

TAMIL TIMES

ISSN 0266-4488

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

UK/India/Sri Lanka.....£9.00
All other countries.....£15/US\$24

Published monthly by
TAMIL TIMES LTD
P.O. BOX 304
London W13 9QN
United Kingdom

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Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the editor or the publishers.

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Printed By Clarendon Printers Ltd,
Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire.

INDIAN DELEGATION IN COLOMBO



Mr. Chidambaram, the leader of the Indian delegation, with Mr. Harindra Corea, Sri Lankan Deputy Minister of Public Administration.

AN INDIAN delegation led by the Union Minister for Personnel and Administrative Reform, Mr. P. Chidambaram, arrived in Colombo on 29 April in pursuance to India's effort to help in the process of reaching a political settlement to Sri Lanka's continuing ethnic conflict.

The other members of the four member delegation included the former Foreign Secretary, Mr. Romesh Bhandari who became the head of the International Affairs Committee of Congress (I) after his retirement, Mr. S. Balakrishnan, Legal Advisor to the Indian Home Ministry, and Ranjan Mathai, Under Secretary in the Foreign Ministry.

Before the team left for Colombo, the Sri Lanka situation in general and the various proposals put forward by the government of Sri Lanka were reported to have been reviewed and discussed at a 2 hour meeting held in Delhi presided over by Mr. G. Parthasarathy, Chairman, National Policy Advisory Committee and attended by Foreign Secretary, Mr. A.P. Venkateswaran and Additional Secretary, Mr. C.R. Gharekhan.

By past experience, the task before the Indian team could not have been an easy one. Two years of sustained effort by India had not succeeded in penetrating the wall of intransigence

with which the Sri Lankan government had surrounded itself. It also had reneged on solemn undertakings it had given in the face of extremist Sinhala opposition to any meaningful concessions to the Tamils. However, the fact that the visit itself took place was significant in the context of the sharp deterioration of inter-state relations between Colombo and New Delhi which was reflected in the exchange of (un)diplomatic acrimonious notes in the recent past and India's open and blunt accusations of grave human rights violations and arbitrary and indiscriminate killings of Tamils in Sri Lanka before the recently held sessions of the UN Human Rights Commission.

Before leaving for Sri Lanka, Mr. Chidambaram said, "We will tell the Sri Lankan government what the Tamils want and will ask them to tell us in unambiguous terms what they can concede and what is not possible".

has had previous experience with those at the helm in Colombo said, "Do not expect any earth shaking developments".

The Indian team is understood to have had talks with the leadership of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) before departing to Colombo.

Continued on back page

PRESIDENT'S ULTIMATUM

PRESIDENT JAYAWARDENE has declared his readiness for a quick military solution to the ethnic strife in Sri Lanka in a recent interview (*Sunday Times*, 11 May 1986). He said, "I must warn everybody that if the proposals are rejected, then we will have no option but to go for a military solution".

The proposals to which he refers are those which his government has put forward for setting up provincial councils with limited powers of devolution. However, they were not drafted in consultation with the representatives of the Tamil people. If the President is serious and genuine about a negotiated political solution, he should endeavour to discuss his government's proposals with the representatives of the Tamil people instead of giving them a unilateral ultimatum: 'accept my terms, or else I will finish you militarily'.

It was only at the beginning of this month that a four-member delegation of the Indian government was in Colombo to discuss matters with the Sri Lankan authorities as part of India's effort to resurrect the negotiating process. Hardly had the Indian delegation returned to New Delhi, President Jayawardene launched his menacing threats to unleash his military might and troops against the Tamil people.

Not that his troops were observing the Buddhist precepts of compassion, kindness and tolerance hitherto. For the last three years, they have been marauding the Tamil areas wreaking havoc and destruction, pillaging and plundering, committing murder, rape and arson on a gigantic scale.

Obviously what President Jayawardene has in mind is to intensify his bombing and shelling of Tamil areas and to literally obliterate the Tamil people and their homes, villages and towns with the help of his hired South African, former Rhodesian and British mercenaries.

It is the continued denial of the legitimate rights and freedoms of the Tamil people that had spawned armed rebellion by some

sections of the Tamil population. It is the cruel and systematic use of state terrorism against the Tamil people that resulted in the emergence and growth of the Tamil guerilla movements. Instead of making a genuine attempt to remove the causes that led to armed rebellion by Tamil guerillas, the President and his government are presently pleading for support from abroad to suppress them. He has asked the so-called English speaking world for help "to suppress the alarm and rebellion" in Sri Lanka.

There is no doubt that President Jayawardene is seeking to use the hysteria produced by the Reagan-Thatcher effort against what they describe as 'international terrorism' to mobilise support for his military venture against Tamil resistance to Sinhala chauvinist hegemony and state terrorism in Sri Lanka.

It is not an accident that the Air Lanka plane should have been blown up killing several foreign nationals to synchronise with the Tokyo summit, and that the Sri Lankan government should rush, even without a preliminary investigation, to blame the Tamil militants for the blast. It is also not an accident that President Jayawardene should spell out his decision to impose a military solution in a major interview shortly thereafter.

Jayawardene and his government ought to realise that the struggle of the Tamil speaking people has a legitimate cause, and that cause is their desire to protect their identity as people possessing the power to determine their own destiny and to live in equality and justice with all other people within Sri Lanka and outside. They also must realise that peace and tranquility cannot be restored with the help of the despicable dogs of war the President has hired. Numerically the Tamils of Sri Lanka may be too few to permit the thought that they could be suppressed and trounced militarily. But they are too many to allow the luxury of the illusion that peace and tranquility could ever return to the island without their active help and positive participation.

Colombo's Dream, Tamils' Nightmare

THE BATTLE between the Tigers and TELO is a dream come true for Colombo. What Sinhalese state terrorism, political duplicity, and years of unremitting repression could not achieve has been partially secured in an orgy of inter-Tamil gunfire and reprisal beyond the resources even of a Palaly or a Gurunagar: the elimination of part of the fighting strength of the Tamil people.

Who should be congratulated on such a victory for Colombo, is an open question. But history, when the dirty record is read in daylight, will probably award first prize to the agents provocateurs and other troublemakers who always prosper when political necessity drives immature adventurers – as well as heroes – to arms, and good men (and boys) to extremes of desperation.

In the heat of battles which are not of the Tamils' choosing, violence is no respecter of persons. But the black flags raised in Jaffna we raise here also; in mourning and protest for the blood of sons and brothers shed in the name of an ever-advancing cause, but shed without thought for the outcome, and shed without mercy.

That such crimes of gang-rivalry and division can be committed at a time when the world community is increasingly united in its perception of the justice of the Tamil struggle; at a time when Colombo's economic and political vulnerability is growing, and its leadership incompetent or senile, or both together; at a time when much of the Northern and parts of the Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka are out-of-bounds to the terrified and demoralized security forces; at a time when Colombo's dependency upon India to shield it from world disapproval by means of another bout of negotiation is becoming more intense; at a time when tens and hundreds of

thousands of endangered Tamil civilians in Sri Lanka need physical protection against the savagery of the Sri Lankan army – that such crimes can be committed now reveals how high a price is being exacted from the Tamils by the relentlessly vicious pressures placed upon them by Colombo.

For this struggle to the death in Jaffna, among the fighters for a common cause, is itself a deformed product of that greater deformity which is Sinhalese racism and its genocidal intentions. It is the cruel result of cruelties even greater; the violent outcome of a much greater violence.

Yet it may be argued, and is being argued, by partisan Tamils who support one or the other grouping, that unity in the Tamil struggle cannot be achieved – and should not even be sought – at the expense of commitment to a particular political direction, left, right or centre. Moreover, it is true that every national movement in history, on or beneath the surface, has contained irreconcilable differences of class interest and of political purpose, divergent beliefs – socialist or anti-socialist, Marxist and non-Marxist – and varieties of position (from Gandhian to Leninist) on the question of violence.

But one thing is absolutely clear. Gun-battles and shoot-outs in the manner of the Sicilian Mafia or Chicago hoodlums, whatever their explanation, remain politically, morally, tactically and physically nothing but a Tamil nightmare and a Tamil disaster. A just war for liberation against a brutal and cunning oppressor, and in defence of Tamil birthright, home and culture, is one thing. Fratricide in pursuit of personal or faction power is another. Indeed, once the idle and immoral 'justifications' for it have been finally silenced, there is one word for it, and one word only.

The word is **MURDER**.

"LET US PUT AN END TO THIS MADNESS" – ENLF

THE FOLLOWING is the text of the statement issued by the Eelam National Liberation Front (ENLF), a joint front of three Tamil militant groups – the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation, Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front and the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation – on the recent clash between the LTTE and TELO:

"The Sri Lankan government is now intensifying its preparations for the final solution of the Tamils. It is creating the military, political, economic and ideological conditions at home and the diplomatic conditions internationally in order to assist it in this task. Assisted by international terrorists such as Mossad, SAS and also the mercenary forces from Pakistan, Sri Lanka is exerting every ounce of strength and every rupee available in order to prepare the ground, according to a definite plan for the subjugation of the Tamils. We are now approaching the critical moment of decision between survival and extinction and must rush preparations for resistance in order to save the Tamils.

Political, military, economic and educational preparations for our defence are all necessary for armed resistance to save the Tamil people from impending peril, and none of them should be delayed for a moment. But the key that will ensure victory for our armed resistance is the winning of political democracy and freedom. Armed resistance requires the maintenance of domestic peace and unity, but the relative peace of recent times achieved by pushing the army behind the barracks cannot be consolidated and internal unity strengthened without democracy and freedom. Armed resistance requires the mobilisation of the people, but you will not mobilise them without democracy and freedom. Unless peace and unity are consolidated, people are mobilised, our armed resistance will meet the same fate as those forgotten by history.

To achieve our historic task we must immediately throw out subjectivism which is causing great harm to the analysis of the political situation and which incapacitates us in responding to the

LTTE ATTACKS TELO

Over one hundred and fifty members of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), including its leader, Sri Sabaratnam, are reported to have been killed when those belonging to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) mounted a concerted attack on the former. The attack upon TELO units and bases which reportedly commenced on April 29 lasted nearly four days.

