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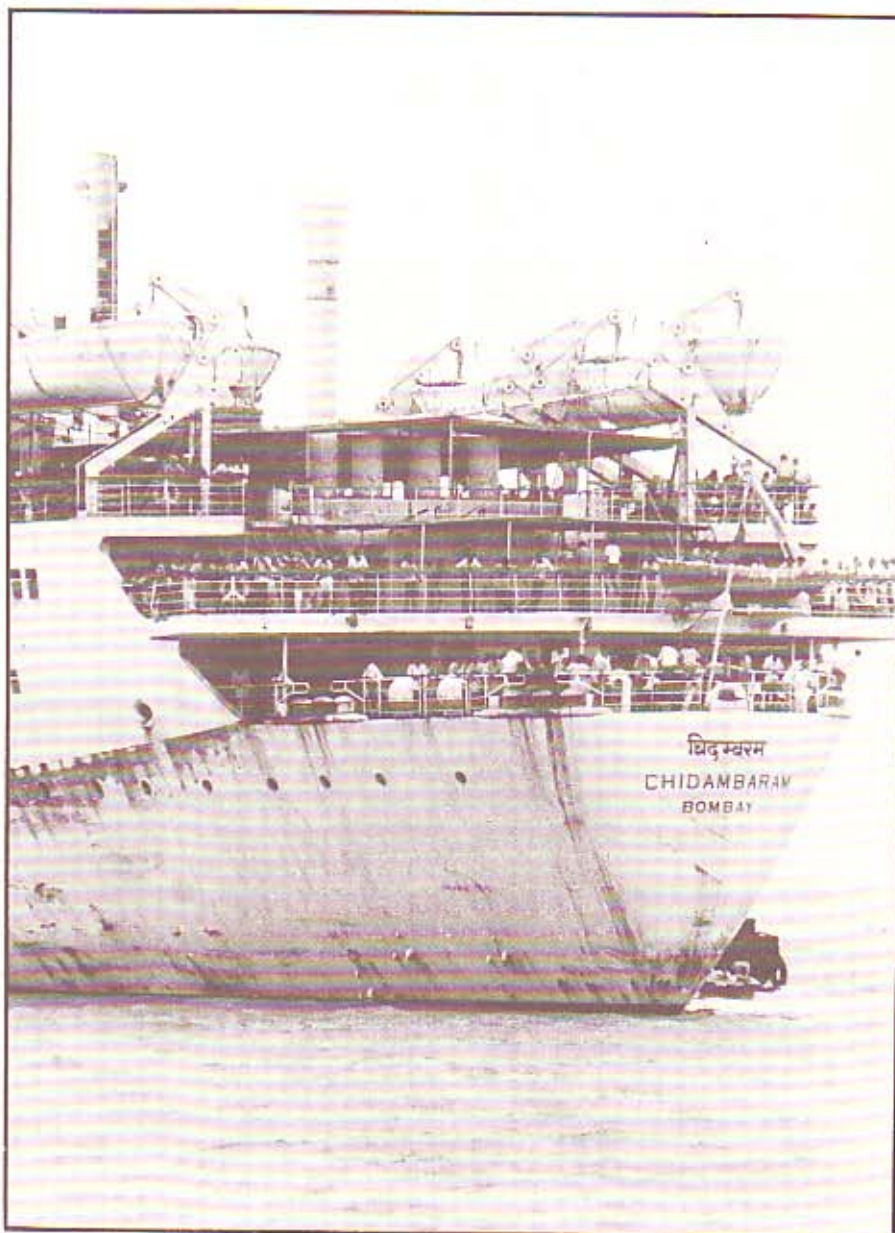
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Following the July '83 violence, over 100,000 Tamils were evacuated by ship to the North of the country in ships provided by India. Taken by a visiting European tourist, the picture shows refugees arriving in the Northern Tamil city of Jaffna.

**THE EDITOR AND PUBLISHERS OF TAMIL TIMES
WISH THEIR READERS AND WELL-WISHERS A
MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR**

A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT?

The talks initiated by the Indian Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, would appear to have raised hopes of the possibility of a negotiated solution to the problems faced by the Tamil people of Sri Lanka.

According to news reports, the proposals resulting from the talks held between the Indian PM's Special Envoy, Mr G. Parthasarathy, and the Sri Lankan President, Mr J.R. Jayewardene, included, (a) the Tamils giving up the demand for a separate state, (b) the merger of the present District Development Councils within a province after acceptance by the Councils' members and a referendum in the district — the proposal being applicable to the whole country; and (c) the recognition of the administration of the Port of Trincomalee as a central government function.

These proposals, if accepted by the leadership of the Tamil United Liberation Front, would be placed before an all-party conference for acceptance and thereafter for parliamentary approval.

The statement attributed to Mr Parthasarathy refers to tentative proposals which 'essentially centre on the creation of Regional Councils with appropriate powers within the framework of a United Sri Lanka'.

At first glance, the reported proposals hardly seem to compensate for the incalculable price the Tamil people had to pay in terms of life, property, humiliation and other forms of suffering during the last thirty years. They do not even add up to what were contained in the aborted Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam pact entered into in 1957.

The meagre 'concessions' reflected in these proposals are made conditional upon the Tamil people renouncing their fundamental inalienable right of national self-determination, a right recognised by the United Nations Charter.

The question whether, in the exercise of their right to national self-determination, the Tamils are to establish a separate state of their own is the major item in the

political agenda of Sri Lanka today. This situation has arisen not as an emotional attraction to or a subjective desire on the part of the Tamil people, but because of the severity of the national oppression to which they were subjected over a period of time. The barbaric violence which they had to repeatedly endure is a concrete and tragic manifestation of this oppression.

Any solution, negotiated or otherwise, has to aim at the complete elimination of the national oppression of the Tamils. However, the reported proposals submitted to the Indian Special Envoy can hardly be expected to even nibble at this central issue. In this context, any responsible and representative Tamil leadership will be held guilty of gross betrayal if it were to accept any solution which does not provide for the removal of all forms of national oppression of the Tamil people. On the other hand, the history of betrayals and breaches of faith on the part of the Sinhala leaders and their proclivity to enter into solemn agreements in times of crisis and later dishonourably and unilaterally abrogate them must convince anybody that any negotiated solution must be reinforced with cast-iron guarantees by an impartial third party.

The proposal to amalgamate the District Development Councils into provincial or regional councils on an island-wide basis and devolving power to these councils is to deny the existence of the specific problems of the rights of the Tamils as a nation within the physical entity of a single country. If a solution to this all important problem is proposed within the single physical entity of Sri Lanka, then it should not be confused with devolution of power to other districts or regions of the country, and to do so would be an exercise in subterfuge. The sole test for the acceptability of any proposed solution would depend on whether it meets the national aspirations of the Tamil people to preserve their identity as a nation without ever

having to rely on the goodwill or good sense of the majority Sinhalese people or their leaders.

Any proposed solution which does not provide for an immediate moratorium on further state-aided colonisation of traditional Tamil homelands in the northern and eastern provinces would constitute no solution at all. The unbridled encroachment into traditional Tamil areas by non-Tamils which has brought unmitigated disaster to the Tamil people must be brought to an end.

Again, any proposal for 'settlement' has to take full account of the enormous damage caused by the July '83 violence to the economy and lives of Tamils. Thousands have lost all their worldly possessions and turned into refugee camps as destitutes. Many more have lost their sole breadwinners. Still more have fled from their homes and places of work and have not returned for fear of further attacks. Thousands of school children, university students, teachers and university lecturers and professors have been forced to flee. The Tamil business community has suffered the total destruction of their industries and businesses. Any solution proposed must provide for adequate compensatory arrangements without delay.

The release of all Tamil political prisoners and those detained and the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act is absolutely essential.

The question of the citizenship and franchise of the Tamil plantation workers has to form part of the solution. Their right to move into and settle in traditional Tamil areas of the north and east must be guaranteed.

That Tamils should give up their inalienable right to national self-determination as a pre-condition for any 'settlement' is totally unacceptable. On the contrary, the pre-condition ought to be that the Sinhala leaders accept a package of measures that will ensure the protection of the political, economic and national rights of

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A. AMIRTHALINGAM

"Life has become impossible"

IN AN interview with INDIA TODAY Senior Editor S. VENKAT NARAYAN, Appapillai Amirthalingam, general secretary of the Tamil United Liberation Front, explained his party's stand in the negotiations with the Sri Lankan Government. Excerpts:

Q. President Jayewardene seems to have conceded most of your demands. Why are you insisting on the northern and eastern provinces being joined together?

A. Beause these areas have been the traditional homeland of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. Even Bandaranaike had conceded that the northern and eastern districts be amalgamated. Our security and our territory's integrity are important for us. The Tamils were in a majority in the eastern province before World War II. For instance, in Trincomalee the Tamils comprised 54 per cent of the population at the time of Sri Lanka's independence and the Sinhalese only 4.5 per cent. Now the Sinhalese account for 35 per cent and the Tamils 33 per cent.

This has been possible because of the Government's planned colonisation of Tamil areas by Sinhalese. We cannot allow this encroachment on our territory to go on for ever. Our fear is that we may be gradually squeezed out of the eastern provinces. In times of crises, this will force us either to jump into the ocean or across the ocean.

Q. If he concedes this demand, the President may have problems in carrying



Amirthalingam: "It's up to the President"

the Sinhalese with him.

A. Frankly, there's no opposition worth the name in Sri Lanka. The opposition groups have been reduced to impotence. He is assured of staying in power for six years. The media is controlled by the Government. President Jayewardene is stronger than many people think. If he is determined to do something, it is not all that difficult for him to get it done.

Q. It may not be tough selling the idea to the Sinhalese at large. His problem appears to be convincing the hawks within his own Government.

A. It is for the President to put his own house in order. He raised certain monsters for his own use at a certain point of time. Now he must cut them to size. And I know he is capable of doing it.

Q. The President says that peace has returned to the island and that the Tamils and the Sinhalese are working together all over again.

A. I'm afraid the President is ill-informed. None of the Tamil teachers, public servants and students have returned to Sinhala areas. Of the 1,35,000 Tamils who were forced to take shelter in refugee camps, over 20,000 are still living in them. Nearly 25,000 Tamils have come away to India and another 10,000 may have gone to western and south-east Asian countries. The Tamils continue to feel terribly insecure.

Q. In case the talks fail because of your insistence on the Jaffna and Trincomalee areas being made into one province, what will you do?

A. Life for the Tamils has become impossible in the southern parts of the island too, particularly after the July riots. They are being denied opportunities of employment, holding land, doing business or running industries. Now this is happening even in the eastern districts. Therefore, we should have our territory as one unit so that we may build the economic life and also ensure the security of the lives and properties of the Tamils. If that is not assured, there can be no settlement of the ethnic problem. We will make all efforts to achieve this objective through India's good offices.

Q. What are your future plans?

A. I will go to Madras and stay there for a few days to assess the situation in my country. Of course, there's a certain element of risk involved in my returning. But it is my country and how long can I stay away from my land and my people?

By kind courtesy of 'India Today', December 15, 1983

IN MEMORIAM

In the death of Bishop Lakshman Wickremasinghe of Kurunegala, Sri Lanka has lost not only an eminent religious leader but also an undaunted champion of civil liberties and communal harmony.

As chairman of the Civil Rights Movement (CRM), Bishop Wickremasinghe played a leading part in the work of that organisation to uphold personal, human, democratic and civic rights irrespective of which government infringed them. He never let the fact that his nephew, Ranil, was a Minister of the UNP government or that his brother, Esmond, was a leading 'think-tank' of that party, restrain him from coming out against the many violations of civil rights of which the present government was guilty.

Bishop Wickremasinghe was also a dauntless proponent of the cause of peace, friendship and equality between people of different nationalities in our country. His last pastoral letter, written after the shame of the racist violence of July 1983, not merely debunks effectively the arguments of those who try to justify what happened but is also a deeply moving plea to all Sri Lankans to assert their fundamental brotherhood and to work together to see that such disgraceful and terrible events never occur again.

The huge crowd, from all walks of life, which attended his funeral and the many tributes to him in the press and from public organisations are signs of the deep respect in which he was held.

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by
SATCHI PONNAMBALAM

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SRI LANKA'S ETHNIC PROBLEMS: MYTHS AND REALITIES

SEMI-TRUTHS tear at the fragile fabric of a united Sri Lanka. In this pamphlet we shall try to examine some key areas that have become a focus of ethnic resentments and hostilities. We shall take up certain widely prevalent myths and contrast them with the realities which we have endeavoured to discern without prejudice or partiality.

There are two possible ways of looking at how the various ethnic communities have fared in various fields of national life. One is by taking the population figures of each community and measuring them against their share of jobs, university places and their other indexes of social attainment. This method is the one that has most often been used in recent discussion of the subject — sometimes selectively or inaccurately. There is another method that is relevant in certain contexts. This is to take the geographical areas where particular ethnic communities are concentrated and to compare the levels of social attainment in these areas with others. We shall use both these methods of analysis in this pamphlet.

