

Saturday Review

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No. 37

By the time this appears in print, the results of the parliamentary by elections at Minneriya and Kundasale would be known.

Whoever wins, it would not make any difference to Tamil people in both the North and the South, for they will continue to live in anxiety and fear wondering when the next pogrom against them would be launched.

But the by-elections were a good diversion for the people in the South. For days, many of them talked about who would win, as if the result would make, a big difference in Sri Lanka's political set-up.

The hectic electioneering provided some amusement as well, as the brothers-in-law, Anura and Vijaya, slammed each other more than their common enemy, the United National Party Government.

As usual, the party in power had the advantage

People Kept in the Dark

of being in control of the state machinery, including the media.

In addition, old Don Stephen Senanayake was resurrected from the grave after 32 years to do service to the party he helped found. The "Father of the

performance, making much of Mr. Senanayake's services to Minneriya.

Was it a coincidence that the by-election at Minneriya was fixed for a date after Mr. Senanayake's 100th birth anniversary?

By a Staff Writer

Nation" theme was exploited to the full. The television programme on 22nd October was really excellent. President Jayewardene himself putting in a

(By the way, not even 25 members of the public were present at the ceremony held at the General Post-Office, Colombo, on 22nd October when the four Senanayake commemorative stamps were issued. Members of the Postal staff were asked to occupy the rows of the vacant seats!)

Now that the latest diversion devised by the Government to distract the minds of the people from the urgent problems facing the country, one of which is the grave economic situation, is over, what next?

The "situation in the North" is there always as a good standby, with the Colombo-based media ever ready to publish without question versions of events dished out by official spokesmen.

How many newspapers have sent reporters to the North in recent times to make independent checks?

This is the tragedy of Sri Lanka: the people are often kept in the dark not only about the true situation in the North but also of a whole host of other matters, ranging from Government decisions and intentions to the state of the economy.

Meanwhile, let us have another diversion, please. The more Goebellian it is, the better.

TAMIL DAY

The ALL CEYLON TAMIL DAY will be held on the 7th, 8th, and 9th November, 1984 at KANDY with Mr. S. Thondaman, Minister of Rural Industries and Development as Chief Guest. Nearly 31 districts will take part in the competition.

THE EAGLE HAS LANDED

All South East Asian American Ambassadors and five State Department officials are due in Colombo immediately after the Minneriya and Kundasale by-elections. Among the State Department officials will be the Under-Secretary for the Far East, Mr. Richard Murphy.

The Ambassadors and the officials will meet in conference in Colombo on

October 27 and 28. They have been booked in at the Inter Continental Hotel.

The Ambassadors include those of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Malaysia.

As reported by FORUM in its issue of October 1, the Under-Secretary of State is due to arrive on October 26, the day after the Minneriya and Kundasale by-elections. He is expected to discuss the US Foreign Military Aid Program (FMAP) with officials in Colombo.

(Courtesy: FORUM 15th October)

THE EDITOR IS ON A TWO-WEEK VISIT TO MALAYSIA TO ATTEND A CONFERENCE.

CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE OF DISPLACED EMPLOYEES

Displaced Employees who wish to be considered for employment in the following projects sponsored by the CCDE and promoted by Industrial Investment Promoters Ltd. are requested to forward their bio-data giving full particulars of qualifications and experience on or before the 15th November 1984. The left hand corner of the envelope should state the project and the category of employment required.

- 1) Northern Food Processors (Pvt) Ltd.
- 2) School Stationers & Suppliers (Pvt) Ltd.
- 3) Yaarl Palm Brush Inds (Pvt) Ltd.
- 4) Food Processors & Packers (Pvt) Ltd. (Super Market)
- 5) Janatha Canneries (Pvt) Ltd.
- 6) Hydrated Lime Project
- 7) Manufacture and/or assembly of Bicycle spares and components.

Please contact:-

Secretary

Co-ordinating Committee of
Displaced Employees
95/1, Stanley Road,
Jaffna.

Prisoners of Conscience

Every October, Amnesty International focuses on a particular theme. This year the theme is "Prisoners of Conscience" with particular reference to women. A whole week, which began on 15th October, is devoted to this theme.

The following excerpts are from AI's October Newsletter.

A Buddhist nun in Viet Nam a Guatemalan feminist and a university law lecturer in Malawi - these three women have one thing in common. Each is a political prisoner.

The Vietnamese nun, Thich nu-Tri Hai, has been held incommunicado in police custody since her arrest in May this year.

Alaide Foppa of Guatemala has been missing since 1980 when she was abducted from her home, apparently by plain clothes security agents.

Vera Chirwa, 44 and her husband Orton Chirwa, are serving life sentences in Malawi after their conviction in May 1983 on charges of treason they were not allowed legal representation at their trial. They were originally sentenced to death and spent more than a year facing execution, be-

fore being granted clemency in June this year.

Each is among a series of cases highlighted in this issue of the Newsletter to coincide with Prisoners of Conscience Week, which is being observed from 15 to 20 October. The theme this year Women in Prison.

The plight of the Forgotten Women needs international attention. Prisoners of Conscience Week has previously highlighted the plight of other categories of prisoners: trade unionists, children, long term detainees, human rights activists. This year AI points out that many of the world's political prisoners are women, their cases spanning a wide range of occupation, countries, ideologies and culture.

Women have suffered from the full variety of injustices to which governments in recent years have subjected their citizens: political imprisonment, detention without trial, 'disappearances' and extrajudicial execution.

A Chilean trade union leader Reinalda Pereira Plaza, who was taken into custody eight years ago, has been "missing" ever since. She was five months pregnant at the time. A leading member of a South

African women's organization Florence Mkhize has been repeatedly detained without trial or restricted under banning orders over a period of more than 20 years.

The reasons for the victimization of women cover a broad spectrum. Some are detained for their faith. Others have become involved in opposition political movements. Some have played a role in their countries' trade unions or rural poor.

Some women have become victims because they themselves were active in exposing human rights abuses in their countries. In many countries, ranging from Argentina and El Salvador to South Africa. The Philippines and China women have been deeply involved in the human rights effort - and have faced the consequences.

Tatyana Osipova a 35 year old computer operator is now serving a sentence of 10 years, imprisonment and internal exile in the Soviet Union, accused of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda". A human rights activist, she was a member of the unofficial Moscow Helsinki monitoring group, set up to monitor compliance with the human rights provisions of the Final Act of the 1975 Helsinki Conference. Most of its members have since been imprisoned.

Since Tatyana was sent to a labour camp in 1981, she has been on hunger strike at least twice, demanding to meet her husband, who is also held in another camp some 1,000 kilometres away. During a hunger strike that lasted from December to 1982, to March 1983 she lost 25 kilograms and was reportedly handcuffed while being forcibly fed. It is not yet known whether the authorities have permitted her to see her husband.

Activism on behalf of women's rights may have been one of the reasons behind the "disappearance" of Guatemalan feminist Alaide Foppa, who has now been missing for four years. She was abducted when she returned from exile in Mexico to visit her sick mother. Armed men forced her into their car and drove away. Like thousands of others Guatemalans abducted in the same manner, she has never been seen again.

While living in exile, she had become an active member of AI, campaigning for the release of prisoners of conscience, fair trials for political prisoners and an end to torture and executions.

One woman who has direct experience of AI's efforts is Farkhande Bukhari, a women's organizer for the banned Pakistan People's party now living abroad. Imprisoned three times after the latest imposition of martial law in Pakistan, she was held in solitary confinement in the old Lahore Fort and tortured. She was deprived of sleep, beaten and burned with lighted cigarettes.

When she was sent into exile AI contacted her. The organisation arranged a medical examination and hospital treatment and then worked to get her accepted as a political refugee.

"I and my family cannot forget the help that was given to me" she says. "The local members of Amnesty International came to my home from time to time and we share many common human feelings. Hope for the future and anger at the insult that people, especially those in Third World countries, have to face for their so-called insignificance."

"But" she adds "above this all the love that these sympathetic people have given me and my family will remain precious asset to our lives forever."

Her words echo those of another woman thousands of miles away - the former Soviet prisoner of conscience Yulia Voznesenskaya. After her release in 1982 the Leningrad poet wrote to one of the AI groups that had worked for

over five years for her freedom.

"Any letter or postcard addressed to political prisoners, their families or to officials plays an important role in the lives of the prisoners. It improves their position even if the letters never reach their hands.

"Sometimes in the camp, the camp authorities and wardens would start to be especially polite to me and they would avoid ill-treating other women prisoners in my presence. I guessed something had put them on their guard. Later on, quite by accident, I found out that a letter from abroad had come for me and caused this change in their behaviour."

As AI starts its campaign for the release of other women still held as prisoners of conscience, hoping to engage women's organizations in the drive and to generate a worldwide deluge of letters and postcards to offending governments, the message from the front line of the struggle for human rights is unmistakable.

"Even if you get discouraged by seeing no results from all your efforts", argues Yulia Vozenskaya, "what you write makes a difference. We cannot have and struggle without help from other countries."

Fatima Al-Lazkani, Syria

Fatima al-Lazkani, 27, a former medical student at the University of Damascus, is being held without charge or trial in Kafr Sousseh prison, Damascus. She was arrested in September 1981 while distributing leaflets for the banned Party of Communist Action; of which she was a member. The party has faced periodic suppression and many of its members have been arrested.

(Continued on page 12)

NEWS BRIEFS

Cowardice?

It is reported that a S. I. and some policemen have been called upon to explain their 'alleged display of cowardice' during an attack on Kalawanchikudy Police Station. It is alleged that, they had abandoned their weapons and took to shelter. They probably thought that discretion was the better part of valour, and that 'they who fight and run away, live to fight another day.'

Schools' Boycott

At a meeting of representatives of various bodies it was unanimously decided that students of Point Pedro, Valvertitural and Karaveddy areas would not attend classes until the security forces withdrew from various points near the schools.

