

S.L.F.P: pushed out of the House to  
extra-parliamentary arena — *Mervyn de Silva*

**LANKA**

# GUARDIAN

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## VIJAYA LANDS IN JAFFNA



## A TARGET TOO FAR ?

### JAFFNA SCENE:

Day and night with the cyanide 'boys' — *Dexter Cruetz*

Vijaya, the media and the message — *M. K.*

P.L.O.T.'s Maheswaran on War and Peace — *Qadri Ismail*

How free is our Press? — *F.E.E.R. reports*

*Also:* S.D.I. and Iceland Summit, Rajiv's Technocrats and  
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## SECURITY SPENDING

The Defence vote has not been cut; it has in fact been increased from 8.6 billion to Rs. 10.6 billion. There has also been an increase of 269 million in the votes of the new Ministry of Manpower Mobilisation which supervises a security-related operation, and a small rise in the vote of the Ministry of Commercial security. But the more we spend on security, the less secure everybody appears to be — the majority Sinhalese and the minorities, the private citizen and the private sector, the government (the recent amendment to the Presidential Commissions Act was clear evidence of that) the Opposition that is supporting the government on the P.C.'s (bomb attacks on Vijaya's meetings and the bomb in Colvin's home) and the Opposition.

And now the Ministry of Commercial Security has been seized by a fit of insecurity about Private Security Agencies, a post-77 phenomenon, like most other developments in the sphere of security, which could be said to represent the "privatisation" of security under the aegis of the UNP government.

In the beginning was the Ministry of Defence. Not even a full-fledged ministry in fact, just a part of the Ministry of Defence and External Affairs, with one Minister (the Prime Minister) and one Permanent Secretary. That post-independence set-up was found more than adequate from 1947 to 1977, including just before, during and after the 1971 insurrection.

True, violence, terrorism and a full-blown separatist insurgency confronted the present regime with far more serious, complex and demanding problems. The Opposition would of course argue that much of the first bouts of violence were directed at its activists and supporters. For along with the private security agencies, protecting big business and the super-rich, came "mafias", associated with the underworld and top politicians or both.

*But the sheer multiplication of "security" ministries and the proliferation of security-related ministerial responsibilities signalled a major change. We had "defence" "internal security" "national security" "commercial security" and "Manpower Mobilisation";*

*Last week the Ministry of Commercial Security held a conference chaired by Brigadier Dennis Hapugalle, the Ministry's top official. The Ministry has decided to keep a vigilant eye on private security agencies hired to protect government enterprises. Their work will be monitored. Some agencies were styled "mush-room". They have failed to respond to questionnaires sent out by the Ministry. One official moaned: "Everybody wants to set up a security agency... there's a lot of money in it".*

## POLICE AND PUBLIC

*As violence of all kinds spreads from the capital to major towns and the countryside, even the police don't feel too secure. Several months ago, a mob attacked a police station in the heart of the city when they heard the screams of a man taken into custody. A police car was almost set on fire, and this not too far from Hulftsdorp, the seat of Justice and the Supreme Court.*

(Continued on page 11)

TRENDS  
+  
LETTERS

## TEMPLE ENTRY

Dr. Wickramasuriya (letter, September 1st) claims that it is necessary to establish one's credentials "(race, caste, religion etc.)" before entering a Hindu kovil. My experiences, based on 12 years extensive travel in India and Sri Lanka, are quite the reverse. I have visited many Hindu places of worship, often alone, and not once has my presence been questioned or objected to — my 'Caucasian' appearance notwithstanding. When entering the Sri Padmanabhaswamy temple — a private foundation in Trivandrum — a few words in advance were necessary however, and I was once accompanied to the Vishwanath temple in Varanasi by a security officer from the Baranas Hindu University solely as a precaution because of enhanced local J.S.S. 'activity' at the time.

By contrast I recall one 'incident' during a visit with my family to the Dambulla Rock temple in mid-1982. Upon leaving, a local endeavoured to levy a tourist charge but my

(Continued on page 24)

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## CONTENTS

News Background	3
The Sri Lankan Media	7
Uma Maheswaran — Interview	13
Foreign News	15
Rajiv Gandhi: A Mid-term Report — II	20
Boy's Own Botham	21
TULF Proposals — VI	23

The next instalment of Paul Seabright's article on Jaffna's War-time Economy will appear on November 15.

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# The Illusions of Power

Mervyn de Silva

NEWS  
BACKGROUND

The SLFP which has probably about 40% of the electorate has only 8 MP's in a house of 168. If it has to demonstrate its power it just has to do so through extra-parliamentary means. The UNP, with its five-sixth majority is all-powerful in Parliament but is anxiously wondering how illusory that omnipotence could be.

How wickedly the past mocks the UNP! The July 1977 election result — a famous UNP victory, albeit through a quirk of an electoral system which has blessed both parties, UNP and SLFP — has determined the present composition of Parliament, helped by the highly controversial Referendum of Dec. 1982, and the total withdrawal of the TULF group from the House by the end of 1983, in the face of a constitutional amendment (the 6th) which required them to swear an oath renouncing separatism.

Today, our "Long Parliament" (1977-1989?) of 168 MP's has one MEP MP, one CP member, one Ind, and 8 SLFP'ers. The UNP has well-over 140, though only 114 were present to vote for the amendment to the SPCIA (Special Presidential Commissions of Inquiry Act). The purpose of the bill, said the National Security Minister, was "to protect and strengthen the rights and privileges of MP's" — a bold leap across the credibility gap! The Parliamentary Privileges Act achieves that quite well. If not, there is the Penal Code. If that is not sufficient to deal with anybody who tries to "overawe, coerce or influence an MP (or the government and President) the offender can be locked up under so many freely available Emergency regulations.

But the same Minister was frank enough to inform the House (and the public) that 'tape recordings' of speeches made at rallies organised to oppose the Provincial

Councils Bill indicate that some critics and agitators are calling on the people to "surround the homes of MP's" presumably if and when the day for debating the PC's bill comes.

In presenting the amendment Prime Minister Premadasa spelt out its real intent in these words "to enlarge the scope of Section 9 of Law No. 7 of 1978 by the addition of another ground for the imposition of civic disability on the recommendation of the Commission".

Already the government had decided to bring into force an emergency regulation introduced by the U.F. in 1971 at the height of the JVP insurrection. For similar offences (vis-a-vis the government, ministers, MP's and public servants) death, 20 years rigorous imprisonment and forfeiture of property were the prescribed penalties.

Of course, the SPCIA itself was a post-77 UNP innovation. A new class of offences were created such as "abuses of power" (Mrs. B., Felix Bandaranaike, Nihal Jayawickrema etc lost their civic rights on such grounds). These offences, hitherto unknown to the law, were broadly speaking of a "political" character. Political 'crimes', it was then argued, are punished by the masters of politicians, the people. And Mrs. B., Felix etc were in fact severely punished.

These offences are not as strictly defined as offences known to the Criminal law. Further, the rules of procedure followed by a Commission are not as rigorous as those which have to be used by courts of law. That was the general nature of the change represented by the SPCIA in terms of law and justice. Its political significance, as an instrument of the State, was of course paramount.

And it is in terms of the present political situation and the power-balance inside parliament and outside it that the meaning of the new amendment has to be understood.

At the Oct. 82 and Dec. 82 polls, the government's vote was about 53%. The anti-government vote of 47% included the solid Tamil vote of the north. Yet, it is a fair guess that the Opposition could now count on anything between 45-50%, may be even more if the ethnic conflict and the government's handling of it has led to a much greater slippage of the traditional UNP vote.

## SINHALA OPINION

The actual strength of Sinhala opinion on the PC's issue cannot be quantified right now. Nobody is in a position to go through that exercise until a poll is held. But it is surely fair to say that Sinhala opinion, now being roused by the SLFP and the Sangha, and all those assorted groups and personalities in the MDN, is bound to have had a strong impact on UNP MP's, especially those in the rural areas. How much? Strongly enough to make them place "nation, and religion", the MDN'S fervent appeal, before "party"? Strongly enough to make some MP's vote against the PC's bill, which requires a 2/3rds majority, or simply stay at home on the appointed day? These thoughts must trouble any regime trapped in a situation where its "peace offer" is too much of a concession in the eyes of a great many Sinhalese and far too little in the eyes of even the TULF, let alone the militants. The amendment is pre-emptive, it is psychological (a threat to potential agitators) and it is self-protective in regard to its exposed rearguard and rank-and-file, the backbench MP.

(Continued on page 19)

## The Vijaya Mission and the media

# Hefty Hole in the Cadjan Curtain

Vijaya has landed in Jaffna — the news flashed by TV and radio. Then things went awry. Lack of preparation for a task that would have tested the skills of a professional negotiator? A volte-face by the "boys" resulting from rank-and-file pressure for a prisoner exchange? Contradictory official signals to the Colonel in Jaffna, reflecting diverse views in the UNP leadership? Or was it from the start 'mission impossible', a bridge too far?

How did Sinhala opinion respond to the project and its failure. An opinion survey conducted on scientific lines would have helped

us to know answers which in turn would have thrown much light on a much wider subject — popular Sinhala opinion on the current crisis and what to do. Opinion anyway was sharply divided in the government's frontbench in parliament during the debate (23/10) on SPCIA amendment.

**Mr. Anura Bandaranaike** (Opp. Leader): The government is playing the fool like sending people to Jaffna. It was a fiasco.

**Mr. Athulathmudali:** Some people go to Jaffna and then play the fool.

Prime Minister Premadasa however regards Mr. Kumaranatunge

as a man of courage and suspects that the SLFP is worried of the S.L.M.P.'s popularity.

**Prime Minister:** It is not fair to say that Mr. Kumaranatunge is selling the country. He made an attempt. We must appreciate the fact that he made an attempt.

The English language press has ridiculed and savaged him but the Sinhala papers, with the fate of the two Sinhala soldiers as their primary consideration, have been more sympathetic to Mr. Kumaranatunge. His visit achieved one thing, anyway — media exposure, a hole in the cadjan curtain.

