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47 TAMILS KILLED IN RAMPAGE BY SECURITY FORCES

At least 47 Tamil civilians were shot and killed on 18 September in the eastern Tamil city of Batticaloa when the Sri Lankan security forces went on a rampage following a bomb explosion in which a number of policemen either died or suffered injury.

The bomb which exploded was allegedly planted in a parked car along Munnai Street in Batticaloa. Shortly after the explosion, the security forces indiscriminately shot at civilians in the area and in their homes and shops. They reportedly captured 21 persons, all Tamil civilians, from one place and shot them dead. They set fire to several shops and threw some of the dead bodies into the burning shops.

The Catechist of the St. Antony's Church was also shot dead and his body removed. Among the victims was a one-and-a-half year old child. Most of the dead bodies were taken by the forces to the Alaiyadi Cemetery and burnt.

The security forces are also said to have rounded up over one hundred

other civilians, including children, and their whereabouts are yet unclear. In the meantime sources from the Batticaloa General Hospital reported that of the 12 bodies taken to the hospital, 10 had gunshot injuries. The government's claim that most of the people died by electrocution having come into contact with an exposed lamp post, which was damaged in the bomb explosion, has been discounted by the Batticaloa Citizens Committee as totally false. Disputing the government's version, one member of the Committee asked, "The bomb explosion occurred in Munnai Street. How come then people, including the Church Catechist, were found dead with gunshot injuries along St. Antony's Road?"

Torture Charge Against SL Ambassador In Canada

The current Sri Lankan Ambassador to Canada, Major General T. Weeratunga, has become the subject of wide media coverage amidst serious allegations that he was personally involved in the torture of Tamil political prisoners back in Sri Lanka.

Until his recent assignment as Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Canada, General Weeratunga held top ranking positions in the country's armed services, including the post of Commander of the Combined Services.

The allegations against General Weeratunga relate to his personal involvement in military operations in the Jaffna district in northern Sri Lanka ordered by President Jayawardene in July 1979. The Canadian media has been carrying details from an affidavit sworn in 1980 by the Sri Lankan Tamil,

Mr. Umaphisivam Pararajasekeram, now living in Paris. He had been tortured nine times in fifteen days in army barracks in Jaffna where General Weeratunga was also then living.

In a television broadcast on 14 September in Canada, the victim of the torture was interviewed and he stated that General Weeratunga was present while he was tortured.

In the affidavit sworn in 1980 before a Sri Lankan Magistrate in front of an Amnesty International investigator, Mr. Pararajasekeram said that General

Continued on back page

AS THE campaign by hard-core racist forces in south Sri Lanka launched against the government's latest proposals to settle the ethnic conflict has failed to gather the anticipated momentum, comes the news that 700 so-called Buddhist monks belonging to the Sinhala Bala Mandalaya are to engage in a 'fast unto death' demanding the abandonment of the government's proposals. The fact that the noble teachings of Buddha and the name of Buddhism have been prostituted in the past by prelates and politicians in Sri Lanka for malevolent purposes is no secret.

The Sri Lanka Freedom Party, the main Sinhala opposition party led by Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike and her son, Anura, has ganged up with a bunch of nondescript extremist chauvinist groups to agitate against the government's proposals to set up provincial councils in all parts of the country providing for a degree of regional autonomy on prescribed matters. They are joined by bigoted sections of the Buddhist clergy led by the Mahanayake of the Asgiriya Chapter, the Rev. Channananda Palipane, and the President of the Sinhala Bala Mandalaya, Rev. Sobhitha. Racists of a bygone era like K. M. P. Rajaratne and Prins Gunasekera and the Iriyagolle progeny have also jumped on this anti-Tamil war-mongering bandwagon.

Some academics like Prof. Wiswa Warnapala are also lending support to this campaign by distorting and exaggerating the implications of the government's proposals. Warnapala and the like have been conspicuously silent over the years during which the ethnic conflict was escalating from being a peaceful campaign for equal treatment in terms of economic, educational and employment opportunities to a struggle for sharing power between the nationalities that constitute the Sri Lankan state. The Warnapalas never opened their mouths when thousands of Tamils were incarcerated, tortured and even killed. They were silent spectators to the many anti-Tamil pogroms in which thousands of Tamils perished and their property destroyed. They watched with unconcealed glee as tens of thousands of Tamils fled the land of their birth in search of physical security. The agony of the Tamil people never reached their ears. Such men, having climbed their academic ladders at the expense of their fleeing Tamil colleagues, now have the cheek and audacity to go round the country pontificating about the democratic right of the people (of course they mean only the Sinhalese people) to a referendum on the government's proposals! Of course, the Bandaranaiques, the reactionary racist sections of the Buddhist clergy and the opportunist academic brigade of the Warnapala variety would go round the country denouncing and misleading the people that the government's proposals are a betrayal and a sell-out of the Sinhala race, and thus see to it that the proposals are rejected by the gullible Sinhala masses. Not that the Warnapalas do not know that there are certain internationally recognised inalienable rights of national minorities, the exercise of which does not depend on the approval by a dominant ethnic majority. What such men strive for is not the assertion of the democratic rights of the people in the sense of equal treatment of all, but the perpetuation of majority Sinhala domination over all sections through the camouflage of a referendum.

Whenever attempts have been made in the past to resolve the ethnic problem by negotiation, the base racist instincts of the Sinhala-Buddhist population have been

roused by the opportunist Sinhala political leadership and powerful sections of the Buddhist clergy. When the late Prime Minister, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, attempted to solve the problem through an agreement he entered into with the then Tamil political leadership in 1957, some 200 so-called Buddhist monks led by the Eksath Bhikku Peramuna (United Monks Front) demonstrated in front of the Prime Minister's residence and demanded the abrogation of the agreement. He succumbed to priestly pressure. In the following year, Mr. Bandaranaike was gunned down in his own home by a Buddhist priest, Rev. Somarama, who had sought and obtained an appointment with the PM under false pretences. The arch conspirator behind the assassination of Bandaranaike was no less than one of the leaders of the Eksath Bhikku Peramuna, Rev. Buddhakhitha Thero, the Mahanayake of the famous Kelani Maha Vihare. It was in the aftermath of the murder of Mr. Bandaranaike that the hitherto unknown and unheard of Mrs. Bandaranaike was propelled into political prominence. She climbed the political ladder under fortuitous circumstances on the wave of popular sympathy generated by the PM's assassination.

Despite his political opportunism in raising the 'Sinhala Only' cry to come to power, the late Mr. Bandaranaike had always believed in the concept of regional autonomy as the one suited for Sri Lanka. As early as 1926, he had advocated a federal constitution for Sri Lanka. But, today, his wife and son, both of whom had personally and politically benefited by his premature demise, are going round the country, ably aided and abetted by the self-same elements within the Buddhist clergy who were responsible for his murder, alleging that the establishment of the proposed provincial councils would destroy Buddhism and the Sinhala race. Neither Mrs. Bandaranaike nor her party has put forward any alternative proposals for resolving the ethnic conflict.

Instead, she and her son are going about the country inciting the Sinhalese people to violence. At one meeting, Anura Bandaranaike threatened that what happened in July 1983 (the island-wide anti-Tamil pogrom) would look like a tea party when compared to what was in store if the government's proposals were implemented. Again at another meeting he announced that his mother had made arrangements for Chinese troops to be called in to suppress the Tamil militants after Mrs. Bandaranaike became President. Anura said, "I don't like to disclose party secrets. But as the UNP is demanding a solution, I like to reveal this. In the tour Mrs. Bandaranaike had in China, she had discussions with Chinese leaders over the ethnic issue here in Sri Lanka. Unless the Tigers surrender, after Mrs. Bandaranaike went to 'Queens House' (the Presidential residence), China will cancel the weekend holiday of its army. That's all."

Whatever the truth or otherwise of Anura's boast on his mother's behalf, to Mrs. Bandaranaike, to the so-called Buddhist priests who are threatening fasts unto death and to the Warnapalas, the violence that has rocked the country for several years, the thousands of innocent lives lost, the destruction of the country's economy, and above all the international opprobrium and isolation the country has suffered mean nothing. What they seek and want to achieve is power and domination by any means.

Pattern of 'Disappearances' as Security Forces Systematically Violate Human Rights

SEVERAL HUNDRED PEOPLE are reported to have "disappeared" in Sri Lanka since mid-1984 and security forces have continued to violate human rights systematically and with virtual impunity.

Most of the reported victims of "disappearance" have been unarmed Tamil civilians, generally aged between 18 and 30. Most are from poor farming and fishing families, although they include a number of civil servants and a Roman Catholic priest. Only one is a woman.

Although many of those who have "disappeared" in Sri Lanka are reported to have been killed, there are still hopes that others may be alive, though kept in unacknowledged detention. AI hopes that by drawing the government's attention to the plight of the victims, every effort will be made by the authorities to ensure that those still held are located and set free or kept in safe conditions, and that the relatives of all the "disappeared" will be informed of their fate or where they are.

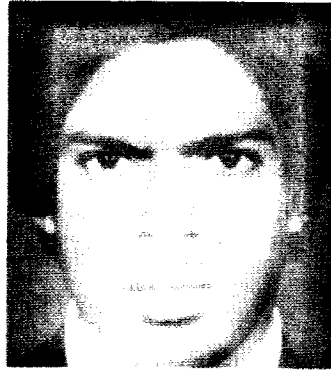
Although AI does not know the fate of most of the "disappeared" there is evidence that many of them have been shot or have died after torture and been buried in secret graves or burned; AI has received testimony on one incident where 40 were reportedly ordered to dig their own graves before being shot. Others are believed to be in unacknowledged detention in police stations, military camps and other centres - many of these people, too, are feared to have been tortured.

The tortures reported to AI have included burnings, severe beatings with PVC pipes, hanging upside down for long periods and the application of hot chillies to sensitive parts of the body, including the eyes.

With few exceptions, the "disappearances" have been reported from the Jaffna, Mannar and Vavuniya districts in the north and, more recently, from the Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Amparai districts in the east.

The army and air force are reported to have been implicated in "disappearances", especially those reported in the north. Most allegations of "disappearance" in the east concern the Special Task Force (STF), a special police commando unit formed in 1984.

The government has persistently refused to investigate almost all cases of "disappearance" or to bring officials responsible for violations to justice. This refusal, legal and other measures adopted by the government may well have encouraged members of the security forces to believe that they can dispose of dead bodies of people in their custody without any questions being asked by the authorities.



Thambimuthu Kamalarajah (left), a mechanic aged 22, is reported to have "disappeared" after soldiers had arrested him at home in Jaffna district on 30 November 1984. Two former detainees say they later saw him in Gurunagar Army Camp suffering from serious injuries and that he died as a result of torture around 8 to 10 December 1984. His relatives received conflicting reports about him when they inquired at the camp after his arrest: that he had been "released" and that he had been "sent to Colombo". After his reported death a sign on his cell apparently said: "Released". Post mortems and regular inquests are rarely held into deaths of political detainees in Sri Lanka. AI has reason to believe that a number of such deaths go unreported.

Father Mary Bastian (right), a Roman Catholic priest, was 38 when he "disappeared" in the Mannar area on the night of 4/5 January 1985. According to eye-witness accounts received by AI, security forces surrounded his mission in Vankalai that night and shot him and two others. His body was taken away by uniformed army personnel believed to be from the nearby Thallady Army Camp. The bodies of the two other victims were left behind. Although official reports initially acknowledged that he might have been shot dead, the authorities later denied this and suggested he had gone to India. This is one of the few cases in which the government has acknowledged a "disappearance" - but then disclaimed responsibility by suggesting the victim had "left the country".

In a new report, 'Disappearances' in Sri Lanka, AI includes details of 272 people who are reported to have "disappeared" since a pattern of such abuses began to emerge in Sri Lanka in late 1984. This was a time when armed Tamil groups stepped up their actions for a separate state on the island: they have carried out numerous acts of violence and have killed many hundreds of civilians and members of the security forces. (See box)

The cases included in AI's new report are only a part of those reported.

Many of the "disappearances" have followed mass round-ups by the security forces. For instance:

- On 2 December 1984, two days after an attack on Sinhalese settlers in the Vavuniya area said to have been carried out by an armed Tamil group, about 100 Tamil men reportedly "disappeared" after being taken from their homes by army and air force personnel. The government has denied they were detained. AI has received affidavits from relatives who say they saw the detentions being carried out. In one case a former detainee said in an affidavit that he was present when about 100 Tamil men were shot at Iratperiyakulam Army Camp and their bodies burned opposite the camp on 2 December 1984.

- In another incident about 40 young Tamil men in the Batticaloa area were reportedly detained by the STF on 17

May 1985. They are alleged to have been taken to a lonely spot, ordered to dig their graves and then shot dead. (Later the bodies are said to have been exhumed by the STF and cremated elsewhere). A shirt and identity card of one of the "disappeared" was found at the scene. On 25 May 1985 a correspondent of the London *Daily Telegraph* wrote that he had found signs of "mass graves" with "clumps of human hair still littering the scene". The government has persistently denied that the arrests or killings took place. The head of a civil liberties group and warden of a Methodist orphanage, Paul Nallanayagam, was detained for four months and charged with "making rumours and false statements" about the incident. A High Court judge acquitted him on 17 July 1986, finding that the evidence "cast serious doubts on the prosecution case" that there had been no arrests by the STF.

AI believes the "disappearances" and other grave violations of human rights have been facilitated by the suspension of important legal safeguards under emergency legislation. The 1982 Prevention of Terrorism Act permits a maximum of 18 months incommunicado detention without trial. Under the Emergency Regulations, intermittently in force since 1979, such detention may be indefinite.

(By Courtesy of Amnesty International)

TAMIL MILITANTS RESPONSE

AN ATTEMPT TO HOODWINK

Interview with V. Prabhakaran of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam - LTTE

Mazumdar: Your opponents charge that innocent civilians are often killed in your military offensives. How do you respond?

Prabhakaran: The LTTE has never killed any civilians. We condemn such acts of violence. There were occasions when we had to kill Home Guards. But they are not civilians. They are trained non-combat draftees who carry guns.

Q. How many troops do you have under your command and where do they train?

A. That's a secret. I can tell you we are strong enough to take on the 51,000-strong Sri Lankan military and well equipped to carry on protracted guerrilla warfare.

Q. Why do you think LTTE has taken the lead among other guerrilla groups?

A. Discipline and order are most important. We emphasise personal morality and a sense of patriotism. Our cadres carry cyanide pills with them to avoid falling into enemy hands. Most of all, the people are behind us.

Q. Critics charge that you rely on drug trafficking to raise money for your military activities. How do you respond?

A. Our people support us financially. We capture arms and ammunition from the enemy and also buy them on the international market. We don't get support from any other country. Here in India we are living as political refugees and the government of India extends moral support to our existence here. We have imposed a strict moral code on ourselves, not to use even liquor. How can one suspect us of drug trafficking which we condemn?

Q. Press reports say that you received military training in Cuba. How did you manage to acquire your know-how?

A. Through sheer personal training. I use my natural instincts and I watch war films and westerns by American movie actor Clint Eastwood. If I were trained in Cuba, I would have been a better fighter.

Q. What is your assessment of the latest round of negotiations between moderate Tamils and the Sri Lankan government on devolution of power to Tamils?

A. The proposals put forward by Colombo are insufficient even to start negotiations. We have enunciated four principles as the basis for talks: the traditional homeland of the Tamils must be recognised; Tamils should be officially recognised as a separate nationality; their rights to self-determination should be recognised, and the civil rights of stateless Tamils should be recognised. A frame work should be worked out incorporating these principles. Then we will consider negotiations.