No Go

Reports from South India indicate that 3 militant Tamil groups were 'not keen' to

meet a religious delegation' as they had not the blessing of the Sri Lankan Government for their visit. The sources further said that they had stipulated pre-conditions such as the release of those arrested as "terrorists" and withdrawal of security forces from the North and East.

Father's Complaint

Mr. K. Sellathural of Kokuvil is reported to have lodged a complaint with the Government Agent that a roneo machine belonging to his daughter was taken over by the security forces during a search there.

Indian Reaction

After the arrest of several Indian fishermen for alleged poaching in Sri Lankan territorial waters, the Indian Coast is reported to have been placed on the alert for Sri Lankan boats entering Indian territorial waters.

A Sonnet to Lord Muruga

Blast my Soul, my gracious MURUGA!
Burn, strike and mould me new, that
I shall rise pure and free
Of aches and desires that enthrall me.
I like an aimless vessel
Tossed, spun and driven to despair
Seek your grace and shelter,
In this holy week of 'Shasti'.
For days six I deprive
My body of food and water,
And tune my thoughts on Thy glory,
Chanting 'Kavasam', 'Alangaram', and 'Anupoothy':
Drag me out of this worldly mire and
Lay me on the path to success and divinity.

C. Kamalaharan

(Composed on the eve of 'Skandashasti')

Three Cheers for Samarakoon

We are heartened by the fact that the UNP Government did not go ahead with the plan to remove Mr. Neville Samarakoon Q C. from the post of Chief Justice before he retired on 22nd October.

Even if it had tried, it could not have done so unless more legal and constitutional changes were made to the existing procedures and time-frames, as we said in our last issue under the headline: "CJ's Affair: 'Has Govt. gone mad?'"

We are equally heartened that Mr. Samarakoon did not indulge in any personal attacks in his three farewell speeches but said what he had to say in a dignified manner. His was a statesman like performance, quite unlike that put in by most of our political leaders for most of the time.

For the record, we publish excerpts from the speeches as published in the Colombo newspapers.

Bidding farewell to the Bench and Bar at a ceremonial sitting of the Supreme Court on 19th October, Mr. Samarakoon said:

"The enforcement of fundamental rights brought in its wake wholly unfortunate and unforeseen consequences. One such consequence was a public attempt to intimidate three Judges of the Supreme Court and the other was promotion of a Police Officer who was found by the Supreme Court to have violated the fundamental rights of a citizen. The Court, however, had enforced such rights undaunted and he was hopeful that the court would continue to do so.

The contribution of lawyers of competence, integrity and commitment to the highest standards of the profession is crucial to the proper administration of justice. I am confident that Bench and Bar alike will withstand any pressure the future holds and perform their joint task of protecting the rights of the people."

The Attorney-General Mr. Siva Pasupathy, the President of the Bar Association, Mr. Herman J. C. Perera and Mr. A C. Gooneratne paid tributes to Mr. Samarakoon.

Associated with Mr. Samarakoon on the Bench were Supreme Court Justices S. Sharvananda, Raja Wanasundara, D. Wimalaratne, Percy Colin Thome, Parinda Ranasinghe, H. Rodrigo and M. M. Abdul Cader.

A large and distinguished gathering was present.

Addressing the Judicial Services Association, Mr. Samarakoon said:

"My period of office has not been without its exciting moments. Something unheard of and totally unexpected occurred last

year. They were the disturbances outside the residences of the three Judges of the Supreme Court who decided a case involving fundamental rights. One newspaper correctly called it "an exercise in intimidation."

It was in broad daylight and the miscreants were conveyed in buses.

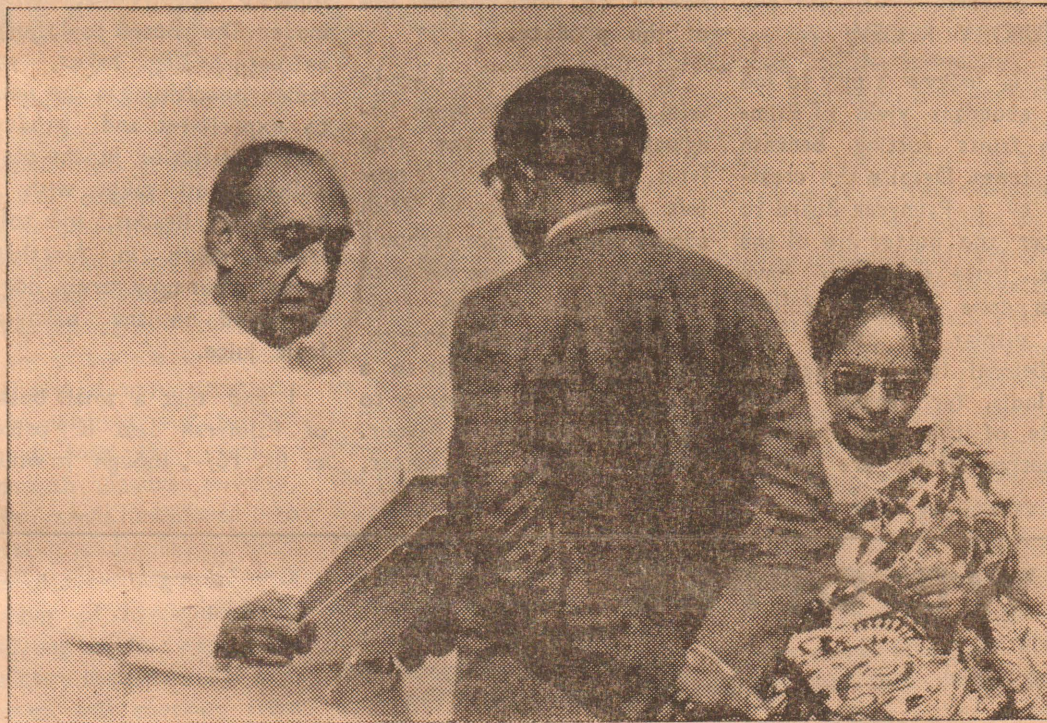
Unfortunately the police were unable to trace a single man or bus. Perhaps I asked too much of them. Let them add this to their list of unsolved crimes.

Subsequently a man known as Kala Lucky accepted sole responsibility for the affair. He appears to have been a red herring. Police officers found to have violated fundamental rights were promoted in rank - the first question that I know of where reward followed wrong - doing. I am glad to state that the Judges of the Supreme Court continue undaunted and an independent Judiciary assisted by a fearless Bar will continue to protect and enforce fundamental rights without fear or favour.

There was an occasion when for three days a debate was on as to whether Judges of the Superior Courts held office or not. Police were stationed to prevent all Justices entering their chambers. My private secretary was denied access to my chambers. I had to ask some of my brother Judges not to attempt to enter their chambers as the police would prevent them.

The Minister has stated in Parliament "We did not want anyone to enter the Courts."

The Minister himself was not sure why it was done. As far as he was concerned "the message had been com-



A historic moment: Mr. J. R. Jayewardene taking oaths as the first Executive President of Sri Lanka before the Chief Justice, Mr. Neville Samarakoon at a ceremony held at Galle Face green, Colombo, shortly after the promulgation of the 1978 Constitution. On right is Mrs. Elina Jayewardene.

municated to the Police Department and their action was no more than to protect the Courts". He did not question the Police (Hansard of 13th December 1983, Col. 1587).

Why was it that the Courts needed such protection? Was there some person or persons lurking in the wings to occupy the seats of Justice? It will be interesting to know because every year it happens that for whole vacations and even at other times courts and chambers are closed with only the court watchers to guard them and such guards were on duty at this time too.

The second Republican Constitution seeks to ensure the independence of the judiciary. But I have said before and I repeat it now—laws and Constitutions cannot make a judiciary independent. It is the sum total of independent Judges. If a Judge is inclined to be intellectually dishonest Constitutions and laws cannot prevent it, and intellectual dishonesty is difficult to detect.

I wonder whether any of you have had the experience of a friend of yours trying to influence your judgement and to induce you to do the wrong thing. I hope there are none and never will be.

But if any of you have the misfortune to be in such a position take my advice—DON'T DO IT—for if you

do you will only be contributing to make the much vaunted Dharmishta Era one of sanctimonious illusion.

Shun such people like the plague for such people are nothing but a plague on the community. They are not fit to be even an acquaintance.

In the fields of justice—Right is Right and Wrong is Wrong and never twain shall meet. There cannot be a compromise between the two for to do so would require a very elastic conscience.

In the post of a Judicial officer it is not a difficult thing to sell your soul for a mess of pottage but this is a short term policy as some have found to their cost.

On your shoulders is the entire burden of meeting out justice in the community. Without justice there can be no law and order because people then tend to settle their disputes by taking the law into their own hands. And without law and order there can be no peace in the community and the country.

I must now end my address. I leave with the firm belief that you will be independent and just. I am proud to have been the head of a judiciary in which you serve and I am proud of you. I came into Hultsdorp from obscurity. I now go into oblivion. I have passed the biblical three score years. I am now on God's overtime of ten. Wherever I am I will remem-

ber you in my prayers. I will pray for divine protection for there are times when that is the only protection we have. I will also pray to God for my country. For a country.

Where the judiciary is free and independent.

Where Bribery is absent and discipline the Vogue,

Where a man's word is his bond,

Where the individual is free and lives contented.

Where there is peace and prosperity and life abundant,

There communities live in harmony and "the voice of strife is dumb",

Into such a paradise—My Father, convert my country.

I wish you all goodbye and Godspeed."

"At the farewell dinner held at Hotel Lanka Oberoi, Mr. Samarakoon said:

A time would come to demonstrate their independence. He hoped everyone would stand up to the challenge and conquer all what they had to conquer.

A voice: "That will never happen."

He said "In a democratic set-up an Independent Bar meant an Independent judiciary. A Judge had to be personally independent. It was the sum total of Judges that would go to form an Independent Judiciary."

Mr. Sam. J. C. Kadirgamar also spoke.