Population:

According to the Census of Population completed in 1981, the total population of Sri Lanka was estimated to be 14.85 million. The percentage of each ethnic community was as follows:

Table I	
Sinhalese	74.0%
Tamils	18.2%
(Sri Lankan Tamil	12.6%)
(Indian Tamil	5.6%)
Muslims	7.4%
Others	0.4%
(Source: Census of Population and Housing, 1981)	

While the Tamils — Sri Lankan and Indian — are around 18 per cent of the national population, they are 92 per cent of the population in the Northern Province and 68 per cent in the Eastern Province. (See ethnic breakdown, North and East, in Appendix A). For a correct understanding of our ethnic problems, both these sets of figures must be borne in mind. Ethnic groups diffused uniformly throughout the island do not develop the same consciousness, and do not face the same problems, as those which are highly concentrated in certain areas. Governmental policies must also cope with this reality.

Geographical Zones:

We adopt in this report the division of the country into five regional zones used by the Central Bank:

By kind courtesy of 'Lanka Guardian', November 1, 1983, we reproduce the full text of a report prepared by the Committee for Rational Development.

The Committee for Rational Development was formed during the aftermath of the July 1983 violence. Its members include Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims, and Burghers of different political persuasions. The objective of the Committee was to assist in the finding of solutions to contemporary social problems of Sri Lanka on the basis of strengthening democratic institutions and the rational processes in society.

Zone I: Colombo District (excluding the Colombo Municipality) Gampaha, Kalutara, Galle and Matara Districts. Wet zone, predominantly Sinhala areas.

Zone II: Hambantota, Moneragala, Amparai, Polonnaruwa, Anuradhapura and Puttalam Districts. Dry zone, predominantly Sinhala areas.

Zone III: Jaffna, Mannar, Vavuniya, Trincomalee and Batticaloa Districts. Dry zone, predominantly Sri Lankan Tamil areas.

Zone IV: Kandy, Matale, Nuwera-Eliya, Badulla Ratnapura, Kegalle and Kurunegala Districts. Predominantly Sinhala, with a concentration of Indian Tamils in the hill country.

Zone V: The Colombo Municipality. Predominantly Sinhala.

Employment in the State Sector

Q: Why is there a popular impression that Tamils have an unduly high share of public sector jobs?

A: The impression has been created by taking figures in selected government depart-

ments, or in selected fields like accountancy and engineering. For instance, it has been claimed that in these fields the figures are around 22 per cent and 42 per cent respectively. 'In 1977, 22.6 per cent recruited to the Accountants Service, 42.3 per cent recruited to the Engineers' Service, 21.6 per cent recruited to the Shroffs' Service were Tamils. In 1978 56.5 per cent were Tamils, while only 39.9 per cent were Sinhalese.' (This is the Truth)

Q: Do Tamils in fact have a disproportionate share of jobs in the public sector?

A: No. The latest published figures — for 1980 — give the following picture: (See Table below).

Q: How do the percentages in Table II and Table III compare with the ethnic breakdown of population?

A: Compare them with the figures in Table I. With 74 per cent of the population, Sinhalese have 85 per cent of all the jobs in the public sector, 82 per cent in the pro-

Table II			
State Sector (excluding Corporation Sector)			
Category Percentages of:	Sinhalese	Tamils	Others
Professional and technical	82%	12%	6%
Administrative and Managerial	81%	16%	3%
All categories	84%	12%	4%

Table III			
Public Sector (State and Corporation Sectors Combined)			
Category Percentages of:	Sinhalese	Tamils	Others
Professional and technical	82%	13%	5%
Administrative and Managerial	83%	14%	3%
All categories	85%	11%	4%
Source: Census of Public and Corporation Sector Employment, 1980 (Department of Census and Statistics and Ministry of Plan Implementation)			

fessional and technical categories, and 83 per cent in the administrative and managerial categories. On the other hand, the Tamils, with 18 per cent of the population, have only 11 per cent of all public sector jobs, 13 per cent of professional and technical posts, and 14 per cent of administrative and managerial positions. Confirmation of this position is to be found in the UNP election manifesto of 1977. That manifesto said:

'The United National Party accepts the position that there are numerous problems confronting the Tamil-speaking people. The lack of solution to their problems has made the Tamil-speaking people support even a movement for the creation of a separate state.'

The manifesto went on to say:

'The Party, when it comes to power, will take all possible steps to remedy their fields in such grievances as . . . ' and it then listed four such fields, of which the fourth was: 'Employment in the public and semi-public corporations'.

So, in 1977, the present government party felt that those who had a genuine grievance regarding public sector employment were the Tamils.

Q: *Would this position be changed by an*

ethnic quota for public sector employment, as some people have suggested?

A: It could, but since an ethnic quota would have to be applied throughout the public sector, it would mean that Sinhalese presence in certain sectors would be reduced from its present levels. A few Sinhalese professionals would gain jobs as doctors, professionals or engineers, but a large number of poorer Sinhalese in Government departments, corporations or the armed forces which are overwhelmingly Sinhalese would have to lose their jobs to Tamils.

General Employment

Q: *How do the ethnic communities stand in relation to employment in general?*

A: Table IV gives the relevant statistics.

Q: *what do these figures show?*

A: Tamils have a higher proportion of their labour force employed (94.38 per cent of Indian Tamils and 89.21 per cent of Sri Lanka Tamils) than Sinhalese (84.14 per cent of Kandyan Sinhalese and 81.51 per cent of Low country Sinhalese). On the other hand, the Kandyan Sinhalese (34.27 per cent) and the Low country Sinhalese (30.49 per cent) have a larger proportion of the total population in their communities in

employment than Sri Lankan Tamils (27.97 per cent), while the Indian Tamils have a still higher proportion (48.96 per cent).

Q: *What do these last-mentioned facts mean?*

A: The figures for Indian Tamils are explained by the fact that whole families are employed on the estates, and at the wage levels at which they are employed, the entire family earnings go into their subsistence. On the other hand, in the case of Sri Lankan Tamils, it is evident that the few who do earn have a greater number of individuals to support.

Q: *What is the unemployment rate for each community?*

A: Table V gives the figures.

Table V: Unemployment (1979)	
Community	Unemployment (% of labour force)
Kandyan Sinhalese	13.9
Low country Sinhalese	18.5
Sri Lankan Tamil	10.9
Indian Tamil	5.6
All-island	14.8
Report on Consumer Finance and Socio-Economic Survey 1978/1979 p.82 Table 67)	

Table IV

Employment by Community — All Island

	Per cent of labour force in the community					As a per cent of the total population in the community				
	Self Employed	Employer	Employee	Unpaid Family Worker	Total Employed	Self Employed	Employer	Employee	Unpaid Family Worker	Total Employed
Kandyan Sinhalese	24.62	1.07	40.12	20.33	86.14	9.79	0.43	15.96	8.09	34.27
Low Country Sinhalese	18.80	1.57	52.17	8.97	81.51	7.03	0.59	19.52	3.35	30.49
Ceylon Tamils	27.52	0.95	51.78	8.96	89.21	8.63	0.30	16.23	2.81	27.97
Indian Tamils	1.80	0.17	91.54	0.87	94.38	0.93	0.08	47.50	0.45	48.96
Moors	25.16	2.58	50.58	7.87	86.19	6.79	0.70	13.64	2.12	23.25
Malays	9.72	1.39	63.89	4.17	79.17	3.14	0.45	20.63	1.35	25.23
Burghers	3.23	0.0	67.74	0.0	70.97	1.22	0.0	25.61	0.0	26.87
Others	33.33	0.0	66.67	0.0	100.00	10.00	10.00	20.00	0.0	30.00
Total	19.59	1.24	52.95	11.49	85.27	7.45	0.47	20.13	4.37	32.42

Source: Report on Consumer Finance & Socio-Economic Survey 1978/1979 p.72, Table 56.

Q: *If the Tamils have a low rate of unemployment, why are the youth so dissatisfied?*

A: Though the Tamils have a low unemployment rate on average, the Labour force and Socio-Economic survey published by the Ministry of Plan Implementation and the Department of Census and Statistics 1983, show that the unemployment rate among young Tamil males who have passed G.C.E. AL qualification is 41 per cent while their Sinhalese counterparts suffer an unemployment rate of 29 per cent. This may help us to understand the phenomenon of the militant youth movement in the North.

Q: *If Tamils are under-represented in public sector employment, why is their unemployment rate lower?*

A: This would indicate that Tamils have moved away from employment in the public sector and have had more success in finding employment in the private sector. However, a good deal of this is self-employment, as Table IV shows (27.52 per cent of the labour force in the case of Ceylon Tamils are self-employed). Both Jaffna Tamils and Kandyan Sinhalese traditionally engaged in agriculture have a relatively lower rate of unemployment.

Q: *Can a system of ethnic quotas work in relation to employment outside the public sector?*

A: Apart from the fact that it would mean again that large numbers of Sinhalese would lose their jobs to Tamils in those sectors where they are overwhelmingly dominant at present (e.g. the Free Trade Zone projects), an ethnic quota would be extremely difficult to enforce in a free economy such as that created under the present government.

Further it has been pointed out that many Tamils, because of the language and other barriers to employment in the public sector, are finding self-employment or setting up their own enterprises. Government interference in these sectors would not only be very difficult but would also be immoral. It would also create further bottlenecks in a

Table VI			
Zone	Without Univ. degrees (OL)	Average income	Without Univ. degrees (AL)
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
I	974.62	631	925
II	909.25	713	768
III	888.11	746	903
IV	770.71	512	987
V	1743.20	1137	4986

(Report on Consumer Finance and Socio-Economic Survey, 1978/1979 p. 115 Table 99)

nationwide situation of frustrated aspirations.

Income levels

Q: *What is the position of the different ethnic communities in respect of income levels?*

A: It is possible to arrive at an approximate answer by taking the income figures in respect of the different geographical zones listed in the Introduction. Table VI gives the figures.

Q: *What do these figures show?*

A: The Colombo Municipality has the highest average income level and the predominantly Tamil areas (Zone III) comes next. But averages can be misleading.

Q: *Why?*

A: The high incomes earned by a small percentage of Tamils who have university degrees skew the figures. This is evident if one looks at the average incomes for people with OL and AL qualifications. Here Zone III ranks fourth, in both cases.

Education

Q: *That last answer leads one to the subject of education, which has been one of the storm-centres of inter-ethnic controversy. Is it true that Tamils gain admission to the universities far in excess of their proportions population-wise?*

A: This is not really true. If we look at the total number of admissions, in the last three years, Sinhalese have averaged around 75

per cent. Let us look at the admission figures in the last three years. (See Admission Figures table)

Q: *What do they show?*

A: Tamil admissions to University have not been over ten percentage points of their ethnic proportion in the population. Popular perception about Tamil students in the coveted faculties of Medicine, Law and Engineering usually place their participation at 50 per cent. Secondly, what is also interesting is that except for Engineering, the representation of Sinhalese is near their ethnic proportion in the population. Thirdly, whatever the faculty, Sinhalese participation is always over 60 per cent.

Q: *'This is the Truth' and other publications show different figures with a greater concentration of Tamils in Medicine and Law?*

A: Those figures are based on the present composition of the student body. In the years 1978 and 1979 before the District quota was imposed, there was a larger Tamil intake to these faculties. However, these two years have not been representative since the year 1974.

Q: *Why then is there a popular impression among Sinhalese that Tamils are privileged in respect of university admissions?*

A: Because of certain coveted university faculties such as medicine, engineering and the physical sciences, there are more Tamils, percentage-wise, in relation to their proportions in the population.

Admission Figures

	1981			1982			1983		
	S	T %	O	S	T %	O	S	T %	O
Arts	82.8	13.3	3.9	79.4	16.3	4.3	77.1	16.4	6.6
Physical Science	63.5	31.8	4.7	61.1	33.5	5.5	73.4	23.1	3.6
Biological Science	72.5	24.3	3.2	71.7	26.1	2.2	70.3	23.1	3.6
Engineering	67.2	28.1	4.7	66.9	28.5	4.5	66.4	28.1	5.5
Medicine	72.7	23.1	4.3	72.4	25.3	2.3	72.8	22.1	5.1
Law	73.0	16.2	10.0	68.8	24.0	7.3	78.5	11.5	10.0
Total	76.4	19.2	4.4	74.3	22.0	3.9	75.0	19.3	5.7

Source : (As released by Division of Planning and Research University Grant Commission 1983)
(Please note, that due to rounding of figures, the percentages do not always add up to 100)

Q: Aren't these the faculties which matter most?

A: Yes and no. They are the faculties which matter most to elite groups competing in the fields which are most privileged in respect of status and material rewards. But while this is certainly an important part of the social reality, we must also remember what a small part of the nation is engaged in this race. For a complete picture of opportunities and attainments in education in respect of different ethnic communities, we must look not only at the whole range of university education, but also at the totality of education, since university students are themselves only the narrow apex of a broad pyramid. For many people, what happens lower down makes a greater impact on their lives than what happens at the top.

