

Bangalore Dialogue: Hands Across the Palk Straits

— Pran Chopra

**LANKA**

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## CHURCH UNDER STRESS

"Sarath Muttetuwegama" a veteran of the Left movement remarked "is the answer to those who now persist in posing the question: 'are we really a nation?' If a strong national consciousness, a consciousness transcending race and religion, is the *sina qua non* of a wholesome and virile nationalism, then Sarath at least offered hope for the future when the present seems so hopeless.

Long before Communist parties earned the popular, if now somewhat tenuous, descriptive term "monolithic", the church that St. Peter founded had won that title. But is even the Catholic Church under pressure? Sometime ago the strains were clear when the Sri Lankan Bishop Conference debated various statements attributed to the Bishop of Jaffna and the Bishop of Mannar.

And now it would appear that the Palk Straits can also separate the Tamilnadu Catholic Church from the Sri Lankan. The CBCSL has recently issued a statement to the Catholic MESSENGER signed by its President Revd. Frank Marcus, the Bishop of Chilaw, in response to a letter sent to Prime Minister Gandhi by the Tamilnadu Catholic Bishops Council. The letter, *inter alia*, urged the Indian leader to prevent what it described as "an attempt to annihilate the Sri Lankan Tamil community".

The CBCSL has of course been extremely careful in its reply. Without directly accusing the Tamilnadu Church, it has charged the Tamilnadu press of "misleading" the Church. But the stresses and the strains on the Church which has a flock of about half a million in this multi-ethnic, multi-religious society, cannot be easily concealed by deft draftsmanship.

## TAMIL SUSPECTS

The CP has asked the government to take certain preliminary

steps to create a more favourable climate for a political settlement before the All-party conference is re-convened. (SEE NEWS). Its first recommendation raises an interesting question which is also an obvious dilemma for a security-conscious government. Is the difference between a 'Tamil suspect' and a 'suspect Tamil' becoming a thin dividing line?

The CP has advised the government to withdraw "its recent discriminatory and illegal exclusion" of Tamils from several departments and corporations. They were placed more or less on compulsory (paid) leave.

The nature of the dilemma became even more pointedly clear after the recent "massive sweep" by the police in Colombo and suburbs. The Daily News opened its frontpage lead story with this sentence: "Over 350 Tamils, unable to give a satisfactory explanation of their presence in Colombo have been taken into custody....."

## SUCCESS STORY

The FIZ (or GCEC) is regularly paraded as one of the UNP's success stories. In terms of earnings, certainly. In 7 years says the GCEC's latest bulletin, export income has increased 25 fold, from Rs. 152 million to Rs. 3.2 billion. (Perhaps, it would have been better if the

## TRENDS + LETTERS

figures were given in US dollars since the value of the dollar to the rupee has risen sharply. Nonetheless the statistics do impress. Besides, the Chinese and the Cubans were impressed enough to send study teams here.

"The makings of a miracle country" a UNIDO expert has merrily predicted, pointing to the GCEC's much-advertised virtues — low cost labour, indigenous raw material, and excellent facilities.

But the Customs Chief, Mr. H. B. Dissanayake, has dropped a bit of cow-dung into the pot of milk. After the detection of a package containing 2,000 yards of lace consigned to a FIZ factory manufacturing brushes! The PCC seems more than a little worried about the possibilities of large-scale rackets in view of the fact that GCEC officials, not the Customs, examine packages at the factory. FTZ goods are duty free. Are the FTZ industries bending the duty free concession? That's the question which troubles the PCC.

(Letters on p. 12 & 18)

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# BOMBS AGAIN... and Back to Trinco

NEWS  
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

The reassuring sound of silence. After a whole month of bombs — from the AIRLANKA Tristar on the tarmac to the CTO, from Elephant House to the Veyangoda railway station — Colombo had learnt to live with the BOMB! And the bomb scare. School children, office workers and afternoon shoppers streaming out of buildings into the street in momentary panic at the first word of "a bomb" or even whiff of a rumour (often a prank) was a common sight in an increasingly security-conscious capital.

At least for the duration, the 'bombers' produced no big bangs. And this had become a city getting used to 'a war of bombs', just as much as the war in the north had remained the 'land-mine' war.

Suddenly a siren screams to disturb the silence of a drowsy afternoon. But nobody panics. The 'Daily News' had thoughtfully warned its readers that **Lake House** was holding a 'security drill' last Tuesday. And so it is with other large enterprises, government and private sector, with army officers giving on-the-spot lectures to the newly recruited personnel of the Ministry of Industrial and Commercial Security, itself a recent invention and a sign of these violent, strife-torn times.

The bombs in Colombo of course had a simple message. Colombo was not London, and Jaffna was not Belfast.

Sri Lanka is an island too but the metropolis would not be allowed to enjoy the comparative luxury of a London cut away safely from a distant Ulster. The 'war' had come home.

Likewise, the real casualty of the bomb blasts in the two buses

leaving Trinco on June 12 was not the poor, innocent passengers, Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim, but another comfortable belief — the conviction that strategic Trinco was secure.

Trinco is not just the finest natural harbour in the world. The strategic Indian ocean port is so highly prized by naval strategists from Napoleonic times. It is the meeting point between North and East. It is the district about which every advocate of EELAM and proponent of 'the traditional homelands' thesis has a very special argument to advance at every forum, local or international. Pulling out the Census figures from even before independence 1947, he builds up his familiar case of "demographic change" through land settlement policy, and the steady drop in the Tamil percentage of the Trinco district's population. Hence those cold-blooded massacres and murderous attacks by the 'Tigers' on

the Sinhalese farmer-settlements of the Trinco area. In short, the strategic 'buffer' that has been created between north and east, with villages like Morawewa as the vital communications link.

Surprisingly, the Chidambaram mission reported to Delhi — and policymakers there cautiously agreed — that progress had been registered on the vexed issue of land policy. Mr. Gamini Dissanayake's paper on the population figures, future settlements and ethnic ratios etc, had been found acceptable to India, after a dispute over statistics had been resolved. But other issues remained — principally law-and-order powers of the proposed provincial councils. (SEE MEDIATOR RAJIV)

And then, just as a second week of silence and relative calm and quiet was about to close, BANG! Mercifully few deaths from the bomb that went off near a movie house in Kotahena.

## MEDIATOR RAJIV — Enough's enough

If Sri Lanka does not make a prompt and positive response on four matters which have been raised by the Indian government vis-a-vis the scheme of devolution discussed in Colombo by the Chidambaram mission, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi will bow out of his present role as mediator, and call it a day. Sri Lanka will then be on its own, and good luck to the UNP government, which can go ahead and look after Sri Lanka's problems, while he takes care of Punjab, Tamilnadu etc etc.

This, in essence, is Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's thinking on the India-

sponsored negotiations. And this thinking has been clearly conveyed to the Sri Lankan leadership last week. Both the Sri Lankan High Commissioner in Delhi and the

Indian High Commissioner who was on a week's visit to Delhi for consultations were in Colombo as the Mr. Gandhi's latest message was communicated at the very highest levels.

What accounts for Mr. Gandhi's tough stance? Last month, the Indian premier appointed two top-level committees to study and

(Continued on page 8)



## INDIAN OCEAN

# Towards the Colombo Conference

**A**fifth of the world's population lives in the 38 Indian ocean states. The Law of the Sea Conference chaired by the distinguished Sri Lankan diplomat, Mr. Shirley Amerasinghe, succeeded in signing what came to be 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. The convention recognises the exclusive rights of the coastal states to the resources of the sea adjacent to their coasts.

But what of the resources of the Indian ocean? The history of the Indian ocean states is the history of the systematic economic exploitation of these resources by external powers, especially the old imperialist countries, and now, by transnational companies based

in the advanced industrialised nations. In any case, the resources of the Indian ocean have not been fully explored. Vast mineral deposits remain untouched. It is part of the common heritage and property of the Indian ocean states.

These states however have neither the capital nor the technological know-how to exploit these resources.

A plan of action for the exploration, exploitation, conservation and rational use of the Indian Ocean and its resources is the objective of IOMAC. The final phase of this project will be marked by a ministerial meeting in Colombo at the end of July.

But will IOMAC become a substitute for or diversion from the main Indian Ocean Peace Zone Conference for which Sri Lanka, its author in 1971 has been battling for so long, with the support of other Indian ocean states, principally INDIA?

Sri Lanka is the Chairman of the U.N. Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean Peace Zone. The Conference was to be held several years ago but thanks largely to the resistance of the US and some of its allies, the conference has been postponed year after year to resolve semantic, legal and procedural problems. In the

(Continued on page 5)

## U. N. ON PEACE ZONE

*The Ministers reaffirmed the determination of the Nonaligned States to continue their endeavours to attain the objectives embodied in the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, considered at the Meeting of the Littoral and Hinterland States of the Indian Ocean in July 1979, as well as at the subsequent meetings of the ad hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean. They reiterated their conviction that the presence in the Indian Ocean area of any manifestation of great Power military presence, foreign bases, military installations and logistical supply facilities, nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction conceived in the context of great Power rivalries constitute a flagrant violation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of Peace.*

*The Ministers viewed with disquiet and concern the continuous escalation of the great Powers' military presence in the Indian Ocean area, including the*

*expansion and upgrading of existing bases, the search for new base facilities and the establishment of the new military command structures of the great Powers against the express wishes of the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean and other nonaligned countries. Those activities endangered the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and peaceful development of the States in the area.*

*The Ministers expressed their full support for the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 2832 (XXVI) of 16 December 1971, and urged its early implementation. They also noted that, notwithstanding the efforts of the nonaligned countries, the convening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean at Colombo had been inordinately delayed because of the unhelpful attitude adopted by some States. They urged the United Nations ad hoc Com-*

*mittee to complete its preparation for the Conference strictly in accordance with its mandate.*

*The Ministers decided to continue their efforts to ensure that the Conference on the Indian Ocean would be held at Colombo at the earliest possible date, but not later than 1988. In this context, they urged full and active participation in the Conference by all the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users as well as co-operation by those States with the littoral and hinterland States, which was essential for the success of the Conference.*

*The Ministers noted the commencement of work by the Openended Working Group of the Ad Hoc Committee in accordance with the Committee's decision of 11 July 1985. In view of its important mandate they urged all nonaligned member States to actively participate in the deliberations of the Working Group.*

# No meaningful response yet

— Lalith

**Q:** There seems to be quite a fierce debate still raging about the May 'operation' in the North... what is your assessment?