STUNTED YIELD: A PITY

The Editor,
SATURDAY REVIEW

It is indeed a pity to see the abundant yield of Palmyrah fruits rotting beneath the trees. Despite the creation of a Palmyrah Board to foster the better use of the tree, little seems to have been done except to collect and display for sale a few traditional items. I believe, in India, far greater use is made of the tree. More imaginative efforts are sorely

needed to make fuller use of the produce.

In this connection, I would wish to suggest a more imaginative use of the ripe fruit, 90% of which is now left to rot uncollected. With some experimentation, it should be possible to use the thick creamy liquid of the fruit to produce a sweet nourishing fruit cake, similar to a butter cake, but superior to it, with a distinctive flavour. With a change of batter,

superior biscuits may also be made. The Board could urge an enterprising baker, and ladies specialising in the field, to experiment and produce varied varieties. In the past, delicious oil cakes with a distinctive flavour, and soft, were made in Northern homes, but now rarely done, all based on the palmyrah fruit juice.

I find that a small bottle of Palmyrah Jam is priced at Rs. 16/-, though it would

need less than two fruits and some sugar to produce. If there is an incentive price, perhaps a rupee per fruit, children would gather large quantities of the fruits to be handed over at collecting centres. If transported by cart to a semi-mechanised extractor, large quantities of the liquid could be produced, for making jam, concentrated fruit drinks, sweetmeat base, fruit wine, and perhaps dried powder for later use. Not only that, the discarded seeds could be used in a large nursery to produce roots (odiyal) which could be made into nourishing flour. Small-scale production generates little interest, and it is up to the Board to launch a vigorous programme, to generate interest, even if it means some loss at the inception. Profits accrue when supply and demand catch up later on. It is up to the North to make fuller use of its scarce resources.

V. Kandiah

Kokuvil.

BANANA REPUBLIC?

The Editor,
SATURDAY REVIEW

I quote from a letter received from my young nephew now domiciled in the United Kingdom which may be of interest to your readers:-

"I have been trying to telephone Jaffna for the past few weeks and the operator in Colombo keeps saying 'Jaffna will not answer'. Do you know why Jaffna is reluctant to answer? Be that as it may, hardly a day goes by without an article appearing in the national press regarding the situation in Sri Lanka. To western eyes, Sri Lanka, which was once a special place in the third world, which seemed to have handled itself well, has now descended to the pathetic level of just another Banana republic. One can only hope that matters will soon return to normalcy and that I will be able to visit you as planned".

A. Kandiah

Navatkull.

HARD FACTS

The Editor,
SATURDAY REVIEW

Mr. S. Kanagasabal writing in the SATURDAY REVIEW of 6th October accuses you of publishing letters and articles which are not based on fact but are the fertile imagination of ignorant writers.

I wish to challenge him regarding his statement on Vavuniya South as predominantly Sinhalese and that it is natural that the South should be added to Meda wachchiya.

LETTERS

The census figures of 1981 state that the population of Vavuniya South is as follows: Vavuniya South (Tamil) 44,385 Vavuniya South (Sinhalese) 15,317.

Mr. Kanagasabal who is concerned about facts should be careful not to use his fertile imagination and write statements which are not based on facts.

Dr. D. J. Kanagaratnam
Vavuniya.

IMPARTIALITY?

The Editor,
SATURDAY REVIEW

At a time when the voices of impartiality and justice should be most raised, it is a great pity that an organisation like the Civil Rights Movement of Sri Lanka, whose raison d'être is impartiality, should in its statement of 1/9/84 on "The role of the security forces in the North" take sides. Tamils are described by C.R.M. as "violent chauvinist militants" carrying out "brutal pre-meditated murders" in order to "provoke the security forces to retaliate against the civilian population".

C.R.M. goes on to condemn Eelam lobbies abroad for their "anti-Sinhala racist propaganda" coming out with the specious argument that "an indication of the lack of good faith of such persons" is "that not even one document in Sinhalese setting out the grievances of the Tamils has ever been published, while such documents have been published in several European languages". Surely the argument is that if the Sinhalese people themselves or organisations like C. R. M. in the South had bothered to set out the Tamil case before the Sinhalese people there would have been no reason for the Tamil people to set their case before a European audience.

London R. L. Pereira

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(Continued from last issue)

There was much agitation in the north over the regional autonomy plan which, it was feared, would ease the task of secession to the south. The argument made, ironically the reverse of that made in Sri Lanka, was that given the large size of the country and the poor communications network, regional autonomy would be de facto separation soon to be followed by the real thing. Nevertheless, the military government led by General Nimeiry disregarded the opposition and stood firm, in 1972 representatives of the government and the Anya-Nya signed the regional autonomy agreement.

(a) Matters pertaining to defence, foreign affairs, trade and planning were assigned to the central government; all other matters relating to the southern provinces were placed under the control of the regional government which would have its own elected legislative and executive organs of power in the three southern provinces.

(b) All citizens of the Southern Region were guaranteed equal opportunities of obtaining employment and education and of engaging in trade.

(c) The southern Legislature, by a 2/3 majority, could request the President of the republic to postpone the implementation of any

end of the bitter Nigerian civil war former Biafrans would travel with security the length and breadth of the Nigerian federation.

POLARIZATION

The rejection of bilingualism and the consequent growth of a Tamil communalism that fed a larger Sinhalese one has led the unitary state system that exists today to an impasse. If the state had recognised the right of every Sinhalese and Tamil to his own language the hardening of a separate Sinhalese and Tamil identity in the flammable role of ruler and ruled could have been stemmed. But that opportunity is now lost; what had been done cannot be undone. The

product of the political system.

The solution is very clearly not to drift along in the present manner.

Public opinion holds that the reason for the dominance of terrorism in the Tamil areas is to be attributed to the government policy of keeping the armed forces on a tight leash. It is argued that if the armed forces were to be given extensive powers of search and arrest and of shooting at sight on suspicion terrorism can be eliminated. Eliminate the terrorists who are a minority, then give some concessions to the peaceable Tamil majority and everything will be pretty much okay once again is the com-

ism was originally limited to Northern Province: now it has established itself in the Eastern Province as well.

The Tamil separatist leadership led by the TULF has made it clear that they are prepared to abandon the demand for a separate state if a viable alternative is designed and made available. There is a possibility that a solution that falls short of secession, even though backed by the TULF, might not satisfy some groups of terrorists. But by reaching a solution supported by the Tamil Political leadership and ratified by the people of that area in a referendum, the government will, with the only means at its disposal, eliminate 'terrorism' by depriving the 'terrorists' of their two-fold prop. a cooperative population in their home territory and a haven in India. When Tamils are governing themselves in their autonomous region the "terrorists" will have to kill Tamils elected by Tamils if they wish to continue being terrorists.

The Solution to the Communal Problem

The communal problem in the Sudan has not ended, which gives substance to the view that communal conflict cannot be solved but only managed. There is dissatisfaction in both the north and south regarding the terms of the regional autonomy agreement. Nevertheless, the Sudanese experiment is of great relevance to Sri Lanka in demonstrating that a skilfully negotiated political settlement can defuse secessionist pressures and give the political leadership another chance at building national unity upon a new foundation.

The American sociologist and former ambassador to Sri Lanka, Howard Wriggins, noted that a significant aspect of politics in Sri Lanka lay in the intensity of feelings that could be mobilized around proposals that were left abstract and therefore ambiguous. His example was the debate over federalism in the wake of the FP's formation and electoral strategy. Because the call lacked precision opponents of federalism were left a free hand to play upon the fears of the Sinhalese and claim it would be the first step towards secession. The same lack of knowledge and fear exist today. Therefore investigating the regional autonomy agreement of the Sudan will provide exposure to a concrete and working agreement. The agreement can provide an outline of a model for Sri Lanka.

The main points of the Sudanese plan are listed below:

central government legislation which, in its view, was harmful to the interests of the Southern Region.

(d) English was recognized as the main language of the Southern Region and allowance was made for the use of any other language that could satisfy local needs; Arabic remained the official language of the country.

(e) The rebel armed forces of the south were incorporated into the Sudanese national army, and for the first 5 years the Sudanese Army stationed in the south was to be equally made up of northerners and southerners under the command of a southerner.

(f) The regional government was required to exert efforts to reinforce and promote the unity of the Sudan.

(g) The agreement was signed for an initial period of 10 years, and could be further extended depending upon its success. The agreement has since been renewed.

The capacity for reconciliation of human communities must not be underestimated. Shortly before the Sudanese regional autonomy agreement was concluded few would have predicted that Sudanese President Nimeiry would tour the formerly secessionist regions to scenes of enthusiastic welcome, or that a year after the

communally polarized political system has made Tamil votes virtually irrelevant to the formation of strong governments which in turn are hostile to their Sinhalese voter base.

TERRORISM

This system of unitary government wherein which two pacts negotiated by Prime Minister were unilaterally abrogated and another one pushed through by the President was watered down in deference to Sinhalese pressures, stands discredited in Tamil eyes. Terrorism in the North which has a degree of support from the people of the area is the spawn of three decades of political

non follow-up to this line of reasoning. The success of the government in destroying the 1971 insurrection is often adduced as proof of the success of a policy of 'bullets and carrots'.

Such arguments, emotionally satisfying though they may be, are far from being applicable in a practical context to the communal conflict. On the one hand they disregard the geographical vicinity of an Impassioned, interventionist South India. On the other hand they ignore history and the experience of other countries faced with similar problems of a determined territorially based people.

by

Jehan Perera

neglect and communally perceived humiliations. The urgent task that faces the country's leadership is to act decisively before the volatile situation in the country explodes beyond all control; it is to establish a new political framework which decentralizes administration and devolves power to the people particularly to the people of the predominantly Tamil areas who presently have little say in the highest decision making process. Even the highest of civil servants, the IGP, the Attorney-General and the ambassadors to mention but a few are under the direct and absolute control of the Cabinet of Ministers which is

Where communal conflict has reached the point of violence and secession, regional autonomy formulas, which include federalism, have proved to be the only realistic solutions. Regional autonomy reconciles the state principle of territorial integrity with the minority's principle of self-determination. It is the bridge between the Tamil demand for a solution as near as possible to secession and the Sinhalese demand that the solution be as far as possible from secession.