This clash between two of the major Tamil militant organisations has left the Tamils of Sri Lanka, both within and outside the country, saddened. Despite the explanations given by the LTTE that their attack upon the TELO was provoked by the kidnapping of two of the former's field commanders by the latter, many Tamils and their sympathisers feel outraged by the scale and the sheer brutality of the response by the LTTE.

In any event, the beneficiary of this conflict and the resulting deaths is the government of Sri Lanka, which could not have hoped, even in its wildest dreams, to inflict such a heavy loss upon the Tamil militants in such a short time, lamented a member of the Jaffna Citizens' Committee.

The Eelam National Liberation Front (ENLF), of which TELO is a constituent member, has denounced the attack upon the TELO as an act that would objectively serve the interests of the Sri Lankan government.

imminent threats that confront us. The subjective analysis of the political situation and subjective guidance of work inevitably results in opportunism or in conspiracies. This combined with individualism is a cancer the growth of which will surely suppress us.

Comrades, retaliation of any kind arises from purely personal considerations, to the neglect of the concepts of a liberator and resulting in the abandonment of the people. Its target is not the enemy but our own heroic fighters from whichever group they come. It is a corrosive which saps the will of the people, weakens their strength and ultimately their fighting capacity.

Some comrades who consider only the interests of their group and ignore the general interests of the people develop the mentality of the "small group". Even on the surface it does not appear as pursuit of personal or group interest; it exemplifies the narrowest individualism and has a strong corrosive and centrifugal effect. Comrades, we cannot afford the luxury of the "small group" mentality at such a dangerous time as this, for by its very nature it cannot even help to mobilise the people for their historic task.

Any individual who is a member of a group should understand that he is an instrument initially for carrying out the tasks of the resistance and ultimately to throw out the illegitimate Sri Lankan State. Some do not seem to think that they are the makers of a new dawn and a new era for the ordinary Tamil man and woman, but instead think that their responsibility is merely to their own individual superiors or their group and not to the heroic task that confronts them. This passive mentality of an "employee" is a sad manifestation of individualism and explains the rivalry between groups. Their attitudes stuck publicly and given effect to inaction will help only the masses and drive them away from participating in the struggle. This attitude also explains why there are not very many activists who work unconditionally for the liberation. Unless this attitude is eliminated, the number of activists will not show and the heavy burden of the liberation will remain on the shoulders of a small number of people.

Comrades, this liberation struggle belongs to the people and is not the private property of any individual or group. Let us not convert it to a trial of strength between the groups based on the bankrupt ideology of roving rebel bands. Comrades, let us dedicate ourselves to the glorious task of freeing our people from their bondage and burying their "contest of attrition" among us, which deflects us from the struggle and destroys our objective. Let us help to unite the strength and will of all our people to achieve the historic tasks in front of us.

The recent tragic incidents in Eelam where over 300 freedom fighters of our organisation and 26 of another died, rank among the darkest hours in our recent history. The spectacle of our own sons battling with each other in a struggle for power bleeds the heart of the ordinary Tamil people and strengthens the hopes of our enemy to crush us. These actions betray our liberation. It must be stopped.

To prevent a recurrence of events of this nature requires steadfast commitment to principles and values. Let us keep sight of our youth. For if we do not we will destroy the momentum we have built up in this movement and in the end will only fritter away the enormous victories we have achieved for the people. Let us all unite our forces in the noble task of restoring the democratic rights of the Tamil speaking people rather than fight among ourselves and earn the contempt of our people and the rest of mankind.

It is in this spirit, and on behalf of the Tamil speaking people, that we appeal to all those gallant fighters in all the separate groups and to all patriots who support the liberation movements, let us act together to erase this hour of shame from our memory. There is a glorious future awaiting us, not very distant in time, but we have to march together with determination to reach it. Let us make sure the blood sacrifice of the best of our youth was not in vain. Let us all come together and guide this heroic struggle by bringing peace and unity among our people so that together we can march to the promised land."

BULLDOZING THE TAMILS

The real targets of the Sri Lankan Government's military offensive do not appear to be the militants but the ordinary Tamil people themselves. They are being bombed from the air and shelled from the sea. Is it part of a larger strategy?

THE Sri Lankan Government's sharpening military offensive against the Tamil militants is unmasking itself very fast as a 'war of attrition' designed to wear down the nerve of the Tamil people and reduce them to a benumbed acceptance of any political solution, however threadbare it may be, say Tamil observers.

There is clear evidence that there is a 'certain amount of confidence' on the part of the Sri Lankan Government that it has brought the East under control and it is now ready to tackle the North, feels the Tamil United Liberation Front Secretary-General A. Amirthalingam. 'Following President Jayawardene's assertion that he would first clear the mainland areas of the East and the North and then start on Jaffna the security forces are now concentrating on the Jaffna peninsula,' said he.

'Their strategy seems to be proceeding from their assessment, an assessment which, of course, I don't agree with,' observes Amirthalingam, 'that they have successfully cleared up the East and with the Army being able to move about there relatively easily, they must begin mopping-up operations. And they seem to have embarked on this, they are arresting large numbers of youths there...'

Under Siege

What would appear to give substance to the assertions that the real targets of the Government's military offensive are not the militants but the Tamil people themselves is the fact that they are increasingly coming under siege, relentlessly bombed from the air and shelled from the sea. A Jaffna-based source says that days prior to an air attack, helicopters are seen circling the sky, evidently marking out the areas. And then one day, the planes come out. They are seen diving down and then soaring upwards again, and as they ascend, the bombs drop. 'It's like a scene out of a war movie,' remarks the source.

According to this source, there are likely to be electronic devices planted in the Tamil areas which emit bleeps to the planes, indicating certain targeted locations. These planes, now drawn to precise targets, make another round in the sky and then return to drop the bombs. As for instance, in Kokuvil and

BY MALINI PARTHASARATHY

Valvetty which were bombed recently, the targets were invariably civilian areas.

When the method of attack on a heavily civilian territory is aerial bombardment, however disputable the power of accurate targeting may be, the fact remains that bombing a densely populated area logically enhances the vulnerability of the civilian population. Says Amirthalingam: 'From the reports that we get, the civilian casualties are at least ten times as much as the militant casualties.'

The Toll

According to a report in a British newspaper quoting human rights workers in Sri Lanka, in the ten months preceding this February, 2,587 civilians were killed, 12,015 persons arrested and 547 missing. The TULF reported in a document submitted to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in March that about 2,000 Tamils had been killed and about 10,000 Tamil-owned houses burnt down by the security forces between May 1985 and February 1986.

The security forces employ different tactics in the Jaffna peninsula and in the mainland areas. In a sense, this reflects the reality that since the 'ceasefire' announced in June last, the militants have managed to seize a certain edge in the Jaffna peninsula. After the ceasefire created a situation wherein the security forces were confined to the camps, the militants managed to preserve this confinement by ensuring that every time security personnel ventured out, land mines exploded. Therefore, wary of using land, the military tactics has been to bomb from the air and shell from the sea.

The TULF report to Rajiv Gandhi says: 'The areas of Kokuvil, Kondavil, Suthumalai, Thavaddy and Manipay were subjected to aerial attacks both by bombs being dropped from planes and also firing from the helicopters of the Sri Lankan Armed Services... the victims of the attacks were Tamil civilians, a fact which should have been clearly foreseen by the attackers.' The spate of bombings on February 19 was followed by another string of attacks on February 27 when, in addition to these places, Suruvil and Mathagal came under fire. Mathagal, apart from having bombs rained down from the sky, was shelled by naval gunboats.

While the pattern of State violence perpetrated on the Tamil people might be aerial bombing and sea-shelling, there are definite attempts to take possession of the land by forcing the

Tamil people to evacuate their homes, as for instance in the coastal areas of the Jaffna peninsula. 'This is part of a plan to secure the coastal areas,' charges Amirthalingam, 'and then to fan out into the interior.'

Leaflets were dropped from helicopters throughout the Jaffna peninsula in the first week of April by the Northern Military High Command, ordering the people of four coastal villages, Kankesanthurai, Thondamannar, Valvettithurai and Point Pedro to vacate their houses to avoid being trapped in the offensive planned against the militants reportedly active on the coastal belt.

And as the people on the Jaffna coast found themselves turning into homeless wanderers, Palaly, which houses the peninsula's most important military complex, found itself becoming the focus of the military action in recent weeks. About a kilometre and a half from the sea and ringed by a fertile red soil belt, the area was to be cleared (according to an announcement by the security forces) to help connect the army camps to the naval base. What has happened is that

While earlier, the security forces would launch full-scale attacks on villages and subsequently unleash rape, arson and crop-burning, now these acts precede an Army attack.

about 200 hectares of the red soil belt have been taken over by the army, a territory encompassing schools, temples and cultivable land. The residents of the occupied territory were told to vacate their houses, which were then reduced to rubble by bulldozers on the pretext that these houses, once empty, would become militant hide-outs.

Meanwhile, in the Eastern Province, the situation, according to Tamil perceptions, is that of 'total war' where the distinctions are blurred between the 'killing of civilians and militants' and between 'the destruction of property and life.' The military strategy there stems from the Government's determination to reduce the Tamil presence in an area which has become of crucial economic value because of the potential of the Accelerated Mahaweli Development Programme.

In recent months, according to observers, the pattern of the security forces operations has reversed. While earlier they would launch full-scale attacks on villages and subsequently unleash rape, arson and crop-burning,

Continued opposite

BULLDOZING THE TAMILS — continued

now these acts precede an army attack, a reality that the villages have learned to dread: they flee before the security forces come.

The pattern of violence in the Eastern Province as described vividly in the TULF report to the Prime Minister is reminiscent of the 'Killing Fields' of Pol Pot's Kampuchea. According to the TULF, on February 19, apparently a particularly bad day for Tamils all over the island, farmers working on a paddy tract in Thirukovil, Amparai district, were gunned down by armed personnel who arrived in large numbers in several trucks. About 103 farmers were reported killed.

