

● How Sri Lanka boosted Rajiv's image ●

K. K. Sharma

LANKA

GUARDIAN

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Unarm EROS, The Long day's task is over. !



The Tiger in civvies

J.R. "Sharon" spots the devolution gap

— Mervyn de Silva

Light at last at the end of the tunnel

— Neelan Tiruchelvam

Life in Jaffna before the Accord — Paul Caspersz

Sri Lankan elites — caught in the contradictions

— Godfrey Goonatilleke

Also: U. Karunatilake on "Contras"
Lining up with Gorbachev **and**
Air Lanka's bottom line, Bishops' letter



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NORTH-SOUTH EXCHANGE

The *Daily News* frontpage (13/8) gives us two reports on the North-South balance of power where the figures have an unusual symmetry. Of course it's statistical, the pundits will say, meaning perhaps accuracy and dispassion, quantity and quality. The LTTE has surrendered 800 weapons. The JVP has acquired the same number. But the LTTE's armory included anti-aircraft guns and RPG's, and assorted modern weaponry. The JVP has collected guns, licensed and unlicensed, and some sub-machine guns.

More harrowing in these North-South developments is the Indo-Sri Lankan exchange. Soviet-Indian Antony transport planes carry Indian troops to the North, and return with Sri Lankan regiments. And now the Joint Operations Command (JOC) the umbrella body that supervises the operations of the combined services, opens its "Forward Headquarters" at Embilipitiya. It will cover the Matara, Hantota, Ratnapura, Moneragalkanda. JOC Chief, Lt. General Cyril Ranatunga, has nominated Brigadier Jayanta Jayarane as commander. General Ranatunga will give the "policy guidelines" while the JOC will coordinate the work of the area commanders, supervise deployment of troops, and all operational activities.

INDISCRIMINATE ARRESTS

Wiser, in these days of censorship, to stay with the "Daily News". This most reliable of newspapers in such circumstances, the D. N. claims that 1,200 "subversives" are in custody, while other newspapers, which prefer "JVP sympathisers" at a broad description, put the figure at 800-600.

In this context, the CP STAMP letter to President JR is worth serious notice. The letter says: "The attitude of our two parties to the Accord is a matter of public record and has been referred to by Your Excellency himself in a public speech. Nevertheless, members and supporters of our parties, who are in no way involved in the acts of violence committed have been arrested by the Police and are in custody or detention."

In several instances, we have good reason to believe that these arrests have been made as a result of malicious information supplied to the Police, together with lists, by their political or personal opponents. In other cases, it would appear that pressure has been brought to bear on the Police by prominent politicians.

We therefore ask you to take necessary steps to see that the Police are advised to stop such indiscriminate arrests on unfounded information supplied to them."

COST OF LIVING

The terrifying cost of war and dying was undoubtedly one of the

main reasons which led to the Peace Accord. The government would be wise to study the causes of unrest and violence in the South, without ascribing to conspiracy theories or attributing all the atrocities and disruptive acts to one party or one organisation, proscribed or not. The Finance Minister has already promised public servants a salary increase (see *Trends* "Carrot and stick" 1.8.87) and a "crash programme" to create 500,000 jobs.

The cost of living should now be the focus of official attention. The LSSP General Secretary Mr. Bernard Soyza has pointed out that the COL Index which stood at 116.1 in 1982 had risen to 653.3 by July 1987. He also noted that according to Circular No. 327 of January 1986 the cost of living increase received by some Public Servants was between Rs. 5 and Rs. 10. The salary increases given in 1982 ranged from Rs. 65 a month to a maximum of Rs. 150 a month.

Another telling symmetry—500,000 government servants have been driven by COL into debt.

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J.R.'s breakthrough — not Napoleon, but Sharon

NEWS
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

In a wide-ranging, remarkably self-revealing exchange with the *Times* (London) and the *New York Times*, President JR said that it was sheer intuition which made him seize the day when Rajiv Gandhi sent him a message saying he was very keen on a speedy and final settlement of the ethnic conflict. Reports from Delhi show why the Indian prime minister was so keen on another, final cry to crack what had appeared so hard a nut since 1983, G. Parthasarathy's Annexure C and Thimpu. Although the Sri Lankan issue was terribly messy and likely to get messier, it was still a mess he could clear and then turn to other domestic problems, far more challenging — namely the trouble within his government, Cabinet and party.

Geo-political Realities

Q. Where does that lead you?

A. That leads us to a realisation that of a practical situation in this part of the world... that is that India is the most powerful nation in the Indian Ocean.

Q. And that Sri Lanka must have that in mind?

A. Definitely.

Q. In conducting its own foreign policy?

A. Oh yes, I am a practical man.

Besides, such problems as Punjab, and Gorkhaland, these intricate Congress (I) trials had led to a dangerous erosion of his prime ministerial authority and his personal credibility. He had made up his mind that the Sri

Lankan problem had to be removed from the piles of time-consuming, troublesome files mounting on his desk. That resolve communicated itself, and impressed the Sri Lankan leader. He took his chance, a bold gamble, as events have proved. Hence the frequent use of the word 'courage' in all the congratulatory messages President JR has received from dignitaries overseas.

The President alluded to Austenlitz and Napoleon, his favourite hero and reading material. The better parallel is more contemporary — the October War in the Middle East, where General Arik Sharon spotted the gap between the Egyptian 2nd and 3rd armies, and broke through the Egyptian encirclement to cross the canal. Of course Sharon was helped by the US SR-71 Blackbird spy planes and the satellite information passed on to the Israeli High Command. May be it was intuition or instinct but whatever it was President JR spotted the 'gap'. What was that 'gap'?

At the end of the budget debate last year, the Opposition leader, Mr. Anura Bandaranaike had broken through the UNP's ranks on foreign policy. Since the speech was not only a frontal assault on the UNP's foreign policy and relations with India, but a vigorous defence of the SLFP position on both, and a carefully conceived argument to prove that it was the UNP's 'hostile' relations with India which had aggravated the ethnic conflict, it was a much wider political statement, with obvious implications. The restoration of mutual confidence and goodwill, and a more 'genuinely' nonaligned policy was an essential first step to a

settlement of our agonising domestic problem. The SLFP, in short, was better equipped to deal with the problem through Indian cooperation than the UNP. Thus, the L.G. made the debate our cover story on 15/12/86.

On the domestic issue, however, the SLFP was still adopting a hardline on the Dec. 19 proposals, which of course the UNP itself renounced within a week. So, the equation was something like this, in Delhi's perception:

India and World powers

A. Well, if you read it, I don't think that is quite borne out. But it is a fact that India is the great power in the region and that the world powers have accepted that. The USA, UK...

Q. There have been comparison to Finland. The acceptance of the realities of big and small neighbours.

A. I don't think any part of the agreement or annexures bears that out.

Q. So Sri Lanka's relations with India are on geo-political terms? Bow to Indian pressure when necessary?

A. Not necessarily

SLFP: minimal devolution — foreign policy congruence.

UNP: vacillation on devolution — no concession on foreign policy.

Meanwhile, the political situation had seen some interesting changes. Doctors, dentists, dons were on strike. The trade union movement was still docile — battered into submission after 1980 General Strike. But the middle-class unions were stirring, a new trend. The LG put the story on the cover — “**The Middle Groups Lead the Way?**” (LG 1/4/86).

By Feb. this year, Mrs. Bandaranaike had used the Election Commissioner's Referendum Report to demand a general election (See LG 15/2/87) and by mid-March, she had not only placed the ‘Democracy’ issue on the national agenda but made it clear also that any SLFP cooperation on a settlement could come only after a concession to the Sinhala opposition on elections. The LG (15/3/87) called it on “**Referendum Report and Sirima's Denial Strategy**”.

By May, the SLFP had started to take a more activist, agita-

Napolean at Austerlitz

When Napoleon was inspecting his troops just before the battle of Austerlitz, both sides were drawn up in the field. That night there was a big row when a soldier jumped up from the ranks and said “Here's the way the enemy will form its troops and this is the way to attack.”

Napolean said, “Shut up and get back into your ranks”.

The battle was won. Napoleon decimated the forces. “Where is that soldier who broke ranks?” he asked. Unfortunately the man had been shot. Napoleon exclaimed “the man is a genius. He knew exactly what I was going to do. That's why I told him to shut up”.

That's intuition. I get that at times. When Rajiv's message came, I grasped it at once. It was sheer intuition.

tional posture. (LG ‘SLFP's new spirit’ 1/5/87). Our main report on the very next issue was titled “**The Crisis Moves South, UNP under seige**”, with “**DEMOCRACY NOW! Mrs. B's Other War**” on the cover.

When we moved into the month of June-July, the campuses were rocked by violent disturbances and student-police clashes, paralleling Oppositional resurgence in South Korea, notably, and nearer home, Bangladesh, with the same slogan of elections, now.

In the meantime, there was a steady confluence of oppositional forces climaxing with the six-party front, with the LSSP dropping out soon on the boycott issue but the 22 trade unions astir, with their own demands, more political than economic. Yet all these forces had a common demand — elections.

(Continued on page 12)

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Invite Red Cross

The Working Committee of the Civil Rights Movement urges the Government to comply with the consensus vote of all Member States of the U. N. Human Rights Commission which in March 1987 invited "the Government of Sri Lanka to consider favourably the offer of the services of the International Committee of the Red Cross to fulfil its functions of protection of humanitarian standards, including the provision of assistance and protection to victims of all affected parties." It urges the Government to implement both the letter and the spirit of the Geneva Conventions, to which Sri Lanka has been a signatory since 1959, in the best interests of its own people.

The International Committee of the Cross (ICRC) is a non-governmental body founded nearly 125 years ago. It enjoys a unique position as a recognised neutral intermediary in humanitarian matters during armed conflict. Its founders not merely organised relief for wounded on the battlefield, but also prevailed upon governments to reach binding agreements regarding the treatment of the sick and wounded in times of armed conflict, irrespective of the side to which they belonged. Such agreements were later extended to cover those shipwrecked at sea, prisoners of war, and civilian populations affected by war. These treaties are now embodied in the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, which also extended protection to victims of internal conflicts. Two Additional Protocols of 1977 developed the Conventions further. The ICRC is given an explicit role and status by these Conventions.

The Geneva Conventions are thus not confined to situations of armed conflict between states. They also govern internal armed conflict. Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions explicitly addresses itself to "armed conflict not of an international character occurring in the territory of one of the High Contracting Parties."

