne by the respective members except that local hospitality will be provided by the host member(s).

ARTICLE IX

AMENDEMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

1. All amendments to the Constitution shall be adopted by an unanimous decision.
2. Thirty days notice shall be given of any amendments to the Constitution.

GENERAL PROVISION

All decisions will be taken on the basis of consensus.

Signed at Colombo, Sri Lanka, this 29th day of January, 1988.

Name :

Title:

Signature:

Bangladesh Jatio Sramik League

Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal

Bangladesh Free Trade Union Congress

Jatiya Sramik Party

Indian National Trade Union Congress

Hind Mazdoor Sabha

Textile Labour Association

Ceylon Workers' Congress

All Pakistan Federation of Trade Unions

All Pakistan Federation of Labour

Gopeshwar
General Secretary,
SAR-TUC.

WHAT IS SAARC

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) comprises Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. It is a regional organisation whose basic aim is to accelerate the process of economic and social development in the member states through joint action in certain agreed areas of cooperation.

SAARC is a manifestation of the determination of the peoples of South Asia to cooperate regionally, to work together towards finding solutions to their common problems in a spirit of friendship, trust and understanding and to the creation of an order based on mutual respect, equity and shared benefits.

EVOLUTION

The idea of a regional association in South Asia was first mooted in November 1980. Following consultations amongst the countries of the region, Foreign Secretaries of the seven countries met for the first time in Colombo in April 1981. This was followed a few months later by the meeting of the Committee of the Whole which identified five broad areas for regional cooperation. The Foreign Ministers in their first meeting in New Delhi in August 1983 formally launched the Integrated Programme of Action through the adoption of a Declaration on South Asian Regional Cooperation (SARC). South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established at the Dhaka Summit held on 7-8 December 1985.

OBJECTIVES

- * To promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life;
- * To accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and to realise their full potentials;
- * To promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia;
- * To contribute to mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another's problems;
- * To promote collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic,

South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation

social, cultural, technical and scientific fields;

- * To strengthen cooperation with other developing countries;
- * To strengthen cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interests; and
- * To cooperate with international and regional organisations with similar aims and purposes.

PRINCIPLES

- * Cooperation within the framework of the Association is based on respect for the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and mutual benefit.
- * Such cooperation is to complement and not to substitute bilateral or multilateral cooperation.
- * Such cooperation should be consistent with bilateral and multilateral obligations of the member states.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

- * Decisions at all levels in SAARC are taken on the basis of unanimity.

Bilateral and contentious issues are excluded from its deliberations.

AREAS OF COOPERATION

SAARC's current activities cover following areas :

- Agriculture and Forestry
- Health and Population Activities
- Meteorology
- Rural Development
- Telecommunication
- Transport
- Science and Technology
- Postal Services
- Sports, Arts and Culture
- Women in Development
- Drug Trafficking and Abuse

Further, following the directive of the Bangalore Summit (November 1986) a high level Group of Experts met in New Delhi in February 1987 and concretised proposals for.

- launching a South Asian Broadcasting Programme covering radio and television;
- establishing a SAARC Documentation Centre;
- promoting organised tourism among SAARC Member Countries;
- instituting SAARC chairs, fellowships and scholarships; and
- launching an organised volunteers' programme.

REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Proposals for establishment of regional institutions under the framework of SAARC currently include:

- * Regional Meteorological Research Centre (RMRC)
- * Regional Agricultural Information Centre (RAIC)
- * Regional Software Centre for Telecommunications
- * Regional Tuberculosis Centre
- * Institute of Transport Technology and Training
- * South Asian Centre for Postal Research and Development
- * Design Centre for Floating Craft
- * Shipping Conference of SAARC Countries
- * SAARC Shippers Council
- * Centre for Amelioration of Problems Soils
- * Regional Institute for Appropriate Rural Technology

ORGANS

The highest decision making authority in SAARC rests with the *Heads of State or Government*. They meet once a year or more often as and when necessary. *The Council of Ministers* meets twice a year and is inter alia responsible for formulation of policy. *The Standing Committee* comprising Foreign Secretaries meets as often as deemed necessary and reviews progress of SAARC activities, approves projects and programmes and decides on the modalities of their financing. *Technical Committees* are responsible

for the implementation, coordination and monitoring of the programmes, besides identifying new areas of cooperation and preparation of projects.

SAARC SECRETARIAT

The SAARC Secretariat was inaugurated in Kathmandu by His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev in the presence of the Foreign Ministers of SAARC countries on 16 January 1987. The role of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat is to coordinate and monitor the implementation of SAARC activities, service the meetings of the Association and serve as the channel of communication and linkage between SAARC and other international organisations.