Q: But why should Tamil students fare better in the competition to get into certain facilities?

A: In the past, historical reasons and the development of educational systems led Tamils to concentrate on certain fields of attainment. At present, however, this gap is closing due to concentrated efforts to increase standards in Sinhala areas.

Q: How can the consequent imbalances be remedied?

A: By decentralisation of higher education and the strengthening of regional centres of learning. This would maximise opportunities by enabling regional institutions to cope with the demand for education from a particular region without creating national disquiet and communal sense of grievance.

Q: What about ethnic quotas in this field?

A: Any such solution would have to be approached very warily in the light of the fact that media-wise standardisation between 1970 and 1977 was one of the principal causes of frustration among educated

Tamil youth which fuelled anti-State violence and the separatist movement.

Q: What about the allegation that Tamil examiners have cheated?

A: When the allegations were first made, a Commission of university dons looked into them, in 1970, and resolved that wide-scale cheating was not a possibility and that these allegations were therefore misconceived. In 1979, when the Minister for Industrial and Scientific Affairs put forward further allegations, dons at the University of Colombo (both Sinhala and Tamil) demanded a public commission of inquiry into a matter so as to establish the facts in an objective manner. In this absence of such an inquiry, it is impossible to say whether there have in fact been any cases of false marking in either medium. On the other hand, the slur cast on Tamil examiners as a body, accusing them of cheating has done great damage to relations between the two ethnic groups. The 1975 Report to the Sectoral Committee chaired by Pieter Keuneman, a minister in the government which first introduced the policy of media-wise standardisation, said that 'organised manipulation of marks in one whole medium in a deceptive manner is neither possible nor probable, and while the possibilities of correcting examiner variability through standardisation was slight, its contribution both to deepening and indeed institutionalising suspicion between communities and promoting distrust in the fairness or impartiality of public examinations' was considerable.

Q: The point was made earlier that the educational opportunities available to and the levels of educational attainment of each ethnic community cannot be judged purely on the basis of figures of university students. That is the total picture?

A: First, it must be realised that less than one per cent of all students get into universities. To judge a community's edu-

cational levels by this minority alone is to ignore the needs and aspirations of the other 99 per cent. In fact, the majority of Jaffna Tamils, like their Sinhala counterparts, have only secondary schooling, and 21.60 per cent have no schooling at all. Table VII gives the figures. (See page 12)

There is a further important fact that emerges from this table — that aggregating educational statistics for Tamils is grossly unfair, to the Indian Tamil community, who are the most underprivileged in respect of education. This in spite of the fact that the labour of Indian Tamils estate workers produce a greater part of the wealth on which we all live. Consider in Table VII the illiteracy figures for estate populations (43.58 per cent) and the zero figures of AL qualified graduates, and degreed persons. All the agitation against an 'excess' of Tamil students in particular faculties never refers to this fact. Nobody who ever asks for ethnic quotas in education thinks this principle should apply to Indian Tamils.

Q: Is it possible to measure in some way the general level of educational attainment among each ethnic community?

A: This is done through the Index of Educational Attainment. The figures for 1978/9 show that it is the low country Sinhalese who have a better educational level than the Sri Lankan Tamils, and that the Indian Tamils rank lowest in the scale.

Table VIII
Index of Educational Attainment

Kandyan Sinhalese	4.40
Low country Sinhalese	5.26
Sri Lankan Tamils	4.94
Indian Tamils	2.10
Moors	3.91
Malays	5.48
Burghers	6.44
Others	6.50

(Source: Report on Consumer Finance and Socio-Economic Survey, 1978/79)

Table VII
Percentage of Population Classified According to Educational Status and by Sectors and Zones 1978/79

Educational Status	Urban	Rural	Estate	Zone I	Zone II	Zone III	Zone IV	Zone V	All island
No Schooling (Illiterate)	18.57	22.47	43.58	19.47	25.38	21.60	27.10	19.08	23.40
No Schooling (Literate)	1.09	0.92	1.08	0.67	0.70	2.92	0.83	1.25	0.97
Primary	33.89	39.55	47.39	36.70	42.36	37.22	40.94	32.41	38.92
Secondary	31.80	27.12	6.67	31.04	23.72	25.81	22.81	31.76	26.43
Passed SSC/GCE (OL)	12.38	8.60	1.28	10.23	6.58	11.53	7.24	13.11	8.64
Passed HSC/GCE (AL)	1.35	0.84	0.0	1.19	0.64	0.79	0.66	1.36	0.88
Undergraduate	0.18	0.14	0.0	0.21	0.12	0.05	0.10	0.16	0.14
Passed Degree	0.60	0.29	0.0	0.36	0.42	0.18	0.30	0.65	0.34
Other	0.14	0.07	0.0	0.13	0.08	0.10	0.02	0.02	0.08
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(Report on Consumer Finance and Socio-Economic Survey 1978/79 P. 28 Table 15)
(Note Zone I and Zone V have better literacy figures)

Agriculture

Q: Since for most people in this country, farming is still the major source of livelihood, it would be good to take a look at agriculture. How do the different ethnic communities fare in this respect?

A: Let's start with this fact. Most of the farming in Sri Lanka is carried out in the Dry Zone, and the critical resource needed for farming in the Dry Zone is water. To ensure an adequate water supply, irrigation is of paramount importance. Recognising this fact, successive governments have invested heavily on irrigation in the Dry Zone. The Mahaveli project is the most important of the commitments made to farming and irrigation. However, the Dry Zone Tamil areas lag behind, and appear to have been neglected. This is brought out by Table IX, which shows the extent of land irrigated by key Sinhala and Tamil farming areas in the Dry Zone.

who are 'Malabar Inhabitants of the Province of Jaffna'.

Q: Why are there so few Sinhalese settled in the Northern Province in recent years?

A: Migratory patterns in Sri Lanka have pushed members of all communities who wish to better their prospects into the cities such as Colombo and its vicinity. Besides, land in Jaffna is relatively infertile and would not have attracted migrants interested in an agricultural livelihood. It could be argued that the paucity of Sinhalese settlers in the Northern Province exists for the same reason why there is perhaps a paucity of Tamil settlers in Hambantota.

Trincomalee	56.6	3.1
Batticaloa	30.4	2.7

(Source: Department of Censuses and Statistics, Ministry of Plan, Implementation, Socio-Economic Indicators of Sri Lanka, Feb 83, p.283)

Q: What does this table show?

A: That except for the Mannar District the

Zone III, that is, the Tamil areas of the North.

Central Government Capital Expenditure

Q: There is an impression that the Jaffna district is specially favoured with regard to Government capital expenditure. Is this correct?

A: No. In the District Budget for the year 1982, the amount allocated to the Jaffna District for new works is only Rs 27 million. This shows up the smallness of the District Budget and its very limited capacity to spearhead decentralised development.

In the case of the Central Budget, an analysis of the figures in the Ministry of Plan Implementation Performance, 1981, shows that capital expenditure in the Jaffna District was only Rs 260 million — that is, only 2.6 per cent of the national capital expenditure of nine billion rupees.

Q: How does this work out in terms of per capita expenditure?

A: The per capita capital expenditure in the Jaffna district is Rs 313, while the national per capita expenditure is Rs 656. In addition, foreign aid utilisation in the Jaffna District for the period 1977-82 was 0.

(Sources: Analysis from Ministry of Plan Implementation Performance 1981; Central Bank Review of the Economy, 1981; Government Budget Estimates, 1981)

Q: Aren't these figures of per capita capital expenditure affected by the fact that national expenditure on special projects such as the Mahaveli, Housing and the Free Trade Zone and targeted for certain areas and none of them are located in the North?

A: That is so, and for the same reason, other areas unaffected by such projects — such as Galle or Kalutara — show figures similar to those of Jaffna. Also Jaffna District has been unrepresented in successive governments, and therefore has benefitted little from Government development policy. However, what the figures do show is that the Jaffna District is clearly not a most favourable district, as some people have tried to make out.

The Private Sector

Q: There is an impression that the private sector of the economy is dominated by Tamil interests. Is this correct?

A: In the large public quoted companies there is a diversity of shareholders, interlocking directorates, bank indentures, etc. The large industrial houses are not and cannot be run like corner boutiques with a single proprietor making lone profits. The interconnections between different interests are still more difficult to ascertain today because of increasing foreign investment. However, as far as predominantly Sinhala-owned or Tamil-owned enterprises are concerned, the Gnanams and Maharajahs are surely matched by the Upali Group, Dasa

Table IX

Land size and percentages of sown land irrigated in the Dry Zone (Maha 1979/80)

Sinhala Districts	Percentage irrigated	Average size of holding
Puttalam	79.7	3.4
Moneragala	63.2	3.9
Anuradhapura	92.7	4.1
Polonnaruwa	95.3	4.0
Hambantota	92.5	3.0
Tamil districts	Percentage irrigated	Average size of holding
Jaffna	31.6	1.3
Vavuniya	83.4	5.7
Mannar	94.7	3.7

Thesawalamai

Q: Is it true that Sinhalese cannot buy land in Jaffna?

A: Muslims, Burghers and Sinhalese have in fact bought land in Jaffna.

Q: Then why is there a popular perception that Sinhalese cannot buy land in Jaffna?

A: Under the Thesawalamai, there is a concept of pre-emption under which co-owners, co-heirs and adjacent landowners — who had a mortgage over property located in the Northern Province — have the first option of purchase. It is not racial exclusion but an exclusion peculiar to the nature of an agricultural community. Today in fact, the owner only need give notice before selling in the open market.

Q: What is the Thesawalamai?

A: The Thesawalamai, like the traditional laws of the Kandyan Sinhalese, is a system of customary law which existed before the colonial era and is applicable to all persons

other Tamil areas have had much scantier irrigation facilities than the Sinhala areas.

Q: What is the relevance of the figures indicating the average size of landholding?

A: Their significance comes out when you set them side by side with the figures in Table X, which shows the percentage of fallow (unutilised) agricultural land in each zone. When considering the lack of irrigation, it is not surprising that the proportion of land left uncultivated is highest in

Table X
Unutilised Agricultural Land
(1978/79)

Zone	Percentage of fallow land
I	10.3
II	11.8
III	20.6
IV	14.5
V	13.8
All island	13.7

(Source: Report on Consumer Finance and Socio-economic Survey, 1978/79, p.49 Table 33)

Group, B.P. de Silva Group, Maliban Group, Nawaloka enterprises, Ebert Silva, De Soysa's Associated Industries, Wijewardene's Group, etc.

Q: Are the sources of credit for business controlled by Tamil interests?

A: No. The main sources of credit are the banks. The Bank of Ceylon, the People's Bank, the State Mortgage and Investment Bank, the Development Finance Corporation, etc., are state enterprises. The primary shareholders of the Hatton National Bank are Browns Ltd., a company with a majority of Sinhala shareholders. All other banks are controlled by foreign shareholders with foreign managing directors who assess projects on viability alone.

Q: What explains the fact that trade and business have been one of the main avenues of social advancement for Tamils?

A: The Tamils were never large land-owners or estate owners like the Sinhala upper classes. Only a handful were affected by land reform. The most lucrative export sector of tea, coconut and rubber even before nationalisation, was never dominated by Tamils. It has been observed in many societies that those do not hold land tend to go into professions and business. The Tamils as an ethnic group have followed this path, like many ethnic groups before them in Europe, Asia and Africa. There is nothing sinister, deceptive or exploitative about this: it is an understandable social phenomenon.

Q: Are there any published statistics of the Ethnic Composition of directors and proprietors in private sector companies?

A: No. But an analysis the Commercial Company list in Ferguson's Directors 1979-1981 (pages 1001-1038) shows that 18.62 per cent of Directors, 20.96 per cent of Chairmen, 20.54 per cent of partners/proprietors in these companies are Tamil.

Q: Why should Sinhalese not over-act to Statistics?

A: The recent frenzy over statistics on Tamil dominance avoids one inescapable fact. At present the Sinhalese are in absolute control of the national legislature and therefore in absolute control of national economic policy. Very few Tamils can receive jobs through state patronage, they can only succeed in private self-employment or in the professions. With control over national economic policy the Sinhalese have the absolute power to direct the course of our economic future. Statistics and social figures can be managed and changed over time, to maximise opportunities for all communities. The inability to do so is not the diabolical plot of an ethnic minority but the failure of our political leaders to direct and manage a modern, equitable economy.

Political violence

Q: Isn't the present violence really a product of the movement for a separate state and the use of political violence in the North?

A: The situation is not so simple. Those political developments are often given as the principal reasons for the present crisis. They have to some extent accentuated the crisis, but, that is only one side of the story. In 1958, there was no separatist movement. The Tamils were asking for language rights and Federalism, and used only non-violent tactics. Violence was still directed at them. For a rational discussion of the facts, we cannot ignore the responsibility that the state must bear for accelerating the cycle for violence.

Q: But hasn't the demand for language rights been settled since 1978?