Q. How serious do you think President Junius Jayawardene is in solving the Tamil problem?

A. This so-called peace initiative by Jayawardene is an attempt to hoodwink the world. That these negotiations are eyewash is clear from the fact that even while the talks were on the military killed nearly 150 innocent Tamils. Talks with Jayawardene? Possible, but only on the question of demarcation of our boundaries as two separate nations.

Q. Why do you think India allows you to operate from here?

A. Purely on humanitarian grounds. There is genocide going on in Sri Lanka. India knows we are fighting against genocide and trying to protect our people.

Q. Opponents charge that India is abetting "terrorists" by giving you sanctuary, while New Delhi blames Pakistan for training Sikh terrorists? What is your view?

A. There is a fundamental difference here. Our people are facing genocide whereas the Indian Army is not committing genocide in Punjab.

Q. India favours a negotiated settlement of the ethnic problem and opposes your goal of a separate Tamil state. What is your view?

A. The world is constantly changing; so is politics. We rely on the hope that changing circumstances will finally lead to India's recognition of our struggle. India has recognised various liberation movements. At a later stage India may be compelled to recognise us as it did the PLO and SWAPO.

Q. What do you expect from the United States?

A. We want to appeal to the American people to realise that we are a nation of people facing genocide. And we will appeal to the U.S. government to stop all aid to the Sri Lankan government which will be used for the destruction of our people.

Q. What kind of a political system do you envisage for an independent Tamil state?

A. We want to establish a socialist society. Ours will be a unique socialist model, neither Soviet nor Chinese nor any other.

Q. Have you ever considered calling for India's military intervention to stop what you call genocide?

A. India's military intervention is not necessary because we have a fighting force capable of facing the military. In fact, India's intervention may allow other international forces to meddle in Sri Lanka and create chaos.

(By Courtesy of Newsweek)

THERE'S SOME IMPROVEMENT

(Interview with the Secretary-General of the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOT), Uma Maheswaran.)

Q. The PLOT's soldier force has all along been taking a low profile, not participating in many militant activities, believing that hit-and-run attacks and ambushes do not pay. Your theory has been that if you attack a police station or an army camp, you should not only wipe it out but also be able to liberate the area around and protect the people there. But in the last two weeks, you have killed several soldiers by planting what the PLOT calls "tree-mines", "cylinder-mines", and so on... What is the rationale behind these attacks?

A. We have always been saying that hit and run attacks will be counterproductive, that they will make people refugees. It will make people run away from the (Jaffna) peninsula and get trapped. There have been some attacks by the militants on the Sinhalese civilians. The military also started attacking the Tamil innocents. We have been condemning these attacks on the civilians for it will pose communal problems and divert our struggle. The present situation is that the army attacks the Tamils and the militants attack the Sinhalese. On both sides, communal feeling is building up and people are also dragged into supporting this.

If we allow this, chauvinism will grow on both sides and it will end in a crisis, leading to the massacre of Tamils. We must break this and to achieve this, we were forced to attack the military at various places without hurting the civilians. In the long run, this is not going to help the Tamil Eelam struggle. But we have to do this to stop the Sinhalese feelings towards chauvinism. These attacks will not continue for a long time.

Q. You were handed over the Sri Lankan Government's latest proposals aimed at solving the ethnic question. Are they an improvement over Annexure C?

A. We have not so far gone through the proposals. Once we go through the proposals, we have to clarify with the Indian Government. After that only can we say what the proposals are.

Q. But surely, you must have read the proposals in the newspapers. They were released in the Political Parties Conference on June 25 in Colombo. How do you feel about them?

A. Since Independence, we have had so many talks, so many proposals and pacts, which were agreed to by the Tamils but not implemented by

the ruling parties. Every time we agreed to a pact, we were the losers. After the proposals were signed, we were kicked out and the proposals were not implemented. We see this as a tactic to reduce the stridency of the Tamil militancy. So we will mobilise the people and we want to go on a struggle to fight for our rights. This time we don't want to be the losers. If the Sri Lankan Government wants to solve the problem, let it first discuss it among the Southern politicians and let them finalise among themselves how far they are going to accept the Tamils as equal citizens and give some rights within the constitution. Once they finalise this we can decide what we can do.

Q. Like other militant organisations, do you look at the proposals in terms of the four principles - recognition of the Tamils as a distinct nationality, recognition of their right to self-determination, recognition of their homeland and the grant of citizenship to all the plantation Tamils?

A. These are only four principles and not proposals. So within these proposals (of the Sri Lankan Government), let the Southern parties decide how far they can meet these principles. After that only we can comment. They are calling for the Political Parties Conference and deciding on how much rights the Tamils should be given. This itself shows that the Tamils are not being looked on as equal citizens.

Continued opposite

TO GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS

THERE IS A LARGE GAP

(Interview with V. Balakumar of Eelam Revolutionary Organisation - EROS)

Q. What is your basic stand on the ceasefire? Will you go in for a fresh ceasefire accord?

A. We had a bitter experience of the last ceasefire agreement with the Jayawardene Government. So we have to be very cautious this time.

As far as Jayawardene is concerned, he is not willing for a ceasefire. He has said that he is going to implement the military solution as far as the Tamil problem is concerned. And so there is no point in asking for a ceasefire now when the Sri Lankan Government is not willing for it.

Q. Can the latest proposals form a basis for negotiations?

A. We have not gone through the proposals or studied them closely. Generally, we can say that we will stick to the four principles we have enunciated.

Q. It is known that the proposals do not incorporate the four principles...

A. Because these proposals are submitted by the Government of India (to us), we will convey our comments on the proposals to the Government of India. As far as our experience of the Sri Lankan Government is concerned, it is very shrewd about this kind of process. It is very good at bargaining.

What it is doing from the All Party Conference up to now is to put the proposals on the table and ask us to look at them. They have improved little by little but still they have not reached the Annexure C or the CWC proposals stage. There is a large gap. We do not

know what is their maximum. From APC up to now, they have been saying this is the maximum they can give.

This is a propaganda gimmick but we have to take it seriously because we are in a "live or die" situation. We are not seasoned politicians to play games with Jayawardene. When they come up with substantial proposals which will, to some extent, satisfy people's aspirations, we will then consider them. But we think the minimum the Tamil people will consider is the federal concept and the homeland concept. This is the basis for consideration and not acceptance.

Q. What are the chances for a fresh round of talks with the Sri Lankan Government now?

A. There is no chance because the Sri Lankan Government is all out for a military solution. In the last one month, they have killed more than 300 Tamils, including 37 fishermen at Mandaitivu in the Jaffna peninsula, 100 at Kilinochchi and another 100 at Trincomalee. We have to pool our resources for a defensive action. This is the only step we can take. It is very clear that Jayawardene wants to talk to us from a position of strength, viz. he wants us to surrender. This will not happen. He gives proposals but at the same time he says that he will crush the militants. What is the meaning behind this?

Q. Jayawardene has said that he will implement the proposals unilaterally even if you will not accept them.

A. Let him implement them. Then, why are

all these exercises going on? Jayawardene is very cleverly using all his ability to postpone finding a solution to the problem because his political future is dependent on this. So far he is not sure of his successor. Until he is sure of his successor he cannot afford to solve the problem. This is their problem.

Q. Union Minister P. Chidambaram has said that the proposals form a "fairly complete package" and the Government of India spokesman has also observed that they are "practical enough" for a resumption of dialogue between the Tamil groups and the Sri Lankan Government...

A. It is their opinion but we were asked to consider whether the proposals can form a basis for negotiations and to come to Delhi. There is no compulsion involved in this. Earlier, we told the Government of India that if it wants to continue the peace process with the Sri Lankan Government, we will not interfere. That stand is still valid.

Q. How do you describe the situation in the Eastern part of Sri Lanka, where the EROS has a well-knit cadre?

A. Everybody knows what is happening in the North. The armed forces find it difficult to come out of their camps. They are idling there. Hence, they use bombers and helicopter gunships to show the Sinhalese that they are doing something in the North. The sufferings of the people in the refugee camps are intolerable.

The Government has never taken any steps to aid these people and it never allows outside agencies to go to the (Tamil) refugee camps.

At the same time, it allows outside agencies to go to the Sinhalese (refugee) camps. For the first time, some people in the Kilinochchi refugee camp have signed a memorandum to Rajiv Gandhi. This shows the plight of the people. It is clear that the Sri Lankan Government wants to pressure the people through these sufferings but the people will not yield. It is different in the East where there are armed Sinhalese civilians. They have settled armed Sinhalese hoodlums and thugs and they are using sinister tactics to create tension between the Muslims and Tamils. They are creating communal trouble.

Besides, in the East, they have the elite commando unit called the Special Task Force under the control of Ravi Jayawardene. They have opened new army camps every four to seven miles. Earlier, we found it difficult to work there because of the terrain. But now we have some control of the situation and the armed forces find it difficult to come out of the camps. After the Palathopu (Trincomalee) landmine blast on May 30 (in which 30 soldiers were killed), we have reliable information that many troops have left the camps without permission. In the last one or two months, there were ten suicides (among the soldiers). The STF is disorganised; its morale is low. They thought that by terrorising the civilians, they can turn them against us, but the tactics have failed. We will hit wherever possible and whenever necessary. But the people's suffering is high because they cannot continue farming and other normal activities.

The displaced are living in forests. But the Muslims have decided to live with us, which is a very good victory for us. So we are now concentrating in the East where there are no petty clashes between the groups as in the North. We have a cordial relationship with the other groups there.

(By Courtesy of Frontline)

Continued from page 4

Q. Last time, it was called the All Parties Conference (APC). This time, it is called the registered Political Parties Conference (PPC), that is minus religious outfits such as the Buddhist Maha Sangha. Does it reflect a sincerity of purpose?

A. The Buddhist Maha Sangha is brought into the scene by the politicians for their own sake - for the sake of the political parties themselves. This is to find an excuse for not being willing to give anything to the Tamils. But if necessary, if any of the political parties is not satisfied, they can call in the Buddhist Maha Sangha. Then, to counter this, the Government will call in another chapter of the Sangha.

Q. Can the "clarifications" form a basis for negotiations?

A. There is some improvement on the earlier proposals but we have to see how far other political parties will go along with this.

Q. Jayawardene says this is the final package and that he will implement it unilaterally.

A. This shows that he has not changed the character of his Government. He is a fascist.

Q. What is your basic position on a ceasefire? Vijaya Kumaranunga is keen on resumption of an effort to bring about a cessation of hostilities.

A. He has not talked to me in terms of a ceasefire. He was talking to me on how we can solve this problem. We agreed to talk with him because, so far, he has not come out with any communal statement since his party (SLMP) was formed. After the Political Parties Conference, he will come back and talk with us. Jayawardene has a fear and that is why he wants to solve it (the problem).

Q. What fear?

A. There are internal contradictions, problems within the party (UNP). The country has gone to rot. Kumaranunga also feels that there is a possibility of an army coup. So Kumaranunga suggests that we should settle this problem to avoid this danger (of a military coup).

Q. In the present situation, is there any room for ceasefire?

A. I don't think there is any chance. We feel that if ceasefire comes, it will be good for us to work among the people.

Q. How do you characterise the situation on the ground?

A. The situation on the ground is worse, especially outside the peninsula, because most of the people outside the Jaffna peninsula are dependent on the land economically. Once they are driven away from the land in "search and destroy" missions, they are not in a position to continue the agricultural work. It is a little bit better inside the peninsula than outside. There is no army coming on a "search and destroy" mission inside the peninsula but there is aerial bombing. The militant organisations are capable of stopping the military movement only on land; they cannot stop the aerial bombing or the shelling from the sea. People outside the peninsula are badly affected.

Q. What do you think of the powers devolved on the provincial councils in respect of law and order, land settlement, language question and so on in the latest proposals?

A. I don't want to comment (on this).

(By Courtesy of "Frontline")

TAMIL MILITANTS RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS

"NO BASIS FOR POLITICAL SETTLEMENT"

Interview with K. Padmanabha, Secretary-General of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front

Q. You have just been given the latest proposals. Do the proposals form any basis for a negotiated settlement? What is the situation on the ground in the North and the East of Sri Lanka?

A. Irrespective of what proposals are presented by the Sri Lankan Government, the existing realities are that conditions do not exist for the implementation of the proposals. The objective material conditions do not yet exist for not only the formulations but also for the implementation of a political solution. If you take the general political situation in areas other than the North and the East, you will find that even the Sinhalese are facing immense problems due to the violation of fundamental human and democratic rights, due to the Prevention of Terrorism Act and an overall decline in living standards as manifest in increasing unemployment, inflation etc.

Q. Do the proposals disappoint you? Do they form any basis for beginning a negotiated political settlement?

A. When we walked out of the Thimpu talks, we left on basically two issues: first with a genocidal situation and army atrocities continuing in the North and the East, conditions did not exist for any rational discussion on any political settlement. This situation has only worsened.

Secondly, our representatives at Thimpu made it very clear that any proposals that can be deemed to be worthy of our consideration must recognise the fact that the Eelam people form a distinct nationality and, more important, they are a nationality which is subject to oppression.

Q. The proposals rule out the "merger" of the North and the East; they also exclude the strategic port of Trincomalee from the purview of the provincial councils. Jayawardene also says that he will implement the proposals unilaterally if you reject them.

A. The basic principle is that we, as a distinct nationality, have been oppressed and also that we have an inalienable right of self-determination. The very statement from Jayawardene that he will implement the proposals unilaterally suggests that he is not concerned whether our people accept the proposals or not. In other words, he is not worried about the consent of the Tamil people. Further, there is a very clear violation of the right of self-determination in the proposals. We cannot accept this "take-it-or-lump-it" attitude of the Sri Lankan Government. There is nothing in the proposals which makes explicit the homeland concept. The homeland concept has been completely left out.

Q. The proposals say that provincial councils might be set up in seven other provinces in Sri Lanka besides in the North and the East. What is your reaction to this?

A. Jayawardene is speaking of provincial councils for the entire country. Speaking only of provincial councils, they neither solve the problems of the Sinhalese nor the Tamils for the following reasons. As I have said already, the provincial councils come nowhere close to recognising the right of self-determination of the Tamils. Secondly, the broad spectrum of the Sinhalese masses is not demanding a solution to their own national oppression. They are not oppressed as a nationality. The Sinhalese are

facing exploitation which even the Tamils face. So why provincial councils for the entire country? It makes no sense.

Q. Are you going to reject the proposals? Or is it possible that they can form a basis for negotiations?

A. For the aforesaid reasons, they cannot form a basis for negotiations for a permanent solution to the national question.

Q. Are the proposals an improvement over Annexure C?

A. It is not an improvement over Annexure C. Annexure C was rejected by the Jayawardene Government.

Q. Supposing Jayawardene unilaterally implements them, what will you do?

A. He will not be able to implement them in practical terms. Under the name of "unilaterally" implementing them, Jayawardene will only intensify his military option for the simple reason that he will continue to face stiff resistance from our people and the liberation organisations which are waging a struggle to emancipate our people.

Q. When the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party (SLMP) leader, Vijaya Kumaranatunga, was in Madras recently, he wanted a fresh ceasefire? Will you go in for a fresh ceasefire agreement?

A. Kumaranatunga's stand on ceasefire, unlike the rhetoric used by the Jayawardene regime last year, is undoubtedly based on good intentions and aimed at minimising the tragic loss of civilian lives, both Tamil and Sinhalese. We made it very clear to him (which he later accepted in a statement) that as long as the Sri Lankan Government continues to engage in a military offensive resulting in a genocidal situation, we have no option but to counter it with the force of arms.