- The Secretariat comprises a Secretary-General, seven Directors and General Services Staff.
- The Secretary-General is appointed by the Council of Ministers upon nomination by a Member State on the basis of the principle of rotation in alphabetical order for a period of two years. Ambassador Abul Ashan (Bangladesh) is the first Secretary-General.
- Directors are appointed by the Secretary-General upon nomination by the Member States for a period of three years.

KATHMANDU

Thondaman Heads SAR Trade Union Council

Sri Lanka's Rural Industrial Minister S. Thondaman who has been unanimously elected head of the South Asian Regional Trade Union Council (SARTUC) yesterday resolved that they would in future show their solidarity with 80 million workers in the region in their agitation for their rights.

Addressing a press conference after the convention of SARTUC held at Hotel Taj Samudra, he said that with the founding of SARTUC trade unions in the region would be one unit and would fight for the cause of the workers jointly in the region.

With a membership of 80 million in 11 national centres the council would become a major trade union force. Mr. Thondaman said that governments must learn to work in close liaison with trade unions and vice versa. They would form a common legislation and would expect the SARC to extend their co-operation to the trade union council.

As a first step the SARTUC demand the immediate release of Trade Unionist David now held in custody by the Malaysian Government. The council was desirous of promoting worker and human rights stability, amity and progress among workers in the region through strict adherence to basic ILO standards as well as the need for world peace and disarmament.

The objectives of the council he said was to promote the welfare of the workers of South Asia and to improve their working conditions the introduction, maintenance and extension of social security and the raising of the standard of living for all people of the region.

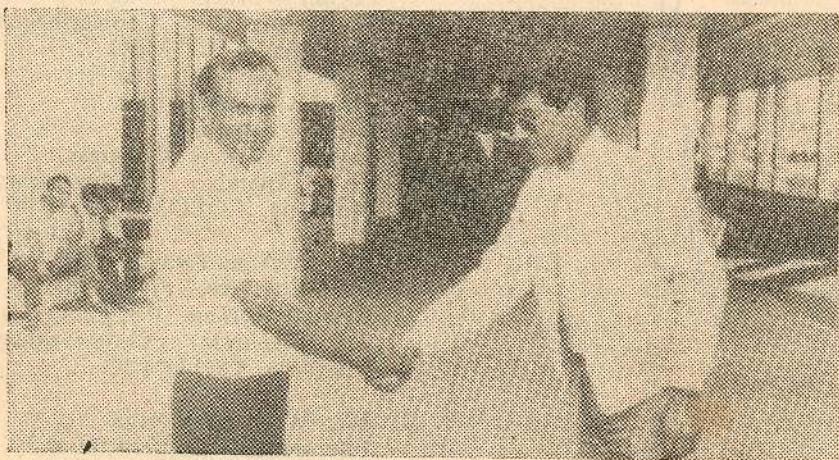
M. P. Sundaram...

(Continued from page 36)

in Pattaya you will recall the constructive discussion and unanimous endorsement by the representatives of ICFTU's South Asian affiliates of the proposal to form an organisation of South Asian Trade Unions. The meeting which took place shortly thereafter in New Delhi with the fullest co-operation of ICFTU-APRO reinforced the consensus reached in Pattaya.

The active participation of representatives of South Asian Trade Unions was most encouraging and culminated in the adoption of a Declaration. This was indeed an important milestone and was followed by further discussions in Geneva at the venue of the ILO conference at which we made further progress in arriving at a consensus in regard to the Organisation's structure. At the meeting held in New Delhi at the venue of the ICFTU-APRO Executive Board meeting in November last year the representative of South Asian Trade Unions, who participated, appointed you, Brother Chairman, as Provisional Chairman of the Organisation and Brother Gopeshwar as Provisional General Secretary. It was decided that the Founding Convention of SARTUC should be held in Sri Lanka under your Chairmanship on the 29th January 1988.

It is in this backdrop that we meet today, to make history. It is indeed a moment of immense joy, excitement and emotion for me personally to participate in this great event. Much will depend on our continued will and resolve to make the organisation a truly dynamic one to serve the needs of millions of workers and toilers who live in conditions of abject poverty and misery. May I conclude by wishing your deliberations every success.