A: The 1978 Constitution accords Tamil the status of a national language. Yet many government offices continue to send documents only in Sinhala. Anyway, the status of national language does fall short of the declared policy of both the UNP and the SLFP until 1955 to make Tamil an official language. We must try to understand the social and historical reasons which gave rise to the above movements if we are to find an effective political solution. We must learn not to give into a blind sense of loyalty without a rational and historical appreciation of the facts. If we do so, we will only help divide the country.

Q: Surely State violence was only in response to terrorist violence in the North?

A: That is not entirely correct. As far back as 1961, peaceful Tamil satyagrahis were attacked. In 1972 Amnesty International reported the arrest and detention without trial of 42 young members of the Tamil community who were staging peaceful protests, such as the display of black flags against the policy of standardisation and the Republican Constitution. Annual reports from Amnesty International and the ICJ from 1976 detail torture inflicted on Tamil youths held in detention. In December 1974, police opened fire at the scene of a Tamil cultural show held at the closing sessions of the conference of the International Association of Tamil Research. Eight persons died. It was after 1977 that Tamil youths began their systematic campaign of violence.

Q: Are you trying to justify the violence of the Northern militants?

A: No. But we must look at the accelerating crisis with fairness and impartiality. Our media continues to give us only one side of the question. The present situation is a result of many complex factors. It is often difficult to separate cause and effect. Unless we look at the issues with clear-sightedness, we will not be able to provide the

social and political solutions necessary for the resolution of the present conflict.

Q: But they, the Tamils are trying to destroy us, how can you be so calm and detached? We Sinhalese have nowhere else to go, this is our only home.

A: If we feel we are a united nation, there can be no question of 'we' or 'they'. Justice is not only supposed to be rational but race blind. If we continue to think in terms of 'we' and 'they' we will turn the present conflict into a savage tribal war. Those who over-react to problems and thereby destabilise the country and the South Asian region, will create the very nightmares they so desperately fear.

Decentralisation

Q: Why are the Sinhalese so afraid of conceding regional autonomy to Tamil dominated areas?

A: Because they are afraid that this will be a first step toward Eelam.

Q: Is their fear justified?

A: No, in other countries this had not occurred. In fact, most often the issue subsidises. With greater regional autonomy, the Quebec nationalists, the Basque nationalists and even Tamil Nadu nationalists have begun to work within the framework of a united state.

Q: Will the Northern extremists be satisfied?

A: Even if they are not, a solution agreed to be a moderate majority in Jaffna and supported by the Indian government will alienate the users of violence from their own people. This occurred in Quebec and is now happening in the Basque region of Spain. After a period of amnesty, with the help of the Indian government through extradition agreements and the like, it will be easier to control their violent activities.

Q: Aren't these 'decentralisation' ideas new to Sri Lanka?

A: Actually these ideas have been circulated since the beginning of the twentieth century. In fact, SWRD Bandaranaike himself put forward a federal structure of government for Sri Lanka with nine separate regional units. Before him, the Kandyan leaders in the Ceylon Congress also put forward ideas for a federal structure consisting of three units. In 1940, the colonial government introduced Provincial Councils but though approved in Parliament they were not implemented.

Q: Have any of the major Sinhalese parties after independence ever entertained such a scheme?

A: Both the UNP and the SLFP had before 1977 negotiated decentralised arrangements but failed to implement them. The Bandaranaike Chelvanayagam Pact, for example, agreed to the creation of two or more decentralised regions and allowed room for parliament to delegate powers in

certain areas. It was a very comprehensive Federal solution. The UNP in 1965 also concluded a fairly similar Pact but it too was not implemented.

Q: *Why aren't the Tamils satisfied with the DDC scheme?*

A: The DDC scheme, in some ways, falls short of the other Pacts for the following reasons.

a) The District Minister, an appointment of the President — is chairman of the Executive Committee and can block all decisions of the DDC, if he chooses to.

b) The Line Ministries must approve all projects of the DDC, in their area. As we all know, ministers jealously guard their preserves and do not often like to share power and control.

c) The District Budget so far has been very small, 40 million for both old and new works for each District. Considering the wide range of projects that the DDCs may wish to engage in, the budget so far has completely limited their scope.

d) And decision agreed to by the DDC can be overridden by the President and/or Parliament.

e) The DDC is only statutory legislation and has no constitutional validity. It can easily be swept away by a simple majority vote in Parliament.

The DDCs then are mere administrative arrangements vulnerable to the contradictory personalities of ministers and the sudden shifts of Presidential and Parliamentary power.

Q: *What kind of schemes do other countries have?*

A: In most democratic countries with an ethnic minority which is territorially placed, decentralisation has been the political answer. In addition, for administrative

reasons, countries prefer to have a decentralised planning and diverse development. In India, US, Australia, Canada, etc. . . . the federal system gives much power to the decentralised units. These units have their own courts, own executive, own legislature, and the federal government can only interfere in situations of national concern such as foreign policy, inter-state commerce, defence, currency, taxation, immigration, protection of fundamental rights, the national development plan, etc. Except in these specified instances, the decentralised units may govern themselves, though they may look to the Central Government for additional financial resources and projects. In other countries of Europe, France, Spain, Federal Republic of Germany — similar arrangements exist.

Q: *Aren't those large countries? Isn't Sri Lanka far too small for this type of arrangement.*

A: No, we have before us the example of Switzerland. In tourist literature we are often called the Switzerland of the East.

Q: *What is the Swiss solution like?*

A: The Swiss system has some of the following features:

a) A federal system composed of 22 cantons — each with its own elected Legislature and Executive.

b) The cantons commune have extensive spending and taxing powers. In addition, the cantons have legislative powers within their own area of jurisdiction.

c) Each canton has its own constitution and its own system of courts, but with a superceding Federal Court to determine issues of national importance — or inter-cantonal disputes.

d) Though there are certain national standards, each canton has its own system of schools and Universities.

e) The federal Legislature itself contains two houses — the first is like our Parliament and called the National Council, the second contains two representatives from each canton and is called the Council of States.

f) The Federal Assembly only has certain specified legislative powers in the Constitution, all residual powers vested with the cantons. The Federal powers are related to defence, posts, army, national economic policy, foreign policy, currency etc.

g) The Swiss Constitution recognises three official languages — German, French and Italian. All cantons also have an enlightened policy of extending official recognition to all the spoken languages.

h) Religion — the people of each canton are free to determine the nature of state-religions relations. This is due to the fact that there is a large non-Catholic minority in Switzerland.

i) Each canton is also responsible for public order within its boundaries — own police force and public service.

Q: *Isn't that too much for Sri Lanka?*

A: We don't have to adopt their model completely, but just learn from their example. Switzerland is a country where modern leaders from traditionally warring communities have managed to negotiate an enlightened settlement.

Q: *Isn't this all too risky and uncertain. Why should we even begin to think in this manner?*

A: We stand at the cross-roads of history. We can either become the Switzerland of the East by following the middle path of negotiation, conciliation and good will, or the Lebanon of South Asia, where intransigence, violence and hate have made it a playground for destruction in which all the powers of the world have a stake. ●

Ethnic Breakdown — North & East

	Total	Sinhalese	Tamils	Moors	Indians	Others
NORTH						
Jaffna	831,112	4,615	792,246	13,757	20,001	493
Mannar	106,940	8,710	54,106	28,464	14,072	1,588
Vavuniya	95,904	15,876	54,541	6,640	18,592	255
Mullaitivu	77,512	3,948	58,904	3,777	10,766	117
	1,111,468	33,149	959,797	52,638	63,431	2,453
		2.98%	86.35%	4.73%	5.71%	.23%
EAST						
Batticaloa	330,899	10,646	234,348	79,317	3,868	2,720
Amparai	388,786	146,371	78,315	161,481	1,410	1,209
Trincomalee	256,790	86,341	86,743	74,403	6,767	2,536
	976,475	243,358	399,406	315,201	12,045	6,465
		24.92%	40.90%	32.28%	1.24%	.66%
OVERALL TOTAL	2,087,943	276,507	1,359,203	367,839	75,476	8,918
		13.24%	65.10%	17.62%	3.61%	.43%

(From Census of Population and Housing 1981)

4-WAY CHANNEL SWIM SPONSORSHIP ANANDAN'S RECORD BREAK ATTEMPT

The well-known holder of several Guinness Book of World Records, Mr V.S.K. Anandan, LL.B (Ceylon), B.Sc.(London), and Attorney-at-law, is to attempt another world record in the near future. This time it is a four-way swim across the English Channel.

A group of Anandan's friends has set up a FUND to enable him to make this rather expensive and arduous attempt in August 1984. Anandan is already in the UK and has commenced his programme of training. He has to continue training for 6 to 8 hours a day. Cost of the training, advice and other required material have to be obtained through the Channel Swimming Association. Besides the fee of around £1,300, only to make the four-way swimming attempt, a further sum of £4,000 is required for the entire programme of training.

TAMIL TIMES is proud to sponsor Anandan's record-breaking attempt because he is a rare and exceptional sportsman in every sense of the word. Here are some of his incomparable achievements:

- He holds the largest number of records in the Guinness Book of Records — seven records — in endurance sporting events. He is the only one in the world to have held six of these records at the same time.
 - He was the first man to swim the Palk Strait from Ceylon to India and back in April, 1975, in 51 hours.
 - Non-stop Cycling: 187 hours: 1,487 miles in May 1979.
 - Ball punching: 136 hours in December 1979.
 - Sit-ups (a gymnastic record): 165 in two minutes on May 15, 1980.
 - Balancing on one foot: 33 hours on May 15, 1979.
- (Note: Anandan is the only person to have established two Guinness World Records on the same day)
- High Kicks: 9,100 times in December 1980.
 - Water treading: 80 hours performed at Anna Swimming Pool, Madras, India, in August 1981.
 - Twist dance: 128 hours in December 1978; Non-stop walking: 159 hours, 296 miles in August 1981.

In September 1981, tragedy struck Anandan. He was run over by a car under mysterious circumstances. Doctors gave him only a five per cent chance of survival when he suffered nine fractures and severe chest and lung injuries. His spleen has been removed. He was kept in hospital for six months and a further six months on crutches. But Anandan was not a man to give up. His remarkable capacity for survival, and incomparable tenacity and commitment



Anandan breaking the water-treading world record in Madras was put on spotlight when, on December 31, 1981, while still on crutches, he performed five events including Billiards Cue-levering and speed motorcycle riding. On this occasion he broke the record in Billiards Cue-levering.

CHARITIES: All the money Anandan earned from his participation in sporting events has been given to charity. The sum of Rs 44,000 he collected for breaking the twist dance record was donated to the Batticaloa Cyclone Relief Fund. Another Cheque for Rs 10,000 he earned was donated to the Crippled Children's Association.

ANANDAN'S AMBITION is to be recognised the best ever endurance sportsman in the world. He hopes to have 10 unbroken records in the same year's Guinness Book of Records.

KUMAR ANANDAN CHANNEL FUND

Anandan deserves all the encouragement and support he needs to make this unique attempt. A group of Anandan's friends has set up the above fund. Supporters and well-wishers are kindly requested to generously contribute to this fund. Anandan has agreed that any money collected in excess will be donated to a public purpose.

● **PLEASE SEND YOUR CHEQUES OR INTERNATIONAL MONEY ORDERS** in favour of **KUMAR ANANDAN CHANNEL SWIM FUND**, crossed A/C Payee only, and mail them to: **TAMIL TIMES, P.O.Box 304. London W13 9QN.**

Please mark '**KUMAR ANANDAN**' on the top left-hand corner of the envelope. Every remittance will be individually acknowledged.

EDITORIAL

FROM PAGE 2

the Tamil people; they should demonstrate over a period of years that they are willing to allow and facilitate the full implementation of those measures; they must give up the notion that Sri Lanka is only a 'Sinhala-Buddhist' country and accept the reality that it is a multi-ethnic physical entity in which the Sinhalese and Tamils have well defined rights. When such political wisdom is demonstrated in practice by Sinhala political leaders, then the Tamil people themselves may choose not to exercise their right to self-determination.

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SRI LANKA, THE TRUE

'The image of Sri Lanka is being damaged abroad' is the current propaganda theme of all Sri Lankan politicians from the President downwards, the state-controlled Lankan media, the country's foreign missions and some vociferous expatriate Sinhalese. The government has allocated over Rs.40 million to carry out a propaganda war to rebuild the already tarnished image of the country.

In this propaganda war, the international news media, the Amnesty International, the International Commission of Jurists, the Eelamites and all those who have cared to report about the atrocities committed against the Tamil people have become targets of attack.

The Sri Lankan press gave undeserved wide publicity to the ravings of Mr Douglas Wickremaratene, the President of the Sinhala Association in UK, whose notoriety as an anti-Tamil baiter in Britain is common knowledge not only among the Tamils but also among the Sinhalese from whom he has very little support. During a recent visit to Sri Lanka, in the course of a tirade against the Lankan Embassy in the UK for the failure of its Tamil High Commissioner to respond to what he claimed as 'anti-government false propaganda' and 'blatant falsehoods'. Mr Wickremaratene said that during the July disturbances startling claims increased. 'There was a flood of anti-government propaganda. The claim ranged from murder to rape to genocide. Again no official effort was made to deny them.'