**A:** An assessment must be based on what our objectives were... not what other people claim were OUR objectives.

**Q:** A turnaround of troops?

**A:** Yes... and we achieved it, we secured Palaly airport and Karainagar. As a matter of fact, we did a similar operation just before that at Thondamannar...

**Q:** So, militarily, you are satisfied with the results...

**A:** Yes, of course... yesterday, by the way, we smashed four bunkers around the camp at V.V.T... the troops came out and smashed them. As for the operation in May, the security of our bases was achieved, and the facility with which we did it shows clearly that what at least one of the separatist groups hopes for or has high ambitions about is quite futile.

**Q:** Are you referring to the the Tigers, and their plans for a military victory?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** Turning to the other aspect of the problem, the political, how do you now rate the chances of a negotiated settlement?

**A:** It is not easy to rate the chances of that... the chances will largely depend on whether the terrorist groups are told by those who harbour them that they cannot hope for a military solution... then perhaps, some of the more intrasigent may be more inclined to think in terms of negotiating a political settle-

ment the trouble is now none of the terrorist groups seem seriously interested in such matters.

**Q:** How about the government's own proposals? India has asked for clarifications...

**A:** All right, anybody can ask for clarifications but the stark fact is that there has been no meaningful response from the other side. It is always we who have stretched out our hand but nobody has rushed out to clasp it...

**Q:** The All-party conference is likely to be...

**A:** Shouldn't you call it multi-party...?

**Q:** What is its purpose any way?

## Towards the...

*(Continued from page 4)*

meantime, the Indian Ocean has been steadily militarised.

According to the last ministerial decision the conference has to be held not later than 1988. (See **UN on Peace Zone**)

Meanwhile tensions grow to hinder the peace and stability that the Indian ocean states need for their economic development and the welfare of the people. Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister, Mr. Shaul Hameed explained the importance of the implementation of the UN resolution when he addressed the NAM foreign ministers' conference in mid-April. He said:

Mr. Chairman, in our own immediate environment of the Indian Ocean, tension has increased, hampering the peaceful development of the states of the region. In concert with the Non-Aligned who constitute the vast majority of littoral and hinterland states, Sri Lanka has exerted all efforts to implement the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of

**A:** To explain to the other parties and through them to their supporters and to the people in general the government's thinking on the current problem...

**Q:** The C. P. appears supportive in its latest statement... don't you think?

**A:** Yes, it will help the peace effort... the process.

**Q:** But it has recommended some preliminary steps to improve the climate... the withdrawal of the compulsory (paid) leave order on Tamils...

**A:** Nobody has been sent on leave in my ministry... there are nearly a thousand Tamils...

— M. de S.

Peace. To this end, in 1979, littoral and hinterland states accepted a series of principles of agreement for the implementation of the Declaration. The process of negotiation for the establishment of the Zone of Peace requires full understanding and acceptance by the Great Powers of the security demands of the regional states. Equally, there must be agreement within the region itself that inter-state relations would be conducted in accordance with the principles of the non-use of force, non-interference in the internal affairs of states and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Sri Lanka looks forward to hosting the UN Conference in Colombo on the Indian Ocean as soon as possible once the preparatory work is completed this year. The Conference will constitute a major step towards establishing conditions of peace and tranquility in the region and facilitate arrangements for international agreements that would ultimately be reached for the maintenance of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

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# Good initiative on Lanka

Pran Chopra (Indian Express)

Most of the Indian press has ignored the event, but some prominent Indians and Sri Lankans have given a very worthwhile lead to public opinion in both countries towards a sane view of the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka and its repercussions on the Island's relations with India. They have jointly outlined an accord which can rescue Sri Lankan Sinhals and Tamils and the broader interests of the two countries from the disaster which otherwise is bound to overtake all four.

The Indian signatories to this unofficially proposed accord include Mr. C. Subramaniam, former minister, who one suspects is also the spirit behind this exercise in statesmanship. Other Indian Tamil signatories include a former judge of the Supreme Court, and two prominent social workers. Among the non-Tamils is Mr. R. R. Diwakar, chairman of the Gandhi Peace Foundation and a former High Commissioner to Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lankan signatories include four Sinhals and three Tamils. Of the latter, two are Muslims whose association with the proposed accord contradicts the general assumption that the Tamil Muslims of Sri Lanka do not share the anxiety of the Hindu Tamils about their future safety in the country. Among the Sinhals is Godfrey Gunatilake, Director of Marga Institute, among the best known social work institutions in South Asia; Charles Abeysekera, president of the Movement for Inter-racial Justice and Equality; Olcott Gunasekara, formerly of the Ceylon Civil Service; and the well known journalist, Mervyn de Siiva.

## Warning

The group very correctly rates "Sri Lanka's political stability and well being" as a matter of "great importance to India" and an "essential condition for the peace and

stability of the region as a whole". At one level the warning is obviously addressed to the Sri Lanka Government because of a statement by President Jayewardene which (torn out of context, I must emphasise) has been taken in India to mean that his government is making just such an attempt. It warns "all the involved parties" against attempting "a military solution". But the warning equally applies to those among the Sri Lanka Tamils who believe, and so behave, that they can get their Eelam with the gun, and to those hotheads within India who think that India must intervene militarily.

The group rightly emphasises, and so does the Government of India too, that the settlement must be "within the framework" of "Sri Lanka's integrity as a nation", and it rejects Eelam as "neither viable nor politically realistic"...But within the framework of unity and in a system which applies to the country as a whole and to all communities alike, powers must be "devolved to the fullest extent possible" to lower units of administration so that "the people in the unit are empowered to administer and develop their unit through their elected representatives.

The group notes that "provincial autonomy has now been proposed" but it emphasises "what is of primary importance is the substance of devolution" because if there is "unambiguous agreement" on that, such agreements on the sizes, shapes and nomenclatures of units "can be evolved" as would reconcile "the security requirements of the provinces" and "the overall security requirements of the country as a whole."

## Merger demand

The group disfavours the demand by the Tamils of the northern province that the eastern province, in which the Tamils form only one-third of the population, should be merged with them. The demand,

it says, "is fraught with many dilemmas" and the group implies, is in conflict with the democratic principle and "the desire and preferences of the people concerned." It recommends instead "inter-provincial coordination" through "inter-state councils... or joint committees" which could be formed in such a way that the Sinhals are assured "that devolution will not eventually lead to separation". But similarly, the Tamils must be assured that an agreement reached now "will not be abrogated, as has happened in the past". Nor should devolution lead to "segregation of the minorities." The group, perhaps encouraged by recent press reports that President Jayewardene is willing to form an all-party government, therefore recommends "an institutional framework which provides for an equitable sharing of power at the Centre in a parliamentary democracy which is fully reflective of all interests".

The obduracy of the hard core Buddhist Sinhals is as responsible for blocking a settlement as the obduracy of the Tamil militants whose militancy has forced a silence upon the moderate Tamils. In this respect the group has hard work ahead of it yet for mobilising the backing of the moderate Sinhals. Nevertheless the appeal is not only a pathway to sanity. It is also a yardstick which can be applied for measuring who must share how much of the blame if efforts for a settlement do finally fail.

No consensus can hope to satisfy everyone. There will always be those on the fringes who will try to topple what the great majority in the middle may find to be sensible. Apportioning blame to them, and dealing with them accordingly, are responsibilities which neither India nor Sri Lanka can avoid indefinitely. These responsibilities may be just round the corner, it seems, because India's mediatory efforts are at a very critical stage.

*Professor Pran Chopra, former editor of the 'STATESMAN', is now a research professor at the Centre for Policy Research in Delhi.*

Following the talks its Foreign Minister, Mr. Shahul Hameed, had in Delhi in mid-April, the Sri Lanka Government appears to have overcome its earlier reluctance to consider a settlement based upon documents on which it had once turned its back. These include a paper prepared some time ago by the Tamil United Liberation Front and a still earlier document prepared by the Sri Lanka government itself but later withdrawn by it, known as Annexure C. It is also prepared to consider any other proposals. Its condition however is that the settlement must not call for such amendments to the constitution as would attract the constitutional requirement of ratification by a referendum. This does restrict the scope for a settlement. But given the present embattled mood of the overwhelming majority of the Sinhalese, who form 70 per cent of the population, a referendum would be even more restrictive.

### New approaches

If the Sri Lanka government does indeed have the relatively more open mind indicated by Mr. Hameed towards the existing documents and possible new ones, it should be possible to discover new approaches to the unresolved points left over from the previous rounds of negotiations. These are neither numerous nor insoluble within the condition that amendment of the constitution would not be practicable.

The first of these is the extent of devolution. Since the constitution cannot accommodate formal federalism, Sri Lanka's provinces cannot be given the same formal status as the states have in India. But can they be given the same powers by informal and yet durable means; or if not the same powers, then at least more powers than what India's Union Territories enjoy? In this context it is interesting that the Indian team in the latest phase of negotiation includes Mr. Balakrishnan, a Tamil and a constitutional expert in India's Home Ministry.

The second major issue is territorial. If the northern and eastern provinces cannot be merged, what

functional linkages can be created between them which would, as urged by the Indo-Sri Lankan group quoted above, respect the democratic principle and "the desire and preferences of the people concerned?" Alternatively, can Tamil majority areas of the eastern province which are contiguous to the northern province be merged with the latter, and how would such segregation in one part of the country affect the lives of those Tamils, over a third of the total Tamil population, who in any case have to live in the predominantly Sinhalese majority areas in the central uplands? In other words, how would the aspirations of the northern Tamils be reconciled with the needs of the upland Tamils?