Specific provision is made to ensure that applying the Conventions in such a situation, including accepting the services of the ICRC "shall not affect the legal status of the parties". This means that no extra authority or status is conferred on armed opposition groups. Article 3 in no way limits *a de jure* government's lawful suppression of a rebellion.

The ICRC has been permitted to conduct its traditional humanitarian work in "internal" situations in, for instance, Chile, El Salvador, Haiti, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Peru, South Africa, Spain, Uganda and Zaire.

An ICRC presence, may well also act as a brake on separatist
(Continued on page 6)

Accord Welcomed

We welcome the prospect of a political solution of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka based on the Accord of 24th July 1987 entered into by the Government of Sri Lanka and India. We feel strongly that the Accord provides a just framework for a fair and lasting solution though it is in the nature of any compromise that some will continue to have their various reservations.

A variety of causes have combined to push the major ethnic groups inhabiting this country into a situation of conflict. Sri Lankans of all communities have individually and collectively suffered deprivation of their human rights in the course of this conflict.

There is a sad history to agreements between Sri Lankan governments and the Tamil people. This history cannot and should not be repeated. All concerned must implement this agreement in good faith, conscious that the future of a united Sri Lanka lies entirely in its successful implementation. We appeal to all citizens to accept the accord and work towards the creation of a united Sri Lankan society in which all ethnic groups, while possessing their own identities, can find a transcending unity.

The peaceful resolution of the ethnic conflict on the basis of the recent Accord should also enable us to focus more clearly on some other problems of our society which have matured and assumed grave proportions in its shadow, such as the erosion of democratic and civil rights including the right to free and fair parliamentary elections at regular intervals.

We should nevertheless be conscious that a continued inability to be sensitive to and solve problems in our own society could become a weakness fatal to Sri Lanka's existence as a free and independent nation.

Signatories:

Prof. Ediriweera Saratchandrar, Writer and dramatist, Prof. Ganapath Obeyesekere, Princeton University, Prof. Carlo Fonseka, University of Colombo, Prof. Vijaya Kumar, University of Peradeniya, Prof. A. Jayasingame, University of Kelantan, Prof. Valentine Daniel, University of Washington, Prof. Osmond Jayarama, University of Colorado, Prof. A. J. Gunawardena, University of Jaywardenapura, Prof. H. L. Senewiratne, University of Virginia, Lester James Peiris, Film maker, H. A. I. Goonatilake, Bibliographer, Radhika Gnanarajawamy, International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Hector Abhayewardhana, Political Commentator, Rev. Paul Caspersz, S. J., Suriya Wickremesinghe, Lawyer, Saul Bastian, International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Bernardino Silva, Women's Education Centre, Charles Abeysekara, President, Movement for Social Justice and Equality, Dr. Lakshmi Fernando, World University Service, Tullin Gunawardana, Actress, Jayaratna Mahipodda, Trade Unionist, Reggie Sinnawansa, Writer, Dr. Bartle Gajamagallana, University of Peradeniya, Dr. Kumari Jayawardena, Essayist, Desmond Fernando, Lawyer, Dr. Newton Gunasinghe, University of Colorado, Rev. Yahan Gunananda, priest, S. Sundarasagarani, University of Colombo.

India is expected to provide security to all communities in the North and East

NEW DELHI, Aug. 10

India is making clear to Sri Lanka that unnecessary speculation or talk of an early departure date for the Indian peace-keeping force from the Northern and Eastern Provinces will neither help the implementation of the Indo-Sri Lankan agreement at this sensitive juncture nor build confidence in the soundness of the peace process.

India's military assistance, at the specific request of the Sri Lankan President, is provided for in the agreement in order to 'implement these proposals'. Specifically, the Annexure to the accord provides for an Indian peace-keeping contingent to "guarantee and enforce the cessation of hostilities, if so required." Further, the agreement envisages practical cooperation between the Governments of India and Sri Lanka to ensure "the physical security and safety of all communities inhabiting the Northern and Eastern Provinces."

Indian view

The Indian view is that there is no question of interpreting these provisions one-sidedly, so that it can be made to appear that the Indian peace-keeping contingent is in the island merely to oversee and enforce the process of handing over of arms by the militants without taking care of the basic question of the safety and security of the Sri Lankan Tamils, who are after all the victims of the ethnic conflict.

It is obvious that the physical presence of the Indian peace-keeping forces in sizeable strength (over 10,000 already) and with formidable hardware is the one qualitative factor that has made the various Tamil political organisations — above all, the LTTE — respond positively to the bilateral agreement.

In fact, in his speech of August 4 near Jaffna, the LTTE leader, Mr. V. Prabhakaran, made this explicit when he declared that "the handing over of arms only signifies the handing over, the trans-

fer of this responsibility... of protecting our people... I wish very firmly to emphasise that by virtue of our handing over our weapons to it, the Indian Government should assume full responsibility for the life and security of every one of the Eelam Tamils".

All those dealing with the question of implementing the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement to Establish Peace and Normalcy in Sri Lanka, in both New Delhi and Colombo, know that the protective umbrella provided by the Indian peace-keeping forces is the factor that has made all the difference so far to the process of guaranteeing and enforcing a cessation of hostilities and to the initial steps to demilitarisation of the ethnic conflict on the ground. Without this presence as provided for in the agreement, the whole process could run into serious trouble.

For one thing, if doubts are raised or fanned about the one credible physical guarantee of the safety and security of the Tamil people, and also of the militants, the process of handing over of arms — for which the deadline of August 18 has now been announced by the commander of the Indian peace-keeping contingent, Maj. Gen. Harkirat Singh — cannot be expected to take place successfully.

The Indian perception that thus far the agreement have gone very well in its implementation and nothing should be done by any of the parties involved in the ethnic issue which has the effect of providing opportunities or openings to those who might want to scuttle the agreement and the wider advantages it is expected to bring about in the South Asian region.

In fact, the constructive spirit of the agreement rules out any question of using India's very fine professional forces to implement one sidedly one stage of the agreement and then drop it un-

ceremoniously without resolving the basic questions.

UNI reports from Colombo

The Indian High Commissioner, Mr. J. N. Dixit, called on the Sri Lankan President, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, here this evening and reported to him the progress of the surrender of arms by Tamil militants under the Indo-Sri Lankan agreement.

Mr. Dixit said that he also sought Mr. Jayewardene's view on the proposed interim administration for the Northern and Eastern Provinces, pending the Provincial Council elections, and details regarding a time-frame on introduction of legislation for implementing the clauses of the agreement.

Mr. Jayewardene was quoted in a newspaper interview as having said that he expected to introduce the relevant legislation in Parliament in September or October. But, the agreement stipulates that residual matters not finalised shall be resolved between India and Sri Lanka within six weeks of signing the agreement.

— Hindu

Invite . . .

(Continued from page 5)

excesses, notably attacks on hapless civilians, conduct which is particularly abhorrent to the humanitarian principles of the Geneva Conventions. Its presence will not only bring considerable solace, relief and assistance to thousands in Sri Lanka who are suffering as a result of the conflict, but will also signify the Government's good faith and sincerity of purpose in trying to protect and assist its citizens of all communities.

Desmond Fernando
Secretary
(C. R. M.)

Editorials on Sri Lanka

Peace hopes in Sri Lanka

The Peace accord signed in Colombo yesterday by President Junius Jayawardene of Sri Lanka and Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, is, for all its faults, fragility and contentiousness, the best hope for bringing Sri Lanka's prolonged and bloody ethnic strife to a conclusion. The violence in the island has reached such a serious state that yesterday's agreement may well be the last chance to avoid a slide into full civil war between the increasingly antagonistic Sinhalese and minority Tamil communities.

Any doubts that the accord was going to be difficult to implement have been dispelled by the widespread rioting by the Sinhalese this week. It is difficult to conceive of a less hopeful venue for a peace signing ceremony than Colombo yesterday — under curfew, police under orders to shoot protesters on sight and palls of thick black smoke hanging overhead.

Nevertheless the accord is all that is an offer except more violence. It contains proposals which can be made to work and the onus now falls on all parties to make them work. Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jayawardene have the task of making sure the consequences of failure are understood: the death toll of 6,000 in the last four years will rise; the decline of the battered Sri Lankan economy will accelerate and ultimately India, under pressure from the 50m Tamils in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, may have to enter the conflict militarily on the side of the Tamils. The unspoken element is that the accord is being underwritten by two weak governments, both with leaders in precarious political positions. A collapse would probably unhorse the signing Sri Lankan president and would do Mr. Gandhi no good at all.

No partition

Already the accord is being misrepresented. It is not a plan for partition of Sri Lanka, as Sinhalese protesters are claiming. The new Tamil homeland in the eastern and northern provinces will have one of nine provincial councils in the island, each with a governor, chief minister and board of ministers. The Tamils will have therefore a semi-autonomous region but will be under the normal jurisdiction of the Government, police, army, laws and judiciary of Sri Lanka, though with a role, as yet to be determined, for the Indian military. This falls well short of partition and of the aspirations of the Tamil Tiger separatist group which has threatened to fight on for "Eelam" — an independent Tamil state within Sri Lanka.

(Continued on page 8)

Relief for Sri Lanka

No political-social issue has been more punishing to countries around the world than that of trying to manage — to tame — ethnic differences. It takes great effort and tolerance and some magic. So it has to be regarded as problematical whether the Sinhalese majority in Sri Lanka can now find peace with the aggrieved Tamil minority and especially with the element of it that had turned to terrorism in the pursuit of a separate state over the past four years.

If there is a bit of justice in this world, however, the political settlement just offered by President Junius Jayawardene will bring Sri Lanka the respite it deserves. It is a friendly, unoffending, democratic country that has sought to serve the needs of the common people. The Tamils had real social and economic grievances, but the

Sinhalese seem at last to have recognized them. The new offer of autonomy now made to the Tamils has cost the government heavily among its own majority community.

In Sri Lanka the problem was never just to find a new pattern of relations between Sinhalese and Tamils. It was to fold in India, which, by virtue of its locations across a narrow strait, its own immense Tamil population and its weight in South Asia, was bound to play a crucial role. Until recently that role seemed mostly negative, India was in effect encouraging Tamil separatism. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, however, has now accepted the full implications of India's overwhelming importance to Sri Lanka and has joined Sri Lanka in sponsoring and guaranteeing the political settlement that was announced this week.

Under the agreement, India takes on an obligation to suppress terrorist sources in India. At Sri Lankan invitation, moreover, it immediately sent peacekeeping troops to the island state. These troops will help the inadequate forces of Sri Lanka put the political part of the settlement into effect. That means not only helping to disarm secessionist guerrillas but protecting them, once they are disarmed, from Sinhalese wrath.