## The hearts and minds battle

M. K.

The minor 'contradictions of capitalism' express themselves in singularly interesting ways in specific historical and dramatic contexts with their special characteristics and nuances. It was, after all, Professor Ediriweera Sarachchandra, the gifted revivalist of Sinhala folk drama and eminent Sinhala academic who wrote that provocative letter on "Facing the Truth" which was published in your journal. (The letter was addressed to the Jaffna-based 'Saturday Review' and re-published by the L. G. on 15/3/86. See Box 'Facing the Truth' — Ed.)

Do the Sinhala people know what's really happening here in Jaffna? That was Sarachchandra's pointed question. And Sarachchandra is the most pungent critic of the debasing vulgarity of the 'new consumerism' bred by the 'open economy', and its disruptive impact on traditional values. But the 'open economy' has also brought us new communications media and communications technology. The mainstream, official communications media may be controlled, semi-controlled or 'guided' but there are other parallel, unofficial and

hidden (subversive?) channels of communications available thanks to these recent 'opening up' changes.

The private T. V. stations in Jaffna present their own 'news'.

### 'Facing the Truth'

*It is the misfortune of the human being that although Truth is an ultimate good, knowledge of the Truth does not always bring him happiness. Ignorance is often bliss. I wonder how many people in the South realise the extent of the sufferings that our brethren, the Tamil people of this country, have been undergoing at the present moment. People to whom I have spoken do not believe what I say. Or they do not want to. Their senses are dulled by the sound of the tamashas around them, the scores of the cricket matches, the bailas broadcast by State radio and the Nandana Vindana comedies on T. V. They will not realise anything until they are themselves touched by this Evil that is stalking the country . . . . ."*

— Ediriwira Sarachchandra

The video films take the 'news' (actualites) to the Tamil liberation movement and the Tamil diaspora, to Tamilnadu and India and to the world, including the world press. The top brass in Colombo possess even greater resources but access to 'actualite' is limited for logistical reasons. However, the top brass in Colombo make their own films of what's going on here, if only from helicopters hovering high in the sky. So decision-making coterie can see what is really going on in this the 'liberated zone' in the idiom of the vanguard fighters. That coterie can see the 'truth'. But not, sad to say, the Sinhala masses, as Dr. Sarachchandra perceptively noted. Perhaps the Vijaya Kumaranatunge press conference, where films were shown and pictures distributed, marks a breakthrough, a hole in the curtain?

When Victor's body was brought to Jaffna a long service was held at the Jaffna (Catholic) Cathedral. All that is on film. So was the scene at Nallur Kandasamy Kovil where the bodies of the nine Sinhala soldiers, dressed and wreathed, were placed on a stage.

On the stage were the two captured soldiers. They were sipping 'coke', and biscuits were served. Their wounds had been treated, by medical personnel.

Victor was given a hero-martyr's funeral in Jaffna. Queues winding in different directions were more than a mile long. All shops and schools were closed. Loudspeakers blared forth valedictory verses, and emotionally stirring pledges that the "struggle" will go on until the brave liberation fighter's name was inscribed in the history books in letters of silver, etc etc.

The helicopters marked the State's presence overhead. The scenes were being filmed. Ground fire from the 'boys' chased them away soon. So a select, privileged group of VVIP's will see them in Colombo. But they won't be shown on Rupavahini, I bet!

The crowd, Victor's body, the dead soldiers, the huge quantity of arms and new weapons captured in the Mannar battles were all laid out for the people to see, and of course material for the video.

The medium is the message, and vice versa.

But the audience? First the Jaffna people of course. The LTTE was backing up its claim of a 'victory' in Mannar, principally that it's own casualties were comparatively insignificant. Secondly, it was proving that it had successfully brought the bodies of its own fighters, the dead soldiers and the two soldiers taken captive from Mannar to Jaffna. How? In the face of 24 hour curfews and heavy concentrations of the army, with reinforcements sent out as the State media and Colombo press announced. In other words, the Mannar-Vavuniya area was

their 'turf' where they enjoyed far freer mobility than the forces. Policy makers and negotiators in Delhi and Madras would be able to judge the "situation on the ground".

The most 'human touch' of all in this 'drama' — and it is drama as Vijaya Kumaranatunge was the first to grasp instinctively — was the Captain Kotelawela — Rahim/Kittu exchanges and intimacies which the Vijaya press conference brought home no doubt to the large gathering of media persons. With the help of the G. A., arrangements were made for returning the bodies of the soldiers to the Fort. This too was filmed. Kittu and one other LTTE man drove the truck with the bodies. Captain Kotelawela came out. He could see the bodies cleanly clothed, placed in coffins full of wreaths. Salutes, a firm hand-clasp, a warm embrace.

## Quick change in day and night life of Jaffna

by Dexter Cruesz in Jaffna

Surprisingly Jaffna the island's most troubled town is busy as a beehive during day. There are certainly many shell-hit buildings which bear scars of the fighting, but civilians now accustomed to the battles go about their routines with only a casual glance at the sound of gunfire or loud explosions which would normally scare anybody out of his wits.

At night however this town takes the appearance of a ghost city with only the Tamil militants armed to their teeth with an impressive assortment of weaponry, manning checkpoints behind heavily sandbagged bunkers or going on foot-patrols. The sound of explosions or the staccato rattle of machine-gun fire echoes strongly, while the town sleeps.

This quick day-and-night life of the Jaffna change in town is now as normal as a casual sip of palmyrah toddy by the thirsty. The city's populace has become almost immune to violence which has taken such a heavy toll of human lives

and caused so much human suffering to so many in so short a time.

But on October 21 the visit to Jaffna by Vijaya Kumaranatunga, movie-hero turned political leader of the SLMP on his controversial and abortive mercy mission saw the Jaffna population temporarily forget their woes. Here was a film actor playing what he normally does on the silver screen, a Rambo type-mission (albeit peacefully) to rescue two Sinhalese soldiers held captive in the Tiger lair.

Unfortunately Kumaranatunga flew back to Colombo empty-handed and the Jaffna people went back to their homes and their "routine" lives behind what is popularly called the "Cadjan Curtain," a life of gunfire, explosions and sudden death.

"We never know what time there will be shelling on the town" said the manager of a leading hotel in Jaffna. "But we have to continue our work in order to earn a living" he said referring to his hotel, more empty

than any four-star place in Colombo!

"The only possible solution to this ethnic conflict which has seen this once peaceful land being ripped apart is the establishment of the Tamil separate state "Eelam" covering the northern, eastern and north-western provinces where the Tamils are concentrated, Kittu the LTTE field-commander of the Jaffna peninsula said in an interview.

"We will never settle for anything less" he was emphatic whilst adding the TULF and its predecessors have been talking for the past 30 years on the legitimate rights of the Tamils without any success.

When Kumaranatunga not only took up a militant's machinegun but fired at a target he created quite a 'bang' among the crowding militants! The Sinhalese filmstar was shooting at the same target the militants used for practice firing. What impact Kumaranatunga's shots had on the minds of a people fighting and dying

for "Eelam", it is only possible to guess.

Jaffna has been something of a "mystery" city ever since the ethnic violence worsened in July 1983. "Yalpanam" became Sri Lanka's forbidden city ever since. Boys as young as 12 years of age sprawl on the ground, row after row, in what was once a recreation centre, aiming wooden guns in combat training. Watching and training them is a Tamil militant group commander tote-ing a Chinese made T-56 assault rifle.

A three inch long cyanide capsule dangles round the sweat-covered neck of a grim looking militant cradling a Soviet made AK-47 assault rifle keeping a watchful eye on the 280-year old Dutch built Fort where the security forces are holed up. The cyanide will ensure a seven second trip to the Happy Hunting Grounds, the militants proudly proclaim in case they are threatened with

capture! The way they talk about the death ever-present round their neck is, as normal as a person speaking about a pill he is carrying to stop a sudden heart attack.

A handsome Colombo college educated youth holding another type of assault weapon joins his colleagues aboard a pick-up truck roaming the streets of Jaffna. Also on board the vehicle is a 50-milimetre anti-aircraft piece pointing skywards.

A little boy, hardly 15, steps suddenly out of a doorway cradling a mortar just cooked out of a munition factory with a capacity to produce 25 mortars and 100 grenades a day.

Today Jaffna city has more than 120 militant-controlled 'industries' turning out an assortment of products ranging from candles to palmyrah sauces to bolster the economy of the separatist cause. Young Jaffna girls work in the industries gratis. The industries

form the backbone of what the militants firmly believe will someday be the national economy of "Eelam".

A young 12 year old boy speaking fluent English interviewed by this writer said he was going to school. "Will you be joining the movement?" The question was answered in a wink. "Yes. It is our tradition now".

Will Yalpaanam continue to be city bristling with guns? It will depend on the on-going peace talks. "The government must talk with us in India. We are willing to negotiate a peace with the government in India. It is we who matter" said Kittu.

But from what Jaffna looked like when this writer freely roamed its streets, this once quiet and proud city presented itself to my inexperienced eye as part of a scenario from some violent movie or T.V. images of some international trouble-spot.

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# The Sri Lankan media: an outsider's view

Many an educated Sri Lankan, indignant over world press coverage of the ethnic conflict and the Tamil insurgency, joins the government in abusing the international media or gnashing his teeth silently over "our tarnished image". But how does the foreign media see our own press? We demand accuracy, balance and "constructive" or "responsible" criticism from the world press. How do our own media stand up to these tests?

The *Far Eastern Economic Review*, the best known journal of regional affairs, has been publishing a series of articles on the "Asian press" with the national media of each country in this area as the subject of a special survey. The spotlight last month was turned on Sri Lanka.

## Government gets what the government wants

By V. G. Kulkarni in Colombo

At the newsstands in downtown Colombo pornographic periodicals vie for space with a host of sports and women's magazines. At least nine different organs of political parties with their contending points of view strive for the readers' attention. And the banner headlines of more than a dozen dailies in three languages range from the latest on the non-aligned movement to super-power rivalry and the casualties in the Tamil insurgency to bombings in the Middle East.

To a casual visitor this varied fare in news and views gives the impression of a vibrant and thriving press in Sri Lanka. But a closer look unveils an unsavoury reality. The party organs have at best a combined circulation of a few thousand. At least two-thirds of the dailies' and a sizeable part of the magazines' circulations come from the government-controlled publishing group.