Although soluble, these are all delicate questions requiring not only patient negotiations but the immediate satisfaction of two preconditions to which the group has very rightly given the highest priority. The first is "effective cessation of violence". That not only means a ceasefire but its effective monitoring and enforcement through machinery which would inspire the trust of the Sri Lankan government and the militants alike. Without a ceasefire effectively in place, negotiations would be constantly in danger of collapsing in the event of some gruesome battle in the field.

The second precondition is that means must exist of "guaranteeing the terms of the final accord to the satisfaction of both parties". Less may be more willingly accepted by the Tamils if it is protected against betrayal in future; to past betrayals the group has drawn justified attention. On the other hand, negotiations will remain bogged down in mistrust if there is no such guaranteeing mechanism.

### Delicate questions

Both these are very delicate questions because the sovereign rights of Sri Lanka are involved. India has no right to impose its will in either matter, and the Tamil militants cannot impose their will unless India backs them up with force. But it might be more important for each party to remember its compulsions than its rights.

Sri Lanka cannot allow the ruinous blood-letting it is passing through without an effective ceasefire and a guaranteed settlement. India cannot afford to be domineering, because if in its desperation Sri Lanka turned to other countries whether for mediation or for the enforcement of a ceasefire, India would be placed in the position of a dog with a bone stuck in

(Continued on page 19)

### MEDIATOR...

(Continued from page 3)

report on Indian options on the Sri Lankan issue. He chose to take charge of the "political" committee, with External Affairs Minister Shiv Shankar as his top aide. Mr. G. Parathasarthy, who has been quite till recently, will be kept informed of the work of the two committees and as chairman of the Policy Advisory Unit will study their efforts in the wider context of Indian foreign policy objectives.

Having given his full attention as Committee chairman to a comprehensive review of the Sri Lankan issue, at least from the time Delhi offered its "good offices" (August 1983) Mr. Gandhi has arrived at the unhappy and reluctant conclusion that Colombo's peace efforts and negotiations have really been a "cosmetic exercise", with a military solution as its optimal goal. Of course Sri Lanka does not accept this reading of the situation and points to the fact that the 'Tamil side' has never made "a meaningful response". (SEE LALITH INTERVIEW) And so, there is now total deadlock. Can the P. P. C. (the political parties conference) which is expected to be convened before President JR's visit to the USSR on (June 29) help break this deadlock?

Mr. Gandhi wants four matters cleared up as soon as possible if he is to change his mind on the Indian mediation effort: the overall structure of devolution, law and order, language and the possibilities of inter-provincial linkage (not merger).

The picture is as hopeless as ever .....as the bombs keep exploding.



# Wanted a truly representative Parliament

— Sirima

Since the 18th of last month, I have been away from the Island on a visit to the People's Republic of China following an invitation extended to me by the Government of that country. I was happy to undertake the trip as I wished not only to revive old friendships, but also to see the recent changes that have taken place in that country.

The journey, was a refreshing experience for me; and I am thankful to the Government and the people of China for the warm hospitality and kindness with which I was received amongst them.

But when I came back to my own country, I grieve to see a much worse situation today than at the time I left. Today, the maintenance of law and order is at the lowest possible ebb; and in the face of increasing terrorist attacks, the President is asking the people themselves to look after their own lives and property, which is his responsibility.

The machinery of Government itself seems severely unhinged; and the work in both the Government and the private sector has come to a virtual standstill, with people concerned, naturally, with their own safety, first.

Asking the people to look after themselves is an abdication of the most vital responsibility of Government. There is so much blood and tears and so much fear; and what danger lurks in what place next, it is difficult to foresee. How long more can the people bear this?

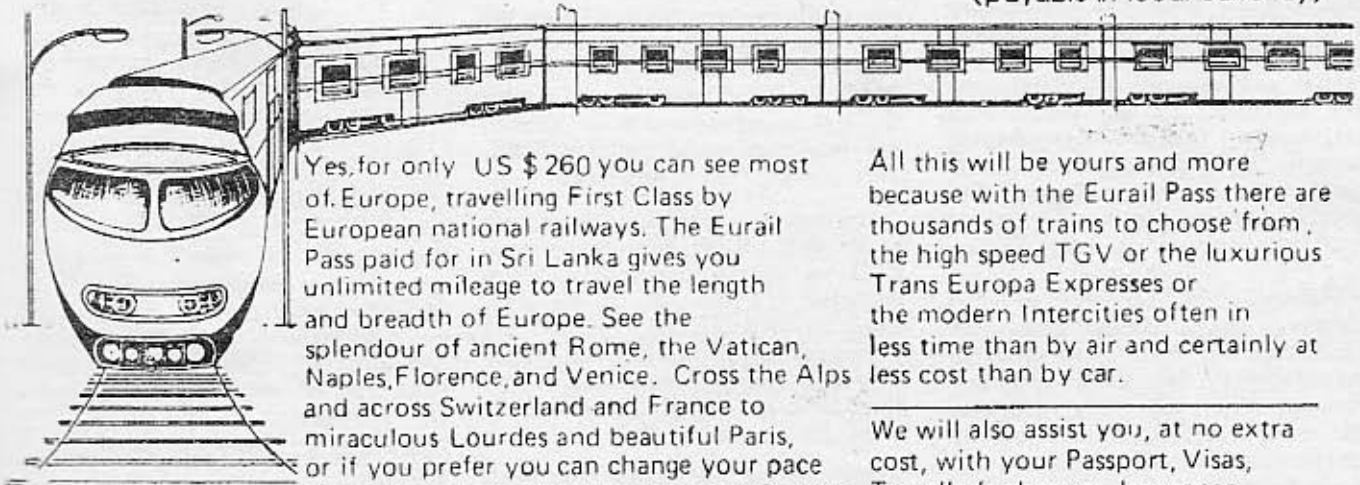
But what actually are the options open to the Government now, in the situation to which it has slid down so swiftly? It is a hardly a Parliamentary democracy and this is also a moment of colossal failure of Government policy. The Government we have is a Presidential Dictator-

(Continued on page 12)

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# C.P. — The Path to a political settlement

*The following statement was adapted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka at its meeting on 7 and 8 June, 1986.*

Unless a concerted effort is made now to reach a negotiated settlement of the problem of inter-nationality relations, which has assumed crisis proportions, there is no way for the peoples of Sri Lanka to stop the slide towards endless slaughter, escalating tension and insecurity, financial and economic ruin, administrative chaos, the destruction of democracy, a de facto division of the country, and subordination to imperialism's political and military plans in this region.

The present U.N.P. government and its policies are mainly responsible for this dangerous situation. The government has shown not merely its inability to solve this vital problem on its own, but also to fulfil the elementary duty to ensuring to the people in all parts of this country the safety and security to which they are entitled. It has besmirched Sri Lanka's reputation abroad, brought it to a position of almost total international isolation, and greatly prejudiced our relations with our immediate neighbour.

Nevertheless, at this critical juncture, the situation cannot be retrieved by merely identifying responsibility for it or assigning blame. Nor will any progress be made in this direction by mere repetition of ultimate solutions by this or that political party or organisation. What is necessary is to bring about a cessation of armed hostilities and terror by both the government and the Tamil armed organisations, and a fresh attempt to reach a reasonable and democratic political agreement through negotiations, using India's good offices as well.

The Communist Party of Sri Lanka has always held that a just and permanent solution to this problem can only be reached in a socialist society which, in addition to abolishing exploitation and discrimination and guaranteeing equality and brotherhood of all citizens and nationalities, will also permit the most rapid and balanced development of the economy, without which any solution will lack a firm material base. We have proposed, and will continue to advocate, a solution based on the recognition of the right of the Sri Lanka Tamils to self-determination, and regional autonomy for them within a united Sri Lanka, whose territorial integrity will be inviolate and respected by all. The forms through which these basic principles should be expressed can vary and are subject to discussion and agreement.

However, our Party has repeatedly made it clear that, notwithstanding our views on a final solution to this problem, we are ready, in the interests of achieving immediate peace and better relations between nationalities in this country, always ready to contribute towards, and abide by, any democratic agreement reached through negotiations, even though we may not agree with it fully. This remains our position.

Accordingly, we appeal to all concerned to do everything possible to create conditions for a peaceful and fruitful settlement, even an interim one, through the processes of discussion and negotiation. All attempts to solve this problem by military means must be rejected.

We renew our appeal to both the government and the armed Tamil organisations for an end to military and terroristic actions, whether state or private, and a stable cease fire.

We call on the government to let the people know what exactly are its present proposals, which are still shrouded in secrecy, for a political settlement.

We also ask the government to take the following steps so as to create a more favourable atmosphere for a political settlement:—

- (1) Withdraw its recent discriminatory and illegal exclusion of Tamils from several government departments and state corporations;
- (2) Stop indiscriminate arrests and detention on suspicion of Tamil youth in Colombo and elsewhere;
- (3) Guarantee that all persons taken into custody under the Prevention of Terrorism Act similar Laws will be either charged before the courts in three months or released;
- (4) Repeal the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution, which does nothing to protect the unity or territorial integrity of Sri Lanka but only penalises persons for their views and arbitrarily prevents democratic and peaceful discussion of issues;
- (5) Declare its acceptance of Sri Lankan Tamils as a distinct nationality with an inalienable right to protect and foster their own language, culture and national identity, and its readiness to devolve central powers and functions in accordance with this; and
- (6) Guarantee that state-sponsored schemes of land settlement will not be implemented in such a way as to alter adversely the ethnic composition of any region of the country.