The sad fact

When Sri Lankan Ministers and people like Mr Wickremaratene attack others for 'damaging the image of the country', what do they really mean? Are they contending that violence on a mass scale against the Tamils did not take place, not only in July 1983, but ever since 1956? Were not houses of Tamils looted and burnt? Were not Tamils attacked in their homes and in the streets? Were not Tamils hacked to death or burnt alive? Were not small Tamil children thrown into burning flames? Were not Tamil women subjected to humiliation and rape? The sad fact is that every one of these things and more happened in the so-called paradise island of Sri Lanka. Thousands and thousands of people, Sinhala people, Buddhist people, foreign tourists and others witnessed these happenings. The fact that some kind-hearted Sinhalese people gave protection to some Tamils does not in any way mitigate the sheer barbaric nature of the violence.

The present President publicly acknowledged that in August 1977 Tamils

were victims of murder, arson and rape which were encouraged by his own party men. The Annual Report of the country's Inspector General of Police for the year 1977 stated that during the period of communal violence, August 15th to September 13th, 74 cases of RAPE, 1,141 cases of ARSON and 1,209 cases of looting. The IGP noted that the number of cases of recorded grave crime for the year 1977 was 83,082, as compared with the 1976 figure of 55,195. 'This unprecedented increase of 26,887 (48 per cent) was mainly due to the breakdown in law and order during the period of racial riots of the same year.'

In the July 1983 violence, the government's own figures acknowledged that over 400 Tamils were killed although the true figure is estimated to be in the region of 2,500. The police have reported that over 4,000 vehicles belonging to Tamils were burnt. An estimated 70 per cent of Tamil houses were set on fire and destroyed. Over 160 industrial establishments and countless number of shops belonging to Tamils were looted and burnt down. Over 200,000 Tamils became refugees. Five months after the violence, there are an estimated 50,000 Tamils still in refugee camps.

These are the tragic and horrible facts and that is the true image of Sri Lanka. If sections of Sinhala-Buddhists did not commit these acts of inhumanity, who else did it? Tamils, Muslims or Christians? While some Ministers and the Prime Minister may attempt to absolve all the Sinhala-Buddhists, Mr Cyril Matthew and those like him interpret the violence against the Tamils as a manifestation of the 'justified anger of the Sinhala-Buddhists'.

Buddhistic claims challenged

One does not like to draw Buddhism into the quagmire of political argument and blame it for the violence that has characterised Sri Lankan society, for Buddhism contains certain laudable principles. Its basic tenets of tolerance, compassion, kindness, love and non-violence are well known and recognised. But when every political scoundrel and racist bigot repeat 'Sinhala-Buddhism' ad nauseam, then they cannot complain if their 'Buddhistic' claims are questioned and criticised. When Buddhist priests who are expected to spread the message of peace and love among the people, go about inciting violence, murder and land-grabbing in the name of 'Sinhala-Buddhism', then they must expect to be challenged about their 'Buddhistic' claims. When a claim is made that the culture and heritage of Sri Lanka have been protected by the Buddhist clergy, then such claimants

should not rave and rant if their claims are questioned.

If the Sri Lankan Buddhist chronicles are to be believed, the most noble and laudable Indian immigrant to ever set foot upon the soil of Lanka, not once but thrice, was Lord Buddha. But the so-called adherents of the Buddha, who are expected by the Great Teacher to preach the message of universal brotherhood, deprived 1.2 million Tamil plantation workers of their basic rights and forced them to live in semi-slave and captive conditions on the grounds that they came from a country from where Buddha himself came! Those Sinhala-Buddhists who live abroad and who abound with 'patriotic fervour' and rush to protect the 'image of our mother country', should subject themselves to serious self-examination. They rightly protest against the racist immigration and nationality laws. They rightly claim and exercise all the rights to permanent settlement and citizenship although their periods of stay in these countries are a mere 5, 10 or 15 years at the most. But they seem to suffer from no problem of conscience when they justify the semi-slave conditions in which the plantation workers are kept without any basic rights of citizenship or franchise. They go about setting up Buddhist temples in western capitals while they condone or conceal the exploitation to which the plantation Tamil workers are subjected to and the violence to which the Tamil people in general are subjected.

Prime Minister's claim challenged

When the Prime Minister, Mr R. Premadasa, says, 'No one should insult the Sinhala Buddhist race and the Buddhist religion by saying that the unfortunate July disturbances were the result of a Sinhala uprising. Throw that idea out of your mind . . . The Sinhala Buddhists have always denounced violence. They believed in and led lives of peace and harmony. Buddhist principles have inspired the Sinhala people to serve the cause of humanity, irrespective of caste, creed or community. Our history bears testimony to that proud record,' then one is entitled to go back into history and examine whether there is any substance in his claim. The fact is that Buddhism seems to have had minimal impact on the Lankan society as far as its propensity for violence was or is concerned. The record of the early Sinhala kings was one of continuous, incessant struggle for the throne, fratricidal and patricidal killings, conspiracies and intrigues. Very few kings succeeded to their predecessors by peaceful means. According to the Mahavamsa, of the 54 kings of the Great Dynasty (543BC to AD275), 11 kings

IMAGE

By SAMANTHA PERERA

were forcibly overthrown, six were assassinated, 13 were killed in battle and 22 were murdered by their successors. The period following until the arrival of the western colonisers was no less prone to violence. How Kassappa buried his own father in a wall of concrete to become King himself is a well-known story.

Bandaranaike gunned down

If early and late medieval history displayed such a remarkable proclivity to violence, the post-independence period was no less remarkable. Mr S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, who converted himself from Christianity to Buddhism, came to power in April 1956 as the champion of Sinhala-Buddhism, thus inaugurating the present era of violence against the Tamils. Tamil political leaders who engaged in peaceful protests against 'Sinhala Only' were subjected to physical violence in the presence of the country's forces of law and order. Racial violence was unleashed against the Tamils in the Eastern Province in 1957, and in 1958 the island was engulfed in a major country-wide pogrom against the Tamils.

Shortly thereafter, Prime Minister Bandaranaike was gunned down in his own home by a Buddhist priest named Somarama Thero. Another high-powered Buddhist priest, Buddharakkhita Thero, along with some other persons, were later found guilty of organising the assassination of the Prime Minister.

Highest crime rate

Sri Lanka has the highest per capita crime rate in all Asia. While the Tamil

'Tigers' have been accused of political killings of 72 security personnel and 'informants' over a period of nine years, murders and other grievous crimes are committed daily for apparently insignificant reasons — boundary disputes, plucking a jack fruit from a neighbour's garden, in pursuance of thieving, etc.

Over 90 per cent of the country's security forces are 'Sinhala Buddhists'. But the record of violence in which they have engaged, can only be compared to those of Latin American dictatorships. They have, on several occasions, gone berserk, breaking the law and their code of discipline, setting fire to private and public buildings and killing people indiscriminately in what they describe as 'retaliation'.

Self-deluding hypocritical humbug

The President, the Prime Minister and all others, including the Buddhist clergy should cut out their self-deluding hypocritical humbug about 2,500 years of culture and civilisation based on the Buddhist way of life. The nature, scale and sheer barbarity of the violent events of July 1983 pinpointedly demonstrate the vast gulf and disparity between the philosophical and conceptual content of Buddhism and what is actually practised in its name. A leading Buddhist monk, who is closely associated with the leadership of the Sinhala Sangvidhanya is reported to have declared that what happened to the Tamils in July was only an 'appetiser' for further action in the future. Another Buddhist priest, who is

currently engaged in helping illegal encroachment of Tamil areas by thousands of Sinhalese has publicly threatened a government Minister with violence — to hit him with his umbrella.

Blood of Tamils to be sacrificed

It cannot be said that the guiding philosophy of Sri Lankan life today, or for that matter for a long time, is not the message of peace, love, tolerance and compassion as propounded by the Buddha, when a government Minister, Mr Gamini Dissanayake, publicly announces that 'in fourteen minutes, the blood of every Tamil in the country can be sacrificed to the land by us, if there was an invasion from India, and still continues to function as a Minister going about pontificating on the 'Buddhist way of life'.

Those who live in Western countries are not unaware of the violence and brutality caused to ordinary people in other countries. But one did not, until July 1983, watch horrible scenes of groups of people including women and children being burnt alive in vehicles before the very eyes of 'the guardians of law and order', and this did happen to the Tamils in the island paradise of Sri Lanka. The image of paradise presented to attract foreign tourists and earn a few dollars or sterling is a false image. The true image is one of intolerance, cruelty and barbarity. The whole atmosphere is filled with GREED, HATRED and DELUSION, the deepest roots of human sorrow, according to Lord Buddha.

TERRORIST LABEL DOES NOT STICK

Dr. S.A. Tharmalingam, 72, a popular medical practitioner in Jaffna and a respected elder of the community was released from detention by the Sri Lankan Government last month.

He was taken into custody under the Prevention of Terrorism Act of Sri Lanka in July this year for organising a peaceful protest against the atrocities being committed in the Trincomalee district by Sinhala racist gangs assisted by the security forces.

It is a reflection of the viciousness of the Prevention of Terrorism Act of Sri Lanka and perhaps the jitteriness of those in authority that an elderly man was seen as a threat to the State and had to be labelled a terrorist and incarcerated.

Incarceration was not the only tribulation of this doctor not in the best of phy-

sical health. He, along with a few other fellow Tamil detainees narrowly managed to escape with their lives in the massacre that occurred with the connivance of the prison authorities at Welikade jail at the height of the racial pogrom that occurred in Sri Lanka in July/August.

Due to the public outcry right round the world about this massacre, the surviving Tamil detainees were transferred to Batticaloa jail, where another moral test had to be faced. When a well co-ordinated plan resulted in the opportunity to escape from the jail, Dr S.A. Tharmalingam, Kovai Mahesan and Father Singarayar decided not to avail themselves of the opportunity on the grounds that they had committed no crime and as such did not have to fear the fair exercise of the law.

Vindication of this moral courage is the

ultimate acceptance of the Sri Lankan authorities that there was no charge against Dr Tharmalingam.

Unfortunately, Kovai Mahesan and Father Singarayar are still awaiting their freedom.

Interest in the welfare of his patients not unnaturally attracted Dr Tharmalingam to the welfare of other human beings in the community and led to his involvement in politics. As a person dedicated to the saving of lives he never advocated or supported violence to achieve any political aim or to espouse any cause. He felt strongly about the injustices the Tamil community in Sri Lanka had to endure but he always advocated protests through peaceful non-violent methods. In spite of all the hardships he never wavered from his determined objection to discrimination.

SRI LANKA

A MISMANAGED ECONOMY IN PERIL

By S. T. ARASAN

In July-August 1983 Sri Lanka experienced the most serious wave of racial riots since it became independent in 1948. Much has been written about the political aspects of this unprecedented unleashing of violence against the minority Tamil population by the majority community of Sinhalese, aided and abetted by the armed forces and the Government itself. The economic damage wrought by this orgy of violence also needs careful attention. The effect of the recent riots on the economy of Sri Lanka is brought out tersely in *The Economist* (August 6, 1983) headline: 'Sri Lanka Puts a Torch to its Future'. The country's economic future has been wrecked by mob violence directed against the economic position of the Tamil community.

We are not dealing here with a country which is highly prosperous or with a Government which has the competence to redeem the country's future with resolve and foresight. Sri Lanka (Ceylon) was one of the more developed countries in South Asia, and friendly countries had reason to describe it as 'Paradise' in more than one sense.

Loss of grip

After 1948 when its independence was granted by the British, the economy, along with political morality, took a downturn which has been explained only with 'lame excuses' and 'accusations'. Since 1948, for the first UNP Government of D.S. Senanayake, the excuse was that the 'colonial masters left the country after economic rape and ruin'. Since 1956, for SWRD Bandaranayake's and his wife's Governments the excuse was the 'misgovernment of the defeated UNP Government' and the economic mess created by J. R. Jayawardene, the then Finance Minister (the present President). Since 1977, the scapegoat for economic down-slide and growing unemployment, inflation, budget deficits and chronic balance of payments problems is the 'misdeeds and cheap politics of Mrs Bandaranayake's SLFP Government'.

For whatever reason, the country's economic base was progressively weakened and the future became patently bleak, steadily advancing to become a basket case but for the endeavours of the private sector. In these private sector efforts various Tamil communities — Indian Tamils, Muslim Tamils and Ceylon Tamils — all participated in a meaningful manner.

Low economic value

The present UNP Government had decided to divert 35-40% of the country's scarce budgetary resources to three new schemes of demonstrably low economic value. The

pattern of Government capital expenditure since 1977 reveals a gross misdirection of resources which would only hamper the take-off to sustained economic growth. Although the economy had already been on a downward slide for several years, the resource allocation of the new development plan reveals undue emphasis on grandiose but unproductive projects and a callous disregard of the traditional productive export sectors and the need for balanced regional development. Moreover, parts of the plan which provided for some economic growth entailed unduly high costs and the dislocation of the economic activities of certain sections of the population (belonging to the Tamil minority community) which had been traditionally resident in some of the areas earmarked for development.