The rest of the press tamely follows the official line on almost

all issues, for fear of offending the authorities who are armed with a set of draconian laws to rein in the press. State power of patronage in large-scale public-sector advertising and import regulations on newsprint act as an additional restraining influence on the press. With radio and TV also in official hands, the government has almost total control over the national media, a situation which has prevailed since the 1970s.

When President Junius Jayewardene's United National Party (UNP) swept to power in 1977, there was considerable expectation that the press would be allowed to breathe more freely. The UNP undid the state capitalist system of permits and licences which its predecessor regime had entrenched, and opened the economy to market forces. But economic liberalisation did not bring about a free and financially healthy press.

Despite paying lip service to press freedom when in opposition,

the UNP once back in power found it convenient to continue the government's hold over the country's largest publishing house — Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd or the Lake House group — which was nationalised by then prime minister Sirima Bandaranaike in 1973. The ethnic unrest in 1981 and 1983 and the ensuing Tamil insurgency which led to emergency rule have also come in handy for the UNP as an excuse to ignore demands for relaxing press controls.

That both rightist as well as leftist governments in Sri Lanka have preferred to control the press has its roots in the country's colonial past and the espoused goals of a post-colonial developing country. The role of the press has been a matter of intense debate in the country since at least the 1960s. The Western approach to the press as a free marketplace of ideas and a watchdog on government and society has come under question in many parts of the Third World. Sri Lankan leaders have sided with the view of many of their Third World counterparts that socio-economic development was of the highest priority and that the press should be an effective instrument in communicating developmental goals. These, needless to say, are framed by those in power.

The nexus between the press and the government had a long colonial past. The first newspaper in what was then Ceylon was the *Government Gazette*, started in 1802 by the British administration.

Others that followed were also in the English language, published by and for Englishmen. The colonial press was essentially a lobby for British planters and merchants, which always strove to hold back the government's welfare policies for the native inhabitants.

## New Magazines — the bright spot *Lanka Guardian* a 'lively fortnightly'

By Manik de Silva in Colombo

The editor of one of Sri Lanka's most popular women's magazines planned a feature on the rash of Sinhalese pornographic publications that appear and disappear on Colombo's pavements. She walked up to a downtown city newsstand recently and asked for some of the "sex stuff." The vendor, who knew her well, said: "They're all gone lady. They're snapped up before you can say 'bak'."

"The mushrooming of pornography in Sinhalese is becoming very bad," Sumana Sapramadu, the editor of the *Tharunee* (*Young Woman*) told the REVIEW. "It's all raw, dirty stuff which even the non-prudish would blush at." Most of it was printed locally with pirated illustrations, she said.

But the surge of pornography has in no way diminished the vigour of Sri Lanka's mainstream periodicals, many of which are run with very small staffs. *Tharunee*, for example, is put out by the editor and four journalists. The industry is flourishing thanks both to the country's very high literacy rate — the number of young Sri Lankans who do not read or write is negligible — and the thirst for reading matter in the two indigenous languages, Sinhalese and Tamil. The strip picture story and cartoon publications are doing particularly well, as are the women's and children's magazines. At least three weeklies have circulations of 70,000 and more.

Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd, or Lake House, as the country's biggest publisher is known, has a string of nine weeklies in Sinhalese. *Sarasaviya*, dealing with films is very popular, as are *Madhura* (cartoons), *Tharunee* (women's) and *Mihira* (for children). Lake House also brings out a Buddhist weekly called *Budusarana*, *Subasetha* which deals with astrology and indigenous medicine, *Kreedda*, a sporting publication, *Yovun Janatha* for youth and the weekly, *Nava Yugaya*, mainly devoted to literature.

The latest addition to the Lake House stable is an international news weekly, *World Today*, an English publication using a lot of the wire-service stories that the company's dailies cannot take for reasons of space. The magazine is considered to have promise, due to the high price of the better-known foreign magazines, but the circulation so far has been disappointing.

Lake House also produces an English digest of the country's domestic news of the week, called *Sri Lanka News*, sold to Sri Lankans living abroad. Upali Newspapers, another national newspaper group, produces a similar weekly in a bid to win a slice of this sizeable business.

Most of the smaller periodicals published in Sri Lanka have problems getting a reasonable volume of advertising, while Lake House chairman Ranapala Bodinagoda says his company could obtain more advertising for its periodicals. "The trouble is that the editors don't want to concede space... I've had to push them to release advertising space."

Although Bodinagoda gave no figures he said the Lake House periodicals were profitable. As is the case with the daily English newspapers, the English-language periodicals tend to attract more advertising than Sinhalese or Tamil publications.

*Tharunee* editor Sapramadu said her magazines attracted "woman and home" advertising: for toiletries, household goods and children's health-care products.

Ranjit Wijewardene, the son of Lake House founder Don Richard Wijewardene, also runs a stable of Sinhalese (and two English) periodicals through a family-owned company, Vijaya Publications Ltd. Like Lake House, Vijaya produces weeklies for children and women, strip cartoon periodicals and a magazine for young men which the

publishers admit is no match for *Playboy*.

*The Lankan Woman*, an English-language women's magazine, does best on advertising, Wijewardene said. While he did not give figures, the publisher is not complaining about the bottom line. Vijaya, like Lake House, has production advantages flowing from the printing and publishing interests of associate companies, though Wijewardene agrees he lacks the infrastructure his family built for Lake House.

"We can do more on periodicals. We have a literate population. I think one of the problems we face is that we are too bound to formula presentations. We should break out of that" Wijewardene said.

Editor S. P. Amarasingham founded in 1954 a political weekly called the *Tribune* which ceased publication early this year. But he hopes that his periodical, which also had a six-month break in publication soon after the communal riots of 1958 and another during the 1971 youth insurgency period, will be back on the newsstands soon. He told the REVIEW there had been periods when the *Tribune* was profitable, other times it broke even and occasions "when I had to subsidise it with my earnings from elsewhere."

His interest in politics and agriculture was reflected in the publication, which included a great deal of political comment and tended to be generally anti-establishment.

More recently, the *Lanka Guardian*, a lively fortnightly edited by Mervyn de Silva, a well-known name in Sri Lanka journalism, has appeared on the newsstands. Modestly priced, the publication is aimed at the intelligentsia and often provides a platform for view points that are not reflected in the national daily press.

The resurgence of a pre-colonial traditional Buddhist culture — a strong emotive plank for all Sinhalese politicians — played its part in the government's attack on the Westernised elite who controlled the media until the early 1970s. While the leftists, when in opposition, found a free press essential to propagate their views, after achieving power they made the private monopoly press their prime target. The leftists were also resentful of the close links between the Lake House group and the right-of-centre regimes of the 1950s.

Although Ceylonese also began publishing their own newspapers in colonial times, these — unlike their Indian counterparts — played a very minor role in the independence movement. While the press in India came in for several harsh clampdowns by the British, the press in Ceylon posed no major problems and the only strictures applied to it were during World War II for security reasons. At the time of independence the British had sold their interests in Ceylon's publications and D. R. Wijewardene, who by then controlled the Lake House group, emerged as the premier media magnate with strong links to the UNP. In the early 1950s, Lake House was commonly considered a member of the UNP's "inner cabinet."

In the 1956 general election, the Lake House organs did their best to support the UNP, but the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) strode to power and attacks on the "monopoly press" began. The SLFP retained power in the 1960 election and announced its intention to regulate the press and nationalise the Lake House group. As intra-cabinet divisions delayed the drafting of legislation, a press commission was appointed to investigate the media scene. The commission recommended several restrictive measures, but the legislation was defeated by parliamentary bungling and divisions within the SLFP.

With the active help of the press the UNP defeated the SLFP

in the 1965 general election and the press heaved a sigh of relief. The electoral wheel turned again in 1970 and the SLFP came to power vowing vengeance against the press. A leftwing insurgency in 1971 shook the government and delayed the moves against the press, but by early 1973 parliament passed the Press Council Law, giving the government-appointed council a watchdog function over the press. The law also restricted the press coverage of cabinet discussions and contemplated fiscal measures. Another law was passed in July 1973 to put 75% of the Lake House group's shares in the hands of a public trustee appointed by the government — which would also run the publications.

The nationalisation of the Lake House group saw an exodus of senior and qualified journalists from the country. The Bandaranaike government started appointing political loyalists in key jobs, and editors not willing to toe the line were unceremoniously eased out. The return of the UNP regime in 1977 saw similar action taken against some "unreliable" appointees of the previous government.

In 1981, the Jayewardene regime facilitated the birth of the Upali Newspapers, founded by dynamic Sinhalese entrepreneur Upali Wijewardene, a close relative of the president. The Upali group launched its English-language flagship, *The Island* and its Sinhalese sibling *Divaina* the same year.

Upali's strong links with the UNP, his own considerable personal wealth and his barely concealed presidential ambitions made the upstart group the envy of its rivals. For a while it seemed *The Island* could resuscitate the comatose columns of other newspapers.

Upali Newspapers' prime targets in the UNP were Prime Minister Ranasinghe Premadasa and Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel, particularly the former. *The Island* spared no efforts in attacking the two, while taking care not to involve the president and the UNP in general in its forays.

Premadasa sued the Upali group for damages over a story about his personal wealth in 1982, and the long drawn-out court proceedings were watched with interest by the public. In 1984 the two sides settled out of court — sources say at the president's behest — with the daily paying Rs 1 million (US\$35,700) to Premadasa, the highest defamation payment in the country so far. However, since the mysterious disappearance of Upali in a private aircraft over the South China Sea in 1983, *The Island* has lost what clout it had.

Currently, there are three major publishing groups in Colombo: the Lake House group, Independent Newspapers, which resumed publication in 1977 after a three-year closure by the Bandaranaike regime, and the Upali group. Express Newspapers, which publishes in Tamil only, comes a poor fourth. None of these groups claims to lose money, but nor do they seem able to invest more in improving and expanding editorial coverage. Not that it would be an easy task even if resources were available given the political and legal constraints under which newspapers operate in the country.

The daily fare of Colombo's newspapers consists of stories that read the same, most emanating from the same official sources. In the absence of correspondents abroad, foreign news is limited to copy from international news-agencies and syndicated features. During Bandaranaike's rule in the 1970s, development news from the Third World was favoured, but under the pro-Western Jayewardene government the Third World no longer gets extensive coverage.