Says the TULF account: 'The dead bodies were burnt, straw in the field was used to burn the bodies . . . many skeletons and several partly-burnt bodies were seen at the site of the massacre by members of the Citizens' Committee who visited the scene later.' The report adds that 'the Sri Lankan Government has not demonstrated a willingness to hold an independent probe into this horrible crime and has made every effort to conceal the truth.'

The increasing atrocities against the civilian Tamil population point to

deliberate intensification of the military offensive with the aim of breaking the morale of the Tamil people as a whole, Tamil sources believe. 'The Government, while having the world think that a political solution is coming, wants to press hard on the military front and to succeed there so that they can impose any political solution they want,' says Amirthalingam.

But some observers say that while it is true that the intensification of the military offensive is to bulldoze the Tamil people into a demoralised or crushed acceptance of any kind of political solution, the intensification is strengthened by a new and sinister phenomenon within the Army. And that is the acquiring of an 'independent operational mind' by the security forces. Some sections of the Army, particularly of the major colonel rank, have come to believe that they are fighting a war — and a war they must win. The Army being allowed to exercise its chauvinistic and hawkish fancies and acquiring a will of its own in a fragile and sensitive situation could have disturbing political implications these observers fear.

(Courtesy of 'Frontline' April 19–May 2, 1986)

SCOT's Successful Effort

The Standing Committee of Tamil Speaking People (SCOT) marked the occasion of the Tamil New Year with a well attended get-together and lunch on Sunday, 13 April 1986. The net proceeds of the lunch approximated to £1,200 and the raffle drawn on the same day resulted in a net gain of £1,500. The collection of £2,700 on this one occasion by the SCOT for its relief and rehabilitation work is regarded as a successful effort by the organisers.

The winners of the raffle will be notified individually.

TAMIL SCHOOL NO. 13

London has now one more centre for the acquisition of a knowledge of Tamil in all its manifestations — language, culture, music and dance. The inauguration of "The Institute of Tamil Culture" took place on 19 April at St. Matthews Parish Hall, Douglas Road, Surbiton, Surrey. Classes will be held on Saturdays from 9.30 a.m. – 11.30 a.m. For further information please contact Mr. W. Thayalan, the Institute's Administrator at 334, Raeburn Avenue, Surbiton, Surrey KT5 9EF.

SRI LANKA'S DOGS OF WAR

The names of the British ex-SAS mercenaries employed by the Ministry of Defence to train the Special Task Force and advise on military operations against the "Marxist terrorists" were revealed by the Communist MP, Sarath Muttetuwegama, in Parliament.

They are Mike Bolas, David Butler, Dick Paxton, Sandy Russel and Deal McWith.

Sarath Muttetuwegama said that he had a list of other names which he was checking, but had confirmed those whom he had mentioned.

Minister of National Security Lalith Athulathmudali, although present, remained silent.

The Communist MP also charged that these mercenaries were paid salaries of between 2,500 and 3,000 pounds sterling (roughly Rs. 3 lakhs) a month from state funds.

The leader of the mercenaries, Mike Bolas, was a man who had been sentenced to two years' imprisonment in Zimbabwe for spying for South Africa.

Sarath Muttetuwegama also called upon the government to inform Parliament of what transactions it had with the Keeni Meeni Corporation, an international agency for supplying mercenaries to Third World governments.

Commenting on the government's purchase of helicopters, the CP's MP alleged that two of these, which had been bought for 1.8 million US dollars, had originally been ordered for President Marcos, who had paid an advance. Our government had bought them after the order was suddenly cancelled by the Philippines.

Another helicopter had been bought for 3 million US dollars when the going international price of this model was just under 1.5 million dollars.

He added that several air force servicemen had been injured because 10 of the newly-purchased helicopters and gunships were not bullet-proof.

He also asked why the STF was not incorporated into the regular army, why its members were given much higher pay and better conditions than regular servicemen who were exposed to similar dangers in the north and east, and what were the qualifications of the President's son, Mr. Ravi Jayawardene, to be placed in charge of the Special Task Force.

AID TO SRI LANKA**International Alert Advocates Cessation**

In a special visit to India and Sri Lanka in February 1986, the Chairperson of the International Emergency Committee on Sri Lanka, Dame Judith Hart, PC, MP, met with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and also with President Junius Jayawardene.

Dame Judith expressed the growing international concern about the continuing ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka, the tragic loss of life, liberty and property. The International Emergency Committee on Sri Lanka was created to focus international attention on the fact that development and human rights are both victims of the continuing violence. Aid programmes are suspended in parts of Sri Lanka and non governmental development programmes in the island are frustrated. The high level of international development aid from governments is permitting other resources to be used to fund the internal conflict.

In a press briefing in Geneva on her return from her mission, Dame Judith announced that she had advised President Jayawardene and members of his cabinet of the intention of the International Emergency Committee to advocate the cessation of government aid to Sri Lanka pending a political settlement acceptable to the people of Sri Lanka. It would be recommended that a fund be established to assist in the implementation of a peaceful, political solution and the rehabilitation of the economy and the well being of the Sri Lankan peoples.

All those concerned with the emergency situation in Sri Lanka who wish to contribute to bringing the crisis to an end are urged to contact the International Emergency Committee at the below address and to approach aid-giving governments to urge them to advocate the withholding of aid grants at the next meeting of the consortium of governments convened through the offices of the World Bank in Paris in June 1986.

The international community has been too long silent with regard to the tragedy of Sri Lanka. This concern is certainly shared by some within government and Sinhalese circles who would welcome international support.

**The above statement was issued on 4 March 1986 by
Martin Ennals, Secretary General,
International Alert, 24 Chancery Lane, London WC2 1LS**

A PLEA FOR SANITY

by H. A. I. Goonetilleke

PERHAPS the most damning indictment of the wayward policies which have led this country and its people into a dangerous cul-de-sac has come from the Minister of Finance in a prize day speech at Bishop's College on March 20th. Issuing as it does from within the Government's own upper ranks, it is worth quoting as reported in the *Island* of March 22nd.

Mr. de Mel is not given to mincing words and his pragmatic good sense and practical sensibility need to be taken seriously even at this eleventh hour, when all seems lost. "If we don't find a solution to the present national crisis soon, as the Finance Minister I can tell you this country is heading for disaster - we are going down a slope slowly to destruction. Sri Lanka is passing through its greatest crisis in recent history and that was not the time to split hairs or score debating points with any one."

The Minister called for the abandonment of what he termed 'the traditional frog in the well attitude', and to understand the present problems in their real perspective. "We must accept the realities of our geographical situation, which no one can change. Can we live in any other way but in peace with our big neighbour India. This is not only an ethnic question we face today, but a deep seated political, economic, social and geographical problem, which we have to appreciate in all its complexity and arrive at a peaceful political settlement soon."

It is well to dwell briefly on the terrible pass we are in today. One of the poorest countries in the world community, a small island of 16 million people, is spending 600 billion rupees in its current budget for fighting, what is to all intents and purposes, a 'civil war' with a significant minority of its own citizens. Half of its population depends for survival on food stamps, 40% of its children are undernourished, while the scourge of inflation in the last decade has become a mounting infliction on most segments of the people. Any development has been achieved at the cost of an enormous and growing burden of foreign debt. To add to it all, the toll of human life, the scale of suffering and material destruction, and the staggering total of helpless refugees within and outside the borders of the country beggar description. Yet, the government seems committed to waging a bitter and unrelenting armed campaign in the North and East, and the Tamil people in those regions seem equally determined not to give up their long standing campaign for self-determination which has now culminated in an apparently inextinguishable struggle for national liberation by militant means.

Nine years ago the ruling regime in its manifesto for that 'famous victory' correctly identified the just grievances of the Tamil people of Sri Lanka, and promised swift redress through the open forum of national political debate. Overwhelming Presidential power and authority and the massive parliamentary majority (even though flawed somewhat in its representative character and moral legitimacy after 1982) squandered the unprecedented political initiative and momentum of popular support they had obtained in 1977. What we have now, as a result of a failure of vision and a faltering leadership, is a squalid and blood war in which no quarter is asked or given, despite resounding asseverations from time to time that a peaceful political settlement remains high on the governments agenda. But, equally claimant, or even more so, is the overwhelming desire for a military solution with all its awesome consequences. The paths of reason, moderation, realism, and compromise have been fouled up by hidebound positions, bigoted images of a febrile racism, and strident stances of chauvinistic bravado. The Tamil psyche has been too grievously violated, and the Sinhala psyche riddled and tormented by the myths and fantasies of a seemingly incurable insular hubris. The climate for accommodation and reconciliation is virtually non-existent, and all hope of a peaceful political solution appears to have receded out of sight.

However internal the problem is, and no one gainsays that central fact, no realistic settlement is possible without Indian mediation and Indian goodwill. This cardinal truth can only be neglected at our peril. It is important, therefore, that all persons who love their country, be they Sinhalese, Tamil or Muslims, and who do not wish to see it dismembered and left a bleeding corpse, raise their collective voices to persuade the government into the ways of racial harmony and peace. The primary demands of the Tamil people need to be recognised, and their legitimate aspirations contained within a just, magnanimous, and workable constitutional arrangement, which, while guaranteeing the unity and sovereignty of the nation, will at the same time secure for the Tamils appropriate and authentic measures of regional self government. It is time we realised that the granting of regional, federal autonomy will not in any way violate the concept of a united Sri Lanka.

To cry halt to the insanity of this senseless and continuing carnage is the compelling need of the hour. No final resolution of the political stalemate can otherwise be achieved.

South African And British Mercenaries Bomb Tamil Areas

by Simon Winchester

BRITISH helicopter pilots are operating against Tamil guerrillas in the north and east of Sri Lanka. Three pilots, two Britons and one South African, have been seen manning helicopter gunships which regularly bomb rebel positions in and around Jaffna and Trincomalee. Other, unconfirmed, accounts say that former Special Air Service officers are leading ground raids against Tamil hideouts.