Q. With the Government of India calling the proposals an advance over the formulations and taking the position that they are "practical enough" to form the basis for negotiations, do you think it is pressuring you?

A. We do not perceive it as pressure tactics from the Government of India. We fully realise that as a mediator in a process of negotiated settlement, such terminologies are inevitable. In addition, we have been told in no uncertain terms by the officials of the Government of India that it is for the liberation movements to decide whether the latest set of proposals constitute a basis for negotiations.

Q. What do you think of the powers devolved on the provincial councils in portfolios such as law and order, where the Tamils (the provincial councils) can recruit police personnel up to the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Police?

A. It is like a job bank. They do not go beyond the establishment of a job bank for recruitment to the police forces. It does not address itself to the law and order situation.

Q. Earlier, Jayawardene used to insist on a referendum before implementing any proposal but the latest proposals rule out a referendum for a constitutional amendment . . .

A. This is a typical double standard tactic employed by Jayawardene right from Thimpu-I to the present. The Sri Lankan Government had made it explicit that it was not prepared to propose any amendment or changes to the constitution which will require a national referendum. It was therefore hypocritical on the part of Jayawardene to suggest a referendum on the merger issue, viz. only for the Tamil area. We are not mere boys to be misled or confused by these double standards. We have made it very clear that just as the Sri Lankan Government is not prepared for the division of the country, we are not equally prepared for the bifurcation of our homeland.

(By Courtesy of Frontline, July 12-25, 1986)

GANDHI 'TIRADE' PUTS TAMIL PEACE TALKS IN JEOPARDY

A BLISTERING attack by Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister, on the Sri Lankan Government and its army and disparaging references to President Junius Jayawardene have jeopardised peace negotiations with separatist Tamil leaders.

Mr. Gandhi's remarks, in Harare, have also cast doubts on India's mediation, a vital consideration in any settlement. "If they (Sri Lanka) do not like our help we are willing to withdraw," he said. The press here described his comments as a tirade.

President Jayawardene has talked to Mr. Mani Dixit, the Indian High Commissioner, but the Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry is awaiting the full record of Mr. Gandhi's statements. Publicly, the Government has said nothing. This is also true of the government-owned media. However, the privately-owned press has responded with indignant editorials and commentaries.

Mr. Gandhi said Mr. Jayawardene had taken 18 months after his talks in Delhi to produce a package of proposals which offered much less than promised. He accused the Government of dithering and wanting in political guts.

Mr. Gandhi seems to have been particularly annoyed by what he called a "deliberate leak" to the press of a confidential letter sent to him by Mr. Ranasinghe Premadasa, the Sri Lankan Prime Minister.

The two premiers met twice in Harare. At the end of the talks, Mr. Premadasa sent Mr. Gandhi a letter summing up the Sri Lankan case for an Indian ultimatum to the Madras-based Tamil guerrilla groups and the need to seize their weapons and stop the flow of arms and men across the 20-mile Palk Straits. The letter was given wide publicity in Sri Lanka.

Courtesy of Financial Times, 9.9.86

Muslims Not Opposed To N. & E Link, But Demand Separate Provincial Council

The following are extracts from a memorandum sent to President Jayawardene by the East Sri Lanka Muslim Front in response to the government's proposals for a settlement of the current ethnic conflict in that country:

"The East Sri Lanka Muslim Front while supporting fully the principles to which the Sri Lanka Government subscribes:

- ★ maintenance of the unity, integrity and sovereignty of Sri Lanka;

- ★ maintenance of the unitary character of Sri Lankan Constitution;

wish to emphasise that the system and the unit of devolution of power should be appropriate to the situation and satisfy the aspirations of different ethnic groups in Sri Lanka. In the interest of the settlement of the present ethnic conflict the East Sri Lanka Muslim Front consents to the proposals provided necessary provisions are made for the creation of a separate Provincial Council for the Muslims to protect our independent ethnic identity with equal powers and functions like other Provincial Councils to achieve our aspirations.

The Tamil Moderates and the Armed Eelam Fighters have said that if they are not given a viable alternative for a separate state, they would continue their struggle till they finally achieve what they want. What they have in mind we believe, as a viable alternative is a Linguistic Council in the Tamil Areas of the Tamil speaking Northern and Eastern Provinces. They have also made it clear that

as provided in the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact, they would welcome the creation of two or more councils in the Eastern Province so that the Muslims could also have a separate Council where they are in a majority.

The merger of Northern and the Eastern Province was refused on the ground that the Muslims of the East are opposed to it.

The Muslims opposed this merger mainly because they would become an insignificant minority under the Tamils. But they are not opposed to the merger of the Tamil areas leaving the Muslim areas in the Tamil speaking provinces, for a separate Muslim Provincial Council.

Muslim Majority Provincial Council

Since Muslims are also a recognised major ethnic group in Sri Lanka it is our legitimate right to have a separate Provincial Council where the Muslims will be of sufficient majority to form a council and to share powers like the other two major ethnic groups.

The proposed Provincial Council for Muslims can be in the Eastern Province. The area of authority of this Council would include the three predominant Muslim electorates - Kalmunai, Sam-

manthurai and Pottuvil including the balance part of Wewagampattu South. Extent approximately 900 sq. miles in the present Amparai district as basic, and the non-contiguous Muslim areas of Kattankudy, Eravur, Valaichenai, Ottamavadi, Mutur, Kinniya, Thampalagamam. In the event of a merger of the Tamil areas of the Eastern Province with the Northern Province, Musali and Erikelampiti in Mannar District should also be joined with the Provincial Council for Muslims.

These Muslim areas which are non-contiguous should be first made community oriented Pradeshiya Sabhas - A.G.A. Divisions as proposed in para (iii) 16 of the new proposal and considered parts of the Muslim Provincial Council. This would incorporate a little more than 85% or 315,000 Muslims of the total Muslim population of 372,005 in the Tamil speaking area. There will be about 80,000 Tamils and 40,000 Sinhalese also in the Council for Muslims. Muslims will be more than 72% in the proposed Muslim Council.

The problem of administering non-contiguous areas is not as impossible as it is made out to be. For example the former French possessions in India fall in three different states Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh where three different languages are spoken and administered as a separate union state. Whereas in Sri Lanka all the Muslims in the Tamil speaking area speak Tamil and their grievances with regard to land, language, economy and employment are the same. What we are asking here is a Provincial Council on the administrative pattern of non-contiguous Union State in India."

Opposite of Unity is not Federalism but Disunity

WHAT seems to us at Satyodaya to be even more necessary than discussion of minutiae is to achieve a mighty consensus against the futility of both military and terrorist violence and for the only solution worthy of a civilised people, namely, a negotiated settlement.

Settlement of what? Not of terrorism which is not the original evil but only a symptom or an effect of the evil. Not even of the demand for Eelam, which is only the result of the unredressed grievances of the Tamil people.

Settlement of what? The present Government answered the question with commendable forthrightness both in its Election Manifesto and in its first Statement of Government Policy in Parliament as early as 4 August 1977:

"My Government accepts the position that there are numerous problems confronting the Tamil-speaking people. The lack of a solution to their problems has made the Tamil-speaking people support even a movement for the creation of a separate State. In the interest of national integration and unity so necessary for the economic development of the whole country, the Government feels such problems should be solved without loss of time."

The problem is therefore not principally one of violence. Neither is it one of a demand by some for a separate State. It is a problem of the redress of grievances which give rise to the separatist demand and to violence. Redress the grievances and then the demand and the violence will progressively be muted!

Much time has already been lost and at tremendous cost - in human lives, money, jobs, socio-economic development, in the loss of

peace, security and well-being. It is time for our common humanity to rise up and cry, Enough! The President's Address has not come a day too early.

There are three special emphasises which Satyodaya wishes to make in the present climate of discussion. The first as regards the estate population. It may be said that the estate people hold the key to the solution of the present problem. For, on the one hand, their presence in such large numbers outside the North and East should make the separatists think again about separation. On the other, leaving the grievances of the people of the North and East unredressed is only to invite the escalation of the problems of the North and East into the plantation areas. We therefore urge both anti-separatists and separatists to bear in mind the needs and aspirations of the estate people. On their part throughout the past 150 years they have humbly served to develop the country. They can now provide invaluable assistance in order to keep it united. The proper acceptance of the estate people into the mainstream of civic life in the country is thus a vital need for a lasting solution and for peace.

The second concerns the authority to implement whatever decisions are taken in the field of devolution and in the fields of land settlement, language, education and employment which were recognised as the chief problematic areas in the Government's Election Manifesto to the people and in its first Statement of Policy. The letter of any proposals of redress will be as important as the spirit in

which they will be implemented. It is hence of the utmost importance that there be set up an implementation body in which integrity and fearless impartiality will be, and be seen to be, inherently inbuilt.

The third concerns the distinction between the unity and the form of government. A firm commitment to the unity of the country should not stand in the way of effective devolution of powers to provincial or regional authorities. Our option may be clearly for a united State but this by no means implies an option for a unitary State, for it is important to be aware that a united State can also be federal in structure. The opposite of unity is not federalism, but disunity.

More than ever before in our post-Soulbury history is there a need today for all of us - political parties, political leaders, trade unions, study circles, religious and voluntary organisations - to cooperate in the search for a honourably peaceful solution to this great problem of our time. Let the political games of the past, however unfairly played, be forgotten for the sake of all the people of this land which is the land of our birth and the land of our love.

Satyodaya therefore earnestly appeals to every group and to every person in the island to support and carry forward the current initiatives towards a just and fair solution with honest and genuine care for the different ethnic, linguistic and religious groups, each of which contributes so indispensably to the rich pluriculture of our society.

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Torture Victim Seeks a New Life

BY GABOR MATE

Gabor Mate is a Vancouver family doctor and freelance writer.

NALLIAH SINNRASU holds out his left hand for the doctor, displaying multiple deformities of his middle, ring and little fingers. The 33-year-old Tamil has come for medical verification of his claims of having been tortured in his native Sri Lanka.

The medical report, requested by Mr. Sinnrasu's lawyer to help establish his client's refugee status, will confirm that "this patient's physical findings are consistent with his history of injuries sustained due to physical abuse."

Three Vancouver physicians have examined several dozen alleged torture victims in the past year. In that same period, Vancouver's Legal Services Society has handled more than 100 Tamil refugee cases, referring most of them to volunteer lawyers in the community.

Mr. Sinnrasu speaks through his interpreter and co-patriot, Frederick Seevaratnam, who claims the distinction of having been the first Tamil refugee to become a landed immigrant in Canada. Since arriving on January 1, 1982, Mr. Seevaratnam has served hundreds of fellow Tamils as guide, translator, driver and adviser. "Most of them are young men between 30 and 35," says Mr. Seevaratnam, "and most have gone to Toronto and Montreal to find jobs. They are all working."

Mr. Sinnrasu is janitor and dishwasher at a Vancouver restaurant, earning \$3.65 an hour, but says that in Sri Lanka it was his position as a well-to-do man in his village that aroused the suspicion of authorities. "I owned land and I was in the sesame oil business, and the police thought I was giving financial aid to the Tigers" (the Tamil insurgents fighting for an autonomous Tamil homeland).

Mr. Seevaratnam relates that Mr. Sinnrasu was first injured in July, 1981,

when the army went on a rampage in the town of Jaffna, following the shooting of four policemen by the insurgents. "They came to my house," says Mr. Sinnrasu, "arrested me, and pushed me inside a truck. When they threw me into the truck, they purposefully slammed the door shut on my hand, completely breaking my fingers. They also hit me with a rifle butt, knocking out my teeth. Then I fell unconscious, so they pitched me out on the road and left me there."

Afraid to attend a hospital for fear of being apprehended again, Mr. Sinnrasu received no medical help for the fractures of his fingers. As a result, they healed bent and twisted.

Rearrested in July, 1983, Mr. Sinnrasu was held prisoner in an army camp at Pallaly, where he claims he suffered torture repeatedly. "They would come for me about once a week," he says, "whenever something happened on the outside that made the soldiers angry. When they were drunk they would also open the cells and torture the prisoners. I was tied by the feet, suspended upside-down and beaten. When I asked for water, they would tell me to drink my own urine."

(According to a 1985 Amnesty International report, Mr. Sinnrasu's case is not unique. "There were frequent reports of detainees being beaten," AI found, "in several instances with plastic pipes filled with sand. Released detainees stated that they had been beaten while hanging upside-down...").

The medical report will state that on his left calf Mr. Sinnrasu bears a 10-centimetre-long scar, surrounded by several smaller scars, the result, he recalls, of being burned with hot iron bars. The large scar was caused by one of the burn wounds becoming infected.

Mr. Sinnrasu, who denies any involvement with the insurgents, was held without legal proceedings for more than a year and a half, under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

"I thought I would die inside the prison! With thousands of troops around, how could I hope to escape? In the end, I began to vomit blood and grew very weak, so they called my wife to take me home. Only I had to promise to appear before them whenever I was called." He did not await such an eventuality, but escaped, leaving behind his mother, wife and five children.

The prison experience has left Mr. Sinnrasu with a nervous twitch of his facial muscles. "He often feels very agitated," says his interpreter. "He has hallucinations and he is afraid for his family." Yet he would like to return to his native land. "Ninety per cent of Sri Lankans want to go back, if the situation ever settles down back home," says Mr. Seevaratnam.

Mr. Seevaratnam responds with a sigh when the two are asked how they feel toward the Sinhalese, the majority ethnic group in Sri Lanka, whose army has been accused of the anti-Tamil excesses. "We have no detestation toward the Sinhalese, but the way they are killing us now, we cannot live with them."

To illustrate, Mr. Seevaratnam holds up a page of color photographs in a Tamil newspaper, purporting to show Tamils massacred by Sinhalese.

The 48-year-old Mr. Seevaratnam, who was, by his own account, a wealthy man and a prominent Tamil politician in Sri Lanka, now works as attendant at a Vancouver parking lot and runs an office-cleaning service on the side. "I don't worry about that," he smiles, "the dignity of labor is the answer. I don't care what I do. But if I could, I would go back, too."

(Courtesy of "The Globe and Mail", August 29, 1986)

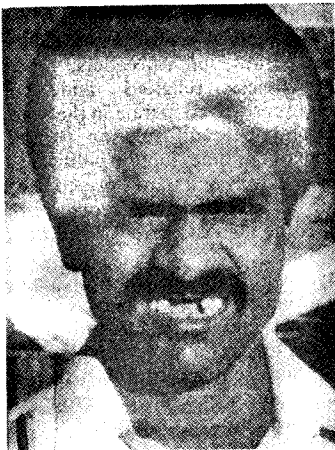
Opposite of Unity

Continued from page 7

Mr. Sansoni concluded his Report of Inquiry into the Incidents of 1977 with an extensive quotation from one of the authors of the present statement. We shall therefore conclude with the same words:

"The ultimate solution of the problem of the inter-communal relationships in our country lies in the establishment of a genuinely socialist society. In this society every man, woman and child will be given due place . . . because one is a human being with inalienable human rights and human responsibilities. The immediate solution lies in all the leaders of our country . . . getting together to provide the climate for the rapid socio-economic development of our country . . . The leaders of the majority community and the majority religious group must realize that the minorities have their rights and that the redress of their grievances needs to be given full weight. They must remember that parliamentary democracy is the rule of the majority with the consent of the minorities . . . The country must not fritter away its time and its energy in inter-communal violence and conflict, while the main task that awaits it is the liberation of all our people from poverty, unemployment, hunger, ignorance and disease."