Colombo's new-found relationship with Israel, which is providing aid, weapons and training to help the government combat the Tamil insurgency, translates into a total absence of editorial criticism of the Jewish state, and its economic and technical achievements are praised. On the other hand, the sizeable employment opportunities for Sri Lankans in the Middle East and the favoured position

of the Muslim minority at home results in the press limiting its comments on Arab affairs.

News about India, mainly culled from Indian wire services, radio and newspapers, figures rather prominently but is largely focused on Indian insurgencies, political strife and natural calamities. Editorial comment on India reflects the mood of the Colombo government line of the moment. One cannot fault the Colombo press for not having on-the-spot coverage of the activities of Sri Lankan Tamil militants in India's Tamil Nadu state. Any contact with them could be construed by authorities as consorting with terrorist separatists, an activity forbidden by the anti-terrorism and emergency rules.

\* \* \*

News of the Tamil insurgency and the military's counter-moves come mainly via the Ministry of National Security and the Joint Operations Command of the Sri Lankan forces. Although local journalists keep in telephonic contact with the Tamil-dominated areas of the country, it would be a brave editor who would dare to dwell at length on the Tamil side of the story.

The government-controlled news-agency, Lankapuvath, adds to the already formidable state publicity network. Launched in 1978, the agency has only four full-time journalists and one part-timer, all based in Colombo. Located

in a government ministry building, it has an annual budget of Rs 2 million, half of which is a direct government grant with the balance coming mainly from the Lake House group and state-owned radio and TV.

Lankapuvath's daily output of about 1,500 words has in recent years consisted mainly of the military's activities and the civilian killings by insurgents. The agency also circulates this information abroad to counter the pro-insurgent propaganda by overseas Sri Lankan Tamils.

With the increasing violence of the ethnic conflict since late 1983, the prevalent anti-Tamil bias of the Colombo press was strengthened. Even those publications which have been usually liberal on most other issues have taken a hard line on the ethnic problem. The Sinhalese-language newspapers in particular vie with each other in taking a decidedly majority-chauvinist line, while the Tamil press is too small and too timid to upset the Sinhala authorities.

The Council for Harmony through Media, a voluntary group of liberal Sri Lankan intellectuals, did a content analysis of the coverage of the ethnic issue in the Sinhalese press during June-August 1981, when the police ran amok in Jaffna with the backing of UNP politicians and the carnage led to counter-violence by Tamil youth.

The analysis found that the Sinhalese press distorted facts, doctored age-old proverbs to suit its biased reporting and wrote linguistic editorials against the Tamils. The thrust of the reports was that there was no basis for Tamil grievances and in fact it was the Sinhalese community that was threatened. The analysis regretted that the press did not discuss the underlying causes of the ethnic conflict and added that it was full of "anti-Tamil propaganda, which goes against attempts, at communal harmony.

The anti-Tamil tirade has grown more strident, since then. The government's paranoia about radical dissent is such that the press rarely mentions those — Tamils and Sinhalese alike — detained under emergency regulations, except when the government itself puts out a release. Earlier this year a citizens group campaigning for the release of political prisoners issued a statement which was totally ignored by the press. Later, no newspaper was willing to print even a paid advertisement by the group.

Even if the ethnic issue is resolved through the continuing negotiations between Colombo and moderate Tamil politicians and the perceived threat from radical Sinhalese dissent is overcome, it is doubtful whether the Sri Lankan Government, armed with restrictive press laws and commanding a comfortable majority in parliament, would allow press freedom.

## The long arm of the law stalks the newsrooms

V. G. Kulkarni

In early 1978, the *Observer*, a Colombo afternoon daily, carried a frontpage picture of a man relaxing in a boat with a young woman. By some quirk of carelessness, the caption identified the man in the picture as the country's foreign minister though it bore no resemblance to that worthy politician.

In other democracies a public official, not unlike a private citizen

in similar circumstances, would seek redress from the courts. But not in Sri Lanka. An indignant parliament summoned the editors of the offending newspaper and fined them for breach of parliamentary privilege.

Some prominent Colombo lawyers have maintained that an action of defamation by the foreign minister against the *Observer* in a court of law would probably not

have succeeded. The case illustrates the excessive powers successive Sri Lankan parliaments with overwhelming majorities have amassed for themselves: impugning the integrity of an elected official even when legislative functions are not involved can be considered a breach of privilege.

As a matter of interest it should be noted that the *Observer* is government-owned.

Extraordinary parliamentary privilege is only one among the many constraints the country's press faces. In Sri Lanka, the press has the same rights as an individual citizen, but does not enjoy the added protection of judicial principles evolved through case law as in the US or Britain.

Fundamental rights of individual citizens were not even enumerated in the 1948 constitution—the first one for independent Ceylon. It was felt then that a dynamic body of case law would develop as had happened in Britain. The 1972 constitution filled the gap by including a bill of rights, but stymied it by including general overriding principles of state policy which included "distribution of social product and development of collective forms of property." These general restrictions, copied from socialist countries, effectively negated the rights granted by the constitution.

The 1978 constitution remedied this somewhat by detailing specific restrictions of rights. And of all the fundamental rights, freedom of expression had the largest number of enumerated restrictions. Moreover, the new constitution brought in a catch-all curtailment of rights allowing parliament to make laws "in the interests of radical and religious harmony, or in relation to parliamentary privilege, contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence, and for the welfare of society."

The constitution empowers the president to declare a state of emergency when needed and emergency decrees have the status of law in curbing basic rights. Since 1971, the time the country has been under emergency rule has added up to more than 10 years, and emergency regulations are in place now because of the Tamil insurgency. Regulations in

earlier emergencies have included press censorship.

Even after an emergency is lifted, some of its decrees have been enacted into laws by parliament. The Prevention of Terrorism Act of 1979 made permanent the earlier emergency edicts relating to press censorship. Under the act, the government by a simple gazette notification can order the press not to print news about terrorist activities without prior official clearance. News which is "likely to cause religious, racial or communal disharmony" could also come under such a ban.

\* \* \*

Of late the authorities have not needed to invoke their power of censorship. The fear of transgressing the repressive laws is so great among editors that they willingly indulge in excessive caution bordering on self-censorship, particularly when the news concerns the Tamil insurgency.

Editors want to play safe, and routinely soft-pedal or even ignore Tamil grievances, knowing that to report them could make them subject to the terrorism act and a jail term of up to five years. However, the same self-restraint does not appear applicable to majority Sinhalese views. Sinhalese politicians and clergy have often, especially since the late 1970s, made jingoistic anti-Tamil speeches which are reported as straight news.

The centrepiece of press regulation by the authorities is the 1973 Press Council Law under which a government-appointed council supervises the media. The law forbids the publication of intra-cabinet discussions and documents. News about monetary, fiscal and import-control measures which might be under consideration by a ministry or the country's central bank is also specifically barred to the press. Yet another item in the prohibited category is information relating to police or military matters, unless officially made public.

The composition of the seven member press council, which has

## TRENDS

(Continued from page 1)

Recently, a police party (a Sergeant and 5 constables) was attacked by a "mob" of plantation workers. The SUN which reported the incident said it was the third such attack in 4 days. A police raid on a group of "illicit gemmers", the Island reported, was also thwarted by a crowd. Just a few days later, Mahaveli Minister, Mr. Gamini Disanayake, demanded that a D.I.G. be appointed to "take exclusive charge of the forestry sector" because "timber racketeers" (the illegal felling of timber) were working "hand in glove" with "law enforcement personnel".

Political violence, high-level corruption, crime, protection rackets ("political" protection and "police protection") the breakdown of law and order, the loss of public confidence in law-enforcement agencies and in the impartial dispensation of justice, lead to demoralisation and the spread of 'insecurity', the new malaise of a society in the

*grip of unparalleled, and almost uncontrollable, turmoil.*

## CIVILIAN VICTORY

Whatever the ups and downs of the "civil war", the Media Centre has scored a victory for the civilians. A circular to the press, local and foreign, states:

However it would be greatly appreciated by all parties concerned especially by the Media Centre if there are no enquiries from the Security Forces including the Staff of the J.O.C.

This is for two reasons which I am sure you would appreciate.

(1) The Security Forces and their Commanders are entrusted with the task and duty of defending this country from the Terrorists. This is a demanding task requiring much thought and expenditure of time. If these officers have in addition to answer questions from the Press their sole objective will be seriously impaired.

(2) We have in Sri Lanka a Civilian Government and as such all news including those relating to Terrorism should emanate from a civilian source.

five officially appointed members and two working journalists, is also a matter of some controversy. In contrast, neighbouring India's press council has 26 members, 13 of whom are working journalists and the rest represent media owners, artists and MPs. While the Sri Lankan body is appointed by the government, the nominating committee of the Indian members consists of the chief justice and the presiding officers of the two houses of parliament. The Sri Lankan press council also has to comply with directions from a minister.

The council accepts complaints from the aggrieved public against newspapers and can carry out investigation. It has powers to summon witnesses including journalists and to award strictures and fines which cannot be questioned in courts of law. Journalists can be compelled to produce documents and reporters' notes in a press council inquiry.

Any one found in contempt of the council is referred to the Supreme Court which can treat the case as a contempt of court and punish the individual. In the

Supreme Court, a certificate signed by the council is deemed as conclusive evidence of the facts of the case determined by the council. The council's members are immune from the process in the Supreme Court and many not be summoned as witnesses. Although most of the cases before the council since its inception have concerned petty personal grievances of members of the public, the semi-judicial powers given to this government-controlled body and its immunity in the courts of law have been criticised by advocates of civil liberty.

## Dominance of drama and music in broadcasting

Manik de Silva

Despite the progress of TV, which came to Sri Lanka seven years ago, radio remains the country's most potent medium. There are now an estimated half a million TV receivers serving a population of 16 million, while an estimated 4 million radio receivers reach a national audience of 10 million. But paradoxically, despite radio's admitted reach and usefulness, it has been totally upstaged, with politicians, in particular, preferring to get on the more glamorous small screen.