The first direct evidence of the Britons' involvement came last week when they were discovered piloting Bel 212 helicopters for the Sri Lankan airforce at Palali air base near Jaffna, and the China Bay air station near Trincomalee.

None of the men wanted to talk, and turned away whenever a camera was pointed at them. "You'll be writing that you've found the mercenaries, won't you?" said one.

It has been known for some months that men - usually former SAS soldiers or RAF helicopter pilots - have been hired to the Sri Lankan government by a Channel Islands-based security firm, Keeni Meeni Services. But KMS and the government had always insisted that the men - who are paid £2,500 a month - are used only for training.

Now, with the discovery that foreigners are taking part in, and even leading, anti-guerrilla missions, there will be calls for a full account of the KMS operations.

The British government is "seriously embarrassed" by the men's presence. "We want to make it clear that we have nothing to do with these people", the British High Commission said, before learning that KMS pilots were operating gunships. "Even if they only train the local forces, it may be just a matter of time before one is killed, or captured. And then there could be grave diplomatic implications."

Courtesy of SUNDAY TIMES (London)
11 May 1986

BASES IN RETURN FOR US MILITARY AID

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister of India, B.R. Bhagat told the Indian Parliament that despite Pakistani denials, there was suspicion of a quid pro quo between Pakistan and the United States regarding bases and facilities in Pakistan for the latter in return for military aid.

Mr Bhagat, who was replying to a call attention motion in the House on the presence of the US Seven Fleet vessels off Karachi said it was significant that in addition to the Diego Garcia base, right at the same time US vessels were in Pakistan waters, Pakistani naval ships were visiting Colombo.

"It is a matter of concern," he said as this

revealed a network involving US, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The call-attention motion was tabled by Mr Dharam Pal Singh Malik (Cong-I), Mr H.S. Ramoowalia (Akali Dal), Mr Suresh Kurup and Mr Saifuddin (CPI-M). All the members expressed grave concern at the US Seventh Fleet presence and alleged that it was an attempt to intimidate India. More so when there was a nuclear submarine also along with the fleet and aircraft carrier "Enterprise".

The Minister said the US Ambassador in India had informed the Government "on telephone" that the US ships were going to Karachi for "rest and recreation." He made

it clear that the Government did not believe that any "rest and recreation" was available in Pakistan where even serving of liquor was prohibited.

Asked whether the Government had protested about it, the Minister said that there was no need for protest, as the US claimed it was a routine visit.

However, he said the Government drew great satisfaction from the fact that both in Pakistan and US there was an increasing concern over this involvement between these two countries in military affairs. He quoted extensively from non-official media in Pakistan which had objected to the presence of the US fleet.

"LANKA IS SLOWLY AND SURELY BLEEDING TO DEATH"

"This country is slowly but surely bleeding to death. Thousands of Sinhalese and Tamils have been killed", the Sri Lankan Minister of Finance, Mr. Ronnie de Mel, lamented while speaking as the Chief Guest at the 20th Annual Celebrations of the Young Men's Buddhist Association of Kandy in central Sri Lanka recently.

Called upon to perform the insurmountable task of balancing the unprecedented huge budget deficit of nearly Rs.30 billion in 1986 in the context of an ever mounting military expenditure required by the Sri Lankan government to prosecute a 'war' against a section of its own people, the Minister added, "Rs.9 billion have been allocated for defence already this year. This may increase as the year goes on. Already this is fifteen times more than the Rs.600 million allocated for defence in 1978. Money voted for defence this year is also more than the entire budgets of the late Dr. N.M. Perera and the late Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike. This money could well have been spent on agriculture, industry or housing to give employment, to raise salaries, to increase food stamps or for education and health. What about the damage done to government installations all over the island? Even the cost has not been counted. Several billions of rupees will have to be spent to repair the roads, bridges, buildings, trains, buses and factories which have been damaged or destroyed."

The Minister continued, "Rs.700 million had to be spent last year to import rice because we could not get rice from the North and East (of Sri Lanka). Onions, chillis and even fish had also to be imported. People do not know the

— Sri Lanka Finance Minister

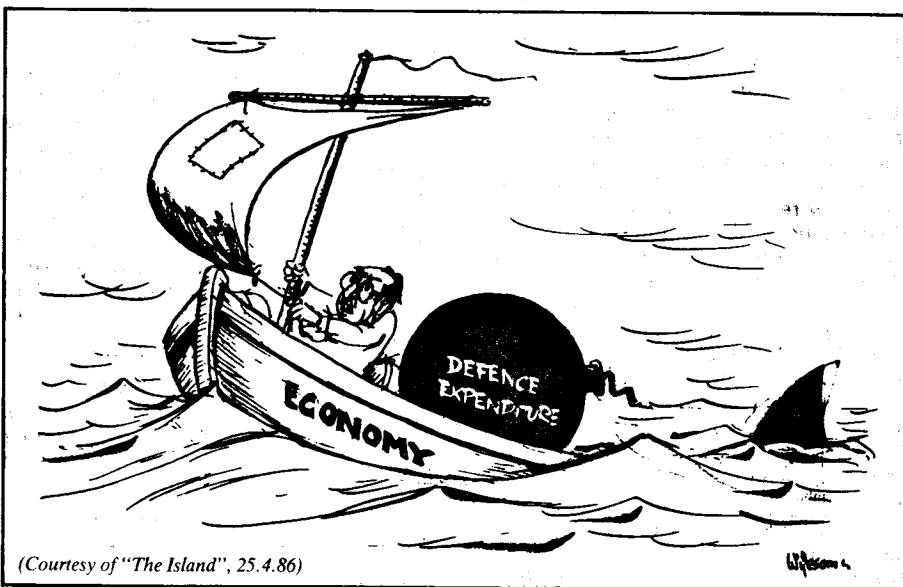
tremendous damage done to our economy. When will all this destruction end? This is like a running sore which is slowly killing Sri Lanka."

Continuing in the same strain, the Minister added, "The vast majority of the people of the country wish for and desire peace and stability. The Sinhalese and Tamils who have been driven from their homes and from their jobs want to go back to peacefully carry on with their work. A peaceful political solution today will receive the endorsement of more than 90% of the people both in the North and the South. I have no doubt about that. People are sick and tired of this conflict".

Mr. de Mel also said: "There is a time in the history of every nation when we should forget about legalities and constitutional issues and seek political solutions to

political problems. This is such a time in the history of our country. This is not a time to split hairs or score debating points. Only fools will resort to such things when the whole country is burning. This is also not a time to seek petty political advantages and Party gains. What is the use of a Party gaining when the whole country is being ruined?" he asked.

Probably realising that the Buddhist clergy, by and large, had hitherto resisted and thwarted all attempts to arrive at a reasonable negotiated political solution to the country's ethnic conflict, the Minister pointedly addressed the large number of members of the Buddhist clergy present and appealed to the Ven. Mahanayakes, the Maha Sangha and the entire Buddhist laity to help the government in every way to arrive at a peaceful political solution to the present problems with the help and support of India before it was too late.



(Courtesy of "The Island", 25.4.86)

CIVILIANS KILLED IN AIR ATTACKS

THREE persons were killed and five, including three ladies, injured when the security forces carried out an air strike, for the second week running, in Thavady Kondavil, Suruvil and Mathagal in northern Sri Lanka.

Three planes and two helicopters took part in the aerial bombardment which began round about 7.30 in the morning on Thursday (27th Feb.) and went on for more than half an hour.

The dead are: Amirthalingam Sivarasa (50), officiating priest of the Nagapooshani Amman Kovil, Kondavil, Lucas (21) of Thavady and Jeyamani Catherine John (62) of Suruvil. **The injured are:** Velupillai Kanammah (60), two sisters Thiagarajah Anusha (13) and Thiagaraja Jegatha (25), K. Uthayakumar (21) and M. Aruleswaran (18).

About nine houses were damaged in the air strike. Here's an on-the-spot report from a reader who went to the scene a little while after the bombing: I was on the scene by 9.30 a.m. By then life had returned to normal except that crowds of sightseers were milling inside the lane behind the temple on Suthumalai Road, 150 yards from KKS Road. An elderly man remarked "If all these sightseers will turn freedom-fighters victory will soon be ours." The apparent

target was a broomstick factory, one among many that have come up recently to provide employment for displaced persons and refugees. Men were removing broomsticks from the house, a portion of which was smoking. A side of a neighbouring house storing straw for cattle was a smoking wreck. The entire area was a mess of broken branches and a few fallen trees. Chipped concrete and bruised trees testified to random helicopter firing. I saw a boy and a girl, in their early teens, displaying with grave faces, shells they had picked up as if they were marbles. Another poignant, little-noticed sight was the body of a dead dog lying in the lane. He had come out to bark at the helicopter, as dogs are wont to do. He will probably go down as a "terrorist" in the annals of the National Security Ministry.

'Home Guards' Attack School Principal

Haj M.M.A. Azeez Hadjiar, aged 53, Principal of a Government School in Kathankudy in the eastern Sri Lanka, has been wounded in the Batticaloa Hospital after being attacked by so-called Home Guards of the government.

The Principal in question has made a complaint in which he has stated that some 'Home Guards' had severely assaulted him and subjected him to humiliation by parading him through the streets and shouting slogans.

'PROHIBITED JUNGLES'

All the forests situated in the northern Vavuniya district have been made out of bounds for humans. The Army Co-ordinating Officer for the Vavuniya district, Kingsley Jayawardene, announced the government decision to declare all forests in the district as a Prohibited Zone under Emergency Regulations at a recently held conference of government officials.

TAMIL TRAVAILS

UDUMBANKULAM FARMERS' MASSACRE

PADDY STACKS THEIR FUNERAL PYRES

Udumbankulam is a tract of paddy land about 100 acres in extent adjoining the village of Thangavelaythapuram in the A.G.A.'s Division of Thirukkivil. It is situated about 7 miles off the Thirukkivil-Pottuvil main road. The approach is along a gravel road in a poor state of repair. These fields are cultivated by Tamils from Akkaraipattu and the village of Thangavelaythapuram which has a population of about 500 persons.