Paul Caspersz Coordinator,
Lalith Abeysinghe Deputy Coordinator



Sinnrasu had teeth knocked out and hand disfigured.

THE TRAGEDY OF SELVARASA THEVI AND HER FAMILY

This is the harrowing tale of Mrs. Selvarasa Thevi from Pavatkulam, Vavuniya in North Sri Lanka, who has been receiving treatment at the Jaffna General Hospital for injuries sustained at the hands of khaki and grey uniformed men of the Sri Lankan security forces. She saw her mother, brother and two sisters gunned down in front of her.

I was living with my brother Subramaniam Veerasingam (38), my mother Parasakthi (48); sisters Yogamangalam (19), Jeyamany (13), my youngest sister and two children at Pavatkulam for the last six years as my husband has deserted me.

On 13.7.86 at about 2.15 p.m. I was having lunch with my two sisters Yogamangalam and Jeyamany. My youngest sister and my two children had gone to another house to play. My brother and mother were sleeping in a room. At that time three uniformed men came in a jeep and stopped in front of our house. They then got down and walked towards our house. Two of the uniformed men were clad in khaki uniform and the other in grey coloured uniform.

The two dressed in khaki uniform stood at the entrance of our house while the third in grey uniform went to the next house and came back dragging Kuddiyur Kanapathy (70) and Arumugam Vaithilingam (38) two of our neighbours. These two were made to stand in the front compound of our house. The three uniformed men then asked us to come out of the house.

I fell at the feet of one of them and begged him not to harm us. He scolded me in Sinhala and hit me with the butt end of the gun.

My mother then came out and walked up to one of them. He pointed the gun at her and threatened to shoot her. My mother then ran back into the house. The man in grey uniform then ordered my brother to come out. I gave my brother his National Identity Card and told him to show it to him. When my brother attempted to show his Identity Card the person in grey uniform hit my brother with the gun. All of us were then ordered again to come out and we did so.

Two boys, Kumar and Kulendran from the neighbourhood who were in our house at that time were taken to the rear of the kitchen by one of the men and asked to show where the Cottiyas (Tigers in Sinhala) were. At this time my mother and my sister Jeyamany were on the verandah. They were asked to come down. I was standing in the compound near my brother. I asked my sister Jeyamany to go and bring my two children and my youngest sister and she left the place to do so.

My brother then told me in Tamil, "there is no escape for us" and grabbed the grey uniformed man's gun. To help my brother I too got hold of the gun. The grey uniformed man then cried out something in Sinhala and the khaki uniformed

man who had gone to the rear of the house came back running and shot my brother who received the shot in his chest. The second shot fired at him hit me also and both my brother and myself fell down. The man in grey uniform then shot at my mother too and she fell down. My sister, Yogamangalam came up to the man in grey uniform and asked him to shoot her too and he shot her in the face. As the three uniformed men were running out my sister Jeyamany who had gone to bring my children returned alone on hearing the gun shots. She (Jeyamany) then shouted out to the uniformed men, "you have shot my mother, shoot me also". One of the uniformed men then shot her too and left. While leaving they shot K. Kanapathy and A. Vaithilingam. K. Kanapathy died on the spot. I understand that A. Vaithilingam who ran away after receiving the gun shots fell into a well accidentally and died.

I went up to my mother and saw that she had been shot in the stomach. I then told my mother that she was going to die and that I too would ask these men to shoot me too. My mother asked where my sister Yogamangalam had been injured and I told my mother that she had been shot in the face. She then stroked my hand where I had been injured and asked me to run away and escape.

The two boys who had been taken to the rear portion of the house and were in hiding came out from their hiding place and asked me to run away with them. I told them that we must carry my mother and take her along with us as my brother and sisters were dead. My mother then said that she would definitely die and wanted us to run away and escape. The two boys and I then ran into the jungle. When we were in the jungle my youngest sister and my two children joined us. They told me that they had gone home and my mother had asked them to find us and run away.

We waited in the jungle till dark and then went and stayed in a house. The following morning we decided to go back to our house where we found the dead bodies of my brother, my mother and two sisters. My brother's dead body lay with one hand clutching his National Identity Card. The gold ring he was wearing was missing. I then arranged the dead bodies as best as I could, kissed the dead bodies and left with my children and youngest sister.

I then walked to Cheddikulam and handed over my two children and youngest sister to the Reverend Sister-in-Charge of the Convent. I made a complaint to the Grama Sevaka who instructed

me to go to the Army Camp and lodge a complaint.

At the army camp I was asked about the persons who had come to our house and I told them that I would be able to identify them if I saw them again. They then produced a person with a gun and I was asked whether the uniformed men who had come to our house possessed similar guns and I replied that two of them possessed the same type of guns.

The army officials then told me that these uniformed men must have been Tamil terrorists posing as army personnel and I replied that they were not Tamil terrorists but Sinhala soldiers as they spoke in broken Tamil when they pointed out to my brother and asked me whether he was my husband.

I was taken in an army vehicle to the hospital where they informed the doctor that my hand may have to be amputated and that I should be sent to Anuradhapura General Hospital. Army personnel then brought a truck in which there was an old Sinhalese lady and wanted to take me to Anuradhapura Hospital. I declined saying that I had to first attend to the funeral arrangements of my brother, mother and sisters. Army personnel then left.

My cousin then came in search of me and took me on his bicycle to my house where I came to know that Ariyanathan Kalyani (30) a Sinhalese, Sritharan (14) and Rasan son of Piyadasa too had been shot dead in this incident.

When all the bodies were about to be cremated army personnel came on the scene and took away the dead bodies lying on the pyre and in the cemetery. I then travelled to Jaffna and got admitted at General Hospital Jaffna for treatment.

Abuses never justified

AI condemns the torture or killing of prisoners by anyone, including opposition groups. However, it also believes that violence by opposition groups can never justify security forces themselves resorting to violations of human rights such as torture, "disappearances" and extrajudicial killings. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Sri Lanka acceded in 1980, specifies that under no circumstances, even in times of public emergency, may a government derogate from its obligations to protect the right to life and right not to be tortured.

SRI LANKA

"DISAPPEARANCES"

An 89-page report released by Amnesty International on 10 September, 1986 containing hundreds of cases of involuntary disappearances of persons taken into custody of Sri Lankan security forces.

Amnesty International Publications
1 Easton Street, London, WC1X 8DJ.

IN ONE MONTH

262 KILLED AND 92 MISSING

262 Tamil civilians have been killed while another 96 are reported missing in the Northern and Eastern Provinces in July. According to figures supplied by the Co-ordinating Council of Tamil Citizens' Committees the breakdown for Black July-86 is as follows:

	Dead	Missing
Trincomalee	101	43
Mannar	52	12
Batticaloa	32	14
Vavuniya	29	03
Jaffna	20	05
Mullaitivu	13	05
Amparai	08	04
Kilinochchi	07	06
	262	92

Three grenades found outside Vijaya's house

Three high explosives were discovered recently by the wall skirting at the residence of Vijaya Kumaranatunga, General Secretary of the Sri Lanka Mahajana Pakshaya.

The Army ballistics experts who were called in found that in one grenade the firing pin had been released. But it failed to work due to a spring fault. The safety pins were on in the other two.

The grenades were discovered by Mr. Kumaranatunga's private secretary Herman Weersuriya. Mr. Kumaranatunga had just returned from Beruwala and there were no others at home at the time.

A police spokesman said that it was possible that whoever planted the bombs primed only one grenade expecting it to go off exploding the other two as well. But, this plan did not work due to a faulty spring.

Had it exploded it could have killed a man within a radius of 25 yards and caused serious injuries within a radius of 75 yards.

Man Taken Into Custody Found Dead

An employee of Karainagar Cey-Nor, V. Nalliah, who was taken into custody by the Navy on 28.7.86 was found dead in a field, later.

A Navy Patrol had taken him into custody at the Karainagar Jetty.

When the Cey-Nor Management contacted Naval authorities of Karainagar, they were told that Nalliah had been released.

HOME GUARDS Remanded in Trincomalee

Over ten Home Guards are in custody at Trincomalee for offences ranging from theft to murder.

UTHAYAN reported on 28th July that a Home Guard had intimidated two Sinhalese householders and was arrested by the Uppuveli Police and brought before the Magistrate. The Magistrate ordered the confiscation of his gun and he was remanded till 7th August.

LANDMINE EXPLOSION

At Kalmadu in Vavuniya District an army convoy is reported to have run into a land mine and as a result 4 soldiers were killed and 4 others injured. This incident occurred on 30th July around 3 p.m.

SHELL KILLS TWO

T.Markandu and his son Chandradasan died as a result of injuries sustained when a shell fired from the Jaffna Fort damaged their house at Ariyakulam on 28.7.86. The son died earlier while his father succumbed to his injuries later.

Home Guards Order Tamils To Move Out

Sinhala Home Guards ordered 43 Tamil families from Dehiwatta in Seruvawila electorate to evacuate their homes.

The families have sought shelter in the Eechanthivu Government School, Kinniya.

Fishermen in North up in arms

Fishermen of North Sri Lanka are up in arms against the Fisheries authorities for insisting that the licences of their mechanised boats be renewed.

The fishermen say their fishing crafts lie idle since the declaration of the surveillance zone and they have been deprived of their earnings as a result. Moreover the fishing crafts are exposed to the elements and are subject to damage. Angling in the waters is also prohibited.

The Community Centre of Myliddy has informed the Divisional Fisheries Extension Officer, Jaffna, that the attempt to have the licences renewed is not proper in the context of the state of starvation the fishermen are facing. The centre has appealed to the authorities to postpone the requirements of licensing the boats until such time as the prohibition order to fish in the surveillance zone is lifted.

Public debt rises to all-time high - Rs. 130.8 billion

Gross public debt rose to an all-time high of Rs. 130.8 billion by end of last year with domestic debt accounting for Rs. 63,197 million and foreign debt for the balance Rs. 67.7 billion.

Statistics released in the Central Bank bulletin for January 1986 also reveal that gross receipts in terms of domestic and foreign debt rose during 1985 from just over Rs. 100 billion at the beginning of the year by Rs. 8898.1 million in foreign loans and Rs. 18216.5 million in domestic debt.

Direct payments against rupee loans on capital and interest commitments during 1985 amounted to Rs. 4913 million while foreign debt servicing took up Rs. 1789 million. Total debt servicing for 1985 hence stood at an aggregate Rs. 6702 million.

The foreign debt includes an amount of Rs. 226 million which is accounted for by the effects of exchange rate fluctuations during the month of December. Exchange rate fluctuations are estimated to have pushed up foreign debt commitments by about Rs. 2000 million during 1985.

An analysis of foreign debt would hence disclose that exchange rate fluctuations have pushed up foreign debt commitments by more than Rs. 1789 million paid out in servicing the foreign debt for the year 1985. Foreign debt servicing took up only Rs. 1789 million while exchange rate fluctuations added on a further Rs. 2000 million approximately to the foreign debt burden.

The depreciation of the rupee against Special Drawings Rights values also resulted in a decline of 4.5 per cent in Sri Lanka's external assets in 1985 which stood at Rs. 18.3 billion at end of the year.

The bulletin further states that cumulative changes since November 1977 and end of January 1986 indicate that the Rupee had depreciated by 42 per cent against the U.S. Dollar, 25.8 per cent against the Pound Sterling 54.6 per cent against the Japanese Yen, 38.9 per cent against the DM and 38.3 per cent against the SDR.

NSSP MEETS TULF

A delegation from the Nava Samasamaja Party met the TULF recently to discuss the present conflict, a NSSP news release said.

The NSSP said that it had expressed its belief that two fundamental issues had to be resolved even for a temporary settlement. These were the formation of a region or province including the entire area considered to be "the Tamil homeland".

The second need was the creation of a "non chauvinist" national armed force by the addition of a Tamil regiment.

The NSSP also says that the objective of a Tamil region can be achieved by enlarging the northern province by including necessary sections of the eastern province.

The NSSP added that the TULF leaders had agreed that if these two concessions are won, there is room for a negotiated settlement.

The news release said that the TULF leaders have agreed that a breakthrough towards resolving the current problem could be a momentous occasion for the country's socialist movement and the socialist future for both the Sinhalese and the Tamils will be assured.

1000 professionals leave for greener pastures

The hardest hit by professional brain drain in Sri Lanka in recent years are the country's universities, the Health Ministry, the Central Engineering Consultancy Bureau and the Ceylon Electricity Board.

A total of 1012 professionals in these four institutions have left service in the past few years and are presumed to have gone abroad.

The universities have lost 253 professionals, the Health Ministry 289, the Central Engineering Consultancy Bureau 263 and the Ceylon Electricity Board 207.

This is the report of the Working Group appointed by the Development Secretaries Committee to investigate the brain drain in the country.

The Report also states that the Universities and the health services have suffered most through violated agreements and bonds. 199 lecturers and 289 doctors have not returned after completing study leave, scholarships or foreign employment.

The Group unanimously agreed that the main reason for the brain drain was low salaries.

It identified as contributory factors, poor working conditions and lack of job satisfaction.

The Group has stressed the need to increase salaries in the public service and the corporation sector and to bring them on par with the private sector salaries.

12,000 Lankan babies adopted abroad

About 12,000 Sri Lankan babies have been taken abroad for adoption in the last ten years.

In 1985 alone, 1530 babies were taken abroad and adopted while 36 were adopted by Sri Lankans during the same period.

The Probation and Child-care Services Department had streamlined the adoption

PROFESSIONALS FOR SOLUTION THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS

THE GENERAL FORUM of the Organisation of Professional Associations in Sri Lanka, constituting 22 professional bodies and associations of different disciplines, that represent over 22,000 individual professionals met on 26th June 1986 to consider the prevailing national crisis arising from the ethnic conflict that is seriously damaging the progress of our country.

The forum was of the view that this crisis has reached such dangerous proportions and that unless immediate solution of a peaceful nature through a process of negotiations is arrived at very soon, that this crisis will fracture and fissure all sections of our society to such an extent it will make reconciliation and rebuilding difficult for a long time to come.

The OPA appeals to all political parties, non-governmental organisations, citizens and citizen groups to rise above partisan politics and sectarianism and demonstrate a spirit of understanding, compassion and love with the sole

intention of reaching an immediate political solution. If there is one time and one period in the modern history of our country, that calls for a spirit of sincerity and puts the responsibilities of citizenship to test, that moment in our history has arrived.

The General Forum of the OPA thanks the Government and the political parties for participating in a dialogue with a view to arrive at a political solution, and appeals to the Government and all political parties to accept the mechanism of constitutional reform as a basis to arrive at a form of Government compatible with the plurality of different cultures, races, languages and religions.

The OPA on its part, offers its services and that of the professionals and professional bodies constituting the OPA to help in anyway they can towards the process of a speedy settlement and also to allay the fears and doubts that impede the formulation of a solution.

Dr. Sirilal de Silva (President)

The Cost of Arson

The Annual Report of the Jaffna Co-operative Stores Ltd., for the current year

reveals that the Jaffna Co-operative Stores Ltd., in north Sri Lanka, suffered a loss of Rs. 14,474,325/- resulting from the army rampage on April 9th 1984 at Hospital Road near Our Lady of Refuge Church in Jaffna.

The Insurance Corporation has refused to pay its claim for compensation. Even an appeal made to obtain relief from the President's Fund was turned down.