For the past several years the state has been unable to effectively govern the predominantly Tamil areas. Terror-

The major cost of regional autonomy would be the psychological one borne by the Sinhalese whose whole history and education have made them identify themselves, and the Buddhist religion, with rulership over the entire island.

The loss of rulership over the Tamils and Tamil area is a price that has to be paid for the unity and development of the country. It is a big price to pay, but it is not bigger than the lives and resources that are squandered everyday in the north, especially when it will not cost the Sinhalese any diminution of power over their own destinies in the Sinhalese areas and in the international arena.

But there is another psychological hurdle to be overcome in dealing with the question of regional autonomy for the Tamils. This revolves around Sinhalese concern over the fairness of competition with the Tamils on a basis of equality.

Embedded in the Sinhalese Communal identity are two insecurity-generating perceptions that are a heritage of the past. One is the perception of isolation in the world; "the Tamils have South India, the Muslims have the Arab World, but the Sinhalese have only Sri Lanka".

The debate over regional autonomy for the Tamils therefore is bound to reawaken

(Continued on page 8)

Bonded Labour in South Asia

Undoubtedly, there are significant political and cultural differences in the countries of the region. However, there are also several common and alarming-features that characterise the political and socio-economic structures in every one of those countries which are resulting in impoverishment and exploitation of the majority of the people, at a distressing rate. In each of the countries, there continues to persist an increasingly unequal distribution of wealth and power. The development policies and programmes being pursued in each of the countries are geared towards preserving the status quo and strengthening the stranglehold of existing elites.

The dominant development models being adopted by the countries in the region emphasize heavy infusions of technology and foreign aid which sometimes end up in depriving large numbers of people of their traditional sources of sustenance and support. The design and implementation of the economic and technocratic development models and projects which are adopted should not disregard humanistic concerns. Large-scale dispersion, displacement and alienation of people from land are resulting from development projects in these countries. As a result there is a phenomenal growth of unorganised labour entering the market. The extreme vulnerability of such labour, coupled with their lack of organisation, is producing throughout the region severe exploitation of different categories of the labouring poor. Efforts by such groups to organise themselves have often met with state violence and repression by vested interests. Simultaneously, almost no effective remedial measures exist for historically exploited communities of the labouring poor.

It is also noticed that in the countries of the region unhealthy employment practices have developed even in the organised sectors with a view to circumventing the proper implementation of labour laws.

In the context of the above reality, the workshop suggested the following strategies for adoption and implementation.

1. To launch a programme of research and action towards

the identification, release and rehabilitation of bonded and forced labour and to mobilise NGOs, the press and the judiciary towards this end.

2. To undertake a programme to bring in law reform concerning fixation of minimum wages and their regular periodic revision, duration and conditions of work, and remedying defects in existing laws dealing with labour.

3. To take measures to promote the increase of rural credit institutions for providing credit facilities to the rural poor, for, inter alia, consumption loans, and to strive for policies that would link interest rates with the paying ability of the given category to which the borrower belongs.

4. To promote measures for educating the people in combating and eliminating undesirable socio-cultural practices such as excessive marriage expenses, dowry, bride price, drinking and gambling, etc., which result in indebtedness and further impoverishment of the poor.

5. To focus attention on special problems of working children who are employed despite constitutional and legal prohibitions against child labour. Until the total abolition of child labour is attained, to promote better conditions of work, training and education for these children.

6. To endeavour to improve the social, economic and family status of women and promote measures to integrate them in the development process and to strive for elimination of discrimination of women in relation to job opportunities, promotion, wages and conditions of service, and for the protection of women against violence and especially to eliminate trafficking in women.

7. To take measures for effective implementation of social and labour laws, welfare and rehabilitative programmes and judicial decisions and orders for the benefit of the disadvantaged.

8. To make efforts towards more effective utilisation of existing beneficial legislation and more effective invocation of sanctions (especially penal sanctions) and also to focus on bringing practices

which produce exploitation of labour within the penal system, with deterrent sanctions.

9. To develop programmes towards educating the labouring poor regarding their legal rights and the laws which affect them.

10. To undertake activities to inform, sensitise and activate the judiciary through problem-oriented and issue-based seminars and workshops at local, national and South Asian level.

11. To make efforts to sensitise lawyers to the needs for developing legal resources for groups of exploited labour and to do this so as to promote self-reliance and not dependence on the lawyer-client relationship.

12. To develop community legal self-reliance and cadres of para-legal activists.

13. To conduct national and regional workshops of lawyers, social and political activists, intellectuals, journalists and other support groups to highlight the problems of bonded, forced, and unorganised labour and other forms of human exploitation.

14. To undertake research towards devising ways of strengthening the judiciary as an institution and especially to enable the Courts to have greater pro-active reach and more effective enforcement mechanisms.

15. To undertake programmes to understand the way projects based on modern technology and development strategies work, whom they eventually benefit, and whom they displace and impoverish.

16. To develop alternatives which are more suitable

to their needs and conditions so as to provide enduring benefits for the impoverished and exploited people.

17. To promote measures to protect social activists facing repression in the course of their work with bonded, forced and unorganised labour.

18. To provide supportive efforts to enable labourers to organise themselves so as to militate against their exploitation.

19. To help devise and strengthen mechanisms for cooperation amongst NGOs, to address themselves more effectively to macro and common issues.

20. To promote institutions to safeguard basic human rights including the right to development.

PARADISE LOST?

For some time now the newspapers have published reports and articles dealing with the failure of both sides to renew the Singapore-Sri Lanka air services agreement.

Singapore Airlines has gone out of its way to disclaim any blame for the failure to renew the agreement. In the magazine *Outlook* published by Singapore Airlines, the International Relations Executive of that Airline has traced the history of the Air Services agreement between Singapore and Air Lanka and given Singapore's version of what has happened.

It is clear that a certain chill has crept into the relations between the two airlines, if not between the two countries. There is talk that Air Lanka might even substitute Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia for Singapore on its journey to the East. How different this is from the situation which existed a few years ago, soon after the present government came to power. At that time Lee Kuan Yew, the boss of Singapore, was invited to this country to teach us how to adopt the Singapore method. Experts from Singapore Airlines were got down to train our own people on how to run an airline and improve the national carrier.

Sri Lankan workers were encouraged to go to Singapore not only for training in selected fields but also in search of jobs.

The Prime Minister was loud and long in his crusade to take Sri Lanka straight into ASEAN. Even when rebuffed the crusade continued. After all these years the warm friendliness that existed has given way to a certain cooling of the situation. It is necessary to ask why?

he reaches his destination. The fact is Singapore is even more heavily dependent on tourism than Sri Lanka.

In recent years there have been acute signs of the approaching crisis that Singapore society is threatened with. On the one hand world recession is affecting the flow of tourists. In Western countries for instance there has been a slowing down of the economic process. The travel page of a recent issue of the

by a Special Correspondent

Singapore and Sri Lanka depend heavily on tourism as a means of providing employment for their people and bringing in foreign exchange for their countries. To encourage tourists to enter the country they run airlines. This is the principal purpose for which small under-developed third world or ex-colonial countries run airlines. During the journey from far off places the tourist is provided with numerous facilities like good food and drink, servile service etc., and made to feel that he has reached paradise on earth. He is also made to feel that the paradise that he enjoys in the airline is a foretaste of what he will receive when

Daily News states that a Soviet cruise liner leased out to a West-German tourist firm sailed one-third empty on a voyage to the East bringing West German tourists. It is clear that world recession which bourgeois politicians and economists have continued to deny is now beginning to affect world tourism in a very big way. This recession is catching up with countries whose leaderships and ruling parties closed their eyes to the economic facts of life and expected the post-war economic boom to continue unabated, creating for them a paradise on earth. However, the realities are different.

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'SRI LANKA: -by Howard Wriggins PECULIAR IN SEVERAL RESPECTS'

This is a summary of the oral testimony given by Howard Wriggins, Professor of Political Science, Columbia University and a former U. S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka, before the Sub-committees on Asian and Pacific Affairs and Human Rights and International Organisations of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, U. S. House of Representatives.

Sri Lanka as you know, is a small island off the coast of India about the size of West Virginia, supporting a population of 14 million. For many decades, -indeed, for centuries -its 75% Sinhalese Buddhist majority and 11% Ceylon Tamil minority lived and worked relatively peacefully together. But in the mid-1970's, some Tamil youths adopted tactics of direct action to dramatize their growing grievances, and to challenge Colombo's police and army. Over the next decade, in an action-reaction cycle, guerilla activity increased in Jaffna and indiscriminate police and army re-

sponses made it worse; efforts to find a political solution proved unavailing. Relations worsened until last July, there was a communal outburst the like of which had never been seen before. The army and police, refused to quell the mobs and between 400 and 800 Tamils died, Tamil homes and factories were destroyed, and many thousands fled to Jaffna or neighbouring India.

I have been asked to provide some background to these sad and unexpected events.

My paper argues that Sri Lanka is peculiar in several respects that are significant for understanding its present situation and outlook. Unlike most states in Asia, its politics have been based on universal adult franchise since 1933. Typically they have been notably competitive as politicians seek votes from an electorate which since 1956 has been articulate and highly mobilized. Such political competition for mass support has adversely affected relations between the Sinh-

lese majority and the Tamil minority.

It is also peculiar in that the Tamil minority and the Sinhalese majority both have a sense of grievance against each other, and both show characteristics of possessing a minority's psychology.

The paper first briefly identifies the principal grievances of each community.

The Tamil sense of grievance really dates from 1956 when (1) a landslide Sinhalese majority pushed through legislation making Sinhalese the only official language of government, thus favouring Sinhalese over Tamils in the public service, where Tamils had hitherto excelled.