For Mr. Gandhi, who has his rough political weather recently, it is a risky enterprise but a timely demonstration of leadership. For India, beset itself by ethnic tensions, it is a useful exercise in combining the elements of firmness and flexibility required to deal with this explosive problem at home.

— The Washington Post

Peace is possible in Sri Lanka

"The peace accord intended to end ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka is beginning to take effect. Barring a few unconfirmed incidents, hostilities have ceased. A large Indian peace-keeping force is installed, the Tamil guerrillas have begun laying down arms and the Sri Lanka government has declared amnesty and started to release Tamil prisoners. President Jayewardene has announced plans for interim administrations of the Northern and Eastern provinces prior to an election later this year which will put in place the promised provincial government.

"The speed and sureness with which these events have unfolded is reassuring. They suggest that the settlement is being pursued seriously and systematically. Both President Jayewardene and the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the architects of the accord, can justifiably be proud of their achievement. Yet their problems are by no means over. Achieving the settlement was just the first half. The more difficult will be seeing it enforced in the face of Sinhalese opposition and with only the lukewarm acceptance of the Tamil groups.

The Sinhalese see their country as a small vulnerable island and, themselves as a Buddhist minority surrounded not just by Sri Lanka's own Tamil minority, but also the 54 million Tamils across the Palk Strait in India. As a result in view of the merger of the North and East, as a stepping stone to separatism and the thin end of a menacing Tamil wedge.

"The Tamil guerrillas, especially the Tigers, have agreed only reluctantly to accept the settlement.

Although the exact terms on which this was achieved are not yet known, one of the conditions the Tamils wrung out of the Indian government was the Indian

soldiers would form the peace keeping force which will police the newly demilitarised regions of the North and East. Should the Tamils become disenchanted and react on the deal which could happen if the guerrilla groups find they cannot retain influence, or if the proposed referendum in the East rejected the merger, Indian soldiers may be pitted against Tamils.

"Indeed the crunch could come earlier under the terms of the settlement. India is to close Tamil training camps in Tamil Nadu, patrol the Indo-Sri Lankan coastal waters, help to extinguish residual violence and ensure the disarming of the guerrillas. If the Tamils feel they have been forced into an unequal settlement they may cause trouble at any one of these points, and it would not be difficult for them to evoke the sympathy of Indian Tamils.

"The fulfilment of India's new treaty obligations is therefore potentially damaging for Mr. Gandhi's Congress Party, particularly at a time when its popularity is declining. Mr. Gandhi might not wish to risk his position further for what would then be a failing Sri Lankan settlement.

"These are significant problems.

"Nevertheless, it is reassuring that both Tamils and Sinhalese have reservations about the settlement. That is the best proof that neither community has lost out and that the settlement is an impartial one.

"If each side can be convinced of the other's hostility to the terms they may be able to accommodate the settlement with a little patience and perseverance from Mr. Jayewardene and Mr. Gandhi, that should be possible."

— Times (London)

Peace hopes...

(Continued from page 7)

The deal does not undermine the security, status or well-being of the majority Sinhalese population or that of the other ethnic groups including Muslims, Malays and Europeans. An annex to the agreement, however, appears to compromise Sri Lankan independence to a degree, Mr Gandhi having insisted, for example, that Indian "advisers and trainers" should replace Pakistan's and Israelis.

Hardest part

Mr Jayawardene may find this degree of acquiescence to Indian regional ambitions tricky to explain away, but ultimately all Sri Lankans will have to understand that there can be no settlement of the current problems without Indian involvement. The price for peace may be closer geo-political ties with Delhi, at least for the time being.

The hardest part of Mr Gandhi's role as peace guarantor concerns the eastern province which is only one-third Tamil, the rest of the population being Sinhalese and Muslim. The Tamils are outraged by the part of the accord which promises a referendum within a year to allow the eastern population to decide whether to stay merged with the north. The others are incensed that they are to be merged in a Tamil entity in the first place. Both sides may resort to violence, the Tamils to try to intimidate the Sinhalese and Muslims into leaving the east before the referendum and the non-Tamils to try to prevent the initial merger. If either were to succeed, the accord would be in shreds. For this reason Mr Gandhi has said his guarantees will include a military presence in Sri Lanka. How extensive this well need to be depends on how much violence has to be contained. It is difficult to overstate what is at risk in Sri Lanka if the ceasefire is not made to hold.

— Financial Times
London, 30/7/87

Besieged at home, Gandhi boosts his stature abroad

K. K. Sharma in New Delhi

INDIA'S Prime Minister, Mr. Indira Gandhi, is so besieged with domestic problems that he badly needs some kind of achievement to improve his greatly diminished stature.

At home there are opposition cries of scandal and censure arising from alleged bribes paid out to people close to him in defence deals and illegal foreign exchange dealings. A success abroad was welcome.

While it might be uncharitable to say that this is the main motive for his part in the Sri Lanka-India agreement signed in Colombo recently it must have certainly been one of the factors that encouraged Mr. Gandhi to spur his officials into attempting to clinch a compromise deal with President F. R. Jayawardene and Tamil militants.

Just a month ago, before the recent series of resignations and dismissals of senior Indian officials and party members, Mr. Gandhi appeared to be on a collision course with the Sri Lankan president when he ordered Indian Air Force fighters to violate Sri Lanka's air space during Colombo's military offensive against the Tamil strongholds in the Jaffna peninsula.

The deal came sooner than these events would have suggested.

There are, however, other sound reasons for the agreement. India has been getting a bad name for helping Tamil secessionists and giving them shelter in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Although such assistance has always been officially denied, it is an open secret that training camps for the Sri Lankan Tamils operated in Tamil Nadu and that the state government of Mr. M. G. Ramachandran gave them financial and other help.

At a time when Mr. Gandhi is accusing Pakistan of helping Sikh militants in their campaign to secede from India to form an independent homeland they call Khalistan, he finds himself accused by Sri Lanka of doing the same with the Tamils. The civil war in Sri Lanka was thus proving a serious and costly embarrassment.

Mr. Gandhi also feared that President Jayawardene was increasingly turning to other countries, including hostile ones such as Pakistan and the US, for help to tackle the Tamil guerrilla problem. This may have meant that coun-

tries antagonistic to India would have obtained more than a foothold in Sri Lanka, a country which India has traditionally considered to be in its sphere of interest.

There are no illusions in New Delhi about the difficulties of implementing the agreement, especially as it means there will now have to be an Indian military presence in Sri Lanka. But hopes are that, given firm political direction from both New Delhi and Colombo in the months ahead, peace could return to the embattled island.

Let Pakistan open up

Pakistan invites ridicule with its protestations that it is not building nuclear weapons. The Pakistani government asserts that it had nothing to do with the attempt to smuggle 25 tons of highly specialized steel from the United States to Pakistan. The steel is suitable for equipment to enrich uranium, and the case came to light two weeks ago with the arrest of a suspect in Philadelphia. In Islamabad, Pakistani officials called it a rogue operation for which the government bears no responsibility.

Really? It was hardly an isolated case. A few days after the Philadelphia arrest, a grand jury in California indicted three people for illegally exporting electronics equipment of types that a nuclear program would require. Again, the destination was Pakistan.

As for the steel, a smaller amount of the same special alloy was recently exported illegally from West Germany to Pakistan. Leonard Spector points out in his book, "Going Nuclear." According to German press reports the shipper sent the invoice and the bill to the Pakistan Embassy

in Bonn. The steel was fabricated to precisely the specifications required by the designs obtained in 1975 by a Pakistani scientist, A. Q. Khan, from the European enrichment consortium where he was then employed. Dr. Khan is now head of the Pakistan government's enrichment program.

Pakistan promised the United States three years ago that it would not enrich uranium beyond the low level required to run civilian power reactors. There is now much evidence to suggest that Pakistan is pushing the enrichment level up to weapons grade and is expanding its weapons capacity.

American law forbids foreign aid to countries that build nuclear weapons. But currently the United States is providing very substantial aid to Pakistan, especially to keep open the supply routes to the guerrillas fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan. That confronts Washington with a difficult choice.

"Clearly, the outcome depends to a very large degree on Pakistan's

(Continued on page 28)

Yes, Join Gorbachev Against the Common Enemy

Thomas J. Watson Jr.

GREENWICH, Connecticut

Forty-five years ago I was involved in setting up the Alaska-Siberia ferry route. Now, on the 45th anniversary of that project, I asked the Soviets for permission to revisit their country and to fly my own aircraft over the route once more.

I received that permission and recently flew from Moscow to Nome, Alaska. Most of the trip followed the old Alaska-Siberia ferry route over which, 45 years ago, 8,000 Lend-Lease aircraft were delivered to the Soviets in Fairbanks and flown down to the fighting fronts by Soviet pilots.

The trip reminded me that Soviets and Americans can indeed cooperate, although setting up the route was not without great difficulty.

The Germans were only 20 miles from the national Hotel in the center of Moscow while the negotiation was going on, but because of the common Nazi enemy, it was successful.

Now the two countries face the real possibility of mutual annihilation. The enemy is 50,000 nuclear weapons — 25,000 on each side.

A large minority of technicians and politicians in the United States and the Soviet Union believe that somehow these weapons can be made useful, and that somehow one side may be able to defeat the other and survive with enough meaningful capacity and population to move forward again in the world. These are pipe dreams.

The threat of the nuclear weapon is hundreds of thousands of times greater than the threat of Hitler's Germany. But because it is intangible, one must do a little

The writer was ambassador to the Soviet Union during the Carter administration and is a former chairman and chief executive officer of the International Business Machines Corporation.

thinking to understand it. I made my flight to add my infinitesimal effort to bringing these facts into focus.

The Soviet Union I saw under Mikhail Gorbachev's new leadership was substantially different from the country I left in 1981, when my term as ambassador was over. Openness is evident everywhere in Moscow, and an effort at restructuring their economy, while less clear, is being worked on from one end of the country to the other.

The first place one sees "openness" is with Intourist guides who say, "I no longer have to match my answers to the doctrine of Lenin, but can tell it like it is without worry of discipline."

A long visit with a new member of the Politburo, Alexander N. Yakovlev, convinced me of their dedication to a much more efficient and self-policing industrial scheme.

This visitor was immensely impressed by Mr. Gorbachev's recent moves in changing the command structure of the air force after Mathias Rust's landing in Red Square, and also by Mr. Gorbachev's ability to put several new people in the Politburo and revitalize the thinking of the top government leaders while retaining their support.