The four major programmes which constitute the development plan are:

- 1) the accelerated Mahaweli Ganga Diversion scheme
- 2) the accelerated urban housing programme
- 3) construction of an entirely new capital city in Kotte, several miles from Colombo
- 4) establishment of free trade zones, originally proposed for Colombo and Trincomalee, but implemented only in Colombo.

Accelerated Mahaweli Scheme

The results of the Mahaweli Diversion project in terms of employment and output have so far fallen woefully short of expectations, and have been inexcusably disproportionate to costs, even when completed, the economic gains in the provision of cultivable land to new Sinhalese settlers will in some measure have to be set off against the losses inflicted on the Tamils by their destabilisation in their traditional homelands in areas covered by the scheme. In fact, the objective of the scheme is not one of overall economic growth but of the diversion of even the little benefits of high cost development to the majority community, by depriving the minority community of their share. This reflects the well-observed tendency of repeated Governments in Sri Lanka to ignore the need for a broad-based development plan which would provide increasing standards of living across the board to all sections of the population. Instead, they resort to short-term schemes for placating the Sinhalese constituency, on which they depend for survival, by devising schemes which confer some benefits to the Sinhalese population at the expense of the minority community of Tamils. The determination of the present Government to carry out its sinister objective in a six-year period so as to ensure its

re-election led to its insistence on an unrealistic acceleration of implementation of the Mahaweli project. The resulting massive expansion in Government expenditure in the context of a severe shortage of real resources, led in turn to unprecedentedly high rates of inflation and a depletion of foreign exchange reserves.

Other Devious Schemes

The grandiose housing scheme and the white elephant scheme for a new capital city named Jayawardenapura have not contributed anything directly to the production of goods and services or indirectly through linkage effects. Both schemes have added to the country's enormous import bill and have compounded the inflationary problems through spiralling costs and an overstrained sector. Despite these negative effects the Government pressed on with the housing scheme in order to mobilise electoral support by providing subsidised housing, especially in Colombo and other urban areas. The blatantly wasteful expenditure on the new capital city (coincidentally bearing the name of the President) was justified in the minds of the Government as the need to revive Sinhalese nationalism by moving to the site of an ancient Sinhalese kingdom.

Colombo Free Trade Zone

As for the Free Trade Zone schemes, the Government implemented with great speed the Greater Colombo Free Trade Zone in order to provide employment for Sinhalese residents of the area. However, the second location — Trincomalee — for a free trade zone was abandoned because it is a Tamil area, and businesses developed there would be dominated by Tamil entrepreneurs and provide employment to Tamils. It was also feared that the development of a Free Trade Zone would have circumscribed the Government's freedom to deal with the militarily and strategically important natural harbour of Trincomalee.

Manipulating the Economy

It is evident that the economic policies followed by the Government were characterised by a lack of vision and a bankruptcy of ideas regarding the requirements of a development plan which would secure long term economic growth and improvement of living standards for all sections of the country's population. The programmes adopted were deliberately chosen with the full knowledge of the ill-effects of the misdirection of resources on the economy; in order to secure short term political advantage for the members of the present Government, winning the favour of the Sinhalese electorate, while denying the minority Tamils any prospective economic

improvement. In this regard the Government was equally culpable in the deliberate avoidance of certain economic policies which would have been inductive to overall development. Their plans deliberately neglected the development needs of the traditional Tamil homelands, especially the Northern Province.

Outright Discrimination

The farmers of the Northern Province had ably demonstrated in earlier years their adaptability and enterprise in response to incentives to produce agricultural products, particularly subsidiary food crops. The present Government withdrew all incentive schemes for such agricultural products and encouraged cheaper imports in order to destroy the viability of the Northern Province agriculture. As for industry, this Government not only failed to establish any public sector industries in the Tamil areas, but also took all steps within its power to prevent the establishment of private sector industries there. The parlous state of infrastructure in the Tamil areas which had suffered by decades of neglect was allowed to worsen further so that even entrepreneurs who were prepared to start industrial establishments in Tamil areas were scared away by the high costs entailed by the inadequate infrastructure, in addition to the administrative impediments imposed by the Government.

Discrimination against Tamil Community

It would be appropriate here to deal with certain other aspects of the background to the riots of July 1983, to obtain a perspective for the proper analysis of the economic effects of the riots. It has been shown above how the economic policies of the Government had been administered with the objective of excluding the Tamils from the mainstream of whatever little economic development could be achieved. Although those actions were contrary to democratic principles, the newly promulgated constitution provided no safeguards for the minority to challenge such discriminatory administrative measures. Successive Governments had also progressively reduced the share of the Tamils in public sector employment to less than their percentage in the population.

It was a rather narrow private sector (which had been circumscribed by the encroachment of the public sector in many fields) which remained open to entrepreneurial activity in industry and wholesale and retail trades. Although the Government administratively hampered the setting up of new industries by Tamils, there were a few Tamils who had successfully established certain industrial and trading establishments in earlier years. Many of these entrepreneurs had very humble beginnings (e.g. as roadside haw-

kers) and their success in the industrial and trading fields was a testimony to their entrepreneurial ability and heavy personal sacrifice. These establishments were almost entirely situated in and around Colombo, the seat of the Central Government, where presumably citizens belonging to all communities of the population had the freedom to make a living. However, the beneficiaries in terms of employment were Sinhalese; the Government has officially acknowledged that over 90% of the employees in the Tamil-owned industrial and trading establishments were Sinhalese. Nevertheless, certain key Ministers in the Government repeatedly called for the stripping of Tamil ownership in industry and trade, although it was contrary to the existing laws.

Riots as a Scheme to Suppress the Tamils

It has now become clear (since the riots) from the official pronouncements of all the important Ministers of the Government and several key Government officials, that a major objective in the planning of the riots was the destruction by wilful arson of the real assets of these industrial and trading establishments and of their owners, and the instilling, by thuggery, of a feeling of fear to deter them from restarting such activities in the future, so that the Sinhalese could replace them.

A similar design to enforce complete destitution and fear was applied to other Tamils practising professions and in humbler pursuits such as clerical and other minor employment in the public and private sector in Colombo and in other predominantly Sinhalese areas, as well as to the Tamil labourers employed in the estate sector. Once the Tamils had been dislodged and driven away from Sinhalese areas, their jobs would be filled by new recruits from among the Sinhalese, (or so the argument went). Sri Lanka provides a typical example of a developing country with a stagnating, even retrogressing, economy where inscrupulous politicians try to perpetuate their power by covering up the bankruptcy of economic developmental policy by schemes designed to transfer existing assets and employment to one section of the people from another. Sri Lanka, however, is unique in the method adopted, viz. the unleashing of violence against an already beleaguered minority community to achieve by arson and thuggery what could not be achieved by legal or administrative means.

Myth of Tamil Domination

The Government, particularly through the official pronouncements of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, has sought to justify these moves by asserting that the industrial and trading sectors were dominated by the Tamils. Although no verifiable statistical

evidence is provided, these Ministers and their propagandists usually point to the few conspicuously successful Tamil businessmen in support of their assertion. The fact that there are more numerous and more wealthy, successful businessmen among the Sinhalese is not mentioned. The fact that 600,000 Tamils are workers in Sri Lanka's tea and rubber plantations and that thousands of Sinhalese are employed in Tamil-owned industrial and trading establishments does not add up to the assertion that the economy of the country is dominated by the Tamils.

This assertion can be easily dispelled by even a cursory examination of the known facts. Over 75% of the industrial productive capacity in Sri Lanka is in the public sector. A substantial portion of the wholesale and retail trade is also in the hands of Government agencies, such as the Co-operative Wholesale Establishment, Salu Sala, and an array of State corporations dealing with key commodities. Sinhalese propagandists often hark back to the pre-Independence days when the Tamils occupied a somewhat more than proportionate share of employment in the Government and mercantile sectors. It is, however, a well-known fact that successive governments have whittled down this share to a miniscule share in the public sector, through its discriminatory recruitment and retirement policies and through jawboning of private enterprises in the mercantile sector.

The Government, however, has allowed a few positions in the upper rungs of the Government administration to be occupied by Tamils for propaganda purposes. This does not conceal the fact that the total employment in the public sector, the number of Tamils is a much smaller percentage than warranted by their almost 30% share of the population, and that Tamils in the public sector are prevented from making their best contribution to the administration by discriminatory laws and administrative practices which hamper their performance and promotion to higher positions. In the plantation sector, although the majority of workers are Tamils, they cannot be said to dominate the sector. The plantations are almost completely owned by the government, and the Tamil workers have been denied the improvement in wages and living conditions that are granted to other workers. Thus they live in conditions akin to slave labour under increasing exploitation and misery. The Government has denied them the right to settle down outside the plantations, even in Tamil areas.

Riot Damage No Chicken-Feed

Estimates of the damage caused by the riots are incomplete and scanty. Newspaper reports, based on official estimates, stated that a total of 122 industrial units had been destroyed or damaged. The total number of workers in these industries was 13,366 with

an estimated wage bill of around Rs. 107 million in 1982. The total annual value of exports by the export-orientated firms among the destroyed industries was nearly Rs.1 billion (\$40 million). At an earlier stage, the government had partially estimated the damage to infrastructure at \$200 million — about twice the World Bank Group's annual assistance to Sri Lanka. The full loss should be much more. Replacement cost of the destroyed and damaged property could be five to ten times higher — much more than \$800 million World Bank Group assistance during the 29 years since 1954, and the 1977/82 annual average aid commitments of \$700 million by all donors. The Government, in view of its already precarious financial situation, will not be able to provide funds for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the damaged industrial and business units.

Moreover, the ill-advised government attempts to interfere with property rights and to take over ownership of industries and businesses through the 'Rehabilitation of Property, Business or Industries' Regulation of 1983 (REPIA) will cause further dislocation and delays in restoration of industrial activities.

Even if some friendly and tolerant donors make funds available to the country, it will take at least one year, if not more, to carry out physical repairs even to the few salvageable industrial properties, before resuming production. The country's economy has suffered a serious jolt — a setback — that will take years to be reversed. Mr Ronnie de Mel, the Finance Minister, is on record as having asserted early in August that the 'short term needs to rebuild factories, shops and homes totalled Rs.3-4 billion'. He also estimated that it would take many years to recover from this disaster.

In an effort not to scare away the hitherto generous donor community, the destruction and despondency caused by the July 1983 riots is now being down-played by the President, Finance Minister and Government spokesmen. There seems to be fervent activity at this self-deception.

Yet-To-Learn Lessons

In the midst of all the July/August destruction and economic despondency, the Government is now setting up new Army camps and purchasing military equipment, bullet-proof vests, tear gas which they report to have run out of, armoured carriers, and helicopters to wage more wars against the defenceless Tamil — a war against its own people. A Government incapable of protecting life and property of individuals has lost its right to rule over such people. Here we have a situation which, far from providing protection, it condones and contributes to repeated pogroms and organised destruction of private property of a section of its own people.

The President and his Ministers seem to have misjudged the enthusiastic response and sympathy shown by the donors and take them to be gullible enough to swallow the empty promises which camouflage their hidden intention to make Sri Lanka a Buddhist Sinhala-dominated island. It is high time these politicians realised that all donors cannot be fooled all the time, and it is for the donor countries or agencies concerned to opt to be part of the small number of donors who will not be manipulated all the time.

The country was already in economic peril even before the wreckage of the Tamil-owned firms. With tongue in cheek, the blow-hot, blow-cool President Jayawardene, the soft-spoken Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel and the senior Sinhalese Ministers would have the World Bank, IMF and Sri Lanka's generous donor friends believe that the country's economic situation 'continues to be good and sound' and that the UNP Government have managed the economy so successfully that they will not tolerate donors pushing them around. The President and his Ministers, in their appeals to aid donors while expressing no sympathy for the Tamil victims of the riots, have been playing innocent and humble since the July/August pogrom, asking for generous financial help from the international donor community on the pretext of repairing and rehabilitating billions of rupees worth of the destroyed Tamil-owned industries and businesses.

Riots a dirty plot

The mayhem and destruction of July 1983 has only worsened the country's already perilous situation. The Minister of State, Ananda Tissa de Alwis, confessed that with the riots 'once again Sri Lanka would have gone to being yet another basket case among the poorer nations of the world'. He confirmed that 'there was a pattern about this (riots). Rioters came along, took out the people from their homes, or the employees and proprietors from the shops, put them on the road, then carried some of the goods on to the road and set fire to them. Then they proceeded inside the workshop or factory or house, to set fire to the rest'.