The main office of the Jaffna Co-operative Stores, its several Departmental Stores, Wholesale Dept., Cigarette Sales Section, Textile Department, Pharmacy, Sales Section of the Schweppes Department and the Canteen were completely gutted, when the army set fire to the stores.

The Motor Department sustained only partial destruction.

procedure. This was done to stop any 'sale' of children or mushroom agencies engaging in illegal child adoption activities, said the Commissioner of the Department, Mrs. Vinitha Jayasinghe. The department dealt only with State recognised and state registered agencies in foreign countries.

Mrs. Jayasinghe says that it is impossible to keep track of a child's on-going progress within a chosen family after the first two years of adoption. Incidents of maltreatment have been extremely rare.

35,506 on drug charges

Drug enforcement authorities in Sri Lanka have arrested 35,506 persons for drug offences during the period 1980-1985 sources said yesterday.

These sources also said that 1,451 kilogrammes of a variety of drugs, including cannabis, hashish, opium and heroin, were seized by them during this period.

During the period under review, sources said 28,853 persons had been arrested for cannabis-related offences, 5437 for heroin-related offences, 827 for opium-related offences and 389 for hashish-related offences. During the same period 892 kilogrammes of cannabis, 255 kilogrammes of hashish, 240 kilogrammes of opium and 64 kilogrammes of heroin had also been seized by the authorities.

Except for heroin, arrests of persons in connection with offences related to other drugs had dropped, at least minutely, each year.

There were no arrests made in connection with heroin related offences in 1980. However, eight were arrested in 1981. Thirty three in 1982, 263 in 1983, 1794 in 1984 and 3339 in 1985, sources said.

SL Tea fast losing out to Competitors

Lanka's tea trade is heading for a serious crisis with local manufacturers becoming increasingly uncompetitive in international markets, Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel warned recently.

"We must wake up - and fast. Otherwise our tea will face the most serious crisis, not only in declining prices, but by becoming uncompetitive in international markets," he said.

Addressing the AGM of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, the minister said: "Every country that can grow tea is doing it now. We must take notice of this and also the new technological advances in the industry."

He said Kenya, one of Sri Lanka's key competitors, was producing almost exclusively CTC teas (for tea bags) which enjoyed a good demand in western markets.

Kenya's cost of production was half of Sri Lanka's Rs. 40 a kilo, while their average yield per hectare was 3,000 kilos compared to 900 kilos here.

Roman Catholic Church - Jaffna University Campus

The opening of the new Roman Catholic Good Shepherd Church by the Roman Catholic Bishop the Rt. Rev. D. Deogupillai took place at the Jaffna Campus of the University of Sri Lanka on 5th July, 1986 at 3.30 p.m. in the presence of a distinguished gathering.

The speakers at this function were the Rt. Rev. D. J. Ambalavanar, Bishop of the Jaffna Diocese of the C.S.I. and Prof. S. Vithiananthan Vice Chancellor of the University of Jaffna.

A Souvenir to mark the occasion was released by the Roman Catholic Association of the Students.

The Souvenir was introduced by Mr. S. Jebanesan and distributed to the distinguished guests by the Vice Chancellor.

The Rev. Fr. Anton Mathias proposed a vote of thanks. This was followed by a Cultural Show organised and presented by the Roman Catholic Students at the University.

NOW TAMILS ON BOAT TO CANADA

"The whole truth . . . as told by Wijayanathan"

"In our despair, we silently made our peace with God and were getting ready to face certain death in a watery grave, when lo and behold we saw a faint glimmer of hope in the form of a tiny boat in the distant horizon," said Mr. Nalliah Wijayanathan (46) soon after he and 154 Sri Lankan Tamil men, women and children were rescued by Canadian fishing trawlers off the coast of Newfoundland on 11th August 1986.

The large influx of castaway asylum-seekers from Sri Lanka sparked off a week-long nation-wide controversy in Canada with the people, press and the television media, all taking sides and airing their views on the broader aspects of the refugee problem.

Mr. Wijayanathan recounted in graphic detail their perilous journey across the Atlantic, which he said could very well have ended with tragic consequences.

A quiet soft-spoken accountant, Mr. Wijayanathan was working in Tillys Beach Hotel, Mount Lavinia, when one day in July 1983, all hell broke loose. His hotel was attacked, ransacked and finally burnt down to the ground by angry Sinhalese mobs. He said, "All the employees and the hotel guests fled in terror, seeking refuge and shelter from the knife-wielding rustics and murderers. I ran to a friend's home and later was housed in the Refugee Camp at Sirimavo Bandaranaike Maha Vidyalaya for 12 days from 27th July to 8th August. I was then sent by train to Jaffna, where I hoped I could have a peaceful life and make a living there. Soon it became evident to me that the parting of the ways had already begun. Jaffna was turning out to be a virtual battlefield with the army and the Tamil militants exchanging frequent fire, in the process of which many homes were ransacked and destroyed, and many innocent persons taken in for questioning, quite a few never to be heard of thereafter.

"I was taken in for questioning in April 1984 when the Naga Vihara in Jaffna was burnt. I was grilled and closely questioned about the militant youths and their activities. I managed to plead my innocence and was released after 14 days. I then decided that Jaffna was no longer a place for me to live with any measure of security.

"I came back to Colombo in October 1983, hoping that the bitterness and anguish would have died down, and that I could try to forget the past and start life all over again in Colombo. Attempts made by me to secure a job ended in dismal failure. I met with negative response to advertisements calling for hotel personnel. I was often told that I could not be employed because I was a Tamil and therefore a security risk in the prevailing ethnic situation. I therefore decided to seek my fortunes in a foreign land.

"On 5th July 1984 I joined a flight for East Germany via Moscow, and on 7th July crossed over to West Germany. It soon dawned on me that Germany was no

paradise and had very little to offer me by way of a job or security. Like most Sri Lankans I was housed in a camp, given a paltry allowance to exist and told I had to bide my time till we were all repatriated to Sri Lanka sooner or later. We were all forbidden to work and restrictions were placed on our movements.

"We could not go out of the areas allotted to us and were often subject to security checks. Fines ranging from 25 to 125 Deutschmarks were imposed on those caught outside their areas. There was no prospect for us to improve our status. Under these circumstances we began making discreet enquiries of getting out of Germany. For some time now, we had heard that refugees were welcome in Canada, given opportunities for study, and to work and live in peace. But how to get across the Atlantic was the nagging question.

The news of how and why 155 Sri Lankan Tamils set sail to be abandoned near the shores of Newfoundland in Canada hit the headlines of the international press recently. Mr. Nalliah Wijayanathan gives a detailed account of the tragic tale of these refugees, including the harrowing circumstances in which he himself left Sri Lanka.

"It was about this time that we heard by word of mouth that some persons were exploring the possibility of ferrying people across to Canada by ship. Through some intermediaries I established contact with a Mr. Ratnam, who offered to obtain a passage for me on board a ship for a fee of 5,000 Deutschmarks. He assured me that he would arrange transport on a ship for about 200 Sri Lankans to Canada, and that we would be served three meals a day, given provisions to cook, and provided with adequate drinking water, toilet facilities etc. We were asked to be in readiness to leave at a moment's notice. We were warned that under no circumstances were we to divulge our point of departure and any other related information. We were to maintain the story that we sailed from India, on pain of deportation straight to Sri Lanka. We all agreed to abide by the conditions laid down by the organisers.

"On the evening of 27th July, we were taken in batches by van to a deserted dock and boarded a small ship in Strade, about 30km west of Hamburg. We were all made to descend an iron ladder into the hold of the ship, where we found ourselves in the midst of about 150 Sri Lankans, all herded together.

"A dim light overhead, a small cooker and two lifeboats were all that we saw in

the otherwise empty hold, but now jam-packed with human cargo. On one side we saw in a heap on the iron floor a fair quantity of bread, some tins of soup, jam, butter and four barrels of water.

"On the following morning we felt the engines start and we soon were sailing. It was only then that it dawned on us that we were going to be ferried across the Atlantic in the manner of slave ships. The only toilets we were provided with were three open buckets. For 14 days we were all crammed into the ship's hold, devoid of fresh air, with the floor awash with human waste and the rolling ship spilling the meagre precious supply of drinking water.

"Within a few days the bread had turned mouldy and foul-smelling. During the latter part of our horrifying journey many went without the rotting bread, and water was rationed. Many felt sea-sick and vomited. The three families were a little luckier, having been given two cabins to share, with some privacy. We were forbidden to go to the upper deck for some fresh air, on pain of being shot by the captain.

"Rumour was afloat that the name of the ship was altered on the run, the cross ensign on the funnel was erased, and the funnel painted black, the Plimsoll line was repainted in such a way to show that the ship was heavily laden with cargo, and the flag of the ship changed.

"All these made us wonder as to what was eventually going to happen to us and where we would be dropped, if at all this was to be a reality.



"On 9th August we saw the two lifeboats being lifted up. Shortly thereafter, we were asked to go up to the upper deck and board the two lifeboats now bobbing beside the ship, by means of a rope ladder.

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WITNESS TO A NIGHTMARE

WHILE THE Tamils who landed on Canada's east coast last week changed their story of the route they took, there is no doubt that in their Sri Lankan homeland members of the Tamil minority fear persecution by the ruling Sinhalese.

Maclean's Montreal bureau correspondent Bruce Wallace spoke to some of the newest members of the Montreal Tamil community: For Marimuthu Thavarajah, the nightmare began in April, 1978, with a late-night knock on the door of his stone cottage in Northern Sri Lankan farming village of Chankanai. While his wife and two young children watched, six Sinhalese policemen arrested Thavarajah for conspiring with Tamil militants against the Sri Lankan government and took him to jail. There, he says, they hanged him by his feet with ropes, held his face down on a table and beat his heels with a bat. Tamil villagers found Thavarajah, then a 28-year-old truck driver, by the roadside where he had been abandoned for dead and drove him 10km to Jaffna General Hospital where he recovered. But Thavarajah - one of the 155 Tamil refugees to seek asylum in Canada last week - said his life remained in peril as long as he stayed in Sri Lanka. From the Montreal hotel room where he spent his first night in his new city, Thavarajah told Maclean's: "Chankanai was the home of my family for generations. But living in safety is more important."

Escape

Most life boat passengers found drifting off Newfoundland coast last week were young adult male Tamils. Like many of them, said Thavarajah, he lived in constant fear of what he described as increasingly indiscriminate violence by the Sri Lankan military. In his desperate bid to escape, Thavarajah left behind his family and carried no mementos of his former life - he even sold his wedding ring to finance the trip. Despite the warm greeting by the Montreal Tamil community, refugees like Thavarajah face the difficult task of learning two new languages and finding jobs. Said Prins Rajaselvan, 38, an unemployed air cargo manager who flew from Colombo to New York via London before crossing onto Canada on a Greyhound bus last February: "Sometimes I get up in the morning and wonder what to do with the rest of my day. I do not want to be a burden on society."

Thavarajah said that local fishermen in Sri Lanka will often rent their boats to escaping Tamils. Last January, Thavarajah decided to join the exodus as the first step in his plan to move his family out of Sri Lanka. After travelling to the north to a tiny coastal fishing village, he slipped on to a fishing boat at night, along with five other Tamils to cross the 22-mile Palk Strait to India. "The army often shoots at the boats," said Thavarajah. "But there

are sympathetic people who will take you for the cost of fuel."

Thavarajah said he spent one month in an Indian refugee camp, then travelled north to live with friends in the coastal city of Madras. He claimed that last month he paid 30,000 Indian rupees (3300 Cdn. dollars) for his journey to Montreal. Thavarajah said that his group travelled on the upper deck of a ship and had no contact with the crew or other refugees below. When they were dropped overboard in lifeboats into the Atlantic,

escaped last May escorted by two elderly women: "I pretended I was off my nut to get past military check points," he recounted.

But problems persist among the swelling ranks of Montreal's Tamil refugee community. Even well educated and skilled Tamils have had difficulty finding suitable work and monthly welfare payments for single people under 30 are only 163 dollars. Said Selva Ponnuchamy, President of the Eelam Tamil Association in Montreal and an employed chemist:



Tamil 'prisoners' guarded by government soldier.

he and his fellow refugees thought that they were close to shore. "We were cheated," he said.

Violence

Still, many observers say that as long as the violence in Sri Lanka continues, Tamils will find inventive ways to leave the country. "My aim was to go anywhere as long as I left the shores of Sri Lanka," said Lakshmanan Kumaradeva, 30, who

"Tamils will do any kind of work. But many of us are accountants and engineers, so the frustration grows." Still, those obstacles seem mundane to refugees whose memories of violence remain vivid. Said 23-year-old Ravi Raveenthiran, who arrived in Montreal last year: "I hope for marriage and I hope to go back to school. But for now at least I am safe."

(Courtesy: Maclean's, August 25, 1986.)

NATIONAL IDENTITY OF TAMILS MUST BE ACCEPTED

"The peace process has now reached nitty-gritty. At bottom, the main issue at stake is acceptance or not of the Sri Lanka Tamils as a distinct nationality, whose aspirations to preserve and foster their separate national identity must be respected and provided for. It has taken practical shape in the debate over the demand to give the northern and eastern Provincial Councils the right to amalgamate.

The current negotiations have produced a plethora of new proposals for the eastern province, ranging from the setting up two linguistic Provincial Councils to a shoe-string P.C. for the Muslims. While not agreeing in full with many of the proposals made, we

nevertheless regard this factor as evidence of welcome re-thinking of former dogmatic and absolutist positions. And as for the forms of co-operation of the units that are finally set up, including merger, we have no objection other than to assert that the voluntary principle is respected.

The most important result of the peace process so far is that it is moving forward. Everything therefore must be done to make it easier for the third round of talks to begin soon and to succeed. A viable cease fire between the government and the armed Tamil organisations will be an enormously important contribution to this."

(Editorial, "Forward", (Colombo) 1.9.86.)

Boat People Get Jobs In Canada

From R. Chakrapani

(By Courtesy of "The Hindu" August 30, 1986)

"We are now smiling for the first time since we left Sri Lanka," said one of the 155 Tamil refugees who surprised the world after they were rescued from their dangerously overloaded lifeboats by Canadian fishermen off the coast of Newfoundland on August 12 and brought ashore with the aid of the Canadian coastal guards.

A group of the Tamil refugees, all in their early 20s, talked to this Correspondent from a temporary residence somewhere in the sprawling city of Toronto. They preferred to remain anonymous for fear that what they said might be misconstrued in Canada where they remain still in the eye of a public storm for having "lied" initially to the Canadian authorities that they came by a mini-ship all the way from India. But, later, when it was known that they had come by ship from a small port in West Germany, a fierce controversy, fanned by rightwing conservative elements and their press, the question was raised whether they should be accepted or returned.

A few days later, at a press conference held by them at Toronto, it was admitted by their spokesman that they had found their way to Canada from West Germany and not from India as they had originally claimed.

A statement to the effect that they "deeply regretted" at not having been open and forthright in their original statement about the country from which they had come and that they "pray for forgiveness" was made on their behalf. It was explained that they

were pressured and warned not to divulge their point of departure or give away those who helped them in their voyage to Canada in search of a permanent home.

This statement which was followed by a categorical assurance from the Canadian Prime Minister, Mr. Brian Mulroney that Canada would not turn its back on the Tamils who would be shown all compassion in the best traditions of Canada had cleared the atmosphere and silenced, at least momentarily, the rightwing elements.

Of the 155 Sri Lankan Tamils who landed at Newfoundland, 61 have been sent to Toronto, Ontario Province, and 93 to Montreal in Quebec. One migrant is sick and is in a Newfoundland hospital. There are a few Christian and Muslim Tamils in the group. They have been found temporary homes by the Tamil community in the two cities and have received employment permits from the Canadian authorities. As of last week, nearly 50 of them have received offers of temporary employment.