Daily broadcasts in what was then Radio Ceylon began on 16 December 1925. Over the years the station, later converted into the more flexible and less regulation-bound Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corp. (SLBC) — with the government retaining sole ownership — was developed into a vigorous entertainment, information and educational medium which officials said was profitable.

"We focus on entertainment, information and education," Livy Wijemanne, chairman of the SLBC, told the REVIEW. "Naturally we've got to broadcast what the listeners enjoy. People like to tune into a station that is pleasant to listen to. Music is the conveyor belt for our commercials." The corporation had not gone to the Treasury for money since being set up, he said.

SLBC and its predecessor have always been government-owned. Until 1973, when the Sirima Bandaranaike government, which included communists, took over the country's most powerful publishing house, Associated Newspapers of Ceylon, the radio was the one medium the then ruling group had at its absolute command. Despite pontification both within and outside parliament that the station should be an independent entity (like the BBC), most people have considered newspapers to be more authoritative than radio. A dependence on official handouts, a news division that has been lethargic and unimaginative and a general disinclination to chase stories that would interest people has resulted in dull news reporting.

However, the situation has been different during such extraordinary events as national emergencies and elections. Then, radio has almost inevitably been the first with the latest, and people countrywide have tuned in to learn what was happening. Outside Colombo especially, the four daily newscasts in three languages — English, Sinhalese and Tamil — have a very wide listening audience as radio generally has the opportunity to break the big stories before evening TV transmissions and the next morning's newspapers.

\* \* \*

Despite weaknesses in its news-casting, SLBC and its predecessor have produced some fine broadcasters and programmes during its 60-year history. Many of its informational and educational programmes have been of a high quality. A daily sports roundup and regular commentaries on sporting events abroad command wide audiences, while pop music beamed on the commercial service continues to be popular in India, earning considerable advertising revenues there.

TV came late to Sri Lanka, with the originally privately owned International Television Network (ITN) being commissioned in 1979. The station was taken over by government a few months after start-up as a dispute among its owners saw the service suspended, and many thousand homes that had invested in receivers were left in the lurch. By the time national TV, Rupavahini, established with Japanese assistance technically near-countrywide reach, began in February 1982, an estimated 200,000 receivers had been purchased.

ITN has remained an almost exclusively entertainment-oriented commercially financed station, beaming mostly imported programmes and repeating Rupavahini's

(Continued on page 23)

# An encounter with Uma Maheswaran

Qadri Ismail

**A** Tamil speaker answers the telephone and, after you say you can't communicate well in Tamil an English speaker comes on. "I'm Skanda" says the voice. An interview with the Secretary-General of the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamileelam (PLOT) is requested. Skanda says he will call back. Some hours later he does so. "Comrade Muhundan will see you at twelve tomorrow. If that is all right by you." It is. Then, an address in a middle/lower middle class area of Madras (Vadapalani, for those who know the city) is mentioned.

We get there a little late. It does not matter, says Skanda, Comrade Muhundan — his members refer to him by his code name — will be a little late himself. We go from there to another house, a couple of hundred yards away. A few minutes later, Uma Maheswaran walks in. You recognise him easily from the photographs. He said he is 38 years old.

He speaks good English, is very soft spoken, and hardly raises his voice throughout the interview. His face is not settled; the recent breakaway from his party of almost half the cadre must have taken its toll. He dismisses the breakaway faction as insignificant. Dismisses also the allegations of financial corruption, lack of democracy in the party, drug running and mass internal killings. Throughout he defends his original stand of not attacking the forces at this point of time. But also points out that a full party congress is scheduled to be held soon to discuss all these things.

Here are excerpts from the interview:

**Q. How does PLOT see the current political and military situation?**

**A.** Whatever happens, the final decision on the problem would be a political matter. We are fighting to achieve our political aims. Presently, we are unable to implement our aims and objectives because of certain events in Jaffna and other areas where

our struggle has become completely diverted.

**Q. You would say that your struggle is for Eelam? Even in a context where the Indian government has stated categorically that it will not support Eelam?**

**A.** The Indian government has nothing to decide about our independence.

**Q. Do you think you can achieve a separate state without their help?**

**A.** We have to achieve a separate state and for that we have to fight. There we have to be very careful how to continue that struggle. We have to know the Indian view and once we know this we have to plan it out. For that we need support from progressive countries. We are asking for help from India also. It is up to them to decide.

**Q. One of the keys of your strategy has been the decision not to indulge in hit and run attacks. But, from the point of view of a lot of people, the LTTE has done this and have control of Jaffna and are running Jaffna. In that context what do you think of your own strategy of waiting instead, a general insurrection?**

**A.** We can say that they are controlling Jaffna, but if the Indian government wants at any time they can counter them. Really our situation is that we have been trapped. Most of our people outside the peninsula have been driven away and become refugees. In Jaffna the army camps are there and so are the militants. The army is unable to come out and the militants are unable to attack the camps. But if Jayewardene tomorrow stopped fuel, electricity and foodstuffs, the Jaffna people can't stay in their refugee camps. They will beg for a solution. So politically, who is winning?

**Q. What are your own strategies to combat this?**

**A.** At the present situation our strategy is to divert the struggle. It has been diverted towards the communal. We have to free the people from this communal ideology.

**Q. The Tamil people or Sinhala people?**

**A.** Both. We don't want to create communal feelings in any part of the world. It is our idea to do more propaganda among the Sinhalese and Tamils. At the same time, to strengthen our organisation.

**Q. Would you describe the Sinhalese people as being essentially chauvinistic?**

**A.** I don't accept that the people are chauvinistic. It is the politicians who create it. This has been practised since independence. They have been trying to divert the concerns of the people. Their aim and the people's aims are different. To divert the people they use communal tactics.

**Q. You are one of two organisations that have links with organisations in the South. Given the present animosity towards you all in the South and also the fact that the leadership of the organisations you have links with has been arrested, how do you read the political situation in the South as far as you are concerned?**

**A.** I would say chauvinism is reducing, not increasing. The sound may be very high because the slogan has been put up by the capitalists. But at the low level I don't think it exists. The Sinhalese people have the fear that with foreign support the militants will come and massacre them. It is our duty to create the feeling that we will not act for foreign interests. We are only interested in liberating our own people. If all the organisations clearly take up this stand it will be easy to convince the broad masses.

**Q. What kind of support do you think you'll have from the Tamil people in a context in which you'll have been active in the guerrilla field?**

**A.** It is a struggle. Our duty is to convince the masses how we have to fight. The masses want overnight change. We have to politically educate them. To make them emotional, we can do it

overnight. We have to campaign and educate the people. Then only they will come behind us. At the same time there will be diversions. We have to overcome all that. It is a long struggle.

**Q. But what do you think is the mood of the Tamil people? Do you think they want Eelam?**

**A.** The mood of the Tamil people is that they want to solve their own problems. In the North and East their problems are different. Outside Jaffna peninsula, they are dependent on lands. Jaffna people are dependent on employment, mostly out of the Tamil areas. The money order economy. Their interest is to get back this with dignity. But outside they want to get back their lands. So they have to fight for their rights. If they want to live, they have to live on the land. If the land is occupied they have to fight.

**Q. Do you think they will fight up to Eelam? Do you all stand for Eelam?**

**A.** We are fighting for the right of self-determination. If we can, we will very well settle within the whole island as a unit.

**Q. There are several allegations against you that while you say you are fighting you are indulging in drug trafficking and are also corrupt?**

**A.** Corruption in what sense?

**Q. Financial corruption. Taking money and investing it abroad, instead of fighting.**

**A.** It is we who trained more cadres than any other organisation. We spent a lot of money on that. We bought a lot of arms — captured by the Indian government — there also we invested a lot. These charges, we deny. We are concentrating on building the army on one side and on the other side to politicalise the masses. Tomorrow if we achieve Tamil Eelam, or if we achieve the whole island, the people should know and be happy. They should enjoy this freedom. If we achieve tomorrow, with a group of the military, the people will not enjoy freedom. We want a people's democracy where each and every person will live with equal right.

**Q. What is the strategy you will use in the immediate future? Have you decided to use military attacks?**

**A.** We have a strategy, but every time we have to change it due to foreign infiltration and interest. On both sides — Tamil side and Sri Lankan government. Their idea is to make Sri Lanka a common market. We have to adjust our strategies to this.

**Q. At this point of time the military option is not dominant in the thinking of PLOT, is it?**

**A.** Now there are military actions going on. But are we going a step forward?

**Q. Is the current military situation in Jaffna a step forward for the Tamil people?**

**A.** No. To the world it is a step forward, but in reality we are in danger.

**Q. Why?**

**A.** The army is powerful. Still the camps are there. At any time they can come out and massacre the masses. The organisations don't have the capacity to capture the camps.

**Q. So your answer to this is to prepare the people, is it?**

**A.** To prepare the people and to fight against whom we have to fight. Our struggle is not against the Sinhalese. It is against the present regime and the military.

**Q. The other major criticism against PLOT has been internal killing. That you'll have not fought the army but fought your own trained cadre.**

**A.** We have not killed anybody. We have assassinated some of our cadre. What was reported in 'The Island' by you of 365 is wrong. We have assassinated about 36. This large figure has been created by the capitalists for their own benefits. I do not know where you got the figures, but it is wrong.

**Q. Why did you "assassinate" these 36 people?**

**A.** Because they betrayed the cause. In many ways. Not those who leave the organisation, but informers. There may be people who are supporting us; we make use of them; but they are not

our cadre. If one of our people give away information then they are traitors.

**Q. One of the main features of the Tamil movement is the lack of unity among the groups. What is the reason for this?**

**A.** This is an absurd question. In the aim 95% are agreed. The unity is there. The Tamils are united and accepted that they want a separate state. To achieve the ideology is the difference. This difference is due to class. All over the world it is there, the ideology is different.

**Q. What is the basic ideological difference between you and the LTTE?**

**A.** That you must be knowing! What the Tigers have been doing we have condemned. Namalwatte and Anuradhapura we condemned. Your paper said the EPRLF condemned but they supported and appreciated it. This is betraying the working class. Killing, without an ideology they do. This is a wrong thing. But supporting it is worse. It is a betrayal of the cause.