Although the riots left the Tamil-owned industry, businesses and property in absolute wreckage, the Government's intention seems to be not to restore the rehabilitated industries to the original owners. Thus, Mr Rasaputram, the Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, in a statement to *The Economist*, finds 'justification for taking ownership out of Tamil hands', as otherwise companies might 'become hostage to another wave of communal attacks'. The Sinhalese chauvinists, under the leadership of senior Cabinet Ministers, have succeeded in one of their prime objectives, i.e. the destruction of the Tamil economic base.

But such an approach may well frighten off foreign as well as Sinhalese investors.

Hollow Homage to Private Sector

At every Aid Group meeting since 1977 and at the last one before the July 1983 riots, special emphasis was placed on the private sector; the need for promoting joint ventures with foreign investors and the creation of a climate more conducive to a dynamic private sector role. Concern was expressed over the large budget deficits and balance of payment gaps and the growing debt burden, all of which posed a threat to Sri Lanka's economy. It is therefore surprising that the Finance Minister who attended the June 16, 1983 Aid Group meeting in Paris should get back to Sri Lanka and propagate a pan-Sinhala Buddhist movement, fanning the fury against the Tamils who were helping to build the country's private sector economy.

Donor Community's Aid Misused

The July 1983 riots also serve as evidence of deliberate destruction of not only the industrial base built up over generations but also wreckage of the investments developed with international aid. The first IFC investment approved in 1970 for Sri Lanka was that of Pearl Textiles of which Mr A.Y.S. Gnanam, a leading industrialist (who happens to be a Tamil) was the sole owner. IFC again made an investment in 1979 for one of Gnanam's textile industries — Cyntex. In flattening the country's more vigorous entrepreneurial class, the Cyntex factory was one of the large industrial units systematically burnt out.

If generous contributions from donor agencies under the leadership of the World Bank are to be directed to gradual extermination of an economic active community or to be destroyed in successive waves of violence in an effort to subjugate a defenceless minority people, then the World Bank and the donors who knowingly provide resources should share the responsibility for the dire consequences, which again in turn will create the need for providing aid continuously and in increasing amounts. This investment did not finally materialise.

Since the World Bank Group (IBRD, IDA and IFC) commenced operations in Sri Lanka from 1954 (they have made more than 50 loans, credits and investments) till 1983, almost all of which were directed to development of the areas outside North and Eastern provinces i.e. in Sinhalese areas. The 'accelerated' Mahaveli development programme and other irrigation projects are exceptions which covered parts of the traditional Tamil homelands in the Eastern and Northern provinces. These irrigation projects supported by World Bank and the international donor community were, however, intended to carry out an accelerated government aided programme to settle Sinhalese colonists, encroaching on the

Tamil homelands, in an effort to make the Tamils a minority community in several Tamil districts and in the northern and eastern regions. The donors, both bilateral and multinational agencies, have therefore unwittingly become parties to the schemes of the successive Sinhalese governments to destabilise the Tamils and deprive them of their legitimate rights as equal citizens in their own country.

A Future Role for Donor Community

The above arguments for the discontinuance of aid to Sri Lanka may appear to be based on grounds of justice and morality in the relations between the two communities in the country. But they are more than that. Can the continuance of aid be justified on economic grounds? Economic management, just as inter-racial relations, has fallen into a chasm from which it cannot be retrieved unless the leadership realises the destructive force of its racial policies on economic development itself. The dis-allocation of resources and the concentration of administrative efforts on programmes for short term political advantage in the guise of a development plan will only worsen if the Government's actions are condoned and supported with further aid. The problems of rehabilitation cannot be measured simply in terms of the financing

needed, enormous though it may be. The Government's inability to mobilize the population in a concerted development effort will only be multiplied several times as a result of the riots and the Government's continued attitude of intransigence towards the minority community.

These effects will be manifested in flight of capital belonging to Tamils, an exodus of Tamils (many with managerial skills and entrepreneurial ability), the unwillingness of Tamils to make new investments and their general lack of enthusiasm for co-operation with the Government's development effort. In addition, the administration which should concentrate its attention on economic management, will dissipate its energies in carrying out the intentions of the Government to further weaken the shrinking economic base of the Tamils.

The world financial press has already reported the flight of foreign capital to be invested in Sri Lanka, a drop in tourist income and in remittances from abroad by Tamils. Furthermore, Government revenue is bound to suffer because of lost income and delayed payments. Similarly, government expenditures will rise steeply because of its role in reconstruction, and handouts to be paid to Sinhalese workers who lost jobs.

Thus, the course of action taken by the Sri Lanka government is guaranteed to cause economic chaos in the near future. The international donors have been inveigled to commit increasing amounts of aid on the basis of the certification of the soundness of Sri Lanka's economic policies by the World Bank and the IMF. The IMF had earlier entered into an Extended Financing Agreement, and even as recently as September 1983 for a one-year stand-by Arrangement under which the IMF would monitor the country's performance and policies.

While the Sri Lanka Government may succeed in dressing up economic data on its performance to satisfy the requirements of the IMF, donor countries should look more closely at real economic developments if they wish to avoid a debt crisis in the future. There are unmistakable indications of a gathering storm. It can be avoided only if donors, bilateral and multilateral, exert pressure on the Sri Lanka government to effecting a mending of race relations on which alone hinges the prospect of an economic improvement. Unless there is a quick, demonstrable, positive response from the Sri Lanka Government, it will be in the best interests of the donors and the people of the recipient country itself to withdraw all aid to Sri Lanka.

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SRI LANKA – THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM

One hears these days from even the more educated Sinhalese, a refrain which is quite misleading. They speak often of 'privileges acquired by the Tamils from their colonial rulers'. What is implied is that Tamils have privileges in Sri Lanka that the majority community does not have! One can see this type of thinking reflected even in the Negombo Priests' 'Message to the Tamil Brethren,' published in the *Tribune* of August 27, 1983, and the *Catholic Messenger* of August 28.

What indeed are these privileges that the Tamil minority acquired, but which were denied to the majority?

Making one's living honourably by hard work, learning to save, building one's house and educating one's children, these are not privileges acquired by the Tamils from colonial rulers. Rather, they are the traditional virtues fostered in the Tamil homes from time immemorial.

In fact, it is the Sinhalese who acquired something from the colonialists: political power as a majority that can dictate to the minorities. Only, the majority has discovered that more political power does not give access to what comes by *hard work*, discipline, capacity to save, and the like. The welfare state can deliver only when *all* its citizens make a contribution to the economy, and not when the majority tries to live by *political appropriation* of other people's economic resources which are quite limited. *There is just so much you can appropriate politically by legislation or violently by looting. The rude awakening is not far away.*

It is these easy political appropriations by legislation of land, resources, foreign aid, government jobs and educational opportunities, by the majority for the majority, that are at the root of the cry for Eelam and separation. The cry for Eelam will die a natural death when the causes of political injustice are eliminated.

Rhetoric of Unity & Harmony

Instead, if politicians think that by passing unjust laws under the flimsy legality of 'British democracy' (quite different from the democracy practised in England), they can contain the separatist cry, they are mistaken. We have to remember that democracy British-style has left similar problems in most of their former colonies where they brought together, through imperial power, for their own convenience, very disparate populations. Indeed, the real cause for the separatist cry is the abuse of political power of the majority to deny others their basic rights to language, culture, education, employment, homeland, and now even their home and business. These rights are not matter for negotiation in any type of all-Party Conference.

By SWAMI ARULTHASAN

One is not talking here about the rhetoric of unity and harmony by the government and some religious bodies, but the reality of how life is experienced by the minorities in Sri Lanka. Next door, India with a vastly more complex problem has worked out more bearable solutions.

Some religious bodies (pity, the Negombo Priests too got into the act) are giving advice to the Tamils not to be violent, at a time when hundreds of thousands have been subjected to unprecedented violence which has no proportion to the terrorism of extremists in the North (mostly youth), who at least strike at select targets. The Tigers terrorise mostly the *armed* police and military, and the so-called collaborationists. Cowardly attacks on unarmed, defenceless, law-abiding citizens is another matter, specially when the Eelam cry and terrorist attacks in the North are used as a pretext to vent the majority community's general resentment about the Tamils' economic success — in spite of all the political and other drawbacks they have had to contend with.

Helpless Reaction

No one wants to condone what the Tigers are doing; but there is no proportion to the havoc wreaked by the Sinhala mobs with the collaboration of the security forces, and a certain cheering from the sidelines by racist politicians — a few of whom we are told are ministers in the present government!

What is happening in the North and East of Sri Lanka is the helpless reaction of the Tamils to the escalating *political violence* since 'independence'. And during the last decade, this political violence by the ballot through racist manipulation of the parliamentary majority, has taken the shape of *military and police violence* by the bullet. And now it has further degenerated into senseless *mob violence*, aided and abetted by the security forces.

Some features of the anti-terrorist legislation are unheard of even in such States as South Africa and Israel. The recent legislation aimed at *thought control* is probably the first in the history of modern nation-states. Minorities are not even free to disagree with the majority on the political front. And this is supposed to be in the name of unity, sovereignty and 'internal affairs', when such provisions fly right in the face of the law of the nations and basic human rights. How such things could happen in a predominantly Buddhist country with all the talk of *dharma* (virtue) and *ahimsa* (non-violence) is beyond anyone's comprehension.

Sri Lanka and its glorious millennial history is being negated by the recent happenings. It is a striking illustration of the anthropologists' claim that people can not only evolve, but also devolve and fall into lower estates of consciousness. In traditional Oriental philosophy, it is the emergence of the *tamas* (inert elements) and *rajas* (passionate elements) over the *sattvas* (the good elements). What is happening is that *Bodhi-sattva* is being turned out of his own home. Those who loved and still love Sri Lanka weep at what has befallen this pearl of the Indian Ocean. Sri Lanka seems to have lost both its *Sri* (title of nobility) and the resplendence which the word *Lanka* implies. The Sri Lankan President himself has rightly described the situation as 'a crisis of culture'.

in a time such as this, religious people should refrain from preaching unity and non-violence to those who have undergone unspeakable violence, in the name of a unitary state. Rather, they should preach hard work and fair play to their own, and make them see how much the Tamils have contributed to building up the country as a whole, and specially to its economy. This is no time to make categorical statements about territorial integrity when human integrity itself is at stake.

Cowardly Nationalism

A case in point is how little the Indian Tamil labourers get in return for keeping the Sri Lankan economy afloat by their hard work on the plantations. They do not even have the basic human right of being a citizen in the land of their birth and toil. This type of cowardly nationalism by a *majority* which feels threatened is unheard of.

One has to seriously analyse the causes of such an attitude, instead of making everything appear as a Communist plot — specially to distract the benefactors of the so-called Free world, who normally should be horrified by the sorry version of democracy currently practised in Sri Lanka: government by the majority for the majority, using armed forces and mob violence if need be!

The London *Economist* in a couple of articles in the wake of the July 1983 pogrom, hit the nail on the head by tracing much of the trouble to *ergophobia* (distaste for work) of some in the majority community. These want to have everything for nothing. The London *Economist* calls on such people to fight their own *ergophobia* by imitation of the Tamil worker and businessman, rather than succumb to envy and wanton destruction. Destroying their Tamil brother and partner, they are destroying the future of their own country. It is like cutting one's nose to spite one's

face. Destroying the Tamil factories, the Sinhala workers have been rendered jobless.

Negombo Priests' Message!

Finally — and this I found particularly galling in the Negombo Priests' Message, though it faithfully reflects the general feeling in the majority community — the priests speak of the protection some Sinhala families have extended to their Tamil friends in the context of the Sinhala mob violence, as a virtue they may not be able to practise in the future! Sad indeed. They find even this minimum too taxing, instead of being ashamed of the fact that their fellow-Sinhalese reduce their Tamil friends to such an inhuman plight be their cowardly behavior — an armed mob of fifty to a hundred against ordinary, unarmed families. On the contrary, in the North it is a handful of poorly armed guerrillas, on bicycles (which the government wants to outlaw!) against the combined might of the Army, Navy, Airforce and the Police.

So, even the Negombo Catholics (some of whose grandparents spoke only Tamil) find the Tamils a burden as long as the latter do not renounce the so-called 'privileges acquired from colonial times'. I wish they hear what they are saying. They are just adding fuel to the Eelam fire, and turning Sri Lanka into ashes.

Having listened to a few of the more educated Sinhalese, what I hear is not always remorse for what has happened; rather one hears the strange echo of 'serve them right', and a hidden satisfaction at the benefits that might accrue to them by such events. The bottom line seems to be: 'In spite of our having political power, the Tamils seem to be still better off economically, and in various other ways'. They forget that the Tamils who seems to be well off in the South are only a fraction of the Tamil population. And even these are in the South because all the opportunities seem to be centred there, by the Government's official neglect of the North and East.

Need a Homeland

The Sinhalese who had the opportunity of protecting a few Tamil friends from the Sinhala mob violence have done a good deed. But they should not now turn round and hold hostage all the Tamils in the North and East, under the pretext of protecting the few who are well off in the South. The siren song of those who want to have easy unity with the captive Tamils of the South could be in the long run more treacherous than the mob violence which drives the Tamils back to their traditional homelands.