At about 7 a.m. on 19th February members of the Armed Forces, some dressed in camouflage uniform, others in blue uniform carrying weapons surrounded the paddy fields, firing in the air. At this time work was in progress in the fields.

At the time of this incident the paddy fields were ready for harvesting. There had been a number of persons cultivating these lands. One individual cultivated about 35 acres, others cultivated lesser extents ranging from two to five acres.

Reaping and threshing had commenced about a week earlier. According to people of the area these paddy lands are cultivated only once a year. Work had commenced in September-October 1985 and the fields were now ready for harvesting. In normal circumstances the entire operation of cultivation would have ended in mid March. Most of the cultivators of this tract are poor peasants whose existence for the entire year depends on what they get from the crops. They said that their entire resources plus heavy loans incurred had gone into the fields and they had hoped to recover all these from the fields then laden with grain. But, now ruin faced them: their men had been killed; only women were left. Left with a burden of debt to bear.

The fields belonging to Suwany David had been threshed on the previous day. Tractor No. 37 Sri 5359 belonging to Mr. Kandapper Elayathamby driven Manapody Thivyanathan was loading the bagged paddy to be taken to Akkaraipattu. According to Mr. Elayathamby this was a new Ferguson 240 Tractor purchased only 5 months earlier by obtaining a bank loan.

In the threshing floor belonging to Kathiresu Vyramuttu the paddy stack had been partly threshed. Kathiresu Vyramuttu, his grandson V. Suntharalingam and eight others were working at this time.

In the threshing floor of E.K. Arnolisappuhamy Sellammah of Kolavil, she and her daughter Kusumawathy were working. Two other tractors David Brown 36 Sri 4666 belonging to Kanapathippillai Nagarasa of Akkaraipattu driven by Thasappu Selliah and David Brown 22 Sri 8047 owned by Seenithamby Ponnambalam driven by Gnanamuttu Buvenendran were working in the fields.

In another threshing floor, there were eight gypsies from Aligambay. This paddy stack belonged to Mr. Arumugam Nallathamby of Akkaraipattu who owned thirty five acres out of the total extent. He had been there for a few days along with his two sons and son-in-law who were assisting him and three ladies who were cooking for the party. They had completed some of the threshing earlier and the paddy already bagged was stacked up by the side

of the threshing floor. A tractor had come there to remove the bags of paddy.

In yet another threshing floor about 10 persons from Akkaraipattu were threshing. This stack belongs to Nagamany Kulanthavel of Akkaraipattu.

There were a number of men from Thangavelaythapuram reaping their fields. A number of paddy stacks were already stacked. A number of men and women were in the fields gathering stalks of paddy dropped while gathering the sheaves for stacking.

According to witnesses, groups of soldiers who came there went around collecting the people working in the fields. The men were tied up two by two and they were brought to the gravel road adjoining the field. The women were also brought there. They were all made to sit in the sun, as by now it was noon.

Other groups of soldiers came to various points where people were working. According to complaints, one of these groups tied up all the men. A woman complained that she had been raped. The men had been assaulted regardless of age; all the while questioning them whether they knew where the 'Kotiyas' were. While this was going on another group went around the Wadies collecting valuables and cash. According to witnesses all valuables such as radios, radio tape recorders and cash had been looted. Yet another group went into the village. In this group was a person named Saheed of Addalaichenai. He was well known to the people of the village as he had a chenai close to the village a few years back. He had been recognised by a number of witnesses. One old man who had worked for him pleaded with him to save his son.

This group looted all the boutiques taking away cigarettes, eatables, like biscuits, plantains etc. and cash and later assaulted the owners. They forced the inmates to climb their coconut trees and pluck young coconuts for them. In one house an orange tree was laden with fruits. They plucked and removed the fruits, about 150 to 200 in all. By forenoon, all the groups had reassembled at the place where the people were kept earlier.

In the meanwhile, according to eye witnesses the men who were held on the gravel road were beaten up, kicked with boots and many cut with the reaping knives that the workers had carried with them. All the while asking them if they knew where the 'Kotiyas' were. A number of them fell senseless from their bleeding injuries.

Late noon the men were loaded into tractors and the women chased away. The tractors were drawn up to a point where the paddy stacked had already been partly threshed. The men were shot and their bodies were heaped up on the partly threshed stack and covered with straw and sheaves of paddy. A hut closeby was dismantled and the timber and cadjan heaped on the pile and set on fire.

According to witnesses those members of the Forces dressed in camouflage uniform, mostly spoke in Sinhala and the witnesses referred to them as Commandos. There were others in blue uniform. A large number of witnesses say that their faces were disguised and they appeared to be Muslim Home Guards. Saheed of Addalaichenai was one of them. After this massacre the tractors loaded with over 150 bags of paddy drove away with the drivers in the seat.

Unions Rally Against Government Policies

OVER 5,000 delegates from 25 major trade union centres and sectional trade unions, who met at a special convention at the Sugathadasa Indoor Stadium, Colombo on March 25, unanimously decided to launch a united campaign of protest against government policies directed against the working class and democratic liberties.

The delegates belonged to different trades, regions, ethnic groups, and political orientations. Delegates came from both public and private sector enterprises. Although most came from the other seven provinces, there was a fair turnout from the north and east as well, despite the military operations in these two provinces and the major breakdown of transport facilities. The plantation areas were also well represented.

The convention elected a Presidium consisting of L.W. Panditha, J.A.K. Perera, Alavi Moulana, Vasudeva Nanayakkara, and R. Liyanage.

Four unions that had also been invited to take part - namely, the C.F.L., the G.C.S.U., the C.W.C., and the G.W.T.U.F. did not send delegates to the convention, but all other important sections of the trade union movement did. Representatives of the nurses on strike, were also present.

The convention decided to organise a National Day of Protest against government policies such as the wage freeze, privatisation, attacks on democratic and trade union rights, the use of emergency powers and undemocratic laws to suppress trade unions and trade union actions, resort to military operations rather than political negotiations over the ethnic problem, arbitrary arrests and detentions, as well as its failure to reinstate all employees who had been dismissed for taking part in the July 1980 General Strike.

A special resolution was unanimously passed condemning the government's repressive policies against the nurses who had gone on strike for higher pay.

It called for the withdrawal of emergency orders proscribing the union and freezing its funds, as well as orders served on nurses dismissing them and ordering them to quit the quarters they occupy. It called on the government to enter into negotiations with the nurses' union for a settlement of their demands.

A special committee, in which all unions that participated in the convention are represented, was appointed to conduct the campaign and decide on the appropriate forms that the united protest should take.

TAMIL TRAVAILS IN THE TROUBLED PARADISE

SACRED HINDU TEMPLE TURNED INTO CEMETERY

"The stench of rotting corpses pervades the environs of the historic Selvasannithy Temple at Thondamannar, which has been partly damaged by shelling and strafing" by the Sri Lankan security forces, according to a front page report in the "Saturday Review" of 19 April 1986.

"No one dares to get near enough to remove the corpses – unless they want to end up as corpses themselves, gunned down by the Army sentries in the Camp opposite. Some of the corpses have been attacked by dogs, according to news reports. The corpses are those of devotees shot by security forces", the Saturday Review report added.

The Selvasannithy Hindu Temple is one of the most sacred shrines of the Tamils of Sri Lanka and it is situated in the northern Jaffna district. For over six weeks now there have been poojas or ceremonies. This has never happened in the 400 year history of the temple.

In a desperate appeal sent to President Jayawardene, the Valvettiturai Citizens' Committee states:

"The army camp at Thondamannar is sited just across the Holy river alongside the famous Selvasannithy Temple. Since the siting of the camp the devotees of Lord Muruga had the humiliation of performing their prayers with modern destructive weapons pointing at them and within close range of these weapons. On 21st March, according to eye witnesses, without any apparent provocation the soldiers started shooting at the devotees who were inside the open courtyard of the temple. The shooting continued for over three hours and the devotees had to take shelter in the main hall area unable to move

anywhere as the bullets were flying about and helplessly listening to the agonised moaning of one devotee who was shot and wounded and who continued to cry till he died bleeding after about two hours. Another devotee died instantaneously.

"On 22nd March, four representatives of the priests of the temple met the Government Agent, Jaffna, and brought these matters to his notice. After consulting the Army Authorities the Government Agent assured the delegation that they could carry on the poojas without any hindrance. But when they returned to the temple and rang the temple bell to commence poojas the soldiers started firing in the direction of the temple. On 22nd also two devotees were shot and killed and it was not possible to remove the dead bodies for two days.

"No one has been able to approach the temple and rituals are not being held. This is the first time in over 400 years that daily poojas are not being held in this temple. This is a famous sacred temple of the Tamil people like the Kathirkamam temple in the South of the country which attracts thousands of devotees from all over the Tamil areas of the country and the callous manner in which the religious feelings of the Tamils are hurt is something that the Tamils cannot forget or forgive."

In spite of the appeal to the President, the temple has been subjected to several attacks by the security forces subsequently. In a letter sent to the Minister for Hindu Affairs, Mr. C. Rajadurai, the Joint Secretary of the Valvettiturai Citizens' Committee, Mr. K.C. Adipathan, pointed out as follows:

"One of our joint Secretaries, Mr. S.

Kumarasamy, met you on Monday, 31st March, regarding the temple, when you promised to discuss the problem with both the President and the Minister of National Security and ensure the restoration of the daily poojas and the safety and security of the pious devotees of the temple.

"Since then, the situation has further deteriorated whereby the Sacred Bell and the Bell Tower (the tallest in Sri Lanka) have been completely damaged, estimated to cost over Rupees Five Lakhs, by the Security forces of the Thondamannar Army Camp, adding insult to injury. We do not know what next to do in the matter.

"It is tragic that the destruction and desecration of Hindu Temples are being done by the Security forces of the Government, of which you are a Minister. The Tamils will find it unacceptable for a Tamil to continue as a Minister any further and be a party to the continued destruction of Hindu Temples."