I first visited the Soviet Union 50 years ago, and I have been going back and forth as a soldier, a businessman or a diplomat ever since. Even counting the war years, I find things more changed in the last two years under Mr. Gorbachev than they had changed from my first visit in June of 1937 until the time I left as ambassador in 1981.

This poses a real question for the U.S. Congress and the administration in the conduct of our relationship with the Soviet Union.

Some may take heart and say that Mr. Gorbachev's moves indicate the sorry state of the Soviet economy and the success of Ame-

rica's program of setting them up for failure. More sophisticated and balanced observers may say that America's best interests are served by a well run and increasingly productive Soviet Union.

Can you imagine the damage if Mr. Gorbachev fails, as America stands by and hopes for the best while it watches the infighting of factions in the government and the military in the Soviet Union? This would result in instability in the control of their nuclear weapons and all their other arms.

The interests of the world are far better served by having the Soviets make a gradual move toward a more efficient and productive system with substantially less emphasis on the military, and with the willingness that Mr. Gorbachev has shown to make verifiable treaties — even to the extent of offering internal inspection in the Soviet Union.

His attitude, speeches and moves have made him a very exciting person in the eyes of Western Europe. At the moment he has total control of the Soviet Union, and this seems to me to offer a major opportunity to capitalize on his leadership and his open-mindedness, while the West keeps its guard up, to see whether the world can be moved toward safer ground.

We can never eliminate nuclear weapons, even though that is the avowed aim of both General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan. What we can do is to make verifiable treaties to reduce the numbers substantially and, in so doing, reduce the chance of eliminating the world by accident.

This is a moment of great importance in history, and one can only hope that Congress and the administration will quickly finish their investigations and get on with the very important task of developing U.S. — Soviet relations in a positive way.

(International Herald Tribune)

Sri Lanka's first steps toward peace

Neelan Tiruchelvam

One month ago few would have anticipated the dramatic turn of events in Sri Lanka. Yet today there is a formal accord between India and Sri Lanka to establish "peace and normalcy" despite widespread mob violence in the south. An Indian peacekeeping force of more than 3,000 troops is monitoring the cease-fire, and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam have started to surrender their arms.

President Juntas Jayewardene alluded to the controversy surrounding the accord at a reception for Rajiv Gandhi here. "Your visit has been one of the most controversial since Prince Vijaya came here 2,500 years ago. He created the Sinhala race. I hope your visit will help the Sinhala race to recreate itself and refurbish itself." Little did the president realize that a 22-year-old sailor would take a less benign view of the visit. Much to the horror and dismay of the Sri Lankan leadership, the sailor struck Prime Minister Gandhi with his rifle but during the ceremonial send-off. An incident with few parallels in modern diplomacy, it was nonetheless a poignant expression of the stavistic emotions that have been released by the tragic conflict.

The origins of Sri Lanka's ethnic conflicts are complex. They are partly related to the failure to build the constitutional foundation of a multi-ethnic polity. The transfer of political power to the majority Sinhalese community during independence was not accompanied by adequate safeguards for the distinct linguistic and cultural identity of the Tamils, or effective power-sharing arrangements. The ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka was further fueled by competing perceptions of deprivation and injustice between the Sinhalese majority,

which felt that it had suffered historical discrimination, and an achievement-oriented Sri Lankan Tamil minority, which resented post-independence policies of exclusion. The assertion of one form of nationalism was viewed as a denial of the other. Over the past few years this has led an increasing resort to armed struggle by Tamil militants and a harsh response by the government, resulting in the brutalization of Sri Lankan society and the deaths of innocent Tamils and Sinhalese alike.

Two-Part Accord

The peace accord has two parts to it. The first redefines the Sri Lankan polity to accommodate Tamil aspirations of autonomy and equality. Primarily this means the recognition of a traditional Tamil homeland in the northern and eastern provinces, and the devolution of political power to this region, which now will be represented by a single provincial council. Tamil will also be recognized as an official language. Other provisions of the accord include a cease-

officers of the Keeni Meoni Systems, as well as intelligence and military support from Pakistan and Israel. Sri Lanka and India further agreed to preserve the non-aligned character of Trincomalee and other ports, and to jointly develop and operate the controversial oil storage facilities at Trincomalee. Sri Lanka under took to review its foreign broadcasting facilities to ensure that no military or intelligence operations are included. When President Jayewardene was asked whether this implied a Finlandization of Sri Lanka, or Sri Lanka's acknowledgment that it was within India's sphere of influence, he quickly brushed aside such concerns saying that these arrangements were no more than an expression of the long time friendship between Sri Lanka and India.

Few in government had anticipated that the opposition to the accord would result in such widespread mob violence in different parts of the country. The need to maintain secrecy until the formal signing of the July 29 accord added to the unrest, which caused

The origins of the ethnic conflicts have their roots in the failure to build the constitutional foundation of a multi-ethnic polity after independence.

fire, the laying down of arms and the restoration of civilian government to the war-ravaged areas. It provides for a general amnesty and the release of about 5,400 Tamil prisoners, as well as the return of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees currently in India.

The second part of the peace pact relates to foreign-policy issues that could facilitate closer cooperation between India and Sri Lanka. Among these are a review of foreign military and intelligence personnel employed in Sri Lanka, such as the former British security

damage to state property and institutions estimated at billions of rupees. Several members of Mr. Jayewardene's United National Party were mobbed and one of its members of Parliament was gunned down. The forces behind the violence were a complex mix of anti-government groups, and chauvinist and anarchistic elements. Handbills were distributed in the capital calling upon the public to revolt against the "Indian-imposed settlement."

The response of the security forces initially was indecisive,

Mr. Tiruchelvam, a former member of the Sri Lankan Parliament, is co-editor of "The Judiciary in Plural Societies" (Francis Pinter, London).

Dissent within the cabinet, particularly the attitudes of Prime Minister Ranasinghe Premadasa and National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali, contributed to the uncertainty. Several thousand Sri Lankan troops were ferried from the north to the south by Indian air force transport planes to deal with the declining security situation. Efforts to spell out the accord over the national radio and television appeared to calm the simmering discontent.

Curiously, despite the passions aroused by the forces of linguistic nationalism in the '50s, the language provisions aroused little interest. Nor was any systematic critique made of the scope of devolution, although many people were upset at the creation of a single provincial council to govern the north and eastern provinces. For years the government had stubbornly opposed the creation of such a council on the grounds that it would prove a de facto division of the country.

Thus, the volte-face on this issue was interpreted as a gross betrayal of Sinhalese interests. President Jayewardene sought to reassure Sinhalese by pointing to the requirement of a referendum to be held within a year. The president vowed to campaign against the merger and thereby reverse the gains to the Tamils.

Efforts to assuage Sinhalese sentiments had an opposite impact on Tamil opinion. The accord would foreclose both the armed struggle and the demand for a separate state. The Tigers, the dominant militant organization, raised a number of objections: Tamil groups had not been consulted and were being confronted with a fait accompli; the promise of a larger unit of devolution was conditional, and could prove illusory; the quid pro quo appeared to be the acceptance of lesser powers; the time frame for the laying down of arms envisaged the termination of the armed struggle even before Tamils could be reasonably convinced the accord would be faithfully implemented.

These objections brought about eight days of wrangling in New Delhi between Tamil militants and Indian officials. At the end, two concerns became paramount: the laying down of arms and a continuing role for Tamil militants in the transitional political arrangements. With regard to the latter, previous discussions between India and Sri Lanka had envisaged the appointment of an administrator who would coordinate the restoration of civilian government and the revival of the electoral processes. It was also contemplated that an advisory council could be constituted with nominees from the different Tamil groups. Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran disavowed any personal role for himself in the interim or the long-term provincial administration. But the Tigers balked over the laying down of arms, crucial to the pact.

However, in a dramatic announcement in Jaffna on Tuesday, Mr. Prabhakaran agreed to the handing over of arms, stating that "he had no choice" as he could not engage in a confrontation with the Indian forces there. The implication was clear: The geopolitical realities were compelling even on the Tamil side.

Remaining Hurdles

Despite the early uncertainties and the trauma of the violent opposition in the south, the accord appears to be holding out. Of course, many hurdles remain. The constitutional amendments necessary to give effect to the autonomy plans will require a special majority. Intensive efforts to press members of Parliament into supporting the legislation could bring about renewed violence. A legislative reversal would place the entire accord in jeopardy.

The ethnic strife in Sri Lanka has been one of the most disintegrative forces in the development process. The accord endeavors, for the first time since the transfer of political power in the late '40s, to build the constitutional foundations of a multi-ethnic polity.

The ultimate efficacy of the accord now depends on the resolve of the two communities to heal the emotional scars of the conflict indelibly imprinted on their collective memories. Sri Lanka as a nation has merely taken the first steps in an effort to create a plural society within a democratic polity. Such an effort merits support by all those who believe in the ultimate triumph of the values of racial equality and justice over those of irrational prejudice and bigotry.

— *Asian Wall Street Journal*

J.R.'s breakthrough...

(Continued from page 4)

June was also the month when Mr. Ronnie de Mel brought the bad news from the aid group, soon after the Indian air-drop and the message which Mr. Gandhi said publicly had 'registered' on Colombo.

It was in July that President JR broke out and through. What was the gap? Devolution. It divided the Opposition ranks — SLMP, CP, LSSP and the unions strongly for an offer closer to genuine autonomy, and the SLFP more or less silent on the subject. While spotting that gap President JR also decided to establish UNP-SLFP congruence on foreign policy. (See Box: GEOPOLITICAL REALITIES). In short, he had much more attractive offer to make to Delhi. By remaining silent or not being explicit on devolution, the SLFP had failed to cut off the UNP's line of retreat. Instead of retreating, JR broke through the gap.

JAFFNA IN JULY

Paul Caspersz, S. J.

8 July

Yohan and Malini came for me at 6 o'clock. We travelled in Yohan's van to Kurunegala to catch the 7.31 Yal Devi to Vavuniya. Sleeperettes—really, reserved seats—had been booked for us in Colombo, so we had seats on the hot and crowded train. I alternated between The Brothers Karamazov, a catnap or two and trying to gauge the feelings of fellow-passengers, nearly all Tamils, on their way to home in Jaffna.