The situation of the Tamils in the South continues to be more and more precarious. It is more like the situation of the Jewish refugees in post-war Europe, and Palestinian refugees in present-day Israel and Lebanon. They need a homeland of their

own. In our case, the homeland is already there.

The majority community continues to speak of territorial integrity (as if that were more important than human integrity), sovereignty (an easy way to subjugate a minority), unity (what is meant is uniformity and assimilation), and 'internal affairs' (one way of keeping out external forces like the UN or India which could help in bringing more justice and real peace into the situation). For all practical purposes, the partition of Sri Lanka runs deep through the hearts and minds of Tamils and Sinhalese, and right through the bodies and properties of the Tamils. Both groups cannot eat the cake and keep it too.

For more than three decades since independence, they have tried to live together. It has not worked, since the occasional eruptions are getting more frequent, and more and more vicious on both sides. If we really want a solution, we have to be all ready to make sacrifices.

The Tamils have to renounce the comforts (and exploitation, if one refers to the Indian Tamils) of their Southern Captivity, and be ready to move back to the North and East (and abroad where possible), taking with them the only resource that the Sinhalese cannot deprive them of, their resourcefulness through hard work. The Sinhalese have to give up their dream of controlling the North and East. Self-control, as Mahatma Gandhi said, is a greater achievement than conquest by arms.

Free to Dream

I suppose the Tamils are still free to dream of their homeland, and work towards self-determination (even if, by law, they are not allowed to talk about separatism). May be it is good that we stop talking and sloganising and provoking. Rather, all have to start the difficult work of building up the economic viability of the future solution.

We have to draw the good out of the evil of Sinhala dissatisfaction expressed in inhuman mob violence. The good is the final realisation by the Tamils-in-the-South that it is time to go home (or anywhere where it would be safer), and build up the North and East. Those who go abroad can create the right type of public opinion and resources needed for such a venture.

While returning to their traditional homeland, the Tamils will part as friends treasuring the memory of the South which they can always visit as friends, tourists or temporary residents. The South is beautiful; and the people are usually friendly and generous. The Tamils did enjoy their stay in the South, in better times. There are civilised, more enlightened ways of saying 'Good bye'. It calls for a certain renunciation; and the minimum renunciation is not to hold on to what does not belong to one.

While the Tamils gradually give up their Southern inheritance acquired by hard

work and thrift, the Sinhalese will have to do the easier thing of letting go the colonial inheritance of the North and East that came to them in the wake of decolonization and independence. Buddhism has more than enough resources to persuade the Sinhala Buddhist masses and their leaders to give up gracefully what is not their own — the Tamils' traditional homelands with their own language, culture and resources.

Adharmic Pollution

It is sad that the vaunted *dharma-dwipa* has been polluted by the *adharmic* radiations of greed and injustice. The Tigers' terrorism and the Tamil politicians' separatism would not have appeared on the scene, if the political power of the majority had not been selfishly used to crush an already oppressed minority.

What are we to think of a government that would cynically exploit the burning and looting by unruly elements, to introduce a blue-print for better city planning, even before the blood of the victims had dried on the pavements? How does not build up unity in the country, when unity is imposed by legislative diktat? The Tamils are not even free to disagree on the crucial issue of a separate state (which could initially be in the context of a federal government, if the Sinhala majority still feels that it cannot survive as well, without the continued exploitation of the Tamils' labour and know-how) under pain of losing what few rights they have left. They will lose even what is left of their property. That is not how people enter into a dialogue on important issues.

In the Old Testament, there is the significant story of Achab the King of Israel who could not feel king enough, unless he had Nabot's vineyard too. He was glad to inherit it when Nabot was disposed of by stoning through a third party (see 1 Kings 21,5-19). He used his political kingship for *effortless economic betterment*. And if political violence was inadequate, he was prepared to accept crude violence as long as someone else (in this case, Jezebel the wicked queen) did the killing and the looting.

I am still hopeful that better counsels will prevail. May be, Chelamayagam's call to federalism (far more regional autonomy than envisaged in his plan) has to be tried sooner than later. The Tamils have been open for more than two decades to a federal system of government. Further, all forms of petty, retaliatory legislation have to go from the statute book. With statesmanship, once can repeal the unjust and discriminatory laws. Mr J.R. Jeyawardene has his grand opportunity to be a real statesman; we all hope he can rise to the occasion, before he passes away like all mortals.

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CONSTITUTIONAL POSITION OF THE ARMED FORCES

The British rules relating to the status of the Armed Forces presupposes a set of public attitudes and assumptions towards the roles of the civil and military powers within the State. The primacy of the civil power is a sociological as well as a constitutional fact. No British government has been overthrown by military force since 1688. No senior officer of the regular Armed Forces has ever been Prime Minister except the Duke of Wellington in 1828-30 and 1834. Even in times of civil disorder within the State, the Armed Forces must act only under the direction of the civil authorities.

The Forces themselves are governed by military law set out in the Army Act and there is no such thing as martial law. The powers and duties of soldiers are different in degree and not in kind from those of the ordinary citizen. Officers and men must exercise their own judgement whether to use force and, if so, how much. The normal courts continue to operate (unless there is an actual invasion or loss of control of a wide area including the place where local courts sit) and all alleged offences committed during the riots, including any accusation of excessive force by the military, can be tried in these courts.

A body of criminal law

Serving members of the Armed Forces are subject to military law as well as the ordinary law of the land. Military law is a readily ascertainable body of rules, collected in the official 'Manual of Military Law'. It is primarily a body of criminal law, contained in statutes and subordinate legislative instruments.

In the United Kingdom, certain very

By P. Varothayasingham

serious criminal offences committed by members of the Forces are triable only by the civil (i.e. ordinary criminal) courts. Other offences are triable by court-martial. In 1931 a courts-martial appeal court composed of High Court judges, was constituted and given jurisdiction to hear appeals from courts-martial after internal review procedures had been exhausted, thus was asserted the primacy of the civil power.

Legal liability

If, in obedience to superior orders, a member of the Armed Forces commits a criminal offence or a civil wrong — for example, wounding a rioter in circumstances where this is not reasonably justifiable — he may incur legal liability before the ordinary courts. If, on the other hand, he refuses to obey an order because he believes it to be wrong, he may be court-martialled. It may be said that the dilemma is unreal because it is not an offence under military law to disobey an unlawful command; but since a soldier is a member of a disciplined force conditioned to the habit of obedience and since, moreover, a court-martial may well hold the command to be lawful, the dilemma and the risk can be very real.

Is it reasonable, then, to assert that obedience to superior orders can never be a defence to an unlawful act in proceedings before the courts? The Nuremburg War Crimes Trials (convened to try Nazi war criminals) proceeded on the footing that superior orders were no defence, though

they might be pleaded in mitigation of punishment. This general proposition is adopted in modern editions of the 'Manual of Military Law'.

Dangerous parallels

When Hitler and his Nazi Party came to power in Germany, books were burnt and the minority Jews were put in concentration camps. There are dangerous parallels today in Sri Lanka to these horrors of burning books and Army concentration camps. But then, Hitler and his Nazi Germany were eventually destroyed and Germany divided into two parts. The Nazi officers and soldiers who carried out orders are still being hunted. A few months ago, Klaus Barbie, a German Commander in occupied France, who is alleged to have executed a French freedom fighter during World War II, was arrested in Bolivia, South America, and was brought to France to stand trial for crimes against humanity committed about 40 years ago.

So, let there be no mistake here, whether wearing military uniforms or not, whether carrying out superior orders or not, they provide no defence against laws of humanity, even if it takes 40 years to trace the criminals half-way across the world. The Sri Lankan security forces can be no exception to the crimes against humanity. A Nuremburg will await them in due time.

In short, the principles of international law place emphasis on effectiveness, rather than on constitutional legitimacy.

AUSTRALIAN WATERSIDE WORKERS PROTEST

The Waterside Workers Federation of Australia has protested against the atrocities committed against the Tamils of Sri Lanka, and condemned the government for the way the Tamils have been treated. Following is the text of a letter dated September 15, 1983, sent to the High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in Australia by the Secretary of the Federation, Mr Claude Cumberlidge:

Union's concern

'I am writing to express my personal and my union's concern in regard to the atrocities committed against the minority Tamil community, organised by the Sinhalese majority government in Sri Lanka.

'It is in violation of basic human rights laid down by the United Nations.

'We demand the 'Prevention of Terror-

ism Act' introduced in 1979 be repealed, and the Tamil population of Sri Lanka be allowed to live in peace.

'Failing to get that undertaking, we would seriously consider calling on the trade union movement in Australia to take such action necessary to protect the Tamil community.'

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THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM

FROM PAGE 19

In the meantime, leaders — specially religious leaders — should refrain from proscribing words like harmony, peace, forgiveness and reconciliation. *There is a price for all these realities: the redemptive blood which continues to flow everywhere, specially in Lebanon, Northern Ireland, South Africa and Central America. In Sri Lanka it happens to be mostly Tamil blood, not to mention the sweat and tears of the Indian Tamil labourers.*

A just cause

Those who shed their blood for a just cause can at least take heart that in some way they are called to fulfil the words the Son of Man spoke in an Upper Room in Palestine two thousand years ago: 'Take, eat, this is my body broken for you; Take, drink, this is my blood that is poured out for you.'

Indeed, there is 'no redemption without the shedding of blood' (Hebr. 9,22). The suffering of innocent victims will not have been in vain. One may try to kill the body and burn the property of the Tamil nation; but its soul will ever remain to bring renewed life to the wounded body and the pillaged home.

Swami Arulthasan is a Catholic priest and an educationist.

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TERRIFIED REFUGEES STAY IN CAMPS

Though several months have elapsed since ethnic violence erupted in Sri Lanka, about 25,000 refugees are still languishing in the 39 state-run camps and an equal number in the unofficial 'welfare centres' scattered throughout the island.

They are too terrified to accept the Rs 3,000 a family package, offered by the government to help them to return to their homes. 'I went back to my house yesterday. The thugs (goondas) threatened me,' complained an elderly labourer, Alagappan, who moved to the camp with his six-member family after an unruly mob attacked him with iron bars.

Alagappan's family, like many others, occupies a little tent it has pitched in the Bambalapitiya Hindu College grounds, the biggest of the four state-run camps in Colombo, which accommodates 6,500 men, women and children.

'We are too frightened to return to our homes,' explained Alagappan's daughter Nagamma. 'We want to go to India,' she said. A group of about 25 people who gathered around repeated her proposition in a chorus.

Karuppiyah, a barber who escaped death because a Sinhalese gentleman sheltered him from an angry mob, explained his predicament thus: 'I have very high regard for the Sinhalese people. But the thugs are instigated by powerful forces to attack the Tamils. I love this country but I cannot hope to live here. How can we live in the camps for ever? Outside it is not safe,' he said. 'We cannot go back, they are chasing us,' the middle-aged Pandiyan said. 'The landowner has given my vegetable plot to the Sinhalese.'

His wife Lakshmi refuted the charge that they were not leaving the camps because they wanted to enjoy the regular supply of food and clothing. 'What are they giving us? One-third of a loaf of bread and tea in the morning, rice with pumpkin and cabbage for lunch and one-third of a loaf of bread and vegetables for dinner. Can you eat this daily?' she asked. 'We are willing to go back to our plots if they are returned and safety assured,' she said.

Most of the inmates in the camps are stateless persons. They have no place to go. But there are also a few Lankan nationals,

especially in the camps in the North and East, the predominantly Tamil areas. They are the refugees who fled from Colombo and other Sinhala areas. They have no house or relatives in the Tamil provinces to accommodate them. Many of them say that their houses in the Sinhala areas were burnt. Sinhala owners are not willing to rent out their houses to them.

'Those whose houses were damaged are reluctant to invest money on repairs and those whose houses were completely gutted are in a predicament. They are promised low interest long-term loans. 'It will take months to process the papers. The loan offered is too little, it is not sufficient to build even a hut,' said a dejected Colombo resident who lost his house.

No MGR Films: The State Film Corporation (SFC) which holds the monopoly on importing and distributing films, has instructed cinema owners to stop showing MGR films. They were also told to return the copies in their possession. 'Do not ask for copies any more,' the SFC circular has forewarned exhibitors.

Threats from extremists to destroy the theatres showing MGR films, and the official displeasure over the Tamil Nadu government's stand on the Tamil question, are reported to have prompted the decision.

HELP FOR TAMIL STUDENTS

The Education Minister, Mr C. Aranganayagam has said that educational institutions in the State have been instructed not to insist on production of transfer certificates or mark sheets from the Sri Lanka Tamil students who had come to Tamil Nadu following the outbreak of ethnic violence in the island. The institutions could admit them on the basis of their performance in a written test, he said, while presiding over the silver jubilee of the Association of Homes for Children at Avvai Home, Adyar.

The government has been considering steps to help students who have been forced to discontinue their professional courses in Sri Lanka. The government would extend all help to those students who could not get financial assistance from their parents in Sri Lanka.

TAMIL TIMES

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