On 20 April, the state-controlled TV, Rupavahini, announced that devotees could freely worship at the Selvasannithy temple. However, on the following morning, 21 April, the holy chariot belonging to the temple was set on fire by the security forces and the temple area was turned into a battle-ground. A shootout between a group of Tamil militants and security personnel resulted in deaths on both sides. The civilians killed in reprisal by the security forces included a Hindu priest of the temple.

In the evening, a bomber-plane dropped 14 bombs on the temple complex and helicopters strafed the houses surrounding the temple.

The 40-foot chariot, worth Rs.4.5 million, had been burnt to ashes. The 2½ ton temple bell, worth Rs.1.5 million, was in smithereens. The temple complex looks like a bomb-site.

The text of a letter sent by the President of the Pt. Pedro Citizen's Committee, Prof. V. Ganeshalingam, to President Jayawardene: (Pt. Pedro is a coastal town in the Jaffna district in north Sri Lanka)

I have been directed by my Committee to place before Your Excellency some incidents that took place recently in this area.

Sometime back – about two weeks ago – a woman had been the victim of gunshots from the Army Camp at Point-Pedro. She is thought to be one Nagammah of Tharnbachetty, Point Pedro, a mental patient. She has been in the habit of worshipping at the Alady Pillayar Temple even as a mental patient. She has been missing for a fortnight and all efforts to trace her failed. A woman's body was lying near

Alady Pillayar Temple for about the same length of time but no one dared to remove the body since no one's life is guaranteed.

On March 27, 1986, Rev. Fr. A. Sahayathan of the Bishop's House, Jaffna had come to St. Thomas Church, Point Pedro on a Motor Cycle to assist Parish Priest of this Church in the Services on Good Friday the following day. He was new to the area and somebody at Nelliady had directed him to take the straight road to Point Pedro. But at Malisanthy junction, instead of following the road eastwards, he had gone on the northward direction and ended up at the Beach road from where he had taken the eastward course only to realize too late that he had come close to the Army Camp. However, he raised his hands in surrender with the Holy

Cross in hand and his Robes well exposed but this did not deter the Army from firing at him. He could not withstand the shots and he ran in fear and was saved by the villagers. Only Providence had saved him with two injuries – one on the hand and another on his leg – perhaps because he was on a solemn mission to assist in the Services at the Church on Easter Friday. Soon after the Army Camp fired Mortar Shells causing unnecessary panic to an otherwise peaceful area.

On Good Friday, 28th, one V. Ganesapillai, a 70 year old Pensioner, an absolutely harmless man, went to his house to light an oil lamp as it was Friday, holy to the Hindus. As he was drawing water from the well to wash his hands and feet before lighting the lamp, he was shot at by the Army who

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Pleas From The Weeping Mothers of Sri Lanka

– FROM THE NORTH –

I AM a widow of fifty-two, with five sons and one daughter. In May, unbelievable tragedy struck our family. Now when I think over the events of those two terrible weeks, I am gripped by a sense of unreality.

We had just sat down to lunch that day when five army officers knocked on the front door and said that they wanted to talk to my youngest son. My son was not at home, so they told me to send him to the army camp at the Jaffna Stadium as soon as he came home. I was worried, but tried not to show it when I told my son this. He reassured me and said he would go straightaway since he had nothing to hide. We decided that he should go to the nearest police station since they were the civil authorities concerned. Later, I heard that the police had sent him over to the army camp at the stadium, which was close by.

My son did not return home that night, and I was sleepless with worry. In the morning, I went to the camp to inquire about my son, but they refused to let me see him. That evening, I heard a rumour that he had been taken to hospital. When I rushed to the hospital, I heard that he had been moved against medical advice. No one could tell me where he was. At home everybody tried to comfort me. But how could I stop worrying until I saw my son again?

After two days of tension, in desperation, I went to meet an influential government official and told him about my son. He was sympathetic and promised to help me, perhaps because he too had a son. Finally, I discovered that my son had been taken to the General Hospital in Colombo. When I heard this, my first instinct was to go down to Colombo immediately, but everybody advised me against it.

It was exactly two weeks later that a policeman arrived at our house. At last, I thought hopefully, he would be able to tell me about my son . . . He did. He told me abruptly that my son was dead and that I must go to Colombo for the postmortem. I could only stare at him unbelievably. He did not even tell me how my son had died, and I could not think to ask him any questions.

On the next day I went to Colombo with this policeman. At the hospital, they took me straight to the mortuary. My son's body was wrapped in a cloth and only his face was visible. He had already been dead for ten days and his face was swollen and discoloured. They asked me to identify him. They would not uncover the rest of his body, and a hundred anguished questions flooded my mind. How did my son die? Why didn't they show me his body? Were they afraid to show me how my son had died?

I was told that the postmortem was already over and that an inquest would be held. The inquest began almost immediately. However, soon after I had begun giving evidence, the authorities decided to postpone it for a week. They advised me to go back to Jaffna.

When I reached home the next day, the police informed me that the inquest was to be resumed immediately and that my presence was essential. I could not understand this but I went back to Colombo. At the mortuary, I found my son's body already in a coffin. The officer in charge had my son's face uncovered and wanted me to identify him again. They would not open the rest of the coffin, and even though I had brought with me his favourite suit of clothes, they would not let me dress the body. They carried the coffin into a vehicle and I was allowed to accompany them to the cemetery. There, he was cremated, were no last rites.

The inquest was never resumed. I still do not know why he was killed, nor who killed him. Perhaps those who killed him were no older than he was.

Why must our sons kill each other like this? It is said that your sons kill our sons because our sons kill theirs. Yet, this is not a problem that can be resolved by your sons and ours killing each other. This is a problem that was created by politicians and it is they who must resolve it. Let us stand together as mothers and ask for an end to this killing.

These translations of authentic personal statements are published by WOMEN FOR PEACE, SRI LANKA.

– FROM THE SOUTH –

TODAY, everyone is talking of the war in our country. They collect money, they donate blood, they honour members of the forces, they perform bodhi-poojas, all to ensure victory in this war. Yet I am a mother of a son who was sacrificed in this war. Please listen to my story.

I have four sons. My husband served as a police constable for twenty six years and retired last year. He never stooped to underhand ways to secure promotions, nor did he take bribes and get innocent persons into trouble. He had a difficult life on his meagre salary. Since my husband who was a P.C. was frequently transferred our children's education suffered. My eldest son was forced to leave school after the O-level exams because of financial difficulties and tried to find a job.

After months of running behind important people, sending in job applications and going for interviews, he was still unable to find anything. Finally, though his father was very much against the idea, he applied to the police. His first appointment was in Colombo, where he served for five years. He tried desperately to get a transfer closer home, especially since he was planning to get married soon. But when the transfer came, it was for compulsory service in the North.

He tried all he could to have this transfer changed. My husband spoke to every influential official he knew, but it was to no avail. I even told my son to leave his job and stay at home rather than serve in the North. But he thought about his impending marriage and the long, frustrating months he had spent job-hunting, and reluctantly made up his mind.

On the day before he left home, we all went to the village temple. There, we made a vow to the Kataragama Deviyo to protect him. My son saw the tears on my cheeks and said jokingly, 'Amma, you're crying as if it was my funeral.' He put his arm around my shoulders and assured me he would come home safely.

From that day, we waited eagerly for letters from him. With what apprehension we read the newspapers and listened to the radio announcing happenings in the North. How we longed for the day my son would be safely home.

One day, returning home from the market I saw a police jeep parked outside our house. I hurried home excitedly thinking my son must have come home unexpectedly. It was so long since I saw his face.

When I went inside, there were some police officers I could not recognise. Nobody said anything. Everyone stared into space. At once I knew something was terribly wrong. I looked at my husband's face and realised something terrible had happened to my son. He took me aside, muttered something about an accident. My legs were shaking. I sat on the bed. I heard voices saying that the jeep was blown sky-high.

Three days later, they brought his remains home. The lid of the coffin was nailed shut. On the lid was a thick square of glass through which the semblance of a human face could be made out. Was that my son? How unfortunate I am that I could not see my son's face for the last time. At the funeral I heard someone say, "These people are lucky. Other families have not been so fortunate. Sometimes, there's no body to send, only little pieces."

Why do our children have to die like this? I know my son was sent to the North to catch those who are called 'terrorists', or to kill them. And so our children end up killing each other, and it is we, mothers, who have to live with this unbearable sorrow.

At the funeral a monk made a speech saying, "How fortunate you are to be the mother who gave this son to defend our country, our nation and our religion." But should I be proud to have sent my son to die in this meaningless war? Whose war is this?

Later, a group of police officers came to our house with a cheque and certificate of promotion. I could only think how could money and certificates bring my dead son back to life? Why don't these politicians who talk so loudly about saving the country, nation and religion go themselves and fight in this war? For the sake of the nation, their children live abroad comfortably but our children must die.

SRI LANKA

Repression In the Guise Of Stability

By Mervyn de Silva

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka – U.S. policy-makers who sometimes spend sleepless nights counting Third World dominoes should spare an hour for the State Department's latest human rights report. It says that 'those who try to justify subordinating political and civil rights on the ground of concentrating on their economic aspirations invariably deliver on neither.'

This is a guarded elaboration of a Benigno Aquino dictum. 'The trade-off,' he said, 'no longer works.' The Philippine opposition leader was reflecting on the persistent failure of regimes that don authoritarian clothing in the name of development. The result, he noted, was 'political repression and economic depression.'

While the ability to deliver falls increasingly short of promise and popular expectation, 'stability', and the International Monetary Fund's companion term, 'stabilization,' become sanitized code-words for repressive rule. In the case of countries friendly to the United States, Washington sometimes must consider a 'benign intervention' before hardship and corruption lead to violence and revolt harmful to U.S. interests.

Washington's luck may not always hold as miraculously as it did in Manila. A closer look at the growing trend – the popular rejection of repression dressed as 'stability' – may prove enlightening, and Sri Lanka provides a striking case.

While Corazon Aquino was awaiting her final moment of triumph, the widow of another assassinated Asian leader was addressing a packed stadium in Colombo. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, a former prime minister, demanded that President Junius Jayawardene (whose regime extended its parliamentary term until 1989 after a disputed referendum), hold a 'free and fair election' this year.