At the Round Table Conference and after, our party stated that we were prepared to support interim settlement based on the maximum devolution of central powers and functions to Provincial Councils or similar bodies. We are glad that many who opposed such a settlement then are now ready to accept a settlement on these lines.

*(Continued on page 24)*



# Hindus protest at exclusion of Tamils from government institutions

The Council of Hindu Organisations is gravely concerned at the decision of the Government to send on Special (Compulsory) leave Tamils working in certain government institutions. According to the newspapers the government institutions, which have sent the Tamil employees, are the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, the Rupavahini, Air Lanka and the Department of Telecommunications.

No formal announcement was made by the government on such an important matter. The people of this country have the right to know the reasons for this unfortunate decision, far-reaching in its implications and damaging to the long-term interest of Sri Lanka. It is regrettable that this decision tantamounts to a declaration of no-confidence in the Tamils working in the various government institutions.

It is also reported that this decision was made for security reasons and is a sequel to the bomb explosions in the Air Lanka Tristar aircraft and in the Central Telegraph Office. No legal judgement has been made as to who was responsible for these deplorable acts, and according to our Constitution "Every person shall be presumed innocent until he is proved guilty". Conceding for purpose of argument that a Tamil individual or a group was responsible, why should the innocent Tamil employees working in other government institutions be penalized? More so, when senior government leaders on many occasions have repeated that their fight is against "Tamil Marxist terrorists" and not against the majority of the Tamils and that the problem is not an ethnic one.

Where will this lead to? Another explosion and other government institutions may follow suit. Private institutions may take the hint and act accordingly. The result would be the removal of Tamils from government and non-governmental institutions, the widening of the cleavage and the polarization of the communities. Tamils resident in Colombo and other areas in the South would be constrained to trek back to their "traditional homelands" and de facto separation would take place, much against the wishes of those who want a united Sri Lanka. The need for security will then not arise!

Terrorism is not unique to Sri Lanka. It is prevalent in many parts of the world. The actions taken by other governments in such situations are worth considering. Though Sikh terrorists have killed many innocents and have hijacked Indian Airlines planes, yet Sikhs continue to hold offices at all levels in the Central and State governments of India. The confidence bestowed on them by the Indian government was so great that a Sikh General was directly in charge of Operation Blue Star to rid the Golden Temple of Sikh terrorists. Similarly, despite Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.) attacks on British installations, Irish Catholics are not sent on Compulsory leave from offices in London.

The decision of the government violates its own Constitution. According to Chapter 3 paragraph 11 it is stated, inter alia, that no person shall be subjected to degrading treatment. In paragraph 12(1) all persons are considered equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the Law and in paragraph 12(2) it is stated that no citizen shall

be discriminated against, inter alia, on the grounds of race. It is also clearly stated in the Directive Principles of State Policy and Fundamental Duties that "the state shall strengthen national unity by promoting co-operation and mutual confidence among all sections of the people of Sri Lanka, including racial, religious, linguistic and other groups..." The decision to send Tamil employees on Special (Compulsory) leave because they were Tamils does not strengthen national unity nor does it promote mutual confidence among all sections of the people.

The decision also violates the United Nations Instruments on Human Rights. Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, inter alia, that every one has the right "to just and favourable conditions of work". The International Labour Organisation Convention concerning Discrimination in respect of Employment and Occupation defines discrimination as including any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis, inter alia, of race, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation.

In our opinion the decision of the government to send Tamils on Special (Compulsory) leave hurts the feelings of the Tamils, widens misunderstanding between the two major communities, violates our Constitution and the United Nations provisions on Human Rights and jeopardizes the efforts to resolve politically the ethnic problem. We therefore, appeal to the government to rescind this unfair decision.

**Yogendra Duraiswamy**  
President  
Council of Hindu  
Organisations

## Letters

### SARATH I

WE are deeply grieved by the tragic death of Mr. Sarath Muttetuwegama, the Member of Parliament for Kalawana.

Mr. Muttetuwegama has always been helpful in the activities of the Movement for Inter Racial Justice and Equality (MIRJE). He was in fact the only Member of Parliament who, under this government, has consistently and fearlessly spoken and worked, both in Parliament and outside, for the re-establishment of good relations between the Sinhala and Tamil ethnic groups on a basis of justice and equality through a process of political negotiation.

MIRJE also recalls that Mr. Muttetuwegama was a dedicated fighter for fundamental human and democratic rights as evidenced by his opposition during the period of the last government to the Criminal Justice Commissions Act and to the Prevention

of Terrorism Act of this government.

MIRJE joins with all other democratic organisations in mourning the death of Mr. Sarath Muttetuwegama. He has left a void that cannot easily be filled.

**Redley Silva**  
Secretary (MIRJE)

### SARATH 2

IT is with deep regret that the Council for Liberal Democracy learns of the death of Mr. Sarath Muttetuwegama, M.P. for Kalawana. The death of Mr. Muttetuwegama in such tragic circumstances, when he could be said to have been at the peak of his powers and when he was performing so vitally necessary a role as a courageous, eloquent and intellectually honest Member of the Opposition in Parliament, is an immeasurable loss.

Sarath Muttetuwegama's sincerity of conviction, his indomitable faith in the truth as he saw it, his devotion to ideology rather than self-aggrandizement, his great intellectual ability and most im-

portantly his love of Parliament and its traditions must earn for him the unqualified admiration of so many.

Liberalism and Communism are much removed from each other; yet the essential tolerance and open-mindedness of Mr. Muttetuwegama, combined with the qualities we have already mentioned are those which we, Sri Lankan Liberals much admired. As believers in the finest traditions of parliamentary democracy and as committed adherents of our ideology as the late Member of Parliament for Kalawana was of his, we deeply regret this irreparable loss of a civilized, able and honourable man and a great parliamentarian.

The Council for Liberal Democracy extends its heartfelt condolences to Mrs. Muttetuwegama, to his two children and to the Communist Party, which Sarath Muttetuwegama served so well for so long.

**Chanaka Amaratunga**  
Joint Secretary  
C. L. D.

## Wanted . . .

(Continued from page 9)

ship, whatever the masks; and when Dictators fail, they have only one peaceful course open to them: and that is to resign and go before the people and not allow the people to be dragged into a state of anarchy.

The sad part of it all is that when the hand of friendship and co-operation was proffered to this Government last year by the Maha Sangha, and recognized political parties, including the SLFP, with other National Organizations like the All-Ceylon Buddhist Congress, the Government rejected it out of hand. That was after the Anuradhapura massacre. On that occasion, the Maha Nayaka Thero of Asgiriya, Venerable Palipane Chandananda, requested many political, social and religious organizations in the Island to meet with him and the Maha Sangha to deliberate on the ways

and means of dealing with the terrorist problem; all invitees attended the meeting at the Asgiriya Temple; but not the UNP. The UNP was given a second chance to meet together with the same organizations at the Ratmalana Paramadammachetiya Pirivena; it was the wish of all those who attended the first meeting that the UNP should participate in the discussions. This time, the UNP wrote a letter expressing its wish to keep away.

When latter, a National Front was formed, with the objective of presenting a single solid face to terrorism, the Government did everything possible to obstruct it and misrepresent it.

Now it is too late; and apart from having outlived its time, the Government has shown itself to be entirely isolated and unable to unite the people of the country in confidence and harmony, to evoke their best

effort to pull it out of the unprecedented state of chaos it has got into.

The only real option available for the Government is to resign and allow the people to elect a Government that has the will and the capacity to restore law and order and peace in Sri Lanka; and here we have to bear in mind that at the so-called Referendum in 1982, the people of the North and the East in particular voted overwhelmingly for a General Election which they have been deprived of.

I think the kindest act Mr. J. R. Jayewardena can do for the people of this country at this gravest moment in its history — the country which he has ruled for nine long years, is to allow the people to elect a Parliament which is truly representative.

**Sirimavo R. D. Bandaranaike**  
President, Sri Lanka Freedom Party



# PUNJAB — A Pakistani hand ?

FOREIGN  
NEWS

**T**hat Tamil separatist rebels have camps in Tamilnadu where they train their fighters in guerilla warfare is no great secret. *TIME* has just published a picture of one camp on its cover. But most of the information has in fact come from investigative reporters of the Indian press and of course from confessions made by captured Eelamist fighters.

secret' operations will probably end up in Faisalbad jail along with the Sikh 'trainees' or in a Sind desert prison with one bucket of water a day, Benazir Bhutto's 16 month ordeal. Perhaps we shall have to wait for Benazir Bhutto and an independent press to have the truth. Excerpts from the *INDIA TODAY* reported by Tayleen Singh.

Two weeks ago, Minister for Internal Security Arun Nehru informed the Lok Sabha that the Government had "clear evidence" of Pakistani involvement in the training of Sikh terrorists. "We have details of names, locations, training schedules and the type of assistance Pakistan has given to these terrorists," he informed the house.

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**"One basic reality established by all the interrogations is that crossing the Indian border into Pakistan poses no major problems. Most of the terrorists who were captured said that they were taken to Faisalabad jail where they were subjected to intense indoctrination."**

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**"Sarabjit and Devinder confessed that they returned from Pakistan with about 20 other terrorists with instructions to stop the Punjab elections from taking place. In Amristar, they were told that their target would be Gurcharan Singh Thora, the Akali leader."**

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Nehru went on to add that in the past six months, between 25 and 30 terrorists had been captured. During interrogation, they had admitted to having been trained in Pakistan, and gave specific names of people they had met, the dates on which they had met them, and the places they had been taken to.

Though there is always a certain element of doubt attached to confessions extracted in the privacy of an interrogation chamber, the latest statements obtained by *INDIA TODAY* have more credibility than most.

Last week the Pakistan Embassy in Colombo thought it necessary to deny allegations of Pakistani training of anti-government Sikh fighters in the strife-torn Punjab.