Two wide-eyed Tamil girls, obviously sisters, one barely into her teens so it seemed, the other a little older, caught my eye. I noticed that there was a young handsome Sinhala soldier, on armed guard duty in the train, also looking pensively at the girls. He and I soon realized that we had a common object of attention and he divined my thoughts. "I have two sisters like these at home", he explained. "I pray that no harm will befall such innocence in Jaffna", I said. "How I also pray!", he replied and, looking with infinite compassion once more at the girls, he steadied his loaded gun and moved away resolutely towards the front of the train.

The train reached Vavuniya shortly before 11 a.m. Private buses and vans were waiting to collect the passengers. There were two C.T.B. buses too, but these were not marked Yalpanam but Batticaloa and some other closer destination. We secured fairly comfortable seats in a private bus but had suitcases, ours and other persons', piled up in front of us almost on our toes and up to chin level. As the bus began to move, and finally at Mankulam, where we had the first checkpoint, the suitcases were arranged more rationally so that we liberated our feet and no longer had bulging travelling bags hugging our chests.

There were four army checkpoints on the way: Mankulam,

The writer is President, SAIYODAYA.

Kilinochchi, Paranthan and Elephant pass. We had been told to expect one at Vavuniya too, either as soon as we came out of the station exit or as we got to the main Northern road. But there was no checking at Vavuniya. The army was there, however, at and outside the station, about eight of them, under a superior officer, all carrying guns of various shapes and sizes. I found myself regretting that I knew next to nothing about guns. All the army did was to enter into a spirited conversation with the drivers and conductors of the buses and vans, ordering them not to charge excessive fares and to speak over the heads of the bus crews to us and to other passengers advising us not to pay more than Rs 35/- per person. The C.T.B. charges only Rs 25/-, they said (really on the return journey Jaffna-Vavuniya we paid only Rs 23.50), so Rs 35/- is fair and just.

The army on the side of the people, I thought, and my memory went back to our last visit to Jaffna in November 1986, we had a five-hour wait on the road at Kokkavil while a mini-battle raged between an army relief regiment marching on foot to the Kilinochchi camp and the Tamil militants. After an hour or two when we were all very hungry, some persons started distributing biscuits to all and sundry and we were surprised to learn they were Sinhalese army men in casuals from the Kokkavil camp. "What's the idea?" I asked them then. "Nothing in particular. But the people must be hungry. And we have the biscuits."

Everybody knows what to expect at the checkpoints. About 200 yards from the point, the driver decelerates and comes to a halt about 50 yards away. He then asks the passengers to alight, each one carrying his bags. All the men descend and some younger ladies. Older ladies and ladies with babies remain seated but with

their identity cards in their hands and ready to leave their seat if ordered to do so. Clergyman like me are not sure whether we have to join the men or keep to our seats. Usually we made some motions of wanting to walk up with the men, but some soldier would come over and say in a matter-of-fact manner, You can go back to your seat. The men proceed single-file to the barrier. A few feet away two soldiers check identity cards and the baggage rather perfunctorily and then the passengers file past the barrier. Meanwhile two or three other armed soldiers board the bus, look rapidly at the identity card which each one has in hand, have a look around, especially at the overhead baggage racks and a little under the seats, sometimes ask a lady to open up her bag and then tell the driver he can proceed to collect the passengers on the other side of the barrier. The whole process takes about 20 minutes.

At each checkpoint, indeed at each sentry point on the way, the driver hands out a copy of the day's Sinhalese newspaper to the sentry. Whether the sentries paid for the paper or whether it was the driver's free pass card we were not able to ascertain. But at one point the sentry asked for a second paper and was told, "One should be enough, for the next sentry will be waiting for a paper too." Sometimes sentries and bus crew engaged in a little chit-chat in elementary Sinhalese or Tamil, for the bus crews have the latest headlines and the sentries are starved of news and are very weary.

The checking was thoroughest, or least perfunctory, at the final checkpoint, Elephant Pass.

I recalled Elephant Pass on my previous visits to Jaffna. Today, except for the sandbag bunkers and the road barricades (meant to force vehicles to zig-zag forward) and the sentries on duty, Elephant

Pass looked somewhat abandoned and forlorn. I recall all the fearful stories of Tamil youths being taken to the Elephant Pass army camp since 1979 when Brigadier Weeratunga was sent to Jaffna with the mandate to "wipeout terrorism" before 31 December of that year. When I saw it today and again on my way down six days later Elephant Pass seemed to have grown old and want its own painful memories to Pass.

We reached our destination Jaffna at 6.30 in the evening.

Already that night we engaged in conversation with a priest who had left his church at Vadamarachchi only the day before but, since Vadamarachchi is so important, and so many people from all walks of life were to talk to us about it, we shall reserve a special place for it later in this travelogue.

9 July

This was a day of individual and small group interviews. Many spoke of the Indian food aid. No one considered the initial air-lifted food as a violation of Sri Lanka's airspace. They did not even see it so much as humanitarian aid to people in need of food. For one thing, not much food had yet arrived, and the distribution of the food that had arrived on the first sea-consignment had not yet reached even all the refugee camps. They rather saw the food aid as the stretching out of a hand to a friend in need not so much of food as of sympathy. Hence the march of the people in the South on the Indian High Commission and especially the Christians' Pubuduwa procession seemed to them to be insensitive and heartless acts, adding the insult of protest to the injury of refusal.

Many spoke of the lack of security in Jaffna. Neither property nor life was safe. "Let the house go with all it contains, the fruits of our hard-earned money. But what about our little children and our old people?" "My grandmother says she cannot go down to the bunker any more. She says she prefers to die in her own room lying on her bed or sitting in her chair". The bunkers are underground shelters against air-

raids and shelling from land or sea. Several families have constructed these in their gardens at a cost of Rs 1500-2000 while the militants have constructed some free for poor families who are in the line of fire. I went into one or two of these. Stools and chairs are left there permanently for sometimes a session to a bunker can last several hours. It is very hot inside and there is no light or ventilation except from the entrance. Some of the bunkers have been reinforced with railway sleepers and even with rails taken off the railway lines. "There must be some people left to use the trains when they start again" we were told.

A science graduate, given to social analysis, said Jaffna had two problems today: the inter-ethnic problem (self-determination, devolution, even language) which can wait and the situational problem (the hostile army, the violent youth, the Indian factor) which cannot. The army must be taken away, the youth must give up violence and totalitarianism, the Indian food must reach without delay those people who are in urgent need of it.

"How do you see the in-fighting among the militants? Do you approve of the mutual killings of some of the best of the youth?" "We do not like the in-fighting and we do not approve of the killings. But a lot of this cannot be avoided in the struggle. Persons and groups have to subject themselves to constant weeding-out processes. Our leader is perfect and does not make mistakes. He punishes wrongdoing very severely." "But surely some mistakes can be made?" "Oh, certainly. Then our leader helps us to correct them and we can change. He studies carefully each and every criticism that reaches us through the letter-boxes we have placed at cross streets." The leader's name was never mentioned. Neither did the ancient Israelites ever mention the name of their God!

10 July

The day began with the celebration of the Eucharist with

some Christian youths. **THIS** is my Body. **THIS** is my Blood. How do we discern in what is taking place the broken body and the spilt blood of the Redeemer?

In Latin America, the suffering of the present, not wonder, plays the active role in the process of understanding. Moreover, this suffering provides the authentic analogy for understanding God: the recognition that the present history of the world is the ongoing history of the suffering of God (Jon Sobrino, *The True Church and the Poor*, p. 28).

The greater part of this day was spent visiting the refugee camps at Varani. We were to visit seven camps but in the event had time only for five. Nearly all the refugees were from the fall-out of Operation Liberation at Vadamarachchi, 26 May — 3 June, and the counter attack of the militants. Some had gone back to their homes around June 13 (the 13th!, the unlucky day, one of them told us), discovered operation Goodwill or Operation Minds and Hearts to be a farce, and finally decided to return to to the rigours of camp life after the militants' attack on the Nelliady Central School on July 5.

Vadamarachchi

This will be found to be a watershed in Sinhala-Tamil affairs for many years to come. Alternatively, it is a point of no-return. Life will never be the same again, not for many years, or so long as the memories last. For many reasons.

Chief among them is the exodus. We were told that Vadamarachchi had a total population of around 120,000, though no one was sure. The lowest estimate given to us of the number that had fled the area was 70 per cent. The chemistry teacher with his wife, three children and mother-in-law had left the home which he had built and furnished over the years by difficult savings from his monthly salary. "What is not irreparably damaged by bombs and shells will be looted by the army and by the local ne'er do wells who will be allowed to share in the loot. We may or

may may not want to go back again. There may be nothing to. What is important is that that we all survived the 15 mile trek across scrub land and along the beach and are now here to tell you the tale. The thing that galls me most is that the Tamils have nowhere to go. In 1958 and 1977 we came by road or by ship to Jaffna. Now we are being attacked in our own homes and gardens. Tell us, will we ever be able to walk about freely again in our own land?"

Then there is the loot. "To the next room please, and do not create a scene in this one... Quick, make it snappy that Citizen watch on your wrist." Alright, those were rackets and may be the officers did not know. But what of the refrigerator and the TV set which were taken away in a truck? Will there be in time a terrible karma for those who looted and their children?

Thirdly, there is the destruction of property.

But the most difficult thing to forget is the way the male youth were taken away. The Jaffna radio and handbills dropped from the air asked the people to move into certain temples for safety. There all youths who seemed to be between 16 and 35 were asked to move to one side. The mothers howled. "Now don't be stupid. We'll just ask them a few questions. In a day, at most two days, you can be together again." Instead, hundreds of them were shipped in appalling conditions to Galle, deprived of food and water, and two are said to have died on the way of sheer exhaustion and been given a watery grave. In Galle they were treated kindly but the journey back by boat was again a terrible experience. Not many are maimed in their bodies. But, in their minds and hearts?

By no means are all the Sinhala people considered guilty. Many Sinhalese have been extremely compassionate and have shown by word and deed that they are deeply disconcerted by what is happening. "It is now nearly six o'clock and it will be stupid of you

to proceed along this road as there are several army patrols marching," said the army lieutenant to the priest on his motorbike. "See that hut over there? Ask for shelter for the night and return to Jaffna tomorrow morning."

"It will be impossible for us to live together again." "So is separation the only answer?"

Nobody says a word more.

11 July

The morning began with a meeting with the Mothers' Front. The mothers have only one concern: a mother's, for her children. They told us that they have publicly expressed regret not only in regard to their own children but also about Sinhala people massacred in the South. A mother is a mother, whether she is a Tamil or Sinhalese, they said. Their lament was not only that innocent children are taken and detained, but that the children are transformed into hard and fierce militants after only a few days of detention. They also told us that more and more girls have begun to join the militant movement. "Do not look for us any more. We shall come when we can to see you all again. And if we do not ever return, know that we have willingly sacrificed our lives so that you and the smaller ones at home may live in peace."