(2) The highly centralized Sri Lankan administration developed under the British, it was argued, did not provide sufficient local responsibility so that the one half of the Tamils who lived in Jaffna were unable to properly manage their own affairs in their own way.

(3) Personal security for Tamils became uncertain following anti-Tamil riots in 1958; and Post-election riots in 1965, 1970 and 1977 also harmed Tamil persons and property;

(4) In the early 1970's Mrs. Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party revised rules for entry into the University which favoured backward areas, commensurately disadvantaging well-qualified Tamils from Jaffna and thus contracting another favourite Tamil channel for advancement.

(5) New lands being opened up by costly irrigation systems on a largely agricultural island have proved to be a bitter apple of discord. Tamil fears they would not get their fair share have led to extensive claims based on rights of historical occupation by early Tamil kingdoms and the use of the Tamil language by inhabitants.

(6) Army personnel sent to Jaffna to restore order when 'militant' Tamil youths murdered the Mayor of Jaffna, robbed banks and assassinated a number of policemen, have behaved badly. They have

not made a sufficient distinction between the 'militants' terrorist tactics and the wider population. And the police and army have not been as careful about the legal rights of Tamil youths as has been the historic norm in Sri Lanka.

(7) Since a number of agreements negotiated on these issues between Sinhalese and Tamil leaders have been repudiated in the end by Sinhalese leaders under pressure from their own zealots, Tamil spokesmen are skeptical of the likely ability of contemporary Sinhalese negotiators to hold to agreements that may be reached. No wonder some Tamil youths turned to violence.

Sinhalese grievances, it is argued, go back much further, though they may be less precise and not so obvious to the casual outsider. Many Sinhalese believe:

(1) Tamils in the north have always had an educational advantage because of American missionary schools that trained them in the very skills the British wanted for their civil service. As a result, at independence, there were disproportionate numbers of Tamils in key positions. The "Sinhalese Only" language policy could be seen as a kind of reverse 'affirmative action' to compensate the majority for its felt historical disadvantages.

(2) During the British period, many Tamils came south for small and large business and the professions, so that at independence, nearly half of Jaffna's Tamils were in the major centers of Colombo and Kandy. The positions they held and services they performed, it is said, made the Sinhalese uncomfortably dependent upon them. They worked hard and provided reliable service, but they were not necessarily generous to the more easy-going Sinhalese.

(3) Tamil agitation on behalf of some form of decentralization was sometimes accompanied by threats to secede or to call upon India to assist. Though usually designed to demonstrate to

northern Tamils a politician's loyalty to Tamil interests, such talk intensified the worst Sinhalese anxieties, evoking primordial historical fears of a return of Indian hordes, as in the Chola Invasions of the 9th to 12th centuries. Buddhist priests steeped in these memories by their study of ancient texts, helped keep these fears alive among the Sinhalese.

(4) Tamil demands to have large empty tracts set aside for future Tamil peasant settlers was seen as one more example of Tamils ignoring Sinhalese needs, since their village areas are already crowded and they feel a special claim because these lands were once part of the ancient Sinhalese Kingdoms which preserved Theravada Buddhism, while the Hindu revival long ago overwhelmed Buddhism in India.

(5) By 1977, Tamil demands for a separate state conjured up a partitioned Lanka, the home and defender of Buddhism, opening the only 10 million Sinhalese to the threat, as seen by them, of an inadequate statelet of less than a million Ceylon Tamils which would be bound to invite help from India's 70 million Tamils to the north, and overwhelm the Sinhalese.

(6) Together with the call for secession, the tactics of Tamil youths to first pick off policemen and then ambush army patrols, could hardly have been better designed to provoke Sinhalese fury.

Together, these cumulative grievances and mutual fears contributed fundamentally to the awful events of July 1983, when the army refused to restore order and Sinhalese mobs killed hundreds of Tamils and destroyed Tamil property and factories. Grievances alone do not fully explain what happened; individual activists clearly were at work encouraging the devastation. But without an understanding of the subjective reality that fuelled distrust and violence on both sides, one can have no

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Paradise Lost?

(Continued from page 6)

For the Sunday ISLAND of the 16th of September the Minister of State had written an article on tourism. It is headed "Tourism in Sri Lanka is limping". There is no doubt that the incidents of July/August 1983 and the existing political instability in the country have affected tourist arrivals. But, it is also certain that these are not the only factors which have affected the tourist industry. There are fewer and fewer tourist arrivals from the traditional sources of Western Europe and the industrialised world. Sri Lanka is compelled to look in new directions for people to fill the huge hotels which have been built at tremendous cost to the country and which have been either empty or partially occupied. Therefore, Sri Lanka had to push its national

carrier into new regions to attract tourists in the Far East and Korea. There is now a freezing of hotel construction in Sri Lanka, and many hotels which were planned will remain on the drawing board.

This attempt by Sri Lanka to penetrate new areas for tourism is clearly resented by Singapore which regards Sri Lanka and its national carrier as a threat to its own position in the tourist market. The two countries are on the verge of traditional capitalist cut-throat competition, although their differences are couched in polite and restrained language. Clearly the honey-moon period in paradise for these two is drawing to a close and instead of Paradise we may hear the cry of 'Paradise Lost' from both of them in the not too distant future.

Look on this Picture and on This

[2]

Now to come to the other, the black, picture. Far from denying the charges made by Mr K I will go a step or two further. He has failed to mention one important failing of our people, a lack of unity. Many have deplored this and have agreed that if there had been any unity we should not now be in the present sorry plight, whatever forces have been ranged against us. There are among us those who 'bend with the remover to remove, whatever unity there is. Denigration of our political leaders seems to be still another failing with some. I have read letter after letter in the daily press roundly condemning our political parties and their leaders who, after all, have been consistently elected by a free vote of the people. What is astonishing about these letters is that there is not even a suggestion of blame of the other side.

Having said all this I must say in extenuation that a min-

ority community unconsciously adopts certain traits and attitudes that help it in the hard struggle for survival. A parallel is the Scots community in the United Kingdom. Unkind as well as apparently 'funny' things have been said about them. In our own country the Tamils have not escaped barbs of 'wit'. In 'He Comes from Jaffna' Mr. T gives his son a bundle of drumsticks and exhorts him to go and enjoy himself. Southerners have also been funny at the expense of men from the North living thriftily in chummeries in Wellawatte. The butt has not always been the man from Jaffna. On one occasion the bus I was travelling in happened to stop near an estate boutique in the hills late one night. The meagre store prompted a wag to say, 'Hari Demala kade', and the people in the bus laughed.

Some have spoken and others have written of the 'unfair advantages' the Northern students have in education. There was a time when students from Karainagar used

to make the weekly trek of fifteen miles to a school in Jaffna, and boys from Puttur used to walk eight miles daily to school at Chavakachcheri and back. Some of their classmates had to get up as early as three or four in the morning and accompany their fathers to the fields to tread the see-saw of the well-sweep till the sun came up, when they returned home for a frugal meal before going to school. Is there a parallel to this anywhere in the country? Things

al tour they gazed with surprise at a herd of cattle grazing in a field.

"What is there for them to feed on?" they asked. The ground seemed all parched and brown to eyes accustomed to the lush green of the hills. What the animals' nibbling teeth failed to extract, the crescent-shaped blade of the 'Seethaham', used by women in the villages, tore out by the roots. It is not found anywhere else in the country, and I remember how an English princi-

seem to have noticed the omission. (Perhaps their eyes and ears have got accustomed to the neglect and do not notice it any more). Are the provisions of the Special Act pertaining to Tamil being implemented? Are announcements of arrivals and departures of trains made in Tamil also? (The department comes under a Tamil-speaking minister.)

by

S. K. Gnanamuttu

are better now after the advent of the bus and the motor-pump, but it is still a hard life in the North. Besides, the bounty of the great Mahavelli is denied to its parched acres. No wonder education obtained with such effort was so highly valued. When a party of students from the hill country visited the Peninsula some years ago during an education-

pal serving in Jaffna expressed her loathing of it.

But these harsh conditions have bred in the Northerner certain estimable traits. He worked hard (he had to) and generally gave a good account of himself. He lived laborious days (there were hardly any delights to scorn) and gave his children the best possible education. In a practical sense he had the right priorities. He not only delivered the goods but settled his dues. He was dependable and kept the administrative machine running smoothly, and presently the administrative is the poorer for his absence. The man who rose to be chief clerk became the right hand of the head of department. He had the answers at his fingers' ends, and if he didn't, produced them with no great delay. I am confining myself for the purpose of this article to the middle-rung government servant who had his base firmly in Jaffna. He had his faults but his merits were not a few, and he deserves a niche all to himself in Memory House.

What is being done to bring together the two communities these portraits represent? While military action has been stepped up in order to do away with the militants, and the government is pursuing a certain line of action to make sure that something constructive comes out of the RTC, what is being done at the grass roots level? The much-publicised Gam Uda-wa festivities had hardly any place for Tamil. The 'thorana', or the welcoming archway had no Tamil lettering to gladden the hearts of Tamil visitors—the Tamil ministers do not

Finally, a plea that the small shy voice of reason be heard amidst all the blaring political cacophony. The soft voice of reason, pleading for truth, understanding, goodwill, manages to reach our ears occasionally. But what chance has it against the incessant, insensate, lying noises of unreason? Cannot we have a respite from these and give sweet reason a spell?

At a certain international conference abroad a much-publicised plea was made for love, a very uncommon commodity (the kind of love, that is, for which the plea was made). May one make this, more modest, plea for reason at home?

The Solution to the Communal...

(Continued from page 5)

the lingering doubts of the Sinhalese regarding their ability to maintain their position in the country and the 'fairness' of open competition with the Tamil region once Central Government control over regional affairs is lost. But in 1984 these doubts are no longer valid. In many fields of endeavour the Sinhalese have produced leaders of world stature.