Mr. Wijayanathan Nalliah, one of the leaders of the local Eelam Tamil Association, said that after an appeal was made by the Tamil community leaders over the Canadian television networks, offers of employment for them were pouring in. This, he said, showed that the Canadian people were sympathetic to the Tamil immigrants. In due course, they would apply for "refugee" status. A long drawn-

out procedure was involved in this, and, when once they got this status, they would have the privileges of Canadian citizens.

The group of Tamil youths, who talked to this Correspondent, said they had left Sri Lanka after persecution by the Sri Lanka's Sinhala-dominated Army. Some of them had received severe beatings and a few suffered internal injuries with the result they were unable to take normal food. They had found various means of travel to reach West Germany. Some went to East Berlin and were able to cross the Berlin Wall.

Asked why they left West Germany, they said though they were getting financial doles, food and shelter, they were unhappy there because they experienced enforced idleness. "We don't want to live free," one of them said. "We want to take up employment and earn our livelihood, and continue our education. But no permission is given either to work or to study." Mentally, it was a stifling experience, they said.

The group declined to name the Sri Lankan agent who arranged their trip to Canada or the freighter by which they made the journey or its captain. They said they entered the boat at a small port whose name they were not aware. They entered the freighter before dawn and the name of the vessel was not visible.

They narrated a harrowing travel experience and an even more traumatic experience in the lifeboat journey until their rescue by Canadian fishermen near the Newfoundland coast. "It is our intention to settle down to normal life," they said.

Tamils on Boat To Canada

Continued from page 12

"The captain bodily pushed some of the slower ones and made us descend post-haste into the boats. This was a nerve-racking experience for most of us, especially the women and children, some of whom had to be passed from hand to hand down to the boats. While we were happy to breathe some fresh air after 14 days, we were now to face fresh dangers.

"As we were descending the captain told us that he would tow the two lifeboats to shallow waters, about 5 or 10km from the Montreal beach, and that thereafter we should steer 350 degrees north west.

"He did tow the two boats for an hour or two, and then cut the tow rope and vanished into thin air. We then found ourselves being tossed about by the waves, when we fitted the only motor to one lifeboat and towed the other, both of which were heavily laden with the 155 of us.

"All that we were given were two barrels of water and a can of gasoline, with which we were told we could reach land in three or four hours, but in actual fact, this nightmare journey was to last two days and three nights over a distance of probably 100km. On the last day we had neither water nor gasoline. We were by this time weak and exhausted. We allowed ourselves to drift and were at the mercy of the waves, and the wind.

"On the last day, when all hope of survival was fast receding, we said our silent prayers, and many made suicide pacts, including the couple and their 11-month child. Many felt ill and were sea-sick.

"While some continually vomited, others retched and I saw one person vomiting blood. Due to the cramped conditions in the lifeboats, many complained of swollen ankles and numbness, while others openly murmured that the end had come. Just at this time a tiny fishing boat spotted us at a distance and summoned aid, and before long we were rescued by the 'Atlantic Reaper' and treated to food, drinks and warm clothes. We were whisked to Newfoundland into the waiting arms of the Red Cross and many other social organisations on 11th August.

"In Newfoundland I acted as spokesman for the 155 Sri Lankans and maintained the story that we had sailed from India, as were our instructions. However, before long we realised that we had to come clean and tell the hospitable Canadian people and the world at large the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

"On 17th August, on arrival in Montreal I made the following statement to the news media at a press conference: 'The Government and people of Canada, in their quiet and generous way, have traditionally given refuge to citizens of many countries in times of crisis and suffering. We strongly believe that our

plight is no different from that of many others who have benefited from this compassion.

"We deeply regret not having been open and forthright at the outset. We were pressured and warned not to divulge our point of departure, or to give away those who helped us and any other information related to our voyage. We were under severe physical and mental stress. Our motivation was desperation in our search for a permanent home.

"We would like to take this opportunity to share the experience of our voyage with you. We boarded a ship in Germany on 27th July and sailed the next morning. All 155 of us were dropped from the ship on to the two small lifeboats on 9th August and provided with two barrels of water and gas. We wandered and drifted in the ocean, losing hope of surviving.

"We are truly thankful to the fishermen who spotted us on 11th August. We would also like to express our deep-felt appreciation to the government, national and local, private agencies and to all individuals who saved us from certain death, ended our suffering and made us feel welcome.

"We deeply regret misleading all people of goodwill in Canada. We pray for forgiveness, not only from the Almighty but also from the people of Canada. We plead that you will treat us with the same understanding and compassion that you have accorded to all others who came seeking refuge and peace in Canada."

Letters to the Editor

The Turks and the Tamils

THE Government of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus headed by Mr. Denktash, already recognised by Turkey, continues to make headlines because of the deep involvement of the United Nations Secretary General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, to find an acceptable solution between the Greek majority (400,000) and the Turkish minority (150,000) in the Island of Cyprus.

It is understood that Bangladesh, Malaysia and Pakistan are also likely to grant recognition.

In the course of an interruption at the UN General Assembly on October 5, 1978, I said "... There is real danger of the Tamil problem threatening the peace of the Indian Region. The problem in Sri Lanka will develop to be as serious as the Palestinian and Cyprus problems unless you, the world leaders, intervene and help in its solution now ...". All three have now become as intractable as the Irish one.

President Junius of Sri Lanka, obviously in a mood of utter despair and helplessness, mingled with a tinge of impotent warning to his people, recently declared that the way the Tamil freedom fighters are waging their struggle, Sri Lanka would soon be partitioned as has happened in Cyprus.

From the on-going 'involvement' of India in the 'internal' affairs of the Sri Lankan ethnic crisis, it would appear that the Indian Government policy makers regard the Tamil Eelam crisis as their own backyard problem and therefore do not welcome outsiders such as even the Commonwealth Secretary-General to offer his good offices to solve the crisis.

So, is it prudent and wise for us to leave the entire fate and future of the Tamil Eelam people to be decided by New Delhi? Of course, every Tamil values and treasures our link-up with India, particularly Tamil Nadu.

THE GENERATION GAP

YOUR JOURNAL assumes an interest in the issues raised only among the English educated. You will certainly remember that only a five or six per cent of the Sri Lankan population comprise the elite, the English educated. Thanks to Swabasha.

The present problems of the Tamil Community in particular concern the future of every single Sri Lankan, whether he is back at home or here in splendid isolation or fleeing the Country for dear life.

Even if you cater only to the Expatriate population and the international community, what you must never forget is that the vast majority of the 'fleeing' Tamils are youths and have little or no knowledge of the language your Journal speaks. That we have a date with destiny cannot be gained.

Why not devote a page or two to Sinhala and Tamil. That should kindle an interest for an understanding of the Heavier Stuff your Journal may contain in English!

Besides, we should like to know the thinking caused by the 'generation gap'.

London

Expatriate Youth

Does this mean that we must not ask for the help and support of other countries—say Turkey?

True, too true, that Turkey is so far away—So, What? Don't we realise that we are living in what some leading people call a global village? Distance has ceased to have much significance.

If only we Tamils can approach and appeal to the Government of Turkey to raise our issue at the United Nations and at the same time for countries such as Turkey to support India in its gallant efforts to solve our problem, then I think India would be the first to welcome it. As far as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is concerned, it is true Cyprus is a country that is a member of the Non-Aligned Movement and therefore India supports the Cyprus (Greek) Government in Nicosia and not happy to recognise the newly formed Turkish Cypriot Government. But Turks say that Cyprus was able to continue in the Non-Aligned Movement because in 1974 the Turkish Government sent its Armed Forces into Cyprus and secured a de facto partition which prevented Cyprus itself joining the NATO.

Are we to be bound all the time by Delhi's likes and dislikes—even when it means hundreds of our compatriots—men, women and children—are being wantonly shot and killed by the Sri Lankan chauvinist and notoriously ill-disciplined soldiers?

Now then—here is a chance—for some new dimension—new force to come to our help. The 52 million Turkish people, almost 100% Muslim, can help us and assist India in its efforts. So, how do we set about it?

The Tamil Eelam leadership should support the Turkish Government in its recognition of the Government of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and if a political formula could be found, then the Tamils can themselves "recognise" the Government of Denktash.

No doubt the Turkish Government, its people and the Turkish Cypriots will do whatever they can for the Tamils of Eelam to win back their freedom and independence.

K. Vaikunthavasan

Sorry for being born a Tamil

A FEW days back I received a long letter from a friend in Montreal. In his letter he wrote about your efforts to keep the Tamil Times going... Being a Tamil myself and having had so much experience with our people in the course of my struggle to build up two schools in Sri Lanka, I can sympathise with your plight.

There were numerous occasions when I felt sorry for having been born a Tamil. Our people are so selfish; always wanting someone else to make the sacrifice. It is unforgivable that even after all the tragedies that have now befallen us, there appears very little change in people's attitudes and values. Nearly every chap shows interest at least outwardly in the plight of our people: but when it comes to translating that interest in terms of financial help, they retreat. People with large bank balances... see nothing wrong in borrowing a copy of the Tamil Times to read it!

It is my view that every Tamil... living away from Ceylon must contribute to your Paper. It is not by any standard a sacrifice I wish your Paper could be adequately supported to make it a fortnightly issue.

Transkei, South Africa

Subscriber

The Monks are at it again!

ACCORDING to recent reports some seven hundred Buddhist Monks appear to have met in Colombo and resolved to fast unto death if further "concessions" are "given" to the Tamils consequent to the Peace Talks under way. Fasts in their true sense, are undertaken to encourage and sustain mental discipline in the human endeavour to sublimate thought. The Buddha used meditation successfully to achieve the mental discipline to attain enlightenment.

Mahatma Gandhi fasted to collect his thoughts and retain his equanimity in times of turmoil when the common feeling in the Country ran counter to his principles of Ahimsa and non violence. He succeeded because the people all over the world, not merely in India itself, loved him as a passionate disciple of the principles for which he lived and died for.

Therefore, if politics is not the name of the game as we understand it by the proposed Fast unto Death, one has to be only consoled by the thought that these seven hundred Buddhist priests must come out better souls, more towards the Enlightened One than they are now although one cannot fail to observe why they were so belated in their attempt. Equally they are a small insignificant minority (hopefully again) compared to the vast numbers of the Priests against whom it is unfair and unjust to allege the same conduct typified by the seven hundred.

One cannot however help being struck by the number of abrogated Pacts and broken promises by Sri Lankan governments over half a century largely by Marches and Sit-Ins, also purported to be Fasts unto Death.

London SW17

S.G. Varadan

Protest Against New Immigration Controls In U.K.

In one week we have seen the introduction of a visa system for certain countries whose residents are almost entirely black, and the decision to deport a two-year old, separating him from his parents in Bradford.

As members of the British churches responsible for matters of racial justice, we wish to object in the strongest terms to these two extreme manifestations of the racist immigration system. To abandon both would in no way reduce our opposition to the legislation as a whole, whose cruelty and inhumanity they expose so clearly. But it would reduce the damaging effects on families in general and on one family in particular.

John Reardon, (United Reformed Church). Tony Holden, (Methodist Church Division of Social Responsibility). John Fethney, (United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel). Kenneth Leech, Mavis Fernandes, (Church of England Board for Social Responsibility). Olu Abiola, (Council of African and Allied Churches UK). Lionel Fernando, (Church Missionary Society). Ann Sutcliffe, (United Reformed Church). Martin Wyatt, (Quaker Community Relations Committee). Donald Black, (Baptist Union). Raj Patel, (Evangelical Christians for Racial Justice). Richard Zipfel, (Committee for Community Relations, Catholic Bishops Conference). Keith Jenkins, (British Council of Churches). Ian Rathbone, (Christians Against Racism and Fascism). Esme Beswick, (Black Pastors Conference). John Campbell, (Zebra Project).

Canada's Need For A Better Policy On Immigration

THERE are various ways of looking at an event like the welcoming of 155 new Tamil refugees into Canada. The evident aspects as perceived by journalists and the media have been given adequate coverage. But the occasion can also provide a discernment situation when certain sentiments hidden deep down are brought to the surface.

Canadian Response: ADMIRABLE

On the whole, both the government authorities and the ordinary Canadian people have come through in an admirable way. Even yesterday morning, a young Canadian lady called me, and offered another three bedroom apartment for the recent immigrants, if the need arose. Such acts of generosity amply redeem the uncharitable rhetoric of a few disgruntled people who neither help, nor let others help. They like to play the proverbial dog in the manger. And that is their right. They do not act; they only react.

Brian Mulroney, whatever his inadequacies as PM, he certainly remains close to the heart of what it is to be a North American and Canadian. His words need to be pondered by people on both sides of the border. North America cannot be true to itself, if it closes its borders to new arrivals.

In Practice: RESTRICTIVE

The major question remains: in this time and age, do refugees have to take such awful risks to come to Canada? And why do they have to come in as gate-crashers who are 'put on hold for a year', and not as respectable, legal immigrants? One reason for refugees to take such risks and find extra-legal (some might call it 'illegal') ways of coming here is because Canada though it officially has an open, liberal policy as regards immigrants and refugees, in practice, at the Embassies and Consular Offices, the policy is most restrictive in that Visas are rarely issued to those in real need, and who have legitimate sponsors in this country. I am speaking specifically of the situation of the Sri Lankan Tamils.

Sri Lankan Tamils: SPECIAL POLICY

Ottawa does have a special policy in place for Sri Lankan Tamils who are sponsored by relatives here. But the consular authorities in London and Delhi and Colombo have another. They are unconscionably strict as to who can get in. Except for a few hundred who were let in after the pogrom in July 1983, they have made it virtually impossible for many deserving cases to migrate to Canada. Statistics for the last two years will clearly show that.

Why is it so? First, there is the pressure of the Sri Lankan Government which gives its own interested picture to the

Canadian officials there. 'Peace proposals' have been the Jayawardene Government's way of buying time, foreign aid and arms, to keep the Sinhala-Buddhist hegemony going. Second, the officials, to keep up appearances let in a few who are fairly well-to-do in terms of finance and education. Most of the others are condemned to find extra-legal ways to beat the system, because of this closed-door policy.

Airlines: EXTRA-CAREFUL

Hundreds of those who have come in recently, have come in 'illegally' since that is the only way in, for poor immigrants. But even these ways have been gradually sealed off by asking Washington and London and various airlines to be extra-careful with Sri Lankan Tamils. It is virtually impossible for Sri Lankan Tamils to get even a visitor's visa for legitimate purposes like attending a funeral or wedding or visiting an ailing parent or for studies. Gander, Newfoundland, is one of the last ports of entry to be thus sealed off.

Since they cannot now come by land (from the States which sedulously refuses visas to Sri Lankan Tamils) or air (through Russia, Cuba or some other country that winks at such entries), they have turned to the rather risky entry by sea.

One has to grudgingly admire their ingenuity in trying to find new ways to beat the system, while condemning the unscrupulous sharks who get rich on human misery.

Further, it is good to remember that the situation in Sri Lanka is not totally of their own making. Successive colonial powers from the West - specially the British - artificially put together for their own convenience disparate nationalities and kingdoms, under a Western style democracy. **Once independence came, it did not take long for this type of 'democracy' to degenerate into a dictatorship of the majority, with no respect for human rights or basic fair play.** Even within the majority, there is the dictatorship of an oligarchy (of a few 'prominent' families) which stays in power, and enjoys all the benefits of modern life, while exploiting the communal differences to stay in power.