In Bangladesh, the daughter and widow of two assassinated presidents are threatening to launch a civil disobedience campaign if proposed polls turn out to be a fraud. In Pakistan, unrest fomented by the widow and daughter of Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was hanged by the martial law regime, finally forced General Mohammed Zia ul-Haq to give his military administration a parliamentary facade. And now Bhutto's daughter, Benazir, has returned home to lead the struggle for real democracy.

These events celebrate more than women's liberation in tradition-bound Asia. They are signals of powerful popular

stirrings – as South Korea may confirm by decade's end.

There are other examples of this in Latin America, where the generals and the admirals are back in the barracks or languishing in jail. Their 'stability' did not deliver.

As far back as 1966, stability was Mr. Jayawardene's main prescription for Third World ills. Development, he argued, required a strong centralized executive which, 'free from the whims and fancies of Parliament,' could make unpopular but necessary economic decisions while preserving political stability.

He got his opportunity in 1977. His rightist United National Party, polling 52 percent of the vote, won a five-sixths majority in Parliament. Mrs. Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party got just eight seats for 30 percent of the vote. The Tamil United Liberation Front won all 14 seats in the Tamil north.

Prime Minister Jayawardene soon became President Jayawardene under a new constitution. Its main feature was an unparalleled concentration of power in the presidency. While foreign scholars termed the new system 'Bonapartist-Gaullist' or a 'benevolent authoritarianism', its architect rejoiced, saying that he was 'more powerful than King Parakramabahu the Great.'

Under Junius Jayawardene, Sri Lanka's 'nonalignment' acquired a pro-American accent, provoking the anger of Indira Gandhi next door. Colombo became less enthusiastic about the Indian Ocean Peace Zone proposed by former Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike.

Israel, the U.S. Peace Corps and the Asia Foundation, all expelled by Mrs. Bandaranaike, have returned – Israel has an 'interests section' of the U.S. Embassy. The Voice of America will soon install a powerful transmitter here, and the U.S. Navy has recreation facilities at Sri Lankan ports. Mrs. Gandhi was suspicious of U.S. designs on the strategic Indian Ocean port of Trincomalee. At the height of the recent Philippine crisis, some diplomats regarded it as a useful fallback position from Subic Bay.

The Jayawardene government gave special constitutional protection to foreign investments, to support a new economic strategy adopted under IMF-World Bank auspices. Abandoning Sri Lanka's traditional, broadly bipartisan social welfare policies, the ruling party pinned its faith on market forces, on a growth-oriented 'open economy' heavily dependent on aid, loans and investment.

In 1980 a special presidential commission found Mrs. Bandaranaike guilty of 'abuses of power,' offenses hitherto unknown to the law. She was stripped of her civic rights for seven years and expelled from Parliament. The Sri Lankan scholar Gananath Obeyesekere, an anthropology professor at Princeton, commented that such arbitrary acts were part of a process of 'institutionalization of political violence.' Victims included



Junius Jayawardene

opposition parties and leaders, trade unions, student bodies, academics, clergymen and judges. In hindsight, the most notable victim was the Tamil community, the target of periodic outbursts of racial violence.

The ruling party's 1977 manifesto summed up the Tamil problem with exceptional candor. Longstanding grievances – language, land distribution, economic and educational opportunities – has led the Tamils, it conceded, to 'support even the movement for a separate state.'

If serious attention had been paid to those grievances, bourgeois Tamil political leaders would surely have settled for regional autonomy.

The constitution did give the Tamil language a special status. But district development councils, the crucial corrective exercise in devolution, were a hopeless failure. They had no real power and lacked funds. Their first elections provoked Tamil allegations of fraud and violence by 'storm troopers' from the ruling party.

'For the young militant, this was the turning point,' said opposition leader Appapillai Amirthalingam, now in exile in Madras, the operational base in southern India of separatists and armed youth groups. Terrorism and an incipient insurgency drew nourishment from the wounded self-esteem of the Tamil people.

The process of centralizing power and de-legitimizing the moderate democratic 'middle,' both Sinhalese and Tamil, was soon completed.

Mr. Jayawardene won a second term in October 1982. Yet Mrs. Bandaranaike's party, minus her, did remarkably well, polling 2.6 million votes to his 3.5 million. The results troubled the ruling party. Projections showed that in the next elections it could lose the vital two-thirds majority, the basis of presidential power. A referendum was held instead, in December 1982 under a state of emergency. In the process, a vibrant democracy became a closed system.

Instead of the promised elections, July 1983 brought a racial explosion. More than 100,000 Tamils took refuge in India. An amendment to the constitution required all members of Parliament to

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column 2

Non-ethnic causes of social tensions in Sri Lanka

by Dr. Mervyn D. De Silva,

1. INTRODUCTION:

The temptation to abandon a truthful and objective analysis of the deepseated causes of the current racial tensions and the reasons for the unleashing of such fires of hatred comes on the realisation that truth appears to have been banished from the minds of men. But what is worst is that truth has been replaced by its deadly scion half-truth which when clothed in subtle language makes it abstract and confusing. The intellectually dishonest tactics now in use for deviating from the truth is a skill that has reached perfection in Sri Lanka.

It is in a background of widespread conspiracy against the truth, coupled with dishonesty and rampant hypocrisy that the following analysis is written. The presentation attempts to touch on the many non-ethnic causes of the fury shown in the past and current day violence missed out by many observers, unwillingly or deliberately. The wave of violence in Sri Lanka by any reasoning cannot be attributed to just one single cause – that is an undeniable fact. It is the climax of a complete set of factors both inter-related and inter-acting. The prolonged racial tension is the immediate cause that kindled the July 1983 outburst. But, parallel to it runs a chain of related events that insidiously dismantled all concepts of right and wrong, law and order in the country.

Let us focus attention on some of these causes and look at the fundamental economic cause first.

2. ECONOMIC SCENARIO:

(i) Policy and Devaluation:

The economic situation prevailing since 1978 had all the pre-conditions conducive to a display of fury in any matter of national discord. There was the complete and unquestioned turn-around in the main economic stance in July 1977 followed by the devaluation of the rupee under IMF command. The latter was adopted at a point of time when imports were mounting and exports slackening, with no immediate prospect of the latter improving, and the promised benefits of devaluation never saw the light of day. The seeds of discontent and frustration were sown on a fertile soil.

(ii) Galloping inflation:

Instead of improving the living conditions of the majority of the people, some of the policies caused inflation to gallop to heights as if in sympathy with those high rise buildings that appeared with the frenzied pace of the building industry. The urban areas were beautified as a matter of priority, while half the population groans living below the

poverty line of Rs. 350/- per household as designated in 1979. The open economy principles applied with the zeal of fanatics flooded the country with an unprecedented range of goods, food and drugs far beyond the reach of the majority and implanted decadent social values that are uprooting noble religious values.

(iii) Dependence:

The outward looking policy brought in armies of foreign experts, business collaborators, voluntary organisations, and Foundations, known for political activity, while seasoned local experts and professionals were relegated to the attics. A variety of cosmetic projects never objectively analysed to ensure that the benefits flowed to the people and country were embarked on. What did it matter as long as the benefits trickled into the pockets of the microscopic elite, new rich, and favoured foreign and local companies?

(iv) Foreign debt and cost of living

The drastic devaluation, the financial indiscipline, the absence of sensible and pragmatic planning and coordination, and the extravagant spending sprees raised the foreign debt of Rs. 4.5 billion in 1979 to Rs. 53 billion in 1985.

It launched the cost of living index into space. If the latter made life a nightmare to those households with a family income of Rs. 1,000 per month, are exceptional powers of imagination required to picture the plight of the 50% of the population living below the poverty line?

(v) Pulse unfelt

Notwithstanding the devastating and crushing blows brought about by the IMF dictates and domestically generated inflation, politicians continue to make their platitudinous speeches on the virtues of the Government's economic policies, the absence of queues, and the availability of luxury goods. And, these speeches are delivered from the ever increasing number of platforms consequent to the 'outbreaks' of extravagant Tamashas and the 'epidemics' of Seminars – the imagined indicators of prosperity and intellectual vibrance.

(vi) Widening income gap:

A cardinal folly any developing country can make is to permit the gulf between the rich and the poor to widen and deepen very sharply. However, while this is taking place the booming advertisement industry, known for its skill in creating greeds, is hammering through the mass media the availability of luxury foods, clothing, and electronic equipment only the super rich can afford. On the other hand, the non beneficiaries of the new

economic policies are without even their basic needs. The simmering fires of discontent and frustration become raging flames at the moment.

(vii) Ostentatious living:

Then, to make matters worse there is the ostentatious, almost vulgar, display of opulence by the small parvenu elite the plutocracy of millionaires enriched by reckless infra structure development, expansion/modernisation projects which the country could ill afford. Hand in hand goes the open licence for corruption, dishonesty, exploitation, and smuggling, while Tourist Hotels cater for and satisfy even the most depraved desires of the affluent from all corners of the world. As the gap between the rich and poor polarises very sharply, the ruling party, afflicted with what may be called the Marie Antoinette syndrome see no reasons for holding elections suppressed in 1982.

(viii) The real challenge:

The real challenge on the economic front was how to use our limited resources more efficiently and equitably. There was a need to understand clearly the role of the State, its relationship to the Private Sector, and its responsibility in encouraging efficiency in both the Public and Private sectors through legislative and fiscal measures, good public management, and correct policy making. But, instead the whole planning and Plan Implementation machinery built and developed over the years was dismantled, and resources of both men and material squandered on unproductive prestige ventures, since there is no clear cut national plan, with carefully tailored sectoral priorities.