In science there is Cyril Ponnampereuma, in International economics Gamini Corea, Multinational business Upali Wijewardene, in Art Senaka Senanayake, in Law C.G. Weeramantry, in Social Anthropology Gananath Obeyesekere and in Medicine Tony Don Michael to name but the most conspicuous. In 1956 S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike brought to the Sinhalese masses the consciousness of their political power which was used, among other things, to fashion crutches.

But crutches if used too long debilitate rather than strengthen. Today the Sinhalese are the equals in ability to any other community, and they need not have doubts about their ability to compete.

Regional autonomy formulas are not new to Sri Lanka. In 1957 Prime Minister and leader of the SLFP S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike negotiated an agreement with S.J.V. Chelvanayakam the leader of the F.P. This agreement better known as the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam pact was a comprehensive regional autonomy solution. In 1965, Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake, leader of the U.N.P. concluded a similar agreement with S.J.V. Chelvanayakam but both these agreements were not implemented due to the strong opposition to them in the south. Neither S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike nor Dudley Senanayake, two of the foremost leaders of the country and of the Sinhalese, thought that regional autonomy would harm the interests of the country they led and were responsible to.

Rather they thought that regional autonomy was the best device to strengthen the unity of the country and its communities. But they lacked the courage and strength to implement their convictions. In 1984 it is now President J.R. Jayewardene's opportunity to

make amends for the failures of 1957 and 1965.

Regional autonomy is not an impairment of the sovereignty of the country or of its territorial integrity. In dealings with other countries there will not be two or more states: rather there will be one country, Sri Lanka.

The fear that granting the Tamil areas regional autonomy might spark off similar demands from territorially concentrated minorities, such as the Muslims in the Eastern Province and perhaps even by the Kandyan Sinhalese is not based upon an understanding of the principles of decentralized government. Even if these groups should ask for autonomy at a referendum, Sri Lanka would not then be a vivisectioned aberration but would rather possess a decentralized system of government that brings democracy and efficiency closer to the people.

(This article was first published in *The Island* in August 1984 and then issued in book form by the Centre for Society and Religion in Colombo.)

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Yes, the planners too play their dirty part!

In this candid critique, the noted planner narrates the game planners indulge in, firstly working out "the growth rate" in the plan period; secondly, inventing the plan area called "the core sector"; and thirdly, in the "poverty amelioration" sector deliberately not making clear what this quantitative objective would involve in actual redistributive measure in society with a sustained improvement in the income earned by the poor person.

The Dirty Dozen - 5

IT IS RATHER IMPORTANT, to start with, to define our terms because of the ambiguous connotation of the major term, 'the Dirty Ones'. Dirt and Dirty connote a state of personal uncleanness and the normal use of the term relates to a person being unclean through accumulation of insanitary and unhygienic matter on his person. I regard this connotation as ambiguous because the term dirt and dirty in this note (which applies to planners) is used primarily in re-

lation to one's social actions or inactions which result in either not helping society attain its agreed goals; or contributing to the distortion and defeat of those goals, rather than accumulating personal ill-gotten wealth.

The dirt here is the use of means which do not help attain agreed social objectives or employ means which defeat and distort these objectives. For instance, we have declared ourselves to be a socialist democratic society, and we remain content with the social status quo or plan and operate an inegalitarian, society; we deny democracy by planning the development of society from a central point and not bothering about what people in each locality want or feel they can accomplish. Thus the dirt one has is primarily social and not individual overtones — what one does not do about other peoples' well-being, or what one does to reduce their living levels, and only secondarily has it a possible personal dimension, as reflected in

some unmerited or unearned personal gain.

Another fact of the dirt of these dirty ones is that these social or anti-social life and actions of theirs have a self-accumulating nature. Once a social or anti-social action has been set in motion, it increases and gathers momentum on its own, without any further guidance from the author. Faced with massive poverty, if the means employed to counter it is limited to some forms of alleviating relief with a number of leakages which are sprung on the way to the beneficiary then the relief programmes will continue from year to year, and from plan to plan because it harms no one, does not in fact bring one person to rise above poverty and it lives on its own justify-

formed by and recognised as those who have the dirt and have accumulated it or are accumulating it in various degrees. The fraternity is also most often unconsciously joined together in many ways in defence of their dirt and is opposed to those who have no dirt on them. Here there is the curious fact that the clean ones are the mass of the people who are poor and who are clean, not because they are opposed to dirt (as the means of defeating social objectives as defined earlier) but because they do not have the chance of becoming dirty. And it is in resisting the swelling of their ranks and thus devaluing their status that there is expressed the solidarity of the dirty ones.

ones who run the country that this higher rate is based on the negative growth rate of the base year, but both because of the technicality of the explanation and because it is easier to mislead the public, the higher rate is presented as a real development of the economy. This planning exercise and explanation has again been repeated this year against last year's low growth rate of 2 percent. Thus the planner is (possibly an unconscious and/or unwilling) partner in the dirty game of misleading the people of what the real growth rate for the year or for the first four years of the plan is.

The planner has invented an area of the Five Year Plan called the core sector and has built a high walled fence around it to see that whatever the rate of inflation during this time period, the real resources going into this sec-

by

Malcolm S. Adiseshiah

Sri Lanka...

(Continued from page 7)

comprehension of how it was that, as someone said, "the Sinhalese mobs went crazy".

Prospects

Northern Ireland of course, is one possibility. However, the paper suggests the elements of a more hopeful scenario. These would involve:

1. Improved discipline in the army and more discriminating care in police methods;
2. more care among political figures to avoid stimulating Sinhalese chauvinism after what happened a year ago;
3. more boldness on the part of moderates in the south;
4. some form of political offer that goes a significant way to meet the most urgent Tamil complaints.

While many believe the current All-Party Conference is merely sham, I personally do not, and believe that on the margins of its consultations, real negotiations, can proceed.

5. The role of India will also matter, since even implicit support of the 'militants' will encourage "terrorist" intransigence, while clear non-support will encourage flexibility. But Mrs. Gandhi's room for manoeuvre is also limited by her prospective election.

Timing of these steps and the specifics of a deal are obviously not for us to speculate about. It is essentially their problem, not ours.

As for US policy, we should, I believe be restrainedly supportive of the Government's efforts. Much still needs to be done to make the most of investments already made; they need our continuing economic assistance. On the other hand, we cannot provide unstinting support if there is no apparent movement toward a negotiated settlement. Yet this analysis suggests just how difficult it will be for leaders of both parties to reach a mutually acceptable agreement.

ing rhetoric. Similarly once a permit or a licence which was originally devised as a control device to ensure that the country's scarce capital resources flow into the wage goods sector as one social priority, but is in actual fact allowed to help establish some luxury goods production (for which there is a growing market because resources are concentrated in the hands of the rich consumers), then the further issue of licences for similar inessential goods services production becomes a self-accumulative process.

A third feature of the dirt which is perpetuated and accumulates in the dirty ones is that the dirty ones tend to form an unspoken or explicit brotherhood to defend their dirt and ensure its perpetuation and accumulation against those who would like to clean the dirt and prevent its reaccumulation. This fraternity of the dirty ones is not always a conscious and outwardly bound brotherhood; rather, members of the fraternity are able to recognise each other by the accumulated dirt. In fact the more that dirt, in the form of distorting or defeating social objectives, is accumulated, the higher is the status of that dirty one in the hierarchy of dirt. The fraternity itself is

The planner is a technician — usually — an economist, a statistician, or one who acquires or has acquired these specialisations. He is thus basically and by profession a dirty one because he takes as given the social goals and their defeat or distortion, and works out the means, methods, and modalities of attainment of these given purposes and goals. I should add that as a planner myself I am also talking about myself as a 'dirty one'. To expand on this dirty game of the planner. I take three brief case studies.

Let us take the growth rate of the economy on which the attainment of most other social objectives depend. The planner is asked to work out the highest possible rate that should be adopted in the plan period. He then works out a rate of 4.7 per cent per annum as the feasible rate but on finding that the base year recorded a — 5.2 percent negative growth, recommends a rate of 5.2 percent per annum for the five years, without making it clear that the additional 0.5 per cent growth per year represents a recovery to the status quo ante, before the year when the negative rate is recorded. He personally explains to the other dirty

tor are maintained at the level at which they were originally conceived? Now what is this core sector that the planner has invented? One would have thought that following the 10 objectives of the plan, reiterated in the revised 20-point programme, they would cluster around the areas most directly affecting the well-being or ill-being of the people and of society, such as the health care and nutrition of the people, particularly the vulnerable sections such as the pre-school child and lactating mother, primary education and adult literacy learning which can enable the child to grow into a thinking and working adult and increase the earnings of the illiterate adult who all belong to the poverty sector — safe drinking water particularly in our 38 lakhs problem villages which are the cause of the major communicable disease — water borne illness, and rural housing and houses sites, for the landless. These are the serialised items which constitute the Minimum Needs Programme and it is those items which ought to constitute the core sector to the planner whose task is to suggest techniques and programmes that help society

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(Continued from page 9)

attain the agreed plan objectives.

However what the planner calls the core sector comprises electricity, coal, railways, steel crude and petroleum products, and it is investments in these five or six areas which are safeguarded. They are of course important for the development of industry and agriculture of the country but do not directly relate to human well-being as do the first group of items enumerated. In safeguarding the investment of the core sector as defined by the planner, which has meant increasing the resources that flow into this sector in absolute terms, as has been done in the current plan to the extent of some 20 percent (in money terms) over what was originally set forth, it has also meant diverting from the real core sector of health care, nutrition, education, provision of drinking water etc., resources of the planner's core sector.

An analysis of this diversion shows that some 15 percent of the resources have been taken out from what I have called the real core sector, the human and social well being areas, to what the planner has called the core sector. One rather sorry example of this topsy turvy view of what constitutes the core sector of the society's development was the resistance of the planner to a scheme launched by one of our states to provide all children up to the age 10 at least one nutritious meal at noon every day. This really meant that the children of the poor majority of the state numbering some 52 lakhs were assured of one solid meal. The planners, including myself as a planner, were opposed to this scheme on the ground that the state could not afford the scheme (it cost Rs. 100-120 crores per annum) and because it was diverting resources from the core sector in the state—namely electricity and power.