I then cycled around the town with two friends. We visited the priest at the Nallur Temple. The roof of the temple had been damaged by bullets in several places. The priest himself had been hit by a bullet but was not seriously wounded. Close to the Temple is a Christian home where the eldest son, a boy of 9, was killed by a bullet. The father himself was injured but, after treatment in the hospital, has returned to work. The mother sobbed as she spoke to us against the background of her boy's photo, placed on a ledge in the wall. Her faith in God was shaken. Her husband's was strengthened. She was a traditional Catholic. He had become a Christian in adult life.

We also walked through the hospital and saw the destruction of that part of it that had sustained a direct hit from the shelling.

I had been to Jaffna on several occasions before. Today the town looked abandoned except for a few persons who walked silently in pursuit of whatever they had to do. Many shops had their shutters down. The few that were open did not seem to transact much business. The main bus stand was quiet as the buses now leave from other centres in town.

In the evening we met the Red Cross: one Indian, two from Colombo and the Jaffna representative. Their only concern was to get the Indian food to the people in the refugee camps. Once the refugees were served, they would think of all the others. What was promised by India and accepted by Sri Lanka would be enough for a family to survive for 7-10 days. Politics was not their province. Food distribution — fairly, honestly, efficiently — was their only consideration. Would more food come later? They did not know.

Later we met some persons who tried to explain to us the ambivalence of the militant groups. On the one hand, it is because of the militant groups that the dreaded army is compelled to keep off the streets and that the people can move around with a sense of security. On the other hand, it is agonizing for the people to know that the groups can do even more ruthless towards each other than to the common enemy. The militant groups are fighting for freedom from the Sinhalese army. But how much freedom will they allow the Tamil people — to dissent, to propose alternatives, to choose their own leaders? Will the people of Jaffna shake off one set of oppressors only to saddle themselves with another? Someone must have the courage to speak up against violence for violence's sake, to recall the youth to their initial idealism and to the main springs of the ancient noble culture of the Tamil people.

12 July

In the morning we met the Northern Branch of the Movement for Inter-racial Justice and Equality. This has continued to function since it was first set up in 1979. That it has survived is, I believe, a tribute to its basic fidelity to the original message of MIRJE — inter-racial justice and equality, no more, no less.

MIRJE is not a political movement but recognizes that there is a political dimension to serious commitment to justice. MIRJE is not a religious movement, though it seeks to draw on the sources of all religions to promote inter-racial peace, founded on mutual understanding and justice. MIRJE is not a trade union and hence does not compete with anybody or anything for membership. MIRJE is an idea and a movement in support of the idea. The idea is that Sri Lanka is, and has to be, a plural society, and the movement seeks to rouse the moral and political will of the people to make the idea a living reality.

In the evening I visited the homes of some fisherman along the beach in Jaffna town. They either fish or they have to die. So with some risk from navy boats they go out with their nets up to 12 miles on the seas. When they see the navy, they signal or are signalled to, some fish may even be exchanged for lemonade and biscuits and they sometime ask each other, why should thinks be as they are, and not otherwise?

13 July

The CTB was to leave Jaffna for Vavuniya at 5 a.m. We were at the bus stand at 4.30. In the crowded bus there was an extended family of about 12 persons — part of the exodus from VVT. "We are going to Vavuniya. "Do you know anyone there?" "Some years ago we did. We hope they are still there. But we just can't live in our home any longer." "Home?" the young son in the family interjected. "It is where we can all be together. For this we are thankful to God", and he bent down to draw their 2 gunny bags and 3 suitcases closer to himself.

There was some firing at Elephant Pass where we were held up for 2 hours. Nobody was able to tell why. Maybe it had something to do with the counter operation at Nelliady or the operation at Mullaitivu. The driver of our CTB bus even feared that he might have to take the bus back to Jaffna. Yohan may have been glad to spend another day in Jaffna. But Malini and I had to return. Finally at 9.30 the signal came for us to advance to the barrier. The faces of the soldiers revealed nothing as to the reasons for their firing.

The cup of pain is nearly at the brim. Even the soldiers want to return home. Forgetting and forgiving will come, hopefully, in their own time, once the senseless violence recedes and an honourable peace returns to the land.

By the time we reached Vavuniya, the Yal Devi had left. So Yohan and Malini took bus to Kurunegala while I returned to Kandy. More helpless? Or more hopeful in our helplessness? The time has come for our common humanity to rise up and say to everyone on every side, Enough!

NIGHT OF THE LUMPENS

*Training Contras isn't easy
Sometimes they have some strange illusions
There are those who think they are Che
And overdo the red beret
Lets psychdistangle this confusion
Why mirror mannerize Mao?
Just copy History's hell and hit men
Hitlers the name you should adore.
Start the putsch with plot and arson
Jew baiting with the Unemployed
Stir the mob with priests and pogrom
And the rich with racial lore.
Cut thinking just be trigger happy
(The shot gun days are truly past)
Spray all round and make it snappy
Only Commies aim their blast.
Who says safeguard State property
And sentimental things like, All
Power to the people, we
Lay waste all peoples things we see.
Contras are high tech, well programmed
But training contras isn't jam.
Sometimes they do not burn and blast
At trains and transformers sometimes cast
Uncertain looks as though to say
It isn't all digital display.*

*Contra dons do sometimes see
Their contras strange illusions stir
In their violent world of make believe
Right and left, a scarlet blur.*

U. Karunatilake

THE ELITE AND THE MASSES

Godfrey Gunatilleke, (Director, Marga Institute)

The subject for contains hypotheses which lead themselves to varying interpretations. The dichotomy between "political cultures" in Sri Lanka becomes sharper, muted or nearly non-existent depending on which elites are being considered and how the elites are defined ranging as they do from the urban western educated groups to a Sinhala village educated elite. Similarly, who are the masses for the purpose of this discussion — urban, rural, Sinhala, Tamil? I am, therefore, using the framework of analysis implied in the title in a very flexible manner to elicit some of the main features in the political value system and behaviour of elites and the masses. A more appropriate title to the paper would be "The institutions, elites and masses — the diversity of political cultures."

There are several broad themes around which I shall attempt to organise the discussion of the political cultures of elites and masses. The first concerns the political culture which is implicit in the democratic parliamentary institutions as they were "transferred" to this country, and the extent to which this culture has been internalised in the political ideology and value systems of the existing parties. Second, the paper considers how the socio-political agenda of the elites attempted to meet the mass aspirations generated as a result of democratisation. Third, the paper addresses the question of ethnicity in politics and the contradictions between multi-ethnic democratic politics and ethnic-centric politics. Fourth, it deals with the special characteristics of political mobilisation in Sri Lanka, the way in which parties acquire the attributes of clans or tribes, how this is reinforced by a national system of patronage in which the party, State and electorate

are closely linked and how this creates the potential for violence and authoritarianism. Fifth, it considers the failure of the political process in Sri Lanka, to create political cultures in which opposition and dissent are institutionalised and valued as elements essential to democracy. And, finally, the paper examines the place of non-partisan citizen advocacy, agitation, and debate on public issues as a necessary part of the infrastructure of a democracy.

The conventional dichotomy — modernity and tradition

The main assumptions that are implicit in the title of the paper need to be examined in the context of the political developments that both preceded as well as accompanied the process of decolonisation in most of the countries which were subject to colonial rule. The transfer of power to the local elites was part of a more comprehensive "transfer" of political systems, institutions and ideologies within which power was to be exercised by these elites. This again was itself a part of the transfer that was taking place in other fields such as in social and economic development and the systems of production, skill formation and learning. The problems relating to this transfer have been dealt with extensively within an analytical framework which at one time found wide acceptance among social scientists. It was a framework in which the development of post-colonial societies was perceived largely as a conflict between the knowledge, institutions and patterns of behaviour transferred from advanced industrial societies and those which had persisted as part of the traditional cultures of the develop-

ing societies at the time of their decolonisation, in brief the conflict between modernisation and tradition.

Applying these concepts, political scientists have drawn attention to the extreme fragility of the political institutions which were introduced in developing societies by the colonial powers. These institutions had grown out of a long process of historical evolution in the societies of the colonial powers and were supported and nurtured by political value systems and modes of political behaviour which permeated the whole of these societies. The situation in the decolonised countries was entirely different. The new political institutions and processes had to be grafted to societies which were not fully capable of receiving them and internalising them. These new institutions and the political value systems that went with them were often incompatible with the prevailing social formation and political entities which were largely feudal or tribal in character. In most countries we have seen how this disruptive tension between the new forms and the traditional content led to a breakdown of the system that had been installed. Forms of government based on popular representation within a competitive multiparty system were soon replaced either by systems which retained the elective principle within a non-competitive single-party framework, or by military governments and dictatorships which did away with the electoral processes and representative institutions.

Sri Lanka is one of the few countries in which the transfer that we have described has remained relatively intact. Despite the severe strains that have been and are being imposed on the system and its many imperfections and distortions, the

country has been able to maintain the basic institutional elements of a representative system of government. For a first appraisal of this process it would seem that in Sri Lanka the dichotomy between the modern and the traditional, as it existed in the political life of the country, did not surface in a sharp and disruptive manner to destroy the institutions themselves. Somehow, the mediating process seems to have been at work between the two elements, producing an adaptation and a political amalgam which was able to maintain the institutional framework. The title of the paper predicates the hypothesis that the political evolution in Sri Lanka might have been the interaction between two political cultures — the culture of the elites and that of the masses. This opposition of the elites and the masses is significantly different from what had been conventionally conceptualised in the conflict between modernity and tradition. In the analytical framework which was described earlier, the opposition is conceived in terms of the political culture which was implicit in the institutions that were transferred, on the one hand, and the traditional political culture embodied in the exercise of power and the value systems prevailing in the society which receives these new institutions, on the other. This conflict is no doubt a very significant determinant of the political processes that evolved in the developing countries. The outcome depended a great deal on how well this conflict was managed, how readily the host society received the new system, and how the political transition was effected to enable the new institutions to create a stable socio-political order.