The statement published in the *ISLAND* said that President Zia himself has asked India to substantiate such allegations. *INDIA TODAY* which has carried accounts of Tamil training camps has recently published a long report on "The Pakistan hand". It is, we should remember, an Indian source and therefore not the most unbiased. Pakistan has the advantage there. Under the military regime of General Zia, elected prime minister Bhutto's hangman, any Pakistani reporter who dares to disclose any details of 'top

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**"Pakistani army officers would come and talk to us every day. They instructed us to ensure that we killed Hindus only as this would lead to communal riots in Punjab. They also said that there must be total havoc, a bloodbath, because that was the only way to get Khalistan."**

— Gurvinder Singh extract from his confession

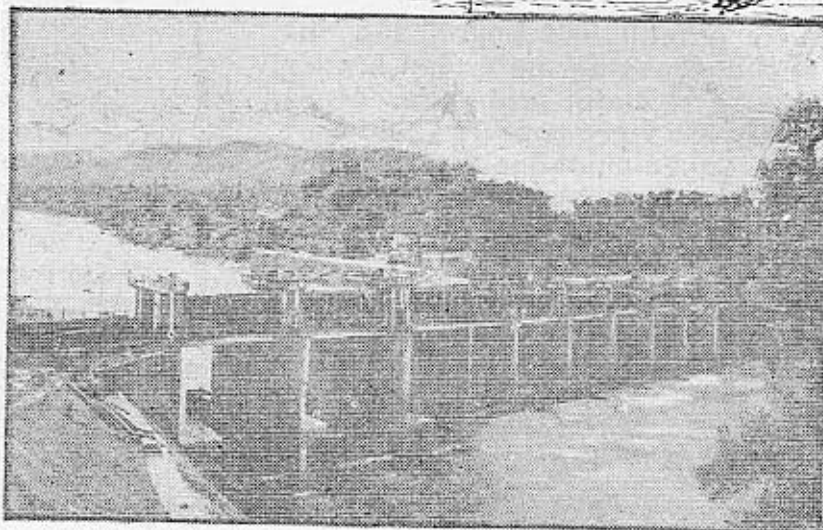
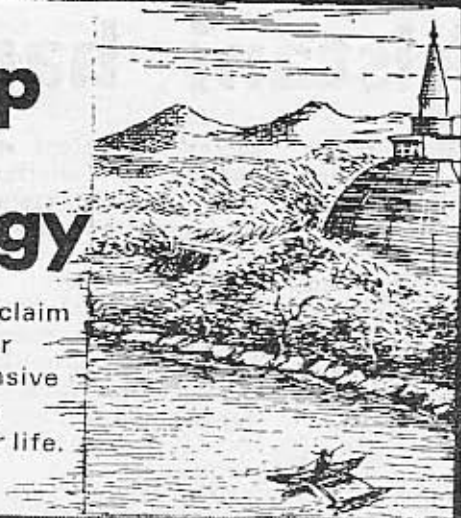
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**"Sarabjit admitted that they were trained in the use of .38 and .455 revolvers, Sten-guns and grenades. He said that they were instructed in the use of chemical weapons, how to blow up brigades, how to open handcuffs and manufacture home-made bombs."**

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# Militarization in Asia and Repressive Developmentalism?

## Asia's Military Jigsaw

**W**estern perspectives on world armaments have concentrated in recent years almost exclusively on nuclear weapons and on the Superpowers. Meanwhile, conventional arms races have emerged in Third World regions and flourished almost unnoticed by the Western mass media and general public. Western concern about weapons in Asia tends to be limited and mainly focused on the strategic basing policies of the United States and the Soviet Union. The reality, however is that Asia in the grip of an arms race terrifying in its magnitude, its destabilizing implications, its effects upon intranational divisions and its capacity for mass destruction.

Second only to the Middle East, Asia is a region comprehensively on the path to militarization. Since the Second World War, no other part of the globe has suffered more terribly from war. Asians accounted for 71 per cent of the 14.4 million people throughout the world who died from war-related causes between 1945 and 1983 (Sivard 1983). More and more now military elites are dominating Asian societies. Arms purchases and production consume an expanding part of public expenditures. The region that has become nearly synonymous with the horrors of napalm and helicopter gunship is now seeing the deployment of even more destructive weapon systems. Militarism is moreover increasingly affecting every aspect of Asian culture.

This article seeks to show how militarization in Asia has intensified since 1975, and to examine the implications and effects of this. In particular it touches on the costs of arms expenditure, the threat or the lives of millions of civilians if the increasingly sophis-

ticated and powerful conventional armed forces of various Asian states were to engage in interstate war, and the ways in which military force is presently being used to repress the ethnocultural, socio-economic and political rights of large sections of various populations by military-technocrat elites in the name of 'development' or 'national security'.

It is hoped that the issues raised will contribute to the growing debate as to the role of the military in Asia and the implications of support for military-technocrat regimes by Western states.

## Military Expenditure

ASIAN COUNTRIES in the past decade have dramatically increased their military spending. Between 1974 and 1983 the nations of South and East Asia (except China) raised their share of Third World military spending from 15 to 20 percent. This was during a period when total Third World military spending increased in real terms by 52 per cent. In the major countries in the area, except North Korea and Pakistan, the rate of increased military spending was higher for the period 1974-80 than for the subsequent years. Nevertheless, military spending has continued to grow as a percentage of gross domestic product, with the exception of the very poorest countries and possibly Indonesia.

## Military Spending & Poverty

Throughout Asia, defence budget increases have been higher than overall budget expansions. Military growth has been at the expense of civilian program. Such growth consumes the same share of resources as in industrial countries, where average per capita income is some ten times that in Asia.

*This is a slightly edited version of an article in a double issue (Vol 1 No 2 & 3) of ASIA-PACIFIC CONTEXT, a series of topical pamphlets published by the ASIAN BUREAU, Australia, a non-profit christian research group, to inform and promote debate on public and development affairs in the region.*

While military expenditure increases, Asia remains one of the centres of world poverty. With the exception of Brunei, Japan and Singapore, Asian countries, even the acclaimed Newly Industrializing Countries (NICs) among them, remain low in the socio-economic rankings of nations.

The average of gross national product per capita for developed countries is US \$ 8,477; for South Asia it is US \$ 226 and for all of East Asia, \$ 1,063. The number of school-age children per teacher in the developed countries is 25; for South Asia it is 85 and for East Asia, 43. The infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births is 126 for South Asia and 59 for East Asia, compared with 20 in developed countries. The calorie supply per capita for developed countries is 3,426; it is 2,015 for South Asia and 2,472 for East Asia.

## Diplomatic Tensions

The figures on military expenditure of individual countries in Asia (see table 1) are good indices of the state of diplomatic tensions on that continent.

Relations in South Asia are strained. The traditional enmity between India and Pakistan dominates the political scene there. The invasion by the USSR, an ally of India, of Afghanistan has brought tension along that small country's border with Pakistan. Pakistan

also borders a military active Iran. Pakistan had received much increased financial support from Arab states and US. In 1981 the US promised it US \$ 3,200 million in military assistance over the next six years while Arab countries promised it US \$ 1,000 million. Pakistan's increased spending has created a similar response in India. The large increases in military expenditure in both countries are part of an action-reaction pattern of diplomatic and arms competition.

The smaller South Asian countries have experienced massive percentage increases in their military expenditures. Their budgets remain, however, comparatively small. More importantly, the increases have not meant expansion in terms of force sizes or new weapon systems. It is probable that, as with Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, they are due to increased involvement of the military in domestic political situations.

The figures for Southeast Asia reveal another major area of international political tension. Just as the former Pol Pot regime's 1977-87 attacks on Vietnam occasioned a military treaty between Hanoi and Moscow in 1978, the subsequent Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea provided legitimacy for large increases in the military expenditure of the surrounding states, particularly Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore. The costs of the occupation and of the continuing resistance fighting has also meant a big increase in the military spending of Vietnamese-dominated Indochina itself.

While Indonesia and the Philippines often encapsulate Western perceptions of militarized Asian states, the growth in their military expenditures during the past decade has been surprisingly modest. The power elites in both states have been more concerned with the use of state force to resolve political unrest than with perceptions of specific external threats. Domestic military repression seems a less expensive exercise than an armament program geared to counter some external menace because the domestic use

of military force is seldom reflected accurately in statistics and it is hard to quantify the long-term costs of internal wars, especially in terms of their effects on people's lives.

### National Security

While interstate regional tensions are important motivations for increased military establishments, an equally important factor is the determination of ruling elites in Asian countries to use state force to assure their continued hold on power and to implement unpopular domestic political, economic and social programs. **In such societies 'national security' becomes defined as the creation of conditions necessary for implementation of such programs. Called upon to uphold this concept of national security the military acquires equipment designed for the suppression of domestic resistance and unrest.** Paramilitary and police forces are also structured and armed so as to coordinate with the military for this purpose. In the role of enforcer, the military gains a large degree of political power. Often arms races sparked by external threat perceptions can also bolster the influence of the military in such societies, as is the case presently with Pakistan and Thailand.

*It is generally accepted principle that struggling Third World economies cannot afford the reallocation of limited resources from development priorities to military expansion. However, the costs of high military expenditure on developing economies cannot be measured just by the number of schools, hospitals and other such social services that could have been established had the money not been diverted. There is also the loss of economic opportunities created by the cumulative effect of social spending: 'Better social services improve workers' economic performance; the resulting increase in social productivity facilitates further development in education, public health, culture and service' (Szentcs 1984).*

As such, increased military spending in the long term stunts economic growth, particularly in economies without excess indust-

rial capacity. It creates tension as the military and civilian sectors compete for finite resources. For Third World countries, especially those without domestic arms industries, military spending reinforces dependence on industrialized arms producers and hence, reinforces their own marginalized status in the world economy.

### Political & Cultural Militarization

To see the increase in military power in Asia over the past decade only in terms of increased military expenditures and larger and more powerful conventional armed forces is to see but part of the picture. Another crucial part emerges from the view of militarization as it had permeated the interstate politics and cultures in Asia.