West Germany: GENEROUS COMPARED WITH UK

Instead of just criticising West Germany which has been so generous in taking so many thousands (how many thousands has England taken?), but which has failed to let them integrate into the wider community, and looking good by comparison, Canada has to have a more realistic immigration policy not only in Ottawa; but in the foreign embassies where the decisions are made.

At present, most of those who come in,

Father Joachim Pillai is Professor of New Testament Studies at the Toronto School of Theology, Canada. He was formerly Professor at the National Theological Seminary at Ampitiya in Kandy, Sri Lanka.

come in illegally. The boat episode is just one very visible form of it. Every week, so many others come in illegally, and find the same kind of generous welcome, while many very deserving cases sponsored legally by close relatives who are Canadian citizens, are kept waiting indefinitely.

WITH NO EXTERNAL WOUNDS

The reasons often given by those immigration officials for not letting them in, are **that they have not yet been attacked, that they have no external wounds or burnt-out houses to show.**

The populous State of Madras in Southern India has taken in 150,000 refugees, in addition to the half a million Indian Tamils who were forcefully deported from Sri Lanka as stateless people, though they slaved for a century and more in the tea-plantations which remain the major source of income for Sri Lanka.

ENTRY BY ORDEAL

Canada, a Commonwealth country with a small population and vast resources can do more. The enlightened political leadership in Ottawa has indeed a liberal policy, but that policy is hardly reflected in the Consular Offices and Embassies which have virtually sealed off all legal, front-door entry to the Sri Lankan Tamils.

What is worse, they expose these people to false hopes and great danger by inviting them for pro-forma interviews in Colombo and New Delhi. With the present civil strife in Sri Lanka, **it is often as dangerous to make these trips from Jaffna to Colombo as to be adrift in lifeboats off the coast of Newfoundland.**

One has also to hear the horror stories of how the so-called Medical clearance is used to make them undergo endless medical examinations, numerous X-rays, superfluous operations; they are made to take all kinds of unnecessary medicines, because the medical authority discovers patches in the lungs, murmurs in the heart, growths in the body . . . This type of cruelty - a sort of entry by ordeal - has to stop. **No wonder, many prefer the more costly, extra-legal way.**

At present, under the pretext of a special program, Sri Lankan Tamils who have become Canadian citizens do not seem to have even the normal privilege of Canadian citizens to sponsor their close relatives. Reunion of families used to be an important factor in allowing new immigrants. It is still invoked for Europeans, and specially Russian Jews. But in the case of the Tamils, it has been made

Continued on page 17

continued from page 16

well-nigh impossible during the last few years.

To insist that they should have been beaten up or shot at or raped before they are allowed to rejoin their families, is hardly a just way of proceeding. People are thus constrained to lie or make up stories.

Both the Foreign Ministry and the Immigration Ministry should take this opportunity to set clear guidelines, and not let people's right to emigrate depend on the whims of bureaucratic officials. Often, there is no way of appealing against a heartless decision.

Let me conclude with what Pope John XXIII - an enlightened moral leader of the Western nations - wrote in his celebrated encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth): "Every human being has the right to freedom of movement and of residence within the confines of his own community; and when there are just reasons for it, the right to emigrate to other countries, and take up residence there. The fact that one is a citizen of a particular State does not detract in any way from his membership in the human family as a whole, nor from his citizenship in the world community."

Such grace and wisdom should at least marginally inspire the laws of even secular nation-states, specially those which have a Christian background, and which came into being by the coming together of displaced persons.

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*Oh! my People,
Scattered around the world,
Wait in hope and faith -
The day of Tamil Eelam will come.*

*Come back O God,
To this timeless land of ours!
See my People suffer, their dreams
Sunk in despair untold;
Hope tearing at their heart and soul;
Our hearts bleed for you -
Words can never be enough
For people who give so much.*

*Our young rose in ardour great,
Gave their lives for tomorrow's land.
Who could ever understand
The brave hearts of these our youth?
We hear the cry from deep within
O brave hearts carry on!
In our land your drums will sound
Your Spirits will live on.*

*Oh! my Mother-land!
You cry in anguish for Jaffna,
Mannar barren, Vanni dry,
For Water in Batti and Trinco,
The singing fish and blue lagoon;
In honour and dignity,
One day we'll drink again -
In freedom full and fair.*

By courtesy of Ceylon Tamil Association (Victoria)

**CRISIS IN SRI LANKA —
CALIFORNIA
CONFERENCE**

Tragic events in Sri Lanka demand immediate attention and international alert. The situation is desperate and not yet hopeless. There is still time for preventive action before the conflict reaches a point of no return.

The South and South-East Asian Committee of University of California Los Angeles (U.C.LA) and International Alert against Genocide and Mass Killings are jointly convening a major conference on 25th October, 1986 at the "California Room" U.C.LA Faculty Centre in Los Angeles to alert international opinion to the issues involved.

Above all we will explore possible measures to restrain immediately the present indiscriminate mass killings and to lay the basis for ethnic conciliation which will release the productive energies of the country debilitated by the murderous conflict.

The first session starting at 9 a.m. will be devoted to a keynote address and a brief historical retrospect. The second session (11 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.) will analyse the present situation. This will lay the basis for an afternoon panel (2 p.m. to 5 p.m.) exploring the possibilities of preventive actions. Leading scholars, political leaders, international lawyers and community representatives will present introductory comments to be followed with general discussions. Attendance is free.

**For further information, contact Prof. Stanley Wolpert,
History Department or Prof. Leo Kuper, Sociology Department,
405 Hill Guard Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90024, USA.**

MEDIA FILE

A FEW Progressive Conservative MPs seem to enjoy flirting with people who hurl racist, send-them-home slogans against 155 Sri Lankan boat people. So we're grateful to see Prime Minister Brian Mulroney slap down all such displays of insensitivity with his heartfelt plea Sunday for Canadians to welcome the newcomers, despite their entry by Newfoundland's foggy back door.

Ending a six-day silence on the touchy refugee issue, the Prime Minister finally stepped forward to counter a dismaying backlash that has developed in some quarters. Mulroney's well-chosen words in defence of his government's chaotic but humanitarian actions last week on behalf of the Tamils deserve to be long remembered for their depth of compassion:

"My government will do anything but allow refugees in lifeboats to be turned aimlessly around in the ocean and turned away from our shores. To think that, in some way, 155 Sri Lankans will diminish our citizenship and ruin our immigration policies is not the resilience and strength of Canada."

His words are a powerful reminder that Canada is a nation of immigrants, one of the few countries in the world

CANADIAN PM SHOWS HEART ON TAMIL REFUGEES

still willing to provide a haven for refugees who flee unhappy homelands, fearing for their lives. Yet Canada's 1,000-a-month refugee flow is but a trickle in a growing world-wide flood of 12 million people searching desperately for new homelands. In Western Europe alone, the number of applications for asylum has multiplied from no more than 20,000 a year in the early 1970s, to 165,000 last year.

So when Tory backbencher Don Blenkarn of Mississauga suggests that Canada's generally humane immigration laws are the "laughing stock" of the world, we wonder who's laughing. What's funny about a country that willingly accepts homeless people, so desperate for a fresh start in life that they pay a trafficker in human cargoes \$3,450 and risk death by drowning just to get a hearing heard? After all, the Tamils still have to convince the authorities that they are legitimate refugees before they may stay.

How insulated from human misery Canada sometimes seems, and how selfish we can be, living in a rich, bountiful and underpopulated land of only 25 million people. How paranoid are the often-expressed fears that 155 more refugees might somehow rob all

Canadians of their birthrights, jobs and futures.

None of this means we have to be suckers for phony refugees, Tamils included. Nor can Ottawa ever let refugee smugglers go unpunished after casting their human cargo adrift. On these crucial points, Mulroney's eyes seem to be wide open. Indeed, he deplores undeserving people who try to jump to the head of the immigration line as refugees. And he wants a refugee processing system that weeds out the fakes and grants speedy entry to the deserving.

But if Canadians think Parliament, simply by passing Mulroney's proposed refugee laws, can write a permanent end to one of the world's more complex problems, they ought to think again. As Rabbi Gunther Plaut of Toronto, whose refugee report provided the backbone for Ottawa's policy overhaul, says: "If you're looking for an orderly system, you'll never have it because refugees are the product of a disorderly society." We'd rather see our federal leaders urging justice and compassion for refugees than calling for exclusionary laws in a mood of bigotry and fear.

Editorial, "The Toronto Star", 19 August, 1986.

The Identity of every Community is equally sacrosanct and non-negotiable India's High Commissioner in Colombo, Mr. J.N. Dixit.

In a recent address to the Rotarians in Colombo, while dwelling on the morality of allowing terrorists to operate from India, Mr. Dixit said politics is not judged by morality. Apart from the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Sri Lanka which are non-negotiable and sacrosanct, when it comes to solving the ethnic problem, the identity of every community is also non-negotiable. If Sri Lanka is to forge itself into a united nation, these non-negotiable factors must be respected in the structure of the compromise needed for a solution, he added.

Questioned about the existence of terrorist camps in India, Mr. Dixit said that the facts were well known. Whether it was Sikh or Tamil terrorism, the origin of the problem should be understood. You must have the courage and honesty to think how Tamil terrorism originated, he said. We didn't invite refugees to India. If some of them chose to take arms, reasonable men should try to find out why this happened and find a political solution to the problem . . . Mr. Dixit referred to the 'morality' of the events of 1958, 1977 and 1983. Nobody can justify terrorism and violence against innocents . . . but politics is not judged by morality, he reiterated.

Mr. Dixit earlier outlined the historical

and cultural ties between the two countries and added . . . 'Given the historical pattern of human settlements, almost all the people of Sri Lanka could be described as being of Indian descent. Regarding those of Indian origin brought to work in the plantations, they were legally, constitutionally and morally the responsibility of the government of Sri Lanka, but as a gesture of goodwill India undertook to take in some as her citizens.'

About the ethnic problem, Mr. Dixit said that India came into the picture only when tens of thousands of refugees entered India after the 1983 disturbances. This had an impact on Indian public opinion. We provided them humanitarian assistance and only undertook to perform the 'good offices' role at the Sri Lankan government's request. However, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi has put his full weight for a peaceful solution to the ethnic problem. He has said definitely that India is against a division or separation of Sri Lanka. By the same token he believes that only a peacefully negotiated solution could end the problem . . .

The Sri Lankan people demanded peace. This is the time for reconciliation, healing wounds, generosity and compromise. Sri Lanka's future depends on it. The

opportunity must be grasped. India is fully behind Sri Lanka's quest for peace with justice for all, he concluded.

(Courtesy THE ISLAND, Colombo)

Cancer Society's Appeal

The Northern Province Cancer Society of Sri Lanka has decided to construct a Cancer Home for incurables. The estimated cost for the building which will house 25-30 inmates is 2 million rupees.

All contributions are exempt from income tax. Please draw cheques in favour of the Northern Province Cancer Society.

If you wish, you may contribute Rs. 30,000/- upwards the cost of a room in memory of a person you nominate. A plaque will be laid with details. Please send the cheque to President's address: Dr. M. Jeganathan, President, 383 K.K.S. Road, Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

Institute of Tamil Culture

The inauguration ceremony was held on 19th April 1986. Mr. W. Thayalan, the Institute's Administrator, writes to inform Tamil residents of South London that the classes include not only the Tamil language, but also music and dance.

For further particulars, please contact: Mr. Thayalan, at 334 Raeburn Avenue, Surbiton, Surrey, KT5 9EF (01-399 7848).

DETENUS AT BOOSA

Hard on the heels of the report by Amnesty International comes the distressing story of the fast undertaken by four hundred Tamil youths held in detention at the Boosa Camp. This is perhaps the largest of the notorious detention centres now dotted around the Country. Precious little is known of what goes on behind these barbed wires except what trickles to the media through the determined efforts of some enterprising journalist who puts his life (and visa perhaps) on the line. This apart, one has to depend on the veracity of the harrowing tales of torture and deprivation narrated by the survivors.

Organisations like CROPP express grave concern at the stony silence of the authorities in Sri Lanka in respect of the anxious queries from parents and dear ones as to the safety of life and limb of those in custody. Sometimes, misleading replies emanating from the authorities send the relatives on a wild goose chase: a heartless approach that even the international community finds it so difficult to understand.

Recently an outbreak of measles among one hundred and twenty odd detenus was reported. They were taken for a 'medical check up' to the Army Hospital for 'some skin ailment'. Whether this is in fact as innocuous as measles or the after-effect of some of the dangerous drugs and injections administered with 'foreign assistance' (Mossad, sic), only time will tell.

Meanwhile let us remember Nuremburg.

Alarmed by the great number of disappearances among those held under arrest or detention the BBC conducted an interview with Yvonne Terlingen of Amnesty International on the 10th September at which it was confirmed that 272 persons have in fact 'disappeared'.

and that no response has yet been received from the Government of Sri Lanka in this regard.

And what is even worse, of the 190 cases queried by the United Nations Agency six cases have since been replied of which only THREE have been accepted as clarified.

Small wonder that this conduct must necessarily be interpreted in the light of the statement (Times, January 27, 1986) by President Jayawardene:

... I have come to realise that only success matters. I do not care what New Delhi, London or for that matter, any other country says...

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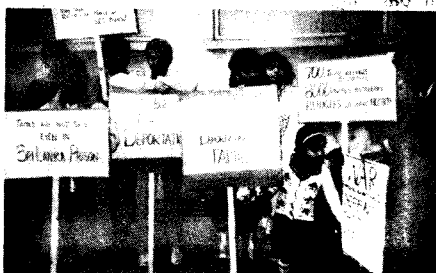
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NEWS IN BRIEF

The Tamil Refugee Action Group

Based at 62 West Green Road, Seven Sisters, London held an "Open Day" at their new office and Library on the 2nd August.

The Mayor of Haringey, Cllr. Andreas Mikkides, was the Chief Guest. The proceedings were followed by a screening of a video film on Tamil Refugees.



TRAG demonstration outside U.K. Home Office.

SURVEILLANCE BY FOREIGNERS

● It is reliably learnt that certain strategic areas in Trincomalee have been extensively photographed by foreign nationals associated with the VOICE OF AMERICA. The Sri Lankan Army was quick to respond and produced the involved persons before the superiors.

To the dismay of the zealous soldiers, the persons were immediately released with a profuse apology for their "unwarranted" arrest!

● Aliens of a fair complexion were reported to have taken photographs of the

Jaffna city from the ramparts of the Army Camp in the old Dutch Fort situated in the centre of the town. Those who photographed the town had taken pictures of the newly restored Jaffna Public Library and the Town Hall buildings. In view of proposals now under consideration to get the buildings and residences near the Fort Army Camp vacated at the request of the security personnel stationed there the photographing of the city has created panic in the minds of the citizens.

Appeal for Books on Computer Studies

The Data Centre - Centre for Computer Studies - of Jaffna in north Sri Lanka has launched an appeal to help build up a library stocked with books and magazines relating to Computer Study.

The Data Centre includes in each batch "students and families adversely affected by the unfortunate happenings that had been prevailing in the North these past few years."

The Directors of the Data Centre are: Dr. J. P. C. Phillips; A. C. Wijenathan; S. Atputhananda, and K. S. Murugesu.