**Q. At Thimpu, all five major groups had a common platform. If there is a fresh round of talks do you see this coming together again?**

**A.** Finally there must be a political solution. We are for it. But so far we don't know what the proposals are. They are discussing with the TULF. But we don't know how far the TULF has the capacity of signing something or accepting it. We feel that talking with the TULF is pointless. They can do only one thing — talk. They can't take a decision. If they take a decision, they can't implement it.

**Q. But can one Tamil organisation take a decision either?**

**A.** We are fighting for the people's rights. It is left to the people to decide. We have a particular ideology. The talks will not disturb us.

**Q. If the Indian government asks you to go for talks will you go?**

**A.** That depends on the basis.

(Continued on page 21)



# Reagan's Empire strikes back

Soon after Mr. Reagan moved into the White House, the M. I. T.'s Prof. Noam Chomsky, the internationally known American scholar, put together a collection of essays under the general title of "Towards A New Cold War", the title in fact of the major piece in this brilliant study of US politics and ideas at the turn of the decade. It was subtitled 'essays on the current crisis and how we go there'.

The 'new' Cold war caught an icy chill at Reykjavik last month when the US leader rejected what the diplomatic correspondent of US TV network A.B.C. called the arms deal of the decade', a reference to Mr. Gorbachev's sweeping across-the-board offer of arms control agreements.

Secretary of State George Schultz whose influence within the usually faction-ridden and bickering personality-dominated US policy-making establishment has been steadily rising is a stout fella, a loyalist to the marrow. The President he said was "magnificent". He had never been so "proud of my President". But George Schultz is an intelligent, worldly-wise man who knew the score. When he addressed the press corps, he was described by Stewart Fleming, the Washington correspondent of the *Financial Times* as "grim-faced". In the face of specific questions, he had to concede that the two leaders had reached "the brink of a historic breakthrough". But the 'summit' collapsed. Why? The US press and public, and the world outside soon knew the reason Mr. Reagan's obsession about his pet project "S. D. I." See US Press on Summit.

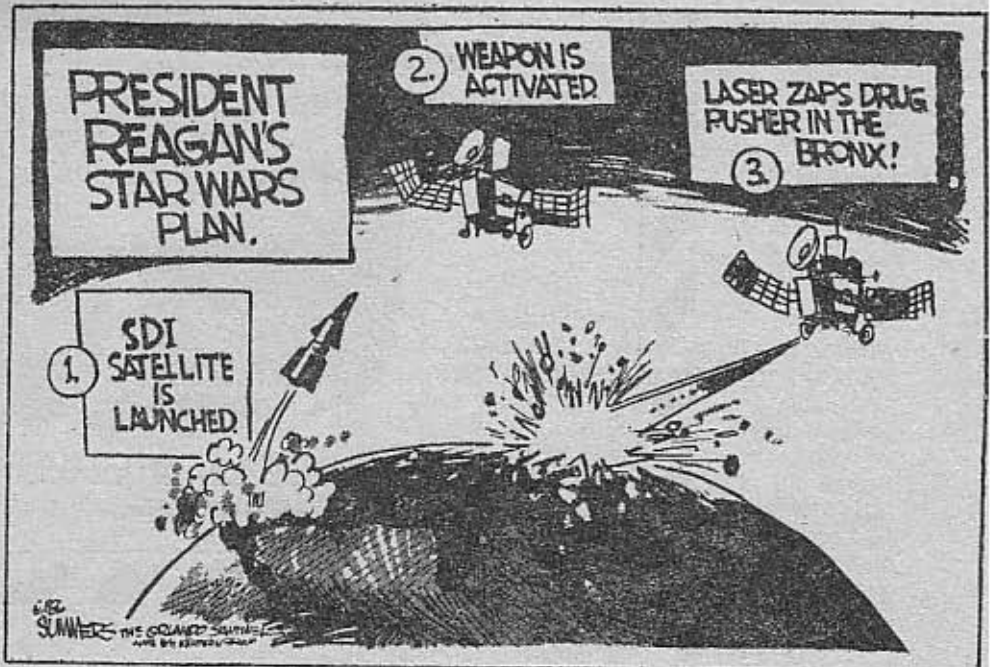
Unlike Mr. Schultz, Mr. Ronald Reagan, twice president with a

popularity rating as high as President Roosevelt's, is the seemingly simple-minded man, the average American finely tuned to the hearts and minds of the ordinary US voter, his fears, prejudices, patriotic sentiments and vanities. That is the secret of his phenomenal success as a pure politician, gifted with an intuitive grasp of electoral atmospherics.

His winning slogans in 1980 ("America No. 1" and "America Standing Tall") bear the best testimony to both the style and substance of his politics. In the more serious idiom of US analysts this translated itself to Mr. Reagan pledge to liberate the American people from their "Vietnam syndrome", the humbling notion of an American that had lost its global power and supremacy, an America exposed as weak and almost impotent.

That painful experience particularly abrasive to a nation which had enjoyed a nearly unchallenged leadership role in the post-war decades was identified by the vast majority of American with the last years of Mr. Carter — the Nicaraguan revolution and the downfall of the US-backed Somoza dynasty, and the distant but even more harrowing events in Iran, the fall of the mighty Shah, and the US hostage crisis personalised and dramatised by US TV.

Reagan's basic pledge to restore America to its previous status of No. 1 was best explained by Prof. Samuel Huntington, a representative voice of the American 'hard Right' which provides the ideological back-up support, along with corporate bodies like the Heritage Foundation and American Enterprise, as "the US hegemonic power in a system of world order". Chomsky notes that from



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time to time such authoritative intellectual and academic voices articulate the dominant ideas of the period and play the part of path-finders. Immediately after the war, it was George Kennan, the Mr. X. of the famous article on 'Containment' titled **'The Sources of Soviet Conduct' in Foreign Affairs**, the mouthpiece of US Policy-planning Establishment. In 1968, at the height of the Vietnam war, it was Huntington's **"The Bases of Accommodation"**, in the same journal, advocating a brutal "forced-draft urbanisation and modernisation program" in Vietnam to undermine "rural revolution" in Vietnam and elsewhere in the Third World, through in effect, 'mass murder and physical destruction' and a massive migration" from countryside to city.

### Third turning point

And then came Prof. Robert Tucker's essay on **"The Purposes of American Power"** again in the same journal, in its 1980-81 Winter issue, coinciding with Mr. Reagan's arrival at the White House. Tucker argues that a 'third major turning point' in US policy is at hand, and 'on this, at least, there is widespread agreement'. The first post-war turning point was "Containment" of the Soviet Union (and later China); the second was 'detente' or what Moscow

called 'peaceful co-existence' founded on an acceptance of different systems and an approximate parity in military capabilities. Now the time had come for a new "activist role" in the world for a "resurgent America". What Reagan's resurgent America would do in practice became clear to the public only two years later when the *New York Times* published the 'first complete defence guidance' of the Reagan administration (30.5.82), a 126 page document prepared by Defence Secretary Weinberger and his 'highest military and civilian advisers'. Tom Wicker, one of the paper's most respected columnists, spelt its meaning out in these terms:

**"A blue print (at least in the next five years) for turning uneasy Soviet-American relations into an unrelenting war to the death"**.

The 'new' Cold War is based on a 'new' militarism and on what many radical US analysts call 'the militarisation of the economy'. But it is ironic that George Kennan himself saw the all-pervasive consequences of the post-Reagan trends. He wrote of the 'militarisation of thought and discourse' in the American Establishment.

The ideology of a resurgent and militant America, and its national-global policy objectives took final

shape in the first years of Reagan while its operational instruments objective and subjective, were perfected soon after — a determined bid for military supremacy (Weinberger and the Pentagon), and an aggressive foreign policy and diplomacy, especially in the Third World and against its 'radical' states, (Kirkpatrick and Walters in the U.N.) and an equally single-minded "America first" economic policy (budgets, interest rates, trade, Third World debt, IMF, UNCTAD) together with an aggressive policy in the sphere of culture and ideology (Voice of America, UNESCO, Radio Liberty).

### Internal Charge

Given the character of American democracy, the specificities mainly of the electoral Congressional and presidential systems, Mr. Reagan a little known Hollywood actor and governor of California, was the ideal vote catching candidate just when major internal changes were taking place. The most important of these was the gradual shift of economic influence to the resource-rich 'open' frontier of the West and what American sociologists term 'the circulation of elites'. The traditional hegemony of the Eastern establishment, the highly Anglicised elite, was being steadily eroded by the advent of the Johnsons, the Nixons and Carters. The Pacific, not the Atlantic, was the new frontier of the emerging elite, and the east coast the new economic-political power centre. Thus, the new Pacific basin strategy, the shift in emphasis from Western Europe to Japan, Korea, the Pacific basin and A.S.E.A.N., a change marked in the new pattern of investment, trade and military interests.

With the banks, the big corporations, the scientific institutes and the high-tech industry opening up in the east, Ronald Reagan was a 'natural' choice. An accomplished master of his constituency, not just the voters but the voting banks, the pressure group and the lobbies, Mr. Reagan was also 'the great communicator' to middle America, with a proven capacity to cut across party lines.

(Continued on page 19)

## U. S. PRESS OPINION

In the US press, which will play a key role in shaping public opinion in the coming days, reaction was gloomy with headlines and commentary using words such as collapse, stalemate and derailment to describe the result of the Reykjavik meeting.

Criticism was also emerging about the way the President had allowed his talks with Mr Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet leader, to turn into a freewheeling bargaining session in which the largest arms control issue was suddenly on the table in an all-or-nothing package.

In an editorial headlined Cold in Iceland, the Washington Post said the President would probably have done better to have stuck to a more modest meeting devoted to making plans for a later, more ambitious summit.

"He accepted Mr Gorbachev's chancy invitation to high stakes

poker and comes home empty handed and having to explain why."

The *New York Times* said in an editorial that both sides were probably partly to blame for the "derailment." The US had reason to believe that individual (arms control) issues were separable while the Russians had cause to believe that the US would be more forthcoming on SDI.

Referring to the President's planned address to the nation tonight, the *Times* said Mr Reagan had an obligation to tell the country what happened next and how to get talks back on the rails.

Yesterday, TV reporters painted the meeting in stark terms. One ABC diplomatic correspondent said Mr Gorbachev had scored a propaganda victory over the President by claiming the Soviet Union had offered "the arms deal of the decade."