### Internal Ways

One of the major uses of increased military power had been the waging of internal wars. These wars have been waged in the name of national unity and security by central power elites against ethnic or political dissenters. **Often, however, they are better characterised as wars fought to assure the dominance of a particular ethnic or social group within the polity.**

For example, the Indonesian Armed Forces campaign against the Free Papua Movement (OPM) in West Irian does not so much represent a federation fighting a secessionist province but rather the violent 'Javanization' of the entire Indonesian archipelago. In Burma, the Burmese Army has been waging a 37-year campaign against the Karen National Liberation Army which is seeking a separate Karen state. The Karens, a minority group, are traditional enemies of the Burmans. **The war being fought by the Armed Forces of the Philippines against the communist New Peoples Army (NPA) in the name of national security is really being fought for the security of the Marcos regime and more so of the established order.**

### Military Fiefdoms

Internal wars are often used by the military as a springboard for



building up power bases. Regions affected by such wars are often closed off to the public by the military. For instance, to enter the province of East Timor a visitor needs a special pass from the commander of the Indonesian Armed Forces. Access to the Thai border with Kampuchea is also restricted and the Western press has often complained that it has not been granted access to be able to confirm Thailand's allegations of Vietnamese incursions into its territory.

These restrictions in effect make such zones military fiefdoms. The areas are used then as training grounds through which troops are rotated or given battle experience, and new weapons are tested. Major civilian activities in the area are adapted to military purposes and political repression is instituted at the village level. Local political and law enforcement structures are reshaped to become active weapons against the spread of dissidents. Roads, bridges and electricity are provided with an eye to aiding military programs. Infrastructure projects achieved with foreign aid have not been exempt from this scheme. An example is Australia's single largest overseas aid project — the construction of a highway system in the Philippine province of Zamboanga del Sur. This highway, while of debatable economic benefit to local villagers, certainly gives the Philippine Armed Forces greater access to a region where consolidated opposition forces to the Marcos regime exist and operate.

Militarized zones are also the sites for 'strategic hamlets', areas firmly under military control to which whole villages are sometimes transplanted. Strategic hamletting is applied in cases where the military feel that guerilla forces move freely among the villagers. Its basic aim is to isolate the guerillas from their mass support; the abandoned village becomes a 'free fire zone' and anyone found there is considered an insurgent, and can be killed without question. The tactic was first used by the Americans in the Philippines in 1899, and later

by the British during the Malaysian Emergency and again by the US in Vietnam.

Strategic hamletting wreaks havoc on peasant communities with ancient links to village lands. It robs them of their traditional farmlands and rarely provides them with sufficient replacements. It is particularly hard on the village women who are primarily responsible for food production. Hamletting can also have some unforeseen repercussions. In East Timor, for example, most of the population traditionally lived in the highlands because the low coastal plains are infested with malaria. In an attempt to isolate Fretilin from its support the Indonesian army has 'resettled' large numbers of people in the lowlands. The result has been a huge increase in the incidence of malaria — apart from the socioeconomic and cultural dislocation of a people unable to translate their traditional highland methods of slash-and-burn agriculture to the lowland environs.

Militarized regions are important to the military also for the opportunities they provide in terms of economic and political gains.

Apart from money taken through extortion and corruption, individuals and units of the military in a controlled zone become involved in the local and commerce and establish themselves as a class whose entrepreneurial ambitions are backed up with force. Such force also enables personnel on either side of a war to become involved with the local black market. For example, the Karen troops impose a five per cent levy on black-market trade across the Thai-Burmese border. In 1983 trade through the border town of Mae Sot alone was Ban 50 Million (US\$ 1.81 million) per day (Tasker 1985).

*Within the polity, militarized zones provide a springboard for military participation or intervention in the nation's political affairs. Several military commanders have used internal wars as just such springboards. The commander of the Indonesian campaign in East Timor, General Benny Murdani, subsequently assumed the politically powerful post of commander of the*

*Indonesian Armed Forces. The Thai army commander-in-chief, General Ardit Kamalang-ek, is presently manoeuvring to succeed Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanond upon Prem's anticipated retirement in 1987. Ardit has kept close contact with affairs along the Thai-Kampuchean border and, importantly was responsible for providing security for the royal family during the abortive Young Turks coup in 1981 and again in 1985.*

## **Repressive Developmentalism:**

The most pervasive influence of the military in many Asian capitalist societies has been the linking of its repressive power with the economic development aims of a Western-educated technocratic elite. These elites promote a model of development, supported by most Western governments and such institutions as the International Monetary Fund, that emphasises economic growth through export-orientated manufacture and commodity production. This model requires the maintenance of low labour costs, political and social stability and conditions favourable to foreign investment so that the economy can reach a 'take-off' stage of growth.

The task of assuring that social change does not destabilize these conditions for growth is given to the military. This, demands for trade union evolution, better wages and conditions, popular participation in economic and political decision-making, recognition of minority and more indigenous control over the activities of transnational corporations are savagely suppressed in the name of development. There is thus established an alliance among foreign investors, technocratic state managers, military commanders, and certain nouveau riche local capitalists with links to the others.

This alliance often works cohesively to suppress any opposition to their policies. At the same time it touts a new state ideology which incorporates its development aims and promotes the roles of the technocrats and the military as key national symbols. Such regimes, described by Herbert Feith (1981) as 'repressive developmentalist', operate in

Pakistan, Bangladesh, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Taiwan and South Korea. Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia and Singapore exhibit some characteristics of repressive developmentalism; their regimes are in a state of flux and particularly Sri Lanka and Singapore may eventually make the full transition Militarization accompanied and legitimised by the adoption of a national-security state ideology often has far-reaching effects on a nation's political, economic, social and religious institutions. An illustration can be found in Indonesia. Tanter (1984) explains:

'In Indonesia, the key elements of the social penetration of the military are two-fold: the doctrine of dwifungsi (dual function) which legitimates the role of military forces in the government and the economy; and the state ideology of Pancasila, which legitimates the actions of the regime and culls out unacceptable actions and attitudes. Dwi fungsi was military doctrine for some time after 1965, before it was finally legalized as Law No. 20, the Basic Law on Defense and Security. The operation of the Pancasila ideology is clear in the militarization of labour relations in 1982, the head of the ministry of defense and security took charge of all labour disputes,

and in doing so spelled out the regime's new philosophy of labour relations:

Through contact with all sectors of the population the Army is to encourage everyone to think the same about the problems we face' or at least to intervene to find a way of resolving any differences of opinion. It is to investigate at the local level, make reports brief the press, and 'use all means', especially a persuasive educational approach based on Pancasila ideology to influence the use of the 'natural' and 'human' potential of the regions in the interest of the 'maintenance' of defence and security'.

As elsewhere, this new philosophy turns out to mean the attempted banning of strikes; the dismissal, intimidation, and beating of union leaders and, where necessary, their murder; and the use of spies and soldiers to break strikes and enforce wage cuts.'

### Violence; a Growing Acceptability

one of the lasting influences of militarization is that society may eventually come to accept the concept that problems may be solved by the use of force. People who are confronted daily with the power of the use, or threatened use, of institutionalized

violence, coupled with growing feelings of frustration, anger and individual powerlessness in the face of extreme socioeconomic inequalities are particularly vulnerable to this thinking. A rearmament program also inevitably increases the availability of weapons in a society, for instance, an M16 rifle costs as little as Baht 5,000 (US\$ 180) on the Thai black market. Often this places the means of deadly force into scenes of domestic or criminal violence. this general upsurge in violence has been particularly detrimental to women. Rape and male-initiated domestic violence is on the rise in Southeast Asia.

'Machismo' is also a string element in the national-security state ideology. Sexual abuse is a favourite method for terrorizing female political prisoners. Governments concerned with earning foreign exchange — much of which is used in the purchase of sophisticated foreign arms, openly encourage sex tourism. This is particularly true in the Philippines and Thailand. The establishment of permanent militarized regions and bases has created a constant demand for prostitution within the local economies. Some bases, like Clark and Subic in the Philippines, have spawned whole cities given over to the entertainment of servicemen or the scavenging of base refuse.

For someone used to the old Western ideal of the separation of powers, the interlacing of the political and the military realms in most Asian countries can be disturbing.

Thus, in their dealings with Western patron states, various Asian leaders keep this fact well in mind. For instance, on occasions when President Marcos of the Philippines fears that his regime is becoming politically alienated in the United States he often appeals to the US Congress to help ward off the threat of a dangerous communist insurgency vaguely linked to China. Yet when dealing with fellow Asean leaders he plays down the threat.

However, it would be rather naive to believe that many legislators in the West, for instance at the US Capital, who allocate foreign aid — for military or development purposes do not still

## Letter

### ARGUFY—MANSHIP

(Dedicated to that accomplished gamesman Dr. Carlo Fonseka)

If you get in an argument and hate to be a quitter  
 Why don't you try — no harm in trying — a wordy *non-sequitur*  
 It is no sin to try to win, so you must somehow fix it  
 Employing a brook-no-nonsense voice, lay down your *ipse dixit*  
 You'll find it sometimes pays to be irrelevant or schmaltzy  
 Or you might try the specious lie — that's *suggestio falsi*  
 You may also choose another ruse (of which you needn't be leery)  
 And that's concealing half the facts, called *suppressio veri*  
 If all goes ill, there's always still, the chance for verbal brawling  
 With "ass" and "dag" and "swine" and "hog" and other such  
 name-calling  
 But the very best I can suggest (to end this helpful lesson)  
 You've got him licked if you but pick a loaded Smith and Wesson.

VPV



understand that much of this aid could be used for domestic political repression rather than for the containment of global communism'. The donor states grant or withhold aid always in line with policies pursued for their own strategic interests.