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Concert opens with a tribute and greeting for Mrs. Edith Ludowyk on the Cello by Rohan de Saram followed by Vipuli in farewell appearance, Sivasakthi, Piyasara, Karl & Reneira Goonesena and Chris & Deanna Greet in play with incidental music by AMM, Tamil Folk Dance, Gavin Ewart reading from Poetry London (Tambimuttu), Bard of Wales, Enion Evans reading from Poem Chaired at 1983 Eisteddfod with translations in Sinhala by Sri Lanka Arts Forum and in Tamil by Punita Perinparaja, Kala Anjali, Highland Dances from Collin Robertson, Concluding Anthem by Rohan, Cello to words by N. Sivasambu. Conch: P. Selvarajah and Ruwansiri Suganasinghe.

Compere: Ananda Kumar.

Stage Management: Deanna and Chris Greet

DISPLAY: '43 Group paintings, Maps, Prints, Books, Craft Work, Batik, Vipuli collection of Drums and Costumes, CEYLON BOOKS and Tissa Ranasinghe's sculptures. The unsetting star of the evening is Ranasinghe's bronze head of Tambimuttu, Editor, Poetry London, Publisher, Lyrebird Press.

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MATRIMONIAL

JAFFNA HINDU brother, seeks partner for 25 year old sister, following accountancy studies in U.K. Students gladly considered. Box M113 c/o Tamil Times.

JAFFNA HINDU brother, seeks partner for 25 year old sister, working in Colombo. Professionals and students considered. Box M122 c/o Tamil Times.

JAFFNA HINDU brother seeks partner for sister (40 years) American citizen, New York resident, Divorcee considered, Provision for settlement in U.S.A. Box M123 c/o Tamil Times.

U.S. SETTLED divorced, professional, seeks broadminded educated career and family oriented pleasant lady below 37 years. Photo preferred. Box M124 c/o Tamil Times.

TAMIL CHRISTIAN SISTER seeking a professionally qualified partner, age 27-31, for her sister - Canadian citizen - graduate - working accountant. Please send details. Box M125 c/o Tamil Times.

BROTHER SEEKS good-looking traditional Tamil Hindu bride for Ph.D. candidate brother with MS degree, 33 years, U.S. immigrant. Apply with particulars horoscope and photograph. Box M126 c/o Tamil Times.

JAFFNA TAMIL PARENTS seek bridegroom for 35 year old daughter. Professionally qualified Ph.D., British citizen, with own house and working in a senior position in U.K. Box M127 c/o Tamil Times.

JAFFNA TAMIL HINDU brother, seeks suitable partner for sister, 37, science graduate. "Inter-marriage" considered with younger brother, 35, also science graduate. Box M128 c/o Tamil Times.

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Weddings

We congratulate the following couples on their recent marriages:

SIVAGURUNATHAN - KATHIRKAMANTHAN. T. Sivagurunathan and Kamalini daughter of Mr. and Mrs. V. Kathirkamathan. Nowar Hill High School Hall, Pinner, Middlesex on 23rd August, 1986.

VIVAKESPARAN - NAVARATNARAJAH. Jivit Kumar, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. Viyakesparan of 787B Kenton Lane, Harrow, Middlesex and Kalaichelvi, daughter of Dr. V. Navaratnarajah, Professor of Civil Engineering, University of Malaysia and of Mrs. Navaratnarajah at Kala Mandapam, Kuala Lumpur on 10th September, 1986.

NAIR - THAMBYRAJAH. Mohan Nair and Parameswari, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. S. Thambyrajah of Murugan Illam, 28 Chester Road, London E7, at London Murugan Temple, Manor Park, London E12, on 24th August, 1986.

ARIYANAYAGAM - BARTLETT. Dr. Varagunan of Kings Lynn Hospital, Norfolk and son of Mr. and Mrs. Ponniah Ariyanayagam with Iswari, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Bartlett, Wednesday, 16th July at the C.S.I. Church Wellawatte.

THIRUGNANAM - RAJARATNAM. Mohan, son of the late K. N. and of Mrs. E. J. Thirugnanam and Shanthi, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Rex Rajaratnam of 47 Claygate Road, London W13, at Kingsdown Methodist Church, Ealing on 23rd August.

Deaths

D. B. R. TAMBIPILLAI, husband of late Elsie Annammah Tambipillai (nee Spencer), father of D. C. (formerly of Browns Group), Mrs. Leela Boulton (U.K.), S.G.K. (C.E.B., U.K.) Funeral 2nd July at General Cemetery, Kanatte, Colombo, 17, Maheswari Road, off Peterson Lane, Wellawatte.

S. E. F. RAJANAYAGAM, Retired Chairman and Managing Director, Raja and Peiris Ltd., husband of late Rosalind Rasathy, father of Consy, late Theresa, Basil (U.S.A.) Christie (U.K.) John (Canada) and Eric. Father-in-law of Stan Xavier, late Joseph St. George, Beryl, Margaret, Frances and Annette. Funeral 2nd July at Jawatte Cemetery, Colombo 7.

Mrs. THIRAVIAM SEEVARATNAM, wife of the late S. C. Seevaratnam, died on August 10 at the home of her son-in-law Dr. Ernest Champion and daughter Seevamalar, 826 Touraine Avenue, Bowling Green, Ohio, USA 43402. Her younger sister, Dr. Pakkiam Retnanandan, predeceased her in February.

WALTER ARASARATNAM, husband of Beatrice and father of Arulraj, Gloria Muttunayagampillai (High Wycombe, UK) and Karunaranee Selvanayagam (Saudi Arabia) - 34 Lake Road, Batticaloa.

S. R. SINNADURAI, Retired Head Teacher, Madduvil, husband of Chellamma and father of Sushila Amarasingam, Mahesan (Dental Surgeon) and Vamadevan. 34 Glen Aber Av, Colombo 4/11a Boycroft Av, London NW9.

Personal

New Professor of History
Dr. S. Pathmanathan, author of *The Kingdom of Jaffna - Pre Portuguese Period*, has been appointed Professor of History, University of Jaffna. He was with the University of Ceylon for the past 13 years. He had his early education at Jaffna College.

Finance

Mr. Siva Singham, Senior Manager of Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co, Britain's second largest firm of Chartered Accountants, has been appointed Finance Director of National Investment Group PLC, a newly formed conglomeration of leading City stockbrokers.

Farewell

On 9th June, Jaffna College bade farewell to its Head of Mathematics and Vice-Principal, Mr. A. Rajasingham. He was connected with the school for 33 years.

Mr. A. S. Sittampalam, till recently Head of the International Investment Dept. at Abbey Life Assurance (UK), has taken up an appointment with Touche Remnant & Co, a leading investment management organisation. He will be in charge of their international fixed income investment totalling US\$500 million. At Abbey Life he was also responsible for the investments of their Dublin subsidiary. Prior to working for Abbey Life he was with J. Henry Schroeder Wagg, a large City merchant bank.

On Holiday in U.K.

'ORATOR' SUBRAMANIAM

Mr. C. Subramaniam will be entertained to a felicitation lunch on Sunday, 9th November at Lola Jones Hall, Tooting, London SW17 by his friends, former pupils and colleagues. Mr. Subramaniam was a teacher at Manipay Hindu and Jaffna Hindu Colleges before assuming charge of Skanda Varodaya College, a post he held with great distinction till his retirement nearly two decades ago.

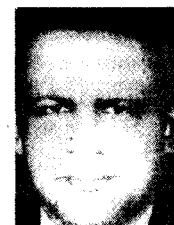
Tickets for the lunch are available from: K. C. Satchithananda 01-500 6984, P. Rajanayagam 01-690 7434, M. S. Nava 01-654 8682, Dr. A. Mahesan 0203-418553, N. S. Kandiah 01-644-0972 and S. Kanagasabai 0727-23871.

Mr. K. SIVAPALAN

Mr. Sivapalan is visiting the U.K. for six weeks to spend some time with three of his children who reside in this country and also to meet Church leaders and other aid-granting organisations. He retired from the post of Principal, Trincomalee Hindu College and in recent years he has been active in the search for a solution to the current conflict in Sri Lanka - as Chairman of the Trincomalee Citizens Committee and Trincomalee District Development Association, and for a short while Member of the Ceasefire Monitoring Committee. He will be known to many in this country for his 'role' in the ITV documentary, 'Siva's People'.

In Loving Memory of T.J. RAJARATNAM (Retired High Court Judge)

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TORTURE CHARGE AGAINST SL AMBASSADOR

continued from page 1

Weeratunga, then a Brigadier, was present during some of the torture sessions, and on "one or more occasions himself threatened me with death".

A rigorous Emergency Rule was clamped down in Jaffna on 11 July, 1979. General Weeratunga was despatched with a Presidential directive: "To eliminate the menace of terrorism in all its forms from the island and more specially from the Jaffna district", (*The Sunday Observer*, 15.7.79).

The then Deputy Leader of the Opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, in a speech in Parliament characterised the President's directive in the following terms: "The directive issued by the President to the Commander of the armed forces in Jaffna to eliminate terrorism in all its forms before December 31, 1979 is reminiscent of Adolf Hitler's directive fixing a deadline for the final solution of the Jewish problem". (*Parliamentary debates*, Vol.3(2), No.6, Col.1456).

The Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality of Sri Lanka, in its account of the military operations in Jaffna during the emergency, said,

"Came the 13/14 night of July and 'Operation Emergency' struck Jaffna like lightning, snatching away several of its young men from their houses. Of those who were taken away on that fateful night, six were never to return to their dear ones. The bodies of two were found in a mutilated condition along the causeway linking Kayts to the Jaffna city. One of them was S. Visvajothi Ratnam, alias Inpam, 27 years of age and a social worker in his village Navaly belonging to the Manipay electorate. . . .

"At about 1 a.m. on 14 July Inpam's father sleeping in the front verandah of his house woke up under the glare of a powerful torch flashed through the window by an unfamiliar figure calling for his son 'Inpam'. He opened the front door. He saw a number of men clad in khaki trousers and white banyans, but fully armed with revolvers and sten guns. They were not in uniform and were without identity numbers. There were no signs of a search warrant or an arrest order, unwanted paraphernalia, after all, to enter a clerk-cum-farmer's house in a small village in the Island's Northern Peninsula. The swaggering men rushed in brusquely querying 'where's Inpam' and as the unsuspecting lad emerged sleepily from the only room of the small house, the leader of the gang held him by his sarong and informed the bewildered family that they were taking Inpam with them. They did not take Inpam alone. They took for company Inpam's brother-in-law, 29 year old Saravanamuttu Selvaratnam, married to Inpam's younger sister Ratna Rane nursing their only child - a five month old infant. Selvaratnam, with no previous police record had returned home from Colombo, after perfecting his travel documents, to bid goodbye before leaving for Saudi Arabia to take up a job as welder. Fate, as the conservative Jaffna man would put it, decreed otherwise. That was the last

Inpam's family saw of Inpam and his brother-in-law. The next morning, news reached the anxious father about two bodies lying along the Pannai (Jaffna-Kayts) causeway. He identified them as his son's and that of his son-in-law, even though they had been mutilated almost beyond recognition. . . .

"The same night, within two miles of Inpam's house, in the same village, another youth, 22 year old T. S. Balendra was walked away from his home by four men, who appeared to be from the Police, the pathetic pleas of the old mother and sister, notwithstanding. He did not return home and is believed to be dead.

"Again on the same night, down Satanathar Kovil Road in Jaffna town, a group of armed men, not in any uniform, swooped on the abode of a poor astrologer named Sandrasegaram and took away his two sons-in-law, S. Parameswaran and S. Rajeswaran, two brothers married to two sisters, both daughters of Sandrasegaram. Rajeswaran the older of the two, and a father of a seven month old baby, was engaged in timber business on a small scale for his living. His younger brother, a reserved and quiet teetotaller, was a salt dealer of small proportions and he left behind his pregnant wife. Both brothers are believed to have been killed. Meanwhile the younger brother's wife has given birth to a child, and no visitor to the astrologer's house will fail to be touched by the piteous sight of his two daughters with infants in arms.

"The sixth victim was Iyathurai Indra Rajan of 54, Pt. Pedro Road, Jaffna, a 19 year old son of a widow and a first year student at the Ayurvedic Medical College, Jaffna. He was missing from 14 July and a worried mother went to Mr. V. Yogeswaran, MP Jaffna, and was informed that her son was in prison. But she could not see him until he was admitted to hospital where he passed away on 21 July. Medical examination revealed several injuries below the waist, a wound above the nose, burn marks on the face and partially pulled out finger nails. . . .

"The worst ordeal was experienced by those who were arrested and kept in custody at the Jaffna Residency. The

Residency became the abode of torture during the emergency. The numerous instances, the mode and intensity of torture and third degree methods, were revealed in Parliament during the debate on the emergency. Such instances included -

- The relatively lighter form of torture by burning with a lighted cigarette

- Some victims had their hands and feet tied to a pole spanning two chairs kept apart, and they were rotated till they broke down or 'confessed'.

- Those who were kept in custody had chillie powder applied on the nose and other sensitive parts of their body. Red ants were set on them until their sensitive parts were bitten and consequently swollen. Victims were beaten black and blue. They were made to hang from the ceiling by their boot laces until the laces snapped and they crashed to the floor

- There was blatant violation of the United Nations stipulations against the use of handcuffs, chains and other restraints while apprehending persons. Those who were arrested, while being transported from one place to another in jeeps, were kept handcuffed to the roof of the vehicle. Even after disembarking at the Residency, they were kept chained to the posts and left to suffer in the solar heat until they broke down and 'confessed'.

- Grimly reminiscent of the 'Black Hole of Calcutta' is a cell in the Jaffna Police Station. In it three persons can hardly be accommodated. But on one occasion, eight people were kept inside and they were left with one bottle of water for drinking and ablutions. Some drank their own urine when there was no water to drink.

- The most shocking revelation from the prisoners was about a military doctor who dutifully stood in attendance, while the arrested persons were tortured, and cried halt when the victims had reached the limit of human endurance. 'Stop. You can continue tomorrow', these were the words that used to be uttered by the doctor, who, as was stated in Parliament had either 'forgotten the Hippocratic Oath he took' or who thought that the Hippocratic Oath is in fact an oath of hypocrisy."

Is Silence That Golden?

THE art of giving expression to our convictions is certainly not the forte of the Tamil people. Bred largely in the tradition of suppression, of our wills by philosophical convictions, of our political feelings and patriotic fervour by continued Press censorship operating with demoniac efficiency, of our inherent desire at self-preservation, despite the odds - we have ended up as a community of tight-rope walkers and 'self-conservationists' (if one is allowed the term). These epithets and invectives cannot certainly apply to the Youths in our Nation who have forcefully demonstrated their convictions and perhaps restored the self-respect which their forebears lost long ago. However, the Tamil Times over the five years of its existence has continuously mourned the lack of reader-participation in its efforts to give expression to the calamity which has befallen our people.

Able and articulate intellectuals are reluctant to express their views and opinions on matters agitating the minds of

the community and have often to be coaxed into their sporadic efforts.

The views and criticisms that are so freely expressed at domestic and social levels have seldom found expression in the form of either Letters to the Editor or short articles or even quips and comments. We realise that the Tamil Times has not merely supporters and sympathisers but critics as well, and severe ones at that. Often, we have had to lend our ears even to the gossip around (and that is plenty) - purely to keep abreast of the aspirations of the 'silent majority' in times of a National crisis when our history is in the making.

This is an appeal, a desperate appeal to our readership.

If you do not express yourself now you have lost the chance to be heard; so please criticise us, encourage us if you will, but please let it be in writing (and not behind our backs). The Tamil Times is a living paper and has a role to play for peaceful co-existence and National survival and is, of course, deeply committed to a free society.

So, feel free with us, we espouse your cause.