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## SAMORA MACHEL

The barbarians of South Africa may or may not have killed Samora Machel but they had already half destroyed his dream of leading his people from national independence to a new Mozambique, in his own words free, just and proud. It is a singularly unkind fate that has denied him the ultimate consummation of his even grander dream — the collapse of the bastion of racism and black Africa's total liberation.

The revolutionary hero brave, brilliant and, most of all, resolute in his dedication to the cause he had chosen so early in his life, was soon to assume the role of a tragic figure on the African stage. Inescapable political compromises symbolised by the Nkomati Accords, paid homage to a cruel truism: it is sometimes easier to make the revolution than to protect it.

For eight harsh years Samora Machel laboured with truly he-

roic tenacity to preserve the purity of the Mozambican revolution, the independence and the integrity of his nation. The odds, alas, were too heavy.

Portugal, the poorest and the most parasitic of colonial powers, robbed everything, left nothing. While immersed in the demanding tasks of building a nation from nearly nothing, Machel's government was dragged into a civil war promoted by South Africa and assisted by the West. This wasting war compelled him to compromise, in the hope that South Africa would cut its links with the rightwing rebels, and the West would give him the economic assistance which the socialist bloc on its own could not adequately provide to meet Mozambique's enormous needs. He promised to close down African National Congress bases in his country in exchange for Pretoria's pledges of an end to sabotage and a restoration of normal economic ties. But Pretoria,

increasingly frightened by the fires of black rebellion inside its own fortress, stepped up the war against both Angola and Mozambique, and later Zimbabwe, the front-line states supporting the A.N.C.'s struggle against apartheid.

A peasant's son who became a hospital attendant because he could not afford to complete his studies, Samora Machel found his inspiration in the writings of Amilcar Cabral, the Simon Bolivar of Africa. He joined Frelimo, just a year after it was established by Eduardo Mondlane, went to Algeria for guerrilla training, and came back to Tanzania where he set up training camps for those armed units that finally accompanied him home to achieve his lifelong ambition, freedom from Portuguese rule.

Mozambique has lost its noblest son; African liberation, a courageous fighter, and the Third World an able champion.  
M.

## Reagan's . . .

*(Continued from page 17)*

Two considerations outweigh everything else including international opinion and the reaction of his European allies, world peace and the reduction of tensions. The demands of the electorate, the popular constituency, and the vested interests of his powerful political and financial backers. With Senate elections coming up he will use S.D.I. as a patriotic rallying cry, drowning oppositional voices shouting about other more down-to-earth issues. 'Star Wars' is a bonanza for big-time contractors and a classic example of what President Eisenhower styled 'the military-industrial complex'. He is not too troubled by what the elite US press says nor by the fact that most western analysts and Third World commentators have spoken of the summit as a "propaganda victory" for Moscow (Gorbachev gains high ground).

Mr. Gorbachev was right when he recognised the issue not as "military" but "political". Superpower tensions aggravate problems for others, first in Europe and then in the rest of the world. Third World countries which need peace and stability most of all, become the first and the worst casualties of global conflict which intruding into domestic affairs weaken national efforts at economic reconstruction. The tit-for-tat diplomatic row over US-Soviet diplomats is the immediate outcome of the summit's failure.

**(Next issue: SDI and US politics)** ●

## The Illusions . . .

*(Continued from page 3)*

But where does it leave the SLFP? There is a big gap between the UNP's parliamentary strength

and its mass, voter support which makes its overwhelming majority misleading and deceptive. UNP power in that sense is an illusion. It is the SLFP's great misfortune that its numbers in Parliament in no way reflect its strength outside. So if it is to force the government to withdraw the PC's proposal or, better still, to compel the UNP to go to the polls the SLFP must mobilise the dormant strength which lies outside parliament. Can it? Four SLFP MP's were carried out of the House on oct 23 the first such incident in the new Parliament. Is the SLFP waking up? Is it showing new signs of life? Is it ready for extra-parliamentary activism, its only option, given circumstances it cannot change through parliamentary means?

Is Sri Lanka in fact joining South Asia (SAARC) in spirit and just in form? Will we have a taste of Pakistan and Bangladesh in the island's South?

## RAJIV GANDHI : a mid-term report

Bhabani Sen Gupta

If Rajiv Gandhi's economic policy won virtual national approval, what actually went wrong? Could he modernise the economy in the midst of multiple conflicts between New Delhi and the "regional forces?" As his mother's chief political aide, Rajiv Gandhi saw for himself how Mrs Indira Gandhi was close to losing her Lok Sabha majority in the event of a mid-term poll in 1984. His own massive majority in December 1984 was the last gift of his assassinated mother. Could he pursue her political tactic of conflict, confrontation, manipulation and hegemony and still lead his party to a thumping victory in the next Lok Sabha poll?

Rajiv Gandhi had to adopt a new political strategy of conciliation, accommodation and rectification of the distortions that had occurred in the political process since 1972. This is what his sound political instincts told him correctly. Instinct, however, has to be translated into dynamic political strategy and tactics, and this is where Rajiv Gandhi appears to have failed. He has given no evidence of a political mind, of clear political vision, nor of a flair of speculative, architectural political thinking. By upbringing and education, he is isolated from the seething humanity of the Indian poor. His advisers are technocrats and managerial experts. They have no sense of politics.

Technologies have a limited reach in a country of India's political demography. A majority of the population is too poor to reach even the fringe of a technological frame of change. A soft and fragile democracy larded with feudalism, a vastly uneven geography of development, an ancient deep-rooted culture that is strongly resistant

to technological intrusions; these and other factors peculiar to India impose severe additional limitations on technology as the principal tool of modernisation. What is rationally desirable becomes politically impossible because the vast masses existing outside the pale of technological change determine who will rule the country.

Politics easily take command, whether the development strategy is industrial, agricultural or modernising. Rajiv Gandhi has so far failed to conceptualise a political frame of modernisation in India. Modernisation means not merely greater performance and efficiency as the economy is fed essential technological and managerial inputs. Modernisation also requires more democracy and a political ideology that can electrify the masses. Even the Soviets have realised this; Gorbachov has adopted "socialist self-government", meaning the transfer of decision-making power to industrial and agricultural units and considerable decentralisation of planning, one of the two main slogans of his modernisation drive, the other being acceleration". India cannot embark on a modernisation drive without resolving internal cleavages that divide the nation and dissipate its vitality. Nor without greater democracy within the political system. Nor with centralised planning and decision-making. Nor with a foreign policy of confrontation and hostility with neighbours and other external powers whose cooperation is needed for obtaining modernising inputs.

Rajiv Gandhi has not been able to find the political language of a new regime of reconciliation and accommodation, nor of a new development drive of modernisation. He did not rally his party for the accord he signed with Sant Longowal; if reports are correct, he did not even consult his cabinet. Nor did he mount a sustained political campaign to sell the Punjab and Assam accords to the

people of Northern India. He failed to inject a sense of urgency into the jaded arteries of the Home ministry to implement the accord on time. There is reason to believe that he did not get the full cooperation of Arun Nehru who seems to share many Congressman's fear that implementation of the Punjab accord might cost the party Haryana in 1987 and Uttar Pradesh a year thereafter.

Even on the economic front, the prime minister's failure is political. It was politically unwise to give the people in the first year only candies and lollipops of his new economic policy—tax cuts and corporate concessions—and then to come down heavily in the second year with the bitter pills: the price hikes. No effort was made to prepare the people in advance for the hikes, nor to explain, even to economic writers, why price hikes were an unavoidable, even essential, part of the new economic policy package.

In short, Rajiv Gandhi has so far not been able to build a political constituency of his own. He has kept the intellectuals at a distance, except on economic matters on which he is advised by some of the best brains in the country. What he lacks is a sound, innovative, creative and aggressive political strategy, rich in concepts and visions as well as in language. His language is too laconic, it has no spark, it does not inspire people. His understatements may be good meat for a sophisticated Western audience, but they are deadpan for a volatile, restless vision-begging politicalised mass of poor and deprived humanity.

Far worse than the distance he has kept from his party satraps and intellectuals, is the long and costly distance that separates him from the masses. They cannot identify themselves with him. Jawaharlal Nehru was their father

(Continued on page 21)

(The writer is a professor at the Centre for Policy Research, Delhi).

# Boy's Own Botham

## Frank Keating on a triumphant return

The prodigal returned in quite sensational fashion and, in doing so, became the most successful bowler in Test Match history.

After his enforced absence for three months following his spring-time admission to smoking pot, Ian Botham set the Oval alight on the first day of the final game against New Zealand last week by taking a wicket with the first ball he bowled.

By the end of his second over he had another and at lunch, as the team pushed him to lead them back through the pavilion gate, sweater twirled nonchalantly over a massive shoulder, he seemed to throw a glance up to the full complement of selectors looking down in a huddle from their first-floor balcony. I was unable to

### An encounter . . .

(Continued from page 14)

**Q. Could you expand on that?**

**A.** So far we don't know anything about these proposals and developments. First we must study them. If the reason is only for us to lay down arms, we won't accept it.

We must know how far the southern political parties accept it. That is an important factor. It is not for Jayewardene and Amirthalingam to accept.

It is matter for all the political parties in the South and also the Tamil underground organisations and political organisations. They should consult the political parties and get their support and come with proposals to satisfy the Tamil.

**Q. Would you say there was a political alternative to Eelam?**

**A.** We are fighting for the right of self — determination.

**Q. Short of that? It you were given some sort of federal alternative?**

**A.** Self — determination is for the people to decide. We will continue our struggle. Temporary settlements will not affect us.

— Courtesy ISLAND

discover whether they then repaired inside for a stiff round of pink gins.

Botham is now past his 10th consecutive year as a Test Match man. Last Thursday he danced in as if it was his debutant day.

With his second wicket he beat the Australian Dennis Lillee's all-time Test bowler's record of 355 wickets.

Botham said afterwards: "Dennis will always be the best always better than me, whatever the records say. We'll have a bottle over it when we next meet — only difference that this time Dennis will be paying!"

Even he had been surprised at such a first-ball drama. "Well, you know my looseners usually go for four." However, he maintained that anger at the media writing him off as a bowler before the match had been a factor.