More often than not, the higher officials in such states form transnational coalitions with various members of the ruling elites in Asia. Consequently, when these officials lobby their home legislatures for foreign military aid programs they often do so with the intention of promoting the interests of their Asian allies while couching the requests in language suited to the 'democratic versus communist' strategic mindset of their own legislators and citizens. For example, in appealing to Congress to provide US\$ 105 million in military aid to Thailand for fiscal year 1986, US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Paul D. Wolfowitz stated:

"Thailand is a close friend and treaty ally of the United States. The important relationship we have developed over the years is based on a shared commitment to the values of freedom and independence. In the spirit of mutual respect and shared obligations which exists between our countries, we propose to continue our assistance to Thailand's programs for economic development and armed forces modernization. To maintain our interests in the region we should help to sustain our friends."

The question poses itself as to whether all Thais would recognize the commitment of Prem's regime to the value of freedom and independence as readily as Wolfowitz, or indeed if Wolfowitz is considering all Thais when he speaks of 'our friends'.

Asian military elites often find such alliances with Western officials extremely helpful in stabilizing diplomatic disturbances caused by overtly savage use of force on the domestic front. For instance, the Indonesian government particularly its military leadership, gained much help from the so-called 'Indonesian lobby' in the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs in its efforts to salvage a deteriorating

relationship with Australia following the Indonesian invasion of East Timor.

### Restrospect & Outlook

This article has sought to draw attention to the expense and dangers of the ongoing conventional arms build-up throughout Asia, and to the socioeconomic, cultural and political implications of the heightened use of armed force within Asian societies. The enormous increase in Asian military expenditure during the past decade is wasteful because it represents huge losses in opportunity costs and because it has aggravated instead of stemmed the tide of economic and political discount and uncertainty. As the Brandt Commission noted in 1980, 'The build-up of arms in large parts of the Third World itself causes growing instability and undermines development.... More arms do not make mankind safe, only poorer.'

Most arms are imported into Asia. This is a burden for those countries with limited foreign exchange earnings and large foreign debts. Especially in Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Philippines, finances allocated to military expansion represent scarce resources withheld from urgent development priorities. In the final analysis, it is a lack of equitable economic development, and not any external military menace, which poses the greatest threat to the security of most Asian states.

The most immediate and pervasive effects of increased armed forces in Asia lie in the militarization of the political, economic, ethnic and cultural relations within Asian societies. Increased military forces are being deployed more and more to fight internal wars against ethnic or political dissenters. Mostly these wars represent the extent of the determination of a particular ethnic or socioeconomic group to assure its dominance within the society. They also serve to create power bases from which the military can project themselves into the national political arena.

The linking of the repressive power of the military with the development aims of a techno-

cratic elite has seen the rise of repressive developmentalism as the outstanding noncommunist Asian political ideology. The widespread use of violent repression within Asian repressive-developmental societies had resulted in a greater incidence and perhaps, acceptance of violence in everyday life. This has been of particular detriment to women.

Adoption of the principle that problems also at the international level can and may be solved by the use of force had promoted and reinforced similar violent responses to issues throughout every level of Asian life.

To achieve peace within Asian societies, in the region and in the world, it is essential that the increasing militarization as has occurred in Asia and the rest of the world — during the past decade be halted. To this end, it is imperative that Western states, review their policies of military aid to Asia, and to repressive regimes in particular. International pressure on Asian governments to settle their differences peacefully, coupled with international assistance to help structure economically just societies, will do far more for the cause of regional and world peace than all the military aid given in the name of defence or development.

Good. . .

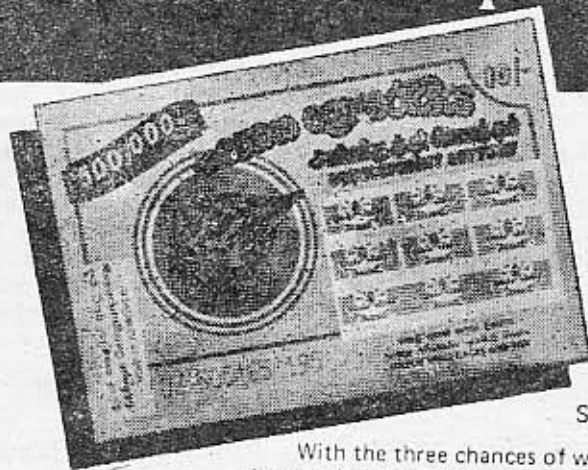
(Continued from page 8)

its throat. Intervention by force by India, always undesirable and impracticable, would then become even more so. Abstention would become increasingly unacceptable with the coming in of third countries. The position of the militants would be even worse. They would become less and less able either to negotiate or to fight their way out of the situation.

It would be much better for all parties to profit from the patch shown by the Indo-Sri Lanka group and to use joint pressures for preventing wilful deviation from it by anyone who may try to be recalcitrant. For measuring the deviation, the group's proposals provide a useful yardstick.

— Indian Express

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# A close look at Rupavahini

Jeanne Pinto

- The journalism of sight and sound is the only truly new form of journalism to come along. It is a **mass** medium, a universal medium..... it has serious built-in limitations as well as advantages.....

—ERIC SEVAREID  
CBS news commentator

- The consumers of television, when all is said and done, are still involved with the world through their screens. The more they watch **critically** — and read, and converse and think — the more they are engaged in life and politics and society.

—EDWIN DIAMOND  
media commentator

NEWS ... NEWS ... NEWS ... NEWS ... NEWS ...

**A**ccording to Rupavahini statistics, 55 to 60 per cent of their total output is produced locally: 49.2 per cent of this local production comes out of the newsroom — that is to say, approximately 25 per cent of the total four and a half hours of telecast time, each day, is news in Sinhala, Tamil or English.

Why this should be so is understandable in a multi-lingual society, with vast discrepancies in education, resources and time available to those who seek information; telecast news in the major source of public information to a large segment of this country's population.

What is significant here is not the amount of time given over to news bulletins, but the need to ensure that those who depend on electronic news should get the most comprehensive package possible, within the limitations of the TV medium. What, then, are the priorities that should prevail in a TV newsroom in this country? Electronic news has been defined as —

"A timely report of events, facts and opinions that interest a significant number of people, written to conform to the time limitations of the medium and the ability of the audience to absorb spoken information".

It is only the time factor and limitations of viewers that have been added to the normal definition of news for all media: the first priority remains, as for other media, the reporting of all available information, logically, concisely, clearly — but more neatly packaged.

It follows, therefore, that, in TV news, preparation is an important as writing; and this demands a meticulous attention to detail, a strong sense of responsibility and unvarying discipline — in short, **professionalism**.

In the proliferation of departments in local TV, it is the Newsroom that demonstrates the greatest efficiency and potential for professionalism: but the general continuing disadvantages of a government controlled information medium are more pronounced in their effects in the news area than anywhere else.

Every official, connected with the medium, has commented on the fact that Rupavahini's staff is, for the most part, "young, bright and keen", with the "blessing of dynamism and strength: that it is composed of intelligent, competent, bi-lingual (at least) young men and women, with talent, drive and dedication.

That verbal tribute paid, the actual practice seems to be an overt and covert undermining of

the efforts of these professionals in the medium.

In the organisation, structure and logistics of this unit, all the nuances and details of other, allied disciplines are put into a functional context — or should be.

TV is the most sophisticated of the media: but, with all that is available to local TV, in the way of opportunities, personnel and equipment, much of what comes out of the newsroom is still amateurish.

TV is an expensive medium: and, though TV here can still complain of inadequacies, what is available is adequate and mostly of the best — but judging from results, it would seem that resources are poor, or, more to the point, poorly used.

The resources are far from slim? It is the organisation that lacks cohesion, the structure that is lop-sided, the logistics that are not built around priorities.\*

On the news supply side — there are enough events and requests for coverage to form basic hard news locally: there is enough talent and enthusiasm in the newsroom to provide necessary "magazine" items and "human interest" stories — the drag here is the lack of time for those

\* Apart from the basic necessities like telephones and typewriters (English, Sinhala, Tamil) the newsroom contains a Reuter teletype machine; a powerful radio — on which news, local and foreign can be constantly monitored; VTR (Video Tape Recorder) screening facilities where rushes can be seen and pre-edited, to save wear and tear in the MCR (Main Control Room); sufficient cassetted sound recorders — for coverage and editing; a large bulletin board — for up-to-date rostering and assigning.

ENG gear and vehicles come under a technical department — but they are available, only sometimes when they are needed. Camera, sound and light crews sit in another room.

One studio is always available, come news time: and dubbing/mixing and editing facilities can be used at set hours.



who could cover such stories, and the lack of priorities which could release equipment, however, limited.

The new Asia Vision Service was introduced on January 16, 1983: expenses are borne by the member countries — Bangladesh (BTV), Brunei (RTB), Iran (IRIV), Pakistan (PTV), Malaysia (RTM), China (RTPRC), Sri Lanka (SLRC): the total cost to Sri Lanka (capital and recurrent expenditure) being Rs. 3.9 million.

There is a conference box hooked direct to the Kuala Lumpur centre: transmissions are via the Padukka earth station and it is manned by staff trained at the Asia-Pacific Institute of Broadcasting Development, Kuala Lumpur.

### UPDATE

All foreign news now comes through the Asiavision News Exchange. This consisting of two packages of items, one of which comes in the afternoon and one in the evening.

The first feed has two sections; regional stories from the subscriber countries and items from

the EVN O satellite package. There is a morning conference at which a list of items is offered and the various stations 'bid' for them followed by an afternoon conference at which the dope on the stories is read out and recorded.

The second feed is more arbitrary; SLRC doesn't take part in the process of selection. The items tend to be more international and less regional and have the great advantage of being the day's stories.

The AVN items suffer from several disadvantages. In the first place the regional stories are not always even in quality. Very often they are supported by inadequate information or poor scripts which makes using them on a bulletin an arduous business. Secondly, many of the EVN stories come in the form of rushes, which means they have to be re-edited and there isn't always time for

this in the 5.30 feed; what's worse is that here too RTM doesn't always supply enough information. Where the story is a major one and can be

augmented with Reuter reports this doesn't really matter. But sometimes it's a general story or a featurette and one doesn't know how to stretch three lines of information out over a minute and a half.