Yes, the planners...

And excepting for myself today all, my planner friends are still opposed to the scheme. I have now come to the conclusion that this scheme is at the core of what I call the core sector, because in a situation where poverty will not be eradicated for a long, long time, this scheme of feeding the children of the poor is (a) manageable as against feeding all the poor (who will number five times the 52 lakh poor children), (b) limited in terms of cost as it is less than 3 percent of the state's annual budget, and (c) is a real investment in the future human development of the state. I am now convinced that this will become part of Prime Minister's 20-point programme in the VII or VIII Plan, a real relief bulwark against the nation's poverty. But the opposition to it and the low priority given to the human and social development programmes is a reflection of the planner's blind eye to the dirt that is accumulating around him in his not realising that he is frustrating the attainment of the agreed human and social objectives of the plan and of society.

One of the major important objectives of the Plan is the reduction of the poverty in the country. In fact the planners were asked to quantify the effort and on their advice, we have stated that in the five years of the Sixth Plan we will bring 100 million of the 330 million people living in poverty above the poverty line. The dirt in this matter was in not making clear what this quantitative objective would involve in actual redistributive measures in society, with a sustained improvement in the income earned by the poor person. Whether it be through land or some other form of asset ownership which the land ceiling and distribution programme, or potentially the integrated rural development programme, or the more

recently launched self-employment of the educated unemployed scheme, or DPAP and SFDA involve.

The further check in these important objectives is in (a) not making clear that schemes like NREP RLEGP and the women's and tribal sub-plans do not provide for a sustained effort by the benefit person who is given some temporary employment which will not bring him above the poverty line on a permanent basis; and (b) the many loopholes and leakages that ceiling and land distribution or IRDP, which do have the element of such sustained benefits, but where the leakages defeat the objective of lifting the person above the poverty line.

The final denouement is when the planner is asked by the political authority to estimate how many of the 100 millions targeted to be brought above the poverty line in five years are actually so lifted above the poverty line by the end of the first 2 years when the plan is being appraised, and by using some rather questionable methodology estimates that 57 millions have been raised above the poverty line. The methodology used involves an unreal assumption that the rate of increase of the incomes of the poor majority of society was the same as that of the rich minority, when all empirical studies have shown that in a period of inflation — (in the first year, 1980-81, the inflation rate was 17.1 per cent, and in the second year, 1981-82 it was 18.2 per cent, totalling 35.3 per cent for the first two years), the rate of increase of the incomes of the well-to-do is about two to three times the rate of incomes increase of the poor. The methodology also assumes that the poor benefited from the general agricultural and rural industrial development programmes, which might be true, but which is not based on field surveys and is more in the nature of a hunch. Thus in the third typical case of poverty amelioration, the planner is made to play a "dirty game" in (a) ignoring the real limitation of the temporary relief programmes as well as the loopholes and leaks built into programmes which can relieve poverty, and (b) inventing and improvising methodology which gives the public unprovable

(and probably false) information of the extent to which one of society's basic goals—poverty amelioration—is being attained.

What then should the planner do to get out of being one of the 'dirty ones' playing 'a dirty game'.

One initial—and almost insuperable obstacle—that he faces in this regard is that the planner cannot himself stop being a 'dirty one' in a society where his peers and his superiors are all 'dirty ones'. Just as you cannot have a square metre of cleanliness in a surrounding square kilometre of filth; no purpose—except that of a peer and prophet—is served by the planner dissociating himself (except occasionally as an action of last resort, as I will point out at the end) from the surrounding society of 'dirt' in order to maintain himself in an isolated state of 'cleanliness' and 'purity'. In a society dominated by 'the dirty ones' the planner will also be dirty. This is the mark of his being in society, serving society, and carrying out the orders of those elected to govern society.

And so the first thing that I would advise is for the planner to realise that he is 'a dirty one', that he is being forced into playing a dirty game. This consciousness of his limitation is important, because his technicality and his technical virtuosity tend to make him complacent with his tools and his working methods and somewhat arrogant about the models and conclusions that he constructs and derives from them. For instance, from one set of tools, one group of planners derive the conclusion that 52 million people have been lifted above the poverty line. From another set of tools another planner draws the conclusion that only 7.5 million have been raised above the poverty line. Both groups are functioning through a social structure which denies the poverty eradication objective, and to that extent both should be conscious about the dirt surrounding them, and be humble and sceptical about both their tools and distorting and distorted effects they give rise to.

Second, the planner, more than other members of his social peer group, being conscious about the extent to

which the social objectives are being defeated by various legal loopholes and legislative and executive leakages, should from time to time come out into the open and expose and make public the 'dirt' surrounding the economic endeavour and distorting social objectives. The planner as an economist is used to making clear the unreal nature of his assumption, such as that other things which are assumed to be given are not given, or that in the long run when certain results are expected to be produced we must also take into effect the fact that in the long run we will all be dead. So too he must on occasions and on important social and economic issues tell the truth as he sees it, about the dirt and dust enveloping certain economic factors and results, which are being publicised by political authority.

Finally, there may be occasions when the planner must dissociate himself from the planning process in order not to be drowned in a sea of dirt and corruption. This would be rare, and hopefully, a one time affair. But the planner's training in digging at the facts and pursuing his analysis till he arrives at what he believes to be truth when he set against the implicit and explicit defeat of people's wishes and society's most cherished goal may lead him to withdraw from the direct game of the 'dirty ones'. His consequent social apathy and economic silence is rather a heavy price that he may be called upon to pay. But there may be occasions when his very calling as a planner devoted to facing the stark facts of truth force him into such a position of withdrawal and passivity. When that happens, he is also making his contribution to reducing 'the dirt' and wiping the dust off people and society, which should be his sole guiding star.

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Prisoners of Conscience

Every October, Amnesty International focuses on a particular theme. This year the theme is "Prisoners of Conscience" with particular reference to women. A whole week, which began on 15th October, is devoted to this theme.

The following excerpts are from AI's October Newsletter.

A Buddhist nun in Viet Nam a Guatemalan feminist and a university law lecturer in Malawi - these three women have one thing in common. Each is a political prisoner.

The Vietnamese nun, Thich nu Tri Hai, has been held incommunicado in police custody since her arrest in May this year.

Alaide Foppa of Guatemala has been missing since 1980 when she was abducted from her home, apparently by plain clothes security agents.

Vera Chirwa, 44 and her husband Orton Chirwa, are serving life sentences in Malawi after their conviction in May 1983 on charges of treason they were not allowed legal representation at their trial. They were originally sentenced to death and spent more than a year facing execution, be-

fore being granted clemency in June this year.

Each is among a series of cases highlighted in this issue of the Newsletter to coincide with Prisoners of Conscience Week, which is being observed from 15 to 20 October. The theme this year Women in Prison.

The plight of the Forgotten Women needs international attention. Prisoners of Conscience Week has previously highlighted the plight of other categories of prisoners trade unionists, children, long term detainees, human rights activists. This year AI points out that many of the world's political prisoners are women, their cases spanning a wide range of occupation, countries, ideologies and culture.

Women have suffered from the full variety of injustices to which governments in recent years have subjected their citizens political imprisonment, detention without trial, 'disappearances' and extrajudicial execution.

A Chilean trade union leader Reinalda Pereira Plaza, who was taken into custody eight years ago, has been "missing" ever since. She was five months pregnant at the time. A leading member of a South

African women's organization Florence Mkhize has been repeatedly detained without trial or restricted under banning orders over a period of more than 20 years.

The reasons for the victimization of women cover a broad spectrum. Some are detained for their faith. Others have become involved in opposition political movements. Some have played a role in their countries' trade unions or rural poor.

Some women have become victims because they themselves were active in exposing human rights abuses in their countries. In many countries, ranging from Argentina and El Salvador to South Africa. The Philippines and China women have been deeply involved in the human rights effort - and have faced the consequences.

Tatyana Osipova a 35 year old computer operator is now serving a sentence of 10 years, imprisonment and internal exile in the Soviet Union, accused of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda". A human rights activist, she was a member of the unofficial Moscow Helsinki monitoring group, set up to monitor compliance with the human rights provisions of the Final Act of the 1975 Helsinki Conference. Most of its members have since been imprisoned.

Since Tatyana was sent to a labour camp in 1981, she has been on hunger strike at least twice, demanding to meet her husband, who is also a prisoner of conscience and is held in another camp some 1,000 kilometres away. During a hunger strike that lasted from December to 1982, to March 1983 she lost 25 kilograms and was reportedly handcuffed while being forcibly fed. It is not yet known whether the authorities have permitted her to see her husband.

Activism on behalf of women's rights may have been one of the reasons behind the "disappearance" of Guatemalan feminist Alaide Foppa, who has now been missing for four years. She was abducted when she returned from exile in Mexico to visit her sick mother. Armed men forced her into their car and drove away. Like thousands of others Guatemalans abducted in the same manner, she has never been seen again.

While living in exile, she had become an active member of AI, campaigning for the release of prisoners of conscience, fair trials for political prisoners and an end to torture and executions.

One woman who has direct experience of AI's efforts is Farkhande Bukhari, a women's organizer for the banned Pakistan People's party now living abroad imprisoned three times after the latest imposition of martial law in Pakistan, she was held in solitary confinement in the old Lahore Fort and tortured. She was deprived of sleep, beaten and burned with lighted cigarettes.

When she was sent into exile AI contacted her. The organisation arranged a medical examination and hospital treatment and then worked to get her accepted as a political refugee.

"I and my family cannot forget the help that was given to me" she says. "The local members of Amnesty International came to my home from time to time and we share many common human feelings. Hope for the future and anger at the insult that people, especially those in Third World countries, have to face for their so-called insignificance."

"But" she adds "above this all the love that these sympathetic people have given me and my family will remain precious asset to our lives forever."