The historical imperatives and the mediating elites

It would not be correct, however, to assume that the division between the elites and the masses coincides with the dichotomy between the modern and the traditional — which the elites attempting to promote the new institutions and the masses being

on the side of the traditional structures. The Sri Lanka experience has demonstrated that the alignments of the elites and masses in relation to the new and the old are a much more complex and even a contradictory process. When the new institutions offer the prospect of transferring some measure of power to the masses and consequently provide some opportunity for promoting social changes which benefit them, it is likely that the masses would be on the side of such institutions. It is also likely that the elites would be caught up in their own social contradictions and would tend to be equivocal and hesitant in their approach to the new institutions. The responses would depend on how the new institutions bring about a new dispensation and distribution of political power. In this sense, the alignments would not be dissimilar to what one would expect in a revolutionary situation which promotes radical changes in structures. In such a situation the elites would be "reactionary" in their response to the changes, the masses "progressive"

But the way in which elites and masses are positioned in regard to the new institutions arise from another set of problems, where cultural factors intervene to modify, alter and even suppress those group interests which are explicitly economic and class-related. All major socio-political and socio-economic change takes place in the medium and plasma of a culture. The culture in which the masses had their life and through which they respond to change at any given historical time must receive the institutions in a form which is intelligible and assimilable to that culture. The contradiction lies in the fact that the elites which have greater ideological sympathy and an intellectual grasp of the purpose and the operation of the new institutions, would yet be fearful of their social consequences with a fear which has both positive and negative elements. The masses, on the other hand, who

are supportive of the institutions for their capacity to initiate a process of power-sharing, may not have a clear understanding of the institutions themselves and their working, or the social and cultural disciplines which are implicit in their operation.

Social scientists have analysed this phenomenon from different perspectives. In the early phase, much of the analysis concentrated on the fragility of political institutions introduced from outside into societies with forms of hierarchical social management and exercise of political power which were distant, historically, from the new institutions. The Western-educated elites which acquiesced in the introduction of the new institutions and were hopeful of their success, were seen as an ineffective and feeble minority without a sufficiently broad power base, and a group that was being swept away by the new social forces that had been generated by the transfer of power after decolonisation. The elites which replaced them and tried to mediate between the old and the new, was characterised as "populist". The organisation of mass interests themselves does not take place in a way which enables the masses to participate effectively in the processes of social decision-making and secure an equitable share of the benefits of development. In the efforts of the elites to come to terms with the demands of the mass culture, the institutions themselves become perverted, or are destroyed, without any alternative system for orderly change, or for equitable distribution of benefits and resources. The inquiry however has gone further in the writings of analysts who, like Myron Weiner, are sensitive to the complexities of the democratic processes in some of these societies. These writers refrain from making simple judgments on the political processes which are categorised as "populist". In this approach there is a recognition of the diversity of elites which constitute the social layer which exercises power in countries such as India.

The elite nurtured in the colonial period tends to favour a centralised bureaucratic exercise of power. It sees this form of exercising power as a prerequisite for an orderly social transition. This is the elite who, in a limited way, participated in the exercise of power under the colonial regime. It is distrustful of the mass politics, engendered by the new political institutions and sees it as fostering social behaviour and goals and objectives which run counter to those of a modern society. These "purist" elites, therefore, tend to get pushed to positions which are non-democratic and authoritarian. In contrast, the elites who had the capacity to mediate between the new and the old tend to give expression to the diversity of the cultures in their society. Weiner's approach, while sensitive to the contradictions, draws attention to the inhe-

rently democratic nature of the process which is at work. By the very nature of their orientation, the colonial elite becomes increasingly irrelevant and devoid of any significant base of mass support. The mediating elite, on the other hand, is relatively successful in finding the appropriate cultural idiom which can give some measure of satisfaction to the various collective interests in their society and at the same time give expression to specific regional and cultural identities. The survival of the democratic processes and institutions appear to depend very much on the effectiveness and quality of this process of mediation, on how the mediating elites are able to indigenise the democratic ideology and give expression to it in the existing cultural medium. But in doing so, they have yet to be able to hold fast

to the core value system which is implicit in the new political institutions and which is indispensable for creating the new socio-political order. At a later point of this paper we can examine more closely the content of this core value system and why it seems to be a historical imperative in the democratic evolution of a society. For the present, we need to concentrate on the crucial role of the mediating elite in the post-colonial era of the developing societies. In any situation of growth and change, the process of mediation is an inevitable and crucial one, whether it be the interaction between the old and the new, between adult and child, between the change agent and the traditional community, or between the elites and the collectivities in which they function.

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Barnstorming Capt. Rakhita did not watch the bottom line

Capt. S. R. Wikramanayake was both the Chairman of the Board of Directors and the Managing Director. He was the only Executive Director in the Company. In both cases Capt. Wikramanayake occupied the lead position and from it stemmed a concentration of power and responsibility in a single person for the operation of the Company and, therefore, it is mainly he who has to be responsible for whatever the status of Air Lanka is in today. As the Chairman of the Board of Directors and the Managing Director of the Company, Capt. Wikramanayake had both control of items that were discussed at the Board and the authority to implement Board decisions in an environment where the controls by and accountability to the shareholders were absent for the reasons stated earlier.

This arrangement led directly to the development of an authoritarian attitude by Capt. Wikramanayake in policy matters, purchase of capital items, day to day administration of the Company including appointment, disciplinary actions and the financial affairs of the Company. The resultant management climate in the Company was one in which the normal checks and balances that obtain in a public company were absent.

The Board Minutes show several instances illustrative of this deficiency. For example, a Board decision relating to the payment of commission to Aerospace Finance Ltd, for their assistance in the transaction relating to the lease of the two Lockheed Tristars LT 11-500s to British Airways was overridden at Capt. Wikramanayake's behest at a subsequent Board Meeting. In this same action Capt. Wikramanayake also overrode the advice of the most senior or his Management team, Mr. Guy Gely, Chief

Operations Officer. Mr. Gely in his memorandum of 22 January 1985 recommended that the commission payable to Aerospace Finance Ltd, should be a "one shot payment" of US \$ 25,000 as their intervention was considered to be "marginal". This was presented to the Board and was approved at the Board Meeting of 30 January 1985. Subsequently, on the recommendation of Capt. Wikramanayake the Board changed this decision to a monthly payment of US \$ 25,000 for the three-year lease period. This recommendation of Capt. Wikramanayake which cost Air Lanka US \$ 900,000 as opposed to US \$ 25,000 was passed without demur by the Board at its meeting held on 15 March 1985.

Peat Midland, the banking arm of Guinness Peat Aviation.

There is no record of Aerospace Finance claiming the \$ 500,000 for this purpose. We find that Captain Wikramanayake's explanation and action unacceptable and against the interests of Air Lanka. On the one hand the money was not claimed for this purpose by Aerospace Finance Ltd, and on the other Guinness Peat Aviation, of which Guinness Peat Midland is a part, were the brokers who sold this second former Qantas aircraft to Air Lanka.

It appears that in both sets of transactions Captain Wikramanayake was concerned more with the interests of an

- Requested US \$ 25,000 — received US \$ 900,000!
- AEROSPACE got US \$ 500,000, without asking!
- GUINNESS PEAT gets US \$ 9.3 million more!

In another transaction involving Aerospace Finance Ltd, in connection with the purchase of the second Boeing 747, Capt Wikramanayake had authorised Air Lanka's Legal Consultant Mr. J. H. P. Ratnayake to release the sum of US \$ 500,000 for an obligation that never arose, from an amount of money owed by Aerospace Finance Ltd to Air Lanka without even obtaining the Board's approval. Captain Wikramanayake in his evidence and also by a written submission delivered to the Commission by his lawyer Mr. Kumar Paul has asserted that although the money was claimed by Aerospace Finance Ltd, as charges in connection with a transaction relating to a financing package to be put together by Grindlays Bank, London, which did not materialize, it was nevertheless payable as charges for the package subsequently put through with Guinness

outside agency than the one he was both Chairman and Managing Director of. We wish to bring to Your Excellency's attention that we are of the unanimous opinion that Captain Wikramanayake's conduct in relation to Air Lanka's dealings with Aerospace Finance Ltd, has not been established as being a "bona fide" action to the Commission's satisfaction.

These series of Air Lanka's transactions with Aerospace Finance Ltd., cost our national carrier approximately US \$ 1.5 million and are examined more fully in Chapter 5. We would like to draw to Your Excellency's attention that the series of transactions referred to above were entered into by Capt. Wikramanayake against the advice from S. G. Warburg & Co. the financial advisors to the Government of Sri Lanka. This advice from War-

burgs was not given just once but was repeated eight months later on 30 July 1985.

Furthermore, Mr. Noor Shrazer, Mr. Virachai Vansukul and Mr. Andreas Hansen, all persons who had been formerly associated with Capt. Wikramanayake in the defunct airline Air Siam, had been recruited to Air Lanka purely on Capt. Wikramanayake's instructions. From the evidence before us in the case of Mr. Hansen, Capt. Wikramanayake had also gone against the advice of Dr. W. M. Tilakaratne. Dr. Tilakaratne in his evidence on 18.12.86 stated that he "objected very strongly to the appointment of Mr. Hansen. There was a loss of tickets at the Hongkong office and it was put down to some kind of robbery, but I was not satisfied. That was the reason."

In the acquisition of capital items such as aircraft we find from the Board Minutes that Capt. Wikramanayake had not acceded to the advice of the Board. We have quoted earlier the Board decision regarding the lease of a Boeing 737 from Guinness Peat Aviation which led to the resignation of Mr. V. C. Gnanatilaka. In another instance, it is recorded in Board Minute No. 85/1/2 on 3 January 1985 that the Board Members had observed that the price to be paid for Air Lanka's second Boeing 747 acquired from Qantas through Guinness Peat Aviation was considerably higher than that paid for the previous sister aircraft also obtained from Qantas Airways through Guinness Peat Aviation. To support this 89.3 million increase in price, Capt. Wikramanayake at the next Board Meeting held on 15 January 1985, had tabled a letter from Mr. Peter Swift, President of Guinness Peat Aviation Europe Limited, the brokers who made the offer, although the Board had requested this appraisal from a reputable independent aircraft valuer.

Similarly, in the case of the lease of the Mercantile Building, Dr. Tilakaratne's advice was for Air Lanka to renegotiate the lease for office space with Mer-

cantile Credit because of the disadvantages to Air Lanka of paying two years rental in advance. This advice was not heeded. No other locations were looked at, but one of the Board Members, Mr. D. C. Wijesekera, reported back that negotiations to change the terms and conditions with Mercantile Credit were not possible and recommended that their terms be accepted.