The South Asian Regional Trade Union Convention was held at Hotel Taj Samudra on 29.1.88. The first delegate to arrive was Mr. H. R. Giri, Gen. Secretary, N.L.O., Nepal. He is seen here with Mr. P. Sivarajah, P. R. O. of the Ministry of Rural Industrial Development who received him at the Airport on arrival.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

BANGLADESH

- BJSJL** 1. Mr. Lutfar Rahaman,
Senior Vice President,
Bangladesh Jatio Sramik League,
68/2, Purana Paltan, DHAKA — 2.
- BJSJ** 2. Mr. Eskander Ali,
President,
Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal,
149, Malibagh Bazaar Road,
DHAKA — 2.
- JSP** 3. Mr. Dalwar Hossainkhan,
General Secretary,
Jatiya Sramik Party,
108, Motijeel Commercial Area,
DHAKA — 2.
- JSP** 4. Mr. Shaikh Delwar Hossain,
Joint Secretary,
Jatiya Sramik Party,
108, Motijheel Commercial Area,
DHAKA — 2.
- BJSJL** 5. Mr. Sanuallah,
Bangladesh Jatio Sramik League,
68/2, Purana Paltan, DHAKA — 2.

INDIA

- INTUC** 1. Shri Gopeshwar, M.P.,
General Secretary,
Indian National Trade Union
Congress,
1 - B, Maulana Azad Road,
NEW DELHI — 110011
2. Shri K. Ramamurthy, M.P.,
President,
Indian National Rural Labour
Federation,
93, North Avenue,
NEW DELHI, INDIA.
3. Shri S. L. Passey,
Secretary,
Indian National Trade Union
Congress,
Safety Department,
NEW DELHI, INDIA.
4. Mr. A. M. Barot,
President,
Textile Labour Association,
NEW DELHI, INDIA.
- HMS** 5. Shri Varaomal Purohit,
General Secretary,
Hind Mazdoor Sabha,
NEW DELHI, INDIA.
6. Shri Thampan Thomas, M.P.,
Secretary,
Hind Mazdoor Sabha,
NEW DELHI, INDIA.

NEPAL

- NLO** 1. Mr. Hem Roy Giri,
General Secretary,
National Labour Organisation,
P. O. Box 3066,
Bhanewhwar,
KATHAMANDU.

PAKISTAN

- PNFTU** 1. Pakistan National Federation of
Trade Unions,
406, Qamar House,
M. A. Jinnah Road,
KARACHI.
- APFTU** 2. All Pakistan Federation of
Trade Unions,
Bhhtiar Labour Hall,
28, Nisbat Road,
LAHORE.
- APFL** 3. All Pakistan Federation of Labour,
Block No. 12 J & T Centre,
G-7/1, Near Zero Point,
P. O. Box 1571 G. P. O.
ISLAMABAD.

SRI LANKA

- CWC** 1. Hon. S. Thondaman,
President,
Ceylon Workers' Congress,
72, Ananda Coomaraswamy
Mawatha, Colombo 7.
2. Mr. Jaya Perisundaram,
Vice President,
Ceylon Workers' Congress,
72, Ananda Coomaraswamy
Mawatha, COLOMBO 7.
3. Mr. M. S. Sellasamy,
General Secretary,
Ceylon Workers' Congress,
72, Ananda Coomaraswamy
Mawatha, COLOMBO 7.
4. Mr. V. Annamalay,
Financial Secretary,
Ceylon Workers' Congress,
72, Ananda Coomaraswamy
Mawatha, COLOMBO 7.
5. Mr. M. P. Sundaram,
International Representative,
Ceylon Workers' Congress,
72, Ananda Coomaraswamy
Mawatha, COLOMBO 7.
6. Mr. P. Devaraj

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It is generally accepted that a meal comprising of 2 eggs makes a substantial contribution to a persons daily nutritional needs. According to nutritional educators, daily food plan of foods are divided into four

groups: milk, meat, vegetable-fruit and bread-cereals.

Eggs belong to meat group of which two eggs comprise one serving. Two or more servings are recommended per day but most young children and older adults can meet their nutritional need of the meat group with less than two servings.

Any hazards due to cholestrol content?

Its very hard to comment about the relationship between egg consumption and the hazards due to cholestrol content of eggs since contradictory results are observed. However it is concluded that eating two eggs

daily, completely inhibit the effectiveness of a diet that would otherwise reduce serum cholestrol.

Best Method to Consume Eggs.

Eggs could be consumed in the form of fried, poached, soft cooked and also as omelette. The composition of whole raw egg is almost similar to a boiled egg but that of a scrambled egg vary slightly due to the added milk. The loss of protein is the same for both hard boiled egg and poached eggs. Cooked eggs are more readily digested than raw but both are completely digested and absorbed.