The editor of Boy's Own Paper was not available for comment. He has another exclusive tale to tell.

Matthew Engel adds: When did any team game ever produce such a sub-plot as this?

Play had started late, the opening overs had proceeded peacefully enough, it was time for a bowling change. Up trots Botham. His loosener was intended as such, hardly more than a long-hop. But Bruce Edgar, transfixed by the legend more than the ball, or perhaps just anxious to play a bit-part in history, waved his bat and helped it to second slip.

The crowd erupted. Botham erupted, made a series of gestures that indicated he was quite pleased with himself and embraced Gatting as though they were long-lost twin brothers, which in a way they are. Amid the scrum of players Gooch asked: "Who writes your bloody script then?" If it comes from a comic strip, it is from a new one: Ian of the Cliches or the Wizard of Ego.

For pointless hours in Antigua. Botham bowled and bowled in an

attempt to get that wicket. Now one suspension, four months and a million column inches later he had done it at the first attempt.

He almost broke the record next ball. It was a beauty, which Jeff Crowe had to play though it slithered off the edge boot-high to Emburey at third slip, who was just a fraction too slow.

Botham's third ball was a good bouncer: his eighth almost sliced back on to Crowe's stumps: his twelfth caught Crowe square, slipped past a half-cock defensive shot and took him on the pad. Some thought it might have missed leg stump, but umpire Shepherd's hesitation may have come simply because he did not believe it either. That was the record.

● After numerous interruptions of play through rain the match was poised at the close on Saturday evening with England on 281 for 3 in reply to New Zealand's first innings total of 287.

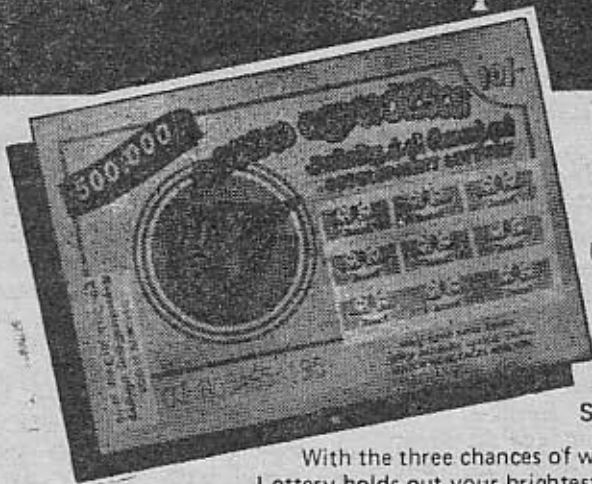
### Rajiv . . .

(Continued from page 20)

figure. Indira Gandhi was amma. Rajiv Gandhi is still to be accepted as bhaiya by the people who voted him to power in December 1984. He has so far given them but little, neither a relevant radical ideology (although, in his very first press interview after being chosen as prime minister, he had recognised the importance of an ideology to enthuse the people) nor bread with butter or even without.

He has attempted to do too many things at the same time, as if he is a young man in desperate hurry, without doing adequate home work on the politics of his actions. What he needs is a clear political design for India based on a realignment of political and social forces. A design of democratic spread, of frontal attack on mass poverty politically as well as technologically, and an agenda of selective priority. He has to widen and sharpen his political visions which appear at this stage to be hazy; even his economic policy is wrapped in fogs of vague political thinking.

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## Part VI

# TULF memo to Rajiv

**D**educting the 137,000 acres or more correctly, perhaps 60,500 acres of new land said to be available in the Northern Province and the 118,220 acres said to be available in the Eastern Province (in fact about 100,000 acres on the ground) of which 56,000 acres falls within Kandakadu (System A) on which no work has been commenced as yet: (the extent available in the Eastern Province could ultimately be much less) there would yet be a balance of 398,580 acres to 475,000 acres of new land available for alienation in the part of the country. It is believed that substantial portions of the developmental

programme that would benefit that extent, has been completed, or is well in progress.

Other major irrigation development programmes in other parts of the country have been completed during the tenure of office of the present Government or are in progress. It must be also noted that under major irrigation schemes completed during the tenure of office of the present Government in the Eastern Province, land has been alienated to the Sinhalese on a preferential basis:— example — MAHADIULWEWA or PERIYAVILANKULAM in Trincomalee District:

### Dominance of...

(Continued from page 12)

evening news. According to ITN official Thevis Guruge, the station has earned a surplus of about Rs. 5 million (US \$ 177,304) a year during the past two years, and has paid income tax and generated its own resources for expansion without turning to the Treasury or depending on foreign aid.

Rupavahini's chairman M. J. Perera said that at the end of last year there were 450,000 licensed receivers in the country. He estimated there were about 10% more unlicensed TV sets and said the market was nowhere near saturation, with increasing rural electrification likely to help boost the figure. Perera estimated that between five to 10 viewers utilise a single receiver while many homes without electricity had TV sets which operated with car batteries.

According to the chairman, the most popular programme on Rupavahini is *Sinhala News*. But a recent, superbly acted teledrama *Yasoravaya*, with a compelling story of middle-class mores, attracted huge audiences and a possibly greater number of viewers. While Rupavahini produces its own local

news programmes, it buys its foreign news from Visnews at a cost of Rs 900,000 annually.

During the early stages of the national station, President Junius Jayawardene was the only national political figure to appear on TV, but other ministers and politicians have since begun to appear. During the 1982 presidential election campaign, both SLBC and Rupavahini gave equal time to the rival contenders.

While there have been great expectations about teaching science and English via educational TV, the results have been disappointing. The state education system provided TV receivers to schools but the highly formalised educational programmes generated very little interest. "Hardly anybody follows these programmes," admitted a Rupavahini official. The national station hopes to have a series of informal programmes not geared to syllabuses and also hopes to put educational material in other programmes [this year, a spokesman said.

Rupavahini has been operationally profitable and officials said it was not doing too badly financially though the 1985 accounts have yet to be released. A second channel is now being planned.

Sinhala	— 372 allotments
Tamil	— 162 allotments
Muslim (Tamil speaking)	— 38 allotments

This alienation by Government was not in keeping with the demographic composition of the Province or the District, and was executed despite strong protests on behalf of the Tamils and Muslims.

The Government cannot point to any instance where under a major irrigation scheme the Tamils or Muslims have been treated on a just basis.

In the context of the above, the Tamils and Muslims (one-third the entire Muslim population in the country live in the Northern and Eastern provinces) claim with justification, that the entire extent of approximately 100,000 acres (perhaps, ultimately much less) that would receive irrigation facilities in the Eastern Province in the near future should be reserved for the Tamils and the Muslims. This claim is further buttressed by the fact that past experience has conclusively proved that Tamils cannot hold land in any other part of the country. Tamils who hold land in colonization schemes in other parts of the country, for instance, in the North Central Province have been murdered massacred, or driven out. It is common ground now that Tamils do not apply for land in other parts of the country.

Mr. S. Thondaman, Leader of the Ceylon Workers Congress, on behalf of the Tamils of recent Indian origin has indicated to the Government that the percentage of land due to the Tamils of recent Indian origin should be given to them in the Eastern or Northern Provinces.

The total population in the Eastern Province when the country became independent, in terms of the 1946 census was as follows:—

Trincomalee District	— 75,926
Batticaloa District (this includes the present Batticaloa & Amparai Dists)	— 203,186
Total population	— 279,112

The break-up was as follows :-

<b>Tamils</b>	
Trincomalee district	— 33,795
Batticaloa district (this includes the present Batticaloa & Amparai Districts)	— 102,264
Total Tamil population	— 136,059
<b>Moors</b>	
Trincomalee District	— 23,219
Batticaloa District (this includes the present Batticaloa & Amparai Districts)	— 85,805
Total Moor population	— 109,024
<b>Sinhalese</b>	
Trincomalee District	— 15,706
Batticaloa District (this includes the present Batticaloa & Amparai Districts)	— 11,850
Total Sinhalese population	— 27,556

The position in the Eastern Province in terms on the 1981 census is as follows. When this census took place, the original Batticaloa district had been divided into the present Batticaloa and Amparai districts.

Trincomalee district	— 256,790
Batticaloa district	— 330,899
Amparai district	— 388,786
Total Population	— 976,475

The break-up is as follows :-

<b>Tamils</b>	
Trincomalee district	— 93,510
Batticaloa district	— 238,216
Amparai district	— 79,725
Total Tamil population	— 411,451
<b>Moors</b>	
Trincomalee district	— 74,403
Batticaloa district	— 79,317
Amparai district	— 161,481
Total Moor population	— 315,201
<b>Sinhalese</b>	
Trincomalee district	— 86,341
Batticaloa district	— 10,646
Amparai district	— 146,371
Total Sinhala population	— 243,358

From the above figures, between 1946 and 1981 Tamil population has increased from 136,059 to 411,451 a 3.02 times increase; the Moors population has increased from 109,024 to 315,201 a 2.89 times increase; the Sinhalese population has increased from 27,556 to 243,358 a 8.83 times increase. The All Island increase in the Sinhala population in the said period has been 2.38 times.

This phenomenal increase in the Sinhala population has been as the result of State-aided Sinhala colonization under major irrigation schemes such as the Gal-oya scheme in the Amparai district, the Kantalai scheme, the Allai scheme, the Moravewa/Muthalikulem scheme, the Padaviya scheme (part), the Mahadiulvewa/Muthalikulam scheme in the Trincomalee district.

Quite apart from grave alterations, in the demographic composition of the Province, the indigeneous Tamils and Muslims of the Province strongly contend, that they have been deprived of valuable land, in a Province which they have inhabited for many centuries. Likewise, the Tamils and Muslims of the Northern Province and other parts of the country contend that by reason of the Sinhalese being given preferential treatment in the matter of State-aided colonization, even in the Eastern Province, they have been deprived of the opportunity of receiving valuable land for cultivation.

The above facts strangely support the contention of the Tamils and Muslims that the land that would become available for alienation in the Eastern Province under the Mahaweli Development Scheme should be reserved for the Tamils and Muslims.

(Concluded)

**Letter. . .**

(Continued from page 1)

young son, who is conscious of his rights, administered a severe shelling. That settled the matter.

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