In this context we would like to draw Your Excellency's attention to the letter from Air Lanka which was tabled in Parliament and reproduced in the *Herald* of 19.08.82 just two months previously wherein they had stated that office accommodation was available in the Port area at a rental even lower than that paid to the OCEC.

Your Excellency, it is clear to us that the authoritarian manner in which Capt. Wikramanayake dealt with the Board Members and with the Management of Air Lanka deterred inflow of advice. We consider that the Board Members were not diligent in acting to safeguard the interests of the Company and of national resources. We wish to reiterate that the Board Members were appointed by Your Excellency and not by Capt. Wikramanayake. As such they should have exercised due care to ensure that the operation of Air Lanka relating to both administration of the Company and its financial commitments were of sound commercial practice at the very least.

From our study of the Board Minutes we find that while day-to-day items of company administration were considered by the Board and Capt. Wikramanayake obtained Board sanction for these actions, the Minutes do not indicate that policy matters relating to financial, operational or personnel development were discussed in depth. This is contrary to the Board's own resolution referred to earlier wherein it had been decided that the Board would concentrate on policy issues. We are of the view that this unhealthy situation resulted from the combination of the posts of Managing

Director and Chairman of the Board. As a result of this combination of posts the incumbent was in a position to control to a large extent the topics discussed at Board Meetings. With a submissive, although eminent Board, this control becomes absolute.

We are surprised to find that it is only in May 1985 when the Board met on three occasions during the month, that the financial health of the Company became a matter of utmost importance to the Board, this from a Company that has been making a loss since inception. At its meeting held on 22 May 1985, the Board resolved that "His Excellency the President be appraised fully of the current position, and that His Excellency the President be requested to advise and assist the airline" (Board Minute 85/9/2). This cry of despair and for help was generated by these outstanding personages on the Board and could only be, in our view an expression of their desire to take shelter from the consequences of profligate stewardship of Captain Wikramanayake.

We note from Capt. Wikramanayake's evidence to the Commission that the entire part of his working life before he became Chairman and Managing Director of Air Lanka was as an airline pilot, and that he had no managerial experience. While we in no way wish to detract from the responsibilities of a command pilot, experience has demonstrated that pilots do not always make good Chief Executive officers. In today's competitive environment and the continuous battle to fill seats and maximise yields, the fine-tuned skills of a command pilot are of little use in planning, maintaining and managing. Most of the profitable airlines in the world are found to be in the "safe hands" of hoteliers, rent-a-car company managers and engineers/administrators, not "flying chairmen". The "brainstorming" days have given way to "bottom line" watching.

(Continued on page 24)

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Ethnic tensions and the 'new' morality

(Excerpts from the Pastoral letter of the Catholic Bishops)

Ethnic relations and conflicts have their own momentum irrespective of socio-economic factors. There are ethnic tensions and problems in both rich and poor countries. All the same, economic opportunities can ease such tensions and increasing economic difficulties can accelerate ethnic conflicts. Ethnic rivalries and disturbances can impede economic development. The distribution of income and wealth also has implications for the ethnic relations.

The policy of the "Open Economy" adopted in 1977 has increased opportunities and motivation for economic activity and employment. It has welcomed foreign investments and encouraged an export oriented production. While we appreciate the positive achievements of the economic development programmes of the present government such as the river diversion schemes, agricultural and rural development, housing etc., all the same, we note that they are not without their problems. An unregulated market economy can lead to greater inequality in society and less concern for the poor and the weak in society. Whereas subsidies and social services to the poor were considered a goal of economic policy for several decades, now they are regarded a liability to be reduced as far as possible. Those who have capital have the advantage. The rich tend to become richer without most of the poor improving their condition. An example of this lack of concern for the poor was the dismissal by government of over 40,000 public servants who struck work in July 1980 demanding a wage increase of Rs. 300 per month.

The political consequences of these economic policies were in the direction of much greater control of peoples' freedoms, including the rights of workers. The new foreign investment and export oriented economic policy requires government and a docile

labour force. The constitution of 1987 while guaranteeing foreign enterprise, made the members of Parliament dependent on the party leaders. It meant in effect, that 5/6 of Parliament who are government party MPs, were brought under permanent control of the Chief Executive. People have thus lost the advantage of having representatives who are responsible to them and who could appeal to them at elections and by elections.

The Constitutional amendments after 1978, the Presidential elections in October 1982, held one and a half years before the due date, and the postponement of parliamentary general election by the Referendum of December 1982 meant that the Northern districts had to keep their 1977 MPs, possibly till 1989, though they voted against this at the Referendum. Thus, they could not even choose their representatives to Parliament. Increasingly, more and more government MPs are unelected nominees of the ruling party. In any case, they have all handed over their undated letters of resignation to the President. This whole process is related to the economic options of the government which stated that it wanted a long period of stability to carry through its development policies. However they had also an impact on human rights and ethnic relations in the country.

Social and Cultural Factors

In so far as the fundamental orientation of our society is on the power of money in private hands to determine the issues concerning economic and social life there is a basic immorality at the very core of our socio-economic system. An economic policy that lacks an adequate concern for the poor and the weak runs the risk of subordinating equity and social justice to economic considerations, and of neglecting the dignity of the human person and sacrificing human rights for profit. Even according to official sources, mal-

nutrition is quite high. About 35-40% pre-school children are chronically under nourished. When such a system tends towards authoritarianism, there is a combination of the priorities of profits and power, which tends to prevent adequate concern for morality and justice.

It is to be feared that our society has been evolving with too little respect for the values of the human person. We have encouraged individualism to the neglect of the obligations to the community; consumerism regardless of present social costs and of future indebtedness. In so far as the economic system is left free to operate according to mere market forces of supply and demand, there is scant regard for what is produced, by whom, at what price and for whose benefit. There is an economic irresponsibility that neglects the needs of the poor and the weak, of the environment and of nature itself. While employment is provided, there should be a monitoring of the purpose of employment and of the just sharing of the social product.

In the absence of countervailing power of the poor in the political system, the economic system may operate not only against them, but against society itself. Thus, the social costs of the large scale migration are hardly taken account of in policy decisions concerning these activities. Children, youth women are pushed by the compulsion of the situation of rising cost of living to sell themselves in the labour market, regardless of other costs. The restrictions on the activities of organised labour make this subordination of human beings to the economic machine easier.

The government has done much to expand educational facilities at all levels. We regret however, that the religious and formative aspect of the education of children has been rather neglected. Suitable personnel are not harnessed for this. This is a con-

tributary factor for the serious moral decline of our society in recent years. The explosion in the availability of the media of social communications expose everyone — including children to both its positive and negative influences.

With this moral decline, indiscipline is rampant. Crime, robbery, kidnapping or disappearance of persons are all on the increase and now reaching frightening proportions. Bribery and corruption are said to be more rampant than ever before both in extent and in the amounts involved. The Commissions due on contracts are said to leave much room for this. The "Job Bank" gives undue advantages to those with political patronage. The use of Narcotic drugs is said to have reached menacing levels.

Unorganised young women are a section of the labour force that is most susceptible to exploitation by the modern phenomenon of Free Trade Zones in which investors are given most favoured conditions while there is little defence of the workers rights. The exploitation and harassment of a sexual nature are also concomitant with some forms of employment as in tourism in West Asia.

There is also an increase in the break up of families, in female and male prostitution, in venereal diseases, in abortions and pornography. Regarding all these, there seems to be an inadequate concern in public policy. The primacy of profit and power seems to rule over morality and justice.

The growth of thuggery as a means of disbanding public protests, the promotion of police officers found guilty by the Supreme Court of violating human rights, all add to the social climate of fostering crime and violence. They have been used to prevent the expression of dissent, to silence the voice of discontent arising from workers, students, women, intellectuals, artists, clergy, judges and media of communications. A society that thus prevents the expression of its better values does harm

to itself. It tends to demoralize the persons of good will and strengthen the unrighteous.

All these complicate and are complicated by the ethnic differences and conflicts. At present a deep gap of perceptions and communions separate the major ethnic communities. Persons considered "terrorists" by one group are thought of as "liberation fighters" by another. Security forces considered national heroes by some are seen as an army of occupation by others. The country is in serious danger of division and further disaster.

Our society thus raises a fundamental issue. What are the goals and norms of public life? Is power to be a service to people or of profit or of the powerful themselves? What is the nature and identity of our society, country and nation? On the satisfactory resolution of these issues will depend our continuance as one nation and as free and civilized peoples.

Christian Reflection

This tragic situation into which our lives and our Country have been plunged is compelling us to go deeper into ourselves in personal and collective reflection on the very purpose and meaning of human life and of human society. The breakdown of relationships among peoples, and of law and order in the country reveal to us our human powerlessness in the face of evil specially when it is organized and impregnated into our ways of thinking and behaviour.

In this situation it is natural for us to have recourse to our religious traditions all of which present values and norms for right human relationships. There is an underlying togetherness in the message of our religions which propose *maithriya*, compassion, love, service and the genuine human community, as the path to human fulfilment and happiness. Aware of this commonality of orientations, and while working together with all persons of good will, we offer to our Christian people these reflections based on our religious tradition in order to fulfill better our mission as the local church in Sri Lanka.

Barnstorming...

(Continued from page 21)

Furthermore, Capt Wikramanayake in his evidence before us stated that he did not have time to read the correspondence that arrived on his desk which forms a part of the normal functions of a Chief Executive. When he was questioned about the dismissal and subsequent re-appointment of Mr. R. V. Shanmuganathan, and how it came to pass that he allowed a man "resigned" because of his poor financial record with Air Lanka to be re-appointed at a higher level and to work directly under him, Capt. Wikramanayake claimed that he did not know the reasons for Mr. Shanmuganathan's resignation. When it was pointed out to him that all correspondence was copied to him, Capt. Wikramanayake stated that he did not have the time to look into correspondence that was passed to him. We find this a clear example of irresponsible management on the part of the Chairman and Managing Director of Air Lanka. In most years he was out of the Island on duty travel or piloting an aircraft for approximately 104 to 120 days per year.

Let Pakistan...

(Continued from page 9)

response," Assistant Secretary of State Richard W. Murphy told a House hearing last week. Denials and denunciations issued from Islamabad will not suffice. If Pakistan wants to demonstrate its good faith, the way to do it is obvious. Most of the world's governments, including those of the United States and the Soviet Union, have opened their peaceful nuclear facilities to international inspection. If Pakistan's enrichment activities are innocent and limited, as it claims, it should have no objection to inspection. But if it continues to refuse anything more than the usual verbal assurances, the United States will have little choice but to enforce its law.

— *The Washington Post*

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