Her words echo those of another woman thousands of miles away - the former Soviet prisoner of conscience Yulia Voznesenskaya. After her release in 1982 the Leningrad poet wrote to one of the AI groups that had worked for

over five years for her freedom.

"Any letter or postcard addressed to political prisoners, their families or to officials plays an important role in the lives of the prisoners. It improves their position even if the letters never reach their hands.

"Sometimes in the camp, the camp authorities and wardens would start to be especially polite to me and they would avoid ill-treating other women prisoners in my presence, I guessed something had put them on their guard. Later on, quite by accident, I found out that a letter from abroad had come for me and caused this change in their behaviour."

As AI starts its campaign for the release of other women still held as prisoners of conscience, hoping to engage women's organizations in the drive and to generate a worldwide deluge of letters and postcards to offending governments, the message from the front line of the struggle for human rights is unmistakable.

"Even if you get discouraged by seeing no results from all your efforts", argues Yulia Voznesenskaya, "what you write makes a difference. We cannot have and struggle without help from other countries."

Fatima Al-Lazkani, Syria
Fatima al-Lazkani, 27, a former medical student at the University of Damascus, is being held without charge or trial in Kafr Sousseh prison, Damascus. She was arrested in September 1981 while distributing leaflets for the banned Party of Communist Action; of which she was a member. The party has faced periodic suppression and many of its members have been arrested.

(Continued on page 12)

NEWS BRIEFS

Cowardice?

It is reported that a S. I. and some policemen have been called upon to explain their alleged display of cowardice during an attack on Kalawanchikudy Police Station. It is alleged that, they had abandoned their weapons and took to shelter. They probably thought that discretion was the better part of valour, and that 'they who fight and run away, live to fight another day.'

Schools' Boycott

At a meeting of representatives of various bodies it was unanimously decided that students of Point Pedro, Valvertitural and Karaveddy areas would not attend classes until the security forces withdrew from various points near the schools.

No Go

Reports from South India indicate that 3 militant Tamil groups were 'not keen' to

meet a religious delegation as they had not the blessing of the Sri Lankan Government for their visit. The sources further said that they had stipulated pre-conditions such as the release of those arrested as "terrorists" and withdrawal of security forces from the North and East.

Father's Complaint

Mr. K. Sellathural of Kokuvil is reported to have lodged a complaint with the Government Agent that a roneo machine belonging to his daughter was taken over by the security forces during a search there.

Indian Reaction

After the arrest of several Indian fishermen for alleged poaching in Sri Lankan territorial waters, the Indian Coast is reported to have been placed on the alert for Sri Lankan boats entering Indian territorial waters.

A Sonnet to Lord Muruga

Blast my Soul, my gracious MURUGA!
Burn, strike and mould me new, that
I shall rise pure and free
Of aches and desires that enthral me.
I like an aimless vessel
Tossed, spun and driven to despair
Seek your grace and shelter,
In this holy week of 'Shasti'.
For days six I deprive
My body of food and water,
And tune my thoughts on Thy glory,
Chanting 'Kavasam', 'Alangaram', and 'Anupoothy':
Drag me out of this worldly mire and
Lay me on the path to success and divinity.

C. Kamalaharan

(Composed on the eve of 'Skandashasti')

Saturday Review

SRI LANKA

C.B.U. Poised for a Strike

The Commercial Bank of Ceylon Branch of the Ceylon Bank Employees Union is poised to launch a strike if their demands are not met.

The Branch met recently at the Ceylon Mercantile Union Auditorium and called upon the management to immediately halt all forms of victimisation of members engaged in legitimate Trade Union Action, to withdraw all such acts committed since 8th August and to negotiate with the Union in a forth-

right manner to settle the dispute with regard to the collective agreement for staff officers.

The Branch also condemned the management for its failure to withdraw the suspension of all suspended members and the failure to pay back wages for the period of such suspension.

From Free Trade Zone To Surveillance Zone!

The post 77 Economic Scenario of Sri Lanka witnessed and boasted about Free Trade Zones. It was said that FTZs were mighty dollar-attracting structures and would boost the Sri Lankan Economy sky-high. But nowadays no one is interested in talking much or writing lengthy articles about the so called FTZs.

As we have pointed out, (SR 13th October) ten companies in the much vaunted Free Trade Zone have already closed down and more are likely to follow.

So no more Free Trade Zones. Now, instead we have a Surveillance Zone! The result? The Northern fishing industry is in shambles. The restrictions and the limits of fishing areas have severely hit Northern fishermen, who supply a substantial part of the island's fish catch and marine exports.

Through fear of shelling, Northern fishermen, especially in Mathagal, are now beaching their boats in the interior.

On 17th Wednesday the Armed Forces in a combing out operation in Mathagal took away 22 boats 'beached' in the interior.

5,000 people in the areas of Mathagal and Sillalal have now taken refuge in churches and temples because of these punitive strikes. The most affected ones are fishermen.

We spotlighted earlier the memorandum addressed by the Fisheries Extension Service Societies' Union to the Minister of Fisheries, Mr. Festus Perera, on the difficulties faced by northern fishermen.

Fishermen now feel that their appeal has been thrown

into the waste paper basket, as nothing has been heard since.

For the record, we wish to recapitulate some of their many grievances. They say that through their representatives they had voiced their misgivings on restrictions imposed by the Surveillance Zone and other harassments by security personnel, to the Co-ordinating officer, the Government Agent and other Security Officials. No remedial action has yet been taken. On the contrary, the screws are being tightened more, they say.

Reports indicate that fishermen in the areas of Mamunai, Chempianpattu, Vettalaikerni and other areas in the vicinity have been forced to spend their day at home and the night in the jungle for fear of shelling by security forces.

Even migration which should be normally allowed as a merciful alternative is severely discriminatory in Mannar and Mullaitivu areas. Fishermen from the North have been forced out of these fishing grounds, while fishermen from Wennappuwa, Negombo and other areas have been given 'most preferred treatment' by security personnel in these areas.

Statistics show that the North produces nearly 30 per cent of the total catch of the whole island and in the export outlet the Peninsula has produced nearly 23 per cent of the island's fish exports and 45 per cent of shrimps exported, not to mention other exports like Beche-demer and chanks. If the present decline in production is not arrested by suitable incenti-

ves, the over-all export potential is very bleak and many exporting agencies will be compelled to put their shutters up under cover of these progressively shrinking exports. Many in these export agencies will face starvation and unemployment.

Fisheries sources say that earlier nearly 20 lorries left the Peninsula to the South with fish but now there is nothing. In fact some transporters have sold their lorry fleet, as they feel their maintenance is economically unfeasible. One fisheries source said that they were no longer disturbed in the nights by the continuous rumbling of lorries on the road and they have a peaceful night's sleep.

Fishermen in the North complain that they have been given step-motherly treatment by the Government and if no form of relief is afforded them nearly 5,000 fishing crafts will be beached and nearly 50,000 fishing families will face starvation and death. Already; they say, some have been forced to pawn their jewellery at exorbitant rates to private parties (now that the People's Bank and other cheaper outlets are closed) to keep themselves from starvation, but this cannot go on for long.

Over to you, Mr. Minister.

Film Star Vijaya Knocks Out Brother-in-law

The SLFP was beaten into third place by the SLMP candidate — Opposition Leader Mr. Anura Bandaranaike's film star brother-in-law Mr. Vijaya Kumaranatunge — at Minneriya which was captured by the ruling UNP which also took the Kundasale seat.

Commemoration Seminar

A Seminar on the theme "For a real Sri Lankan Church" was organized by the Christian Workers Fellowship to commemorate the life and work of the late Bishop Lakshman Wickremasinghe on Thursday 25th October from 4-00 p.m. to 7-00 p.m. at

the YMCA Forum Hall in Colombo.

As a tribute to Bishop Lakshman whose death anniversary fell on 23rd October the CWF recently published a booklet entitled "For a real Sri Lankan Church!". Copies of this booklet were available at the Seminar.

Prisoners of Conscience

(Continued from page 11)

including Fatima al. Lazkani's husband.

She is also a poet and novelist and was active in the promotion of women's rights. In 1977 she was arrested and briefly detained after leaflets on women's rights; in Syria had been distributed on the campus of Damascus University.

Alaide Foppa de Solorzano, Guatemala

Alaide Foppa de Solorzano was a lecturer in literature at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and a well known art critic and poet. She was abducted on 19th December 1980 while visiting her native Guatemala to see her sick mother. Armed men believed to be members of the security forces bundled her into a car and drove away.

No thorough investigation has ever been investigated into her "disappearance" and AI continues to press for those responsible to be held accountable.

She was one of Guatemala's most distinguished intellectuals, and had been living in exile in Mexico City since 1954.

She was an active feminist, being one of the founders of the feminist magazine Fem and the presenter of the radio program Foro de la Mujer. Women's Forum. Her abduction may have been prompted by an interview she had recorded with Indian women

from Quiche Province of Guatemala, where opposition to the then government of General Lucas Garcia was strong. It has also been suggested that it may have been intended as a reprisal for the active opposition of her husband and her son, Mario, to the government of the day.

Vera Chirwa, Malawi

Vera Chirwa, a 44 year old university law lecturer. Is currently serving a sentence of life imprisonment at Zomba Prison in Malawi together with her husband. Orton Chirwa, a former Minister of Justice and Attorney-General

Vera Chirwa and her husband spent more than a year under death sentence before they were granted clemency in late June 1984 by Dr. Hasting Kamuzu Banda, Malawi's 1st President. They had been sentenced to death for treason in May 1983 by the Southern Regional Traditional Court after a trial in which they were denied legal representation.

On 24 December 1981 Vera Chirwa and her husband were detained by Malawian security forces. The Malawi Government alleged that they had entered the country clandestinely from Zambia, but the couple have stated throughout that they were abducted by force from Zambia. Their son Fumbani Chirwa was with them. He was detained without trial for more than two years and was released uncharged in February 1984.