The old ASPAC package isn't subscribed to any more. It did cost a lot, but the combination of that and Asiavision provided a really good foreign news component.

T. V. may be expensive; but that expense can be more than justified by expanded, varied, interesting news bulletin: the material is available, the staff willing and able — wherein lies the weakness?

### The Constraints

The current roster and the way the department works in reality proves that a basic number of people do most of the work — the rest are not merely redundant, they are a definite nuisance.

There is absolutely no justification for overstaffing in this department: it should and could be small and tight-knit, with some areas of specialisation — but a greater mobility between areas of

(Continued on page 24)

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# Need for a media policy

Victor Gunewardena

Editor, Marga Institute

One of the basic problems in the development of television in Sri Lanka is absence of a clearly articulated national policy not only on television but also on the media in general. Consequently, television tends to develop on its own, having as its guide the general objectives set out in the Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation Act. The Act also serves as a regulatory framework for Rupavahini besides the general laws that are applicable to publication and the media of communication. In the absence of an overall media policy and of a policy on information Rupavahini would appear to be evolving its own policy, regardless of the need to relate to the other media of social communication such as the radio, press and cinema. The need for a coordinated policy on the media is all the more greater because radio and television in particular are state owned and managed and should be utilised by the State to meet its social responsibility for the provision of public information, social and aesthetic education and entertainment.

Television and radio, press and cinema are all complementary in the process of social communication. Individuals and communities need information for their personal and social growth and to participate better in the development of the larger social community.

The different media individually and collectively have the potential for enriching the quality of human life by helping to stimulate the individual's faculties of sight, sound thought, imagination and emotion thereby deepening social awareness, enhancing sensibility, fostering creatively and contributing to the flowering of one's personality. Hence the development of any one medium cannot be at the expense of any other. While

each medium needs to be developed optimally it must also relate to the other media and seek to complement them, and not seek to be so competitive with them as to be a substitute for any of them. For instance, in the designing of its children's programmes television must among other requirements seek to make good the absence of a children's cinema in Sri Lanka. It can do so by visual creativity that stimulates the child's imagination and other faculties of perception and expression.

The particularity of each medium should enable it to meet the special aspect of human need, be it visual or auditory enjoyment or the intellectual or emotional satisfaction to be derived from the reading of the experiences communicated through the print medium. But it is the variety and the totality of the different experiences that reflect the depth and diversity of life. A coordinated and carefully designed national media policy is therefore an essential requirement of a national strategy aimed at integral human development. Media have vital roles to play in social education, value transmission, group dynamics and in enriching leisure and recreation. But in Sri Lanka the various media seem to be competing for the same audiences at the same prime viewing or listening times. At times the messages communicated by the different media conflict, and consequently, confuse viewers and listeners. There is little evidence of inter-medium consultation between the professionals and programme organisers of, for instance radio and television. In a sphere of inter-relatedness what is evident is exclusiveness. As a result prime viewing time on television tends to coincide with prime listening time on radio. A coordinated media policy could ensure for the listener and the

viewer enjoyment of special television and radio programmes without having to forgo one for the other.

Television owes its rapid growth in Sri Lanka, from 40,000 licensed sets in 1980 to 205,000 in 1983 (Rupavahini's estimate is 250,000) partly to novelty of the medium, and partly to the fact that transmission which under ITN was confined to a 30-mile radius in and around Colombo, was able within four years to become almost nationwide. At present 84 per cent of the country is covered and when the transposer stations at Suriyakanda and Namunukala become operational in 1986 the whole island will be covered by the network.

Rupavahini estimates there are 250,000 TV sets in use, and on the assumption that there are five viewers to a set, it concludes that about 1,250,000 people watch television daily, the programmes averaging five hours a day.

But Rupavahini cannot afford to ignore the fact that there were 1,181,000 licensed radio receivers in 1983. On the basis of five listeners per receiver radio broadcasting has an audience of 5,905,000 persons of a population of 15 million. In 1980 when there were 40,000 licensed TV sets there were 1,361,000 licensed radio receivers. In 1981 TV sets increased to 53,000 and radio sets to 1,525,000, but the number of radios dropped to 1,434,000 in 1982. In which year TV sets increased to 113,000. In 1983 there was a further drop to 1,181,000 as against a steep increase in the number of TV sets, totalling 205,000.

While in the space of four years the number of licensed TV sets increased five-fold, the number of licensed radios dropped



by 181,000. It is possible that broadcasting's loss has been television's gain. It is also likely that some owners of radios who also own TV sets prefer TV to radio while retaining their receivers.

However, broadcasting which in Sri Lanka is almost 60 years old continues to expand. At the time the Broadcasting Corporation came into being (January 1967) there were roughly 200,000 radios. In five years the number increased to 479,638. Five years later (1977) it had risen to 550,000. Within three years thereafter the number almost trebled.

Although the number of licensed sets has now dropped, evidently because of the novelty of TV, the broadcasting services have expanded, the transmissions increasing from about 200 hours a week on the home and overseas services each during the period under review. In addition, the educational broadcasts for school children and teachers cover nearly 25 hours a week. Seven new transmitting stations and two regional stations have also been opened.

All this is an indication that radio has not lost its popularity. Its reach is islandwide and overseas as well. Unlike TV, it is accessible to low-income groups and rural inhabitants too and reception is not constrained by the absence of electricity. It broadcasts daily in the three languages and for much longer than TV. The local component of the content of broadcasting far exceeds that of Rupavahini. Nevertheless it has the limitations of its medium, just as television is circumscribed by what the particular medium can do. It is the complementary roles of both media that a national policy especially must seek to foster. Like television, broadcasting, too, requires a philosophy for its development so that communicators and audience can relate to each other within a rational and acceptable framework.

## C.P. — The Path . . .

(Continued from 10)

We therefore call on the government to declare its readiness to provide for such Provincial or similar Councils which will enjoy extensive powers in their areas of jurisdiction over such subjects and functions as education, employment, land settlement, law and order, etc.

As to the vexed question of the compulsory merger of the eastern with the northern province in a single unit as pre-condition to any political settlement, our Party urges the T.U.L.F. leaders and others, who insist on this pre-condition not to do so. It would not be democratic to compel the racially mixed population of the eastern province to accept a compulsory merger with the north without their specific agreement. It is also our view that, at the present juncture, the substance of the devolution of powers and functions is more important than the form of the unit of devolution.

Our Party welcomes the fact that some of the armed organisations of Tamil youth have indicated a willingness to seek a political settlement of this problem, thereby continuing a process which began at the time of the Thimpu talks. But we strongly condemn the apparent decision of some other groups to pass over from armed struggle against the government's security forces to reckless terrorist violence against civilians, as witnessed in recent bomb explosions and in the brutal execution of the inhabitants of isolated Sinhalese hamlets in the eastern province, including women and children. Such contemptible actions are totally alien to any genuine liberation struggle, which the armed organisations say they are waging. We call on the Tamil militants, many of whom have condemned such actions as wrong and counter-productive to take steps to see that they are stopped.

Our Party calls on the leaders of the S.L.F.P., who up to now have pursued an evasive and essentially racist policy in relation to this vital issue, to cease to

do so. We ask them, instead, to make known their party's proposed solution to this problem and to contribute positively towards its settlement through negotiations. If the S.L.F.P. leaders, who demand a general election for a new government, are really interested in achieving this, they should surely do everything they can to see that the nationalities problem is settled at least to the extent of allowing the holding of really free and fair elections throughout the whole country.

Our Party also calls on the government and the S.L.F.P. leaders to stop provocative attacks on India and its leaders. Such attacks can only prejudice any positive role that India's government can play as a mediator and make a negotiated political settlement more difficult to achieve.

The Communist Party will continue to do all it can to help the creation of the necessary political climate and conditions for a political settlement of the nationalities problem. It urges all other parties to do the same. A special responsibility in this matter rests with parties that represent Left and radical forces in this country. Their united initiative can help greatly to break the present stalemate.

On behalf of the Central Committee,

**K. P. de Silva, General Secretary**

## A Close . . .

(Continued from page 21)

reporting and producing; with resultant encouragement of wider experience and skill, "to prevent boredom and defensive mentality" — but with clear-cut duties assigned to any **one** individuals, at any given time, on any given day.

The newsroom should be separate and independent:

"Current Affairs", with its meagre staff and negligible output, should be transferred elsewhere. The room is desperately small — and the news staff proper should be given more room in order to function efficiently and creatively.

There would, then, be room, too, essential support staff and equipment on the spot, available at all times.

(To be continued)

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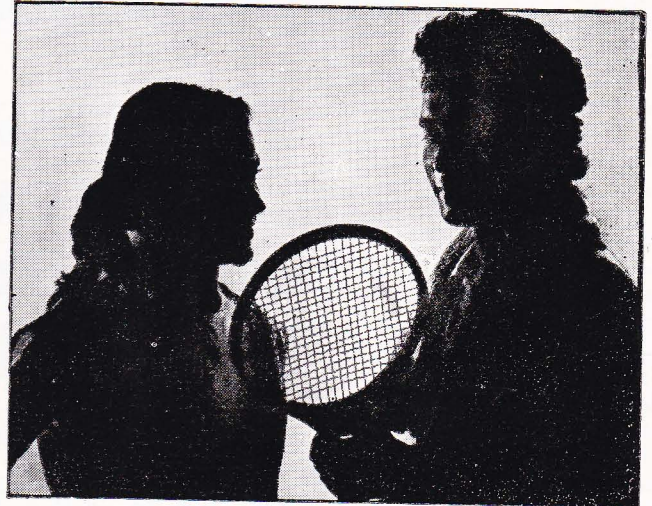
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