(ix) Obsessions with growth rate:

The rate of economic growth as an indicator of economic development became an article of faith, despite its widely admitted deficiencies. There was no concern for a more equitable distribution of income, or for the non-monetary dimensions such as welfare, education, health, food, and nutrition. Nor was there concern for the formulation of projects with a sensitivity to the complexities of development activities. Economic development was equated to economic growth rate. More correctly, economic development should be the measure of the progress towards reducing the incidence of poverty, unemployment, and income inequalities. Poverty is here defined as a lack of good nutrition, health, educational opportunities, and similar dimensions of welfare. The consequences of chaotic political, economic, and social situations were flashed eloquently on the minds of the people in July 1983. At that time, 60% of the population was undernourished and 40% of the children suffering from malnutrition. The growth rate indicated that the economy was doing well, but the majority of the people were faring very badly indeed. The marauding mob of the deprived were given an

opportunity to capitalise particularly when they saw other vested hirelings and private armies embroiled in the holocaust, but for a different set of reasons.

3. THE COLLAPSE OF LAW AND ORDER

(i) Private armies:

Today there is an attitude of scant regard for law and order in the country. This was apparently an off-shoot of the laissez faire economic policies that dominated public thinking. Political power blocs controlled all avenues leading to easy money and financial fortunes. Thus, the temptation to recruit and maintain squads of hirelings and trade unionists to protect those sources of power was a strong one. These squads of private armies as they have been aptly described, are at the disposal of political authorities to gain, maintain, or regain their power. They were a law unto themselves as their attack on the Supreme Court Judges did show.

(ii) Why private armies?

The rise in the foreign debt from Rs. 4.6 to Rs. 53 billion in 1985 brought about by the unprecedented spending spree, explains how it was possible and why it was necessary to have these unholy alliances. The fact that extravagance, dishonesty, and corruption is universal, and that almost overnight many politically influential persons have been able to amass enormous amounts of wealth in cash and property, quite out of proportion to their known assets and earning capacities, gives the clue as to how the shared-interest system operates.

In the new alignment of social groupings, the politician, the business men and their foreign collaborators, and the latter group's hirelings from the underworld become a close group totally independent. Perhaps, they correctly recognised that it is only in their unity that they could stand without crumbling when confronted with forces that espouse the cause of angry and deprived people.

The breakdown of law and order structures however, did not take place over night – since the night of July 23rd. No, it was a gradual operation with dismantling taking place brick by brick very methodically.

4. LIQUIDATION OF THE OPPOSITION

(i) Fair elections of 1977:

When the present government swept into power in July 1977, the 5/6th majority it obtained was a vote with a vengeance for a change. An important point that emerges from this massive majority that has not been commented on is the fact that it left absolutely no doubts as to the fairness with which the general elections were conducted. This must be regarded as a fine tribute to the previous regime because the elections – DDC, by-elections, presidential, and the referendum held in the post 1977 years have raised many serious doubts in the minds of the majority of the people. A loss

of faith in the manner in which the system is worked poisons the faith in the system itself, and brings about a host of attendant repercussions.

(ii) Insincerity in talk:

In 1977 the people placed their implicit faith in the newly elected government. Since the mandate given almost embarrassed the government, it publicly lamented the absence of a strong opposition essential for the efficient functioning of the democratic system. Sooner than later, the obsession to destroy the opposition completely in the Napoleonic style of rolling up the electoral maps took over, adding to the sagging faith in the democratic system. The Tamil question was high on the agenda and hopes of resolving were bright, but the first priority was the liquidation of any opposition, and they went with full steam!

(iii) The treatment meted out to the former Prime Minister:

The first sharp attack on the opposition came in the form of the special Presidential Commission to try out among others, the leader of the Sinhala Section of the opposition in Parliament on the vague charge described as 'abuse of power'. To this end, special legislation was passed, and the special court set up proceeded to bring on trial the former Prime Minister of this country. All proceedings and addresses by counsel for the prosecution, some tinged with sadism, were beamed in all three languages on all waves of the broadcasting system.

Mrs. Bandaranaike was deprived of her civic rights for a period of seven years up to 1987, while the next General elections were scheduled to be held in 1983! There was no one left to pick up the political gauntlet and challenge the ruling power in 1983.

(iv) Reaction of the West:

Although, the action taken against the former Prime Minister was tantamount to placing her behind bars as is commonly practised in South Korea, the Philippines, Indonesia and Singapore, the guardians of democracy, the western news media, maintained a studied silence on such a news worthy issue. The Western democracies on the other hand, flooded the country with outright grants, aid, and loans as if to endorse the actions of a vindictive Government.

(v) Reaction of Countrymen:

What was the reaction of the country's own people? How did the political assassination of the Sinhala leader of an alternate government reconcile with the claim of the ruling party to be the Fathers of the Just and Free Society? What moral right had they now to exhort the people to have faith in the democratic system when they themselves were sabotaging it?

The deadly silence of the people that was observed across the nation bore testimony to their total disapproval of the governments' vindictive and undemocratic action.

The flood of imported foods and dazzling tinsels somewhat detracted, but

deep down in the recesses of their hearts questioning was going on. Was it a betrayal of their trust in the government to improve their living conditions rather than arrogate functions best left with the gods?

(vi) Adverse effects on the Establishment:

When a former Prime Minister is said to be guilty of an offence vaguely termed abuse of power, all the service personnel and public servants who dutifully executed policies that flowed from decisions now declared as an abuse of power, are also bound to search their own hearts. Did they ever realise that all those orders and directions they obeyed so faithfully would one day be declared illegal at the source? Should they in future determine the legality of all orders and directions before executing? Would a future Presidential Commission find the orders and directions being executed at the moment as stemming from decisions that are a total abuse of power?

The whole drama struck deep at the very foundation of the democratic system and its Institutions. It has further undermined, demoralised, and created a wave of uncertainty in the minds of all those who were devoted to duty.

(vii) Public hypocrisy:

To cover up its diabolical actions and demonstrate its sincerity the government meticulously selected an insignificant member from its own ranks and hauled him before the Presidential Commission on a relatively insignificant offence, while the gallery of awfully corrupt men remained untouched and flourished.

Then, as if to keep the flames of the righteousness of the Government burning before the eyes of the masses, the case was dragged on for months without end. But, neither was public corruption stopped, nor did it serve as a lesson to those actively engaged in the game. Neither, did it reduce the backlash from the action taken against the former Prime Minister, nor did it improve the credibility and sincerity of the government.

(viii) Duplicity in Justice:

Meanwhile the leaders of the 1971 uprising who were on oath to destroy the present day rulers were in the great spirit of forgiveness released from prison. It was the former Prime Minister who successfully quelled this uprising with foreign military assistance keeping to the very letter of her commitment to non-alignment, but was put on trial. It was she who saved the lives of many of the present day leaders without creating any fear of foreign troops marching in as in Korea, Vietnam or Grenada.

Double standards in dispensing justice have serious effects on the thinking and attitudes of the people because it could bring about a loss of faith in justice itself. Ironically, today years later, the same government that punished the Prime Minister who contained the insurrection but freed the rebel terrorists, has been compelled to declare the latter as the most 'wanted' men in Sri Lanka.

(Courtesy of Lanka Guardian 15 February 1986)

What will New Delhi's response be to Colombo's Genocidal War on Tamils

LANKAN envoy to New Delhi Bernard Tilakaratne appears to have told Foreign Secretary Romesh Bhandari that his Government is still anxious to seek a political solution to the Tamil ethnic problem. Lankan Minister for National Security Lalith Athulathmudali has said that his Government still expects India to take a fresh initiative for resuming the suspended dialogue among the concerned parties. These two statements have come in response to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's blunt poser to Colombo on whether or not it wants India to continue its efforts for a peaceful, political settlement. The Prime Minister minced no words in conveying his annoyance at Colombo pursuing a different path even while swearing by the process of a negotiated settlement.

From the two statements made by Lanka's spokesmen it would appear on the surface that President Jayawardene is nothing but a bundle of sweet reasonableness. We should, however, think that the stage for India to go by the noises made by Lankan representatives no longer exists. It will be highly foolish and naive for New Delhi to take Colombo at its words. Instead of calling for 'statements of earnest' from the Colombo Government for deciding its next move, New Delhi should judge all things by itself on the basis of what has actually happened.

Double Talk

Where double-think and double-talk have become the essence of statecraft, as is the case with President Jayawardene's UNP Government, it is no use for New Delhi to call for or await new statements of intent. New Delhi has enough material in its shelves to conclude without further hesitation that when President Jayawardene talks of political solutions, he means only a military-political solution. If the best of intentions on his part were to be assumed, it can only be said that while he goes through the motions of dialogue with the Tamil groups, he is simultaneously bent on liquidating the ethnic minority in the island by foul means. Delhi should make it clear that any political solution has got to be totally exclusive of military solution and the condition precedent for that is the withdrawal of the army from the northern and eastern provinces of the State. President Jayawardene should be told that he can't have the cake and eat it too.

It is surprising that New Delhi is still harbouring illusions about Colombo's intentions. It does not have to read between the lines to understand Colombo better. They are as clear as pikestaff.

In several of his interviews Jayawardene has gone on record stating that his Government's top priority is one of liquidating the so-called Tamil militants before the end of the current year. He does not talk of liquidating *extremism* but only wiping out the 'extremists'. The war on the 'extremists' has provided him with a convenient cover to unleash troop violence on Tamil population, on land, from the air and sea. The Tamil areas have been virtually cut off from the rest of the country and encircled in order to starve the population of food and other essential supplies.

According to even Western media reports, more Tamils have been killed by the troops in the last two years than during the earlier three decades at a stretch of ethnic tensions. Whenever there is some mild protest against, or

expression of annoyance at, mounting casualties, Jayawardene merely nods his head and says these excesses can't be averted with the best will in the world. By his very casual reaction, the President is adding insult to the injury he has chosen to inflict on defenceless Tamils with a hawkish policy which is further buttressed enormously by the support he receives from the U.S., Israel, Pakistan and possibly South Africa. When this is the case, it makes little sense for New Delhi to seek fresh assurances from Sri Lanka without taking into account what is actually happening and why.

Previously the complaint was that while the Colombo Government had come forward with some kind of an 'approach paper' as the basis of a dialogue with the Tamil groups, the latter were pursuing a negative policy of merely rejecting the Colombo's offers. Although it was known to all that no proposal from any Tamil group would ever be acceptable to the Jayawardene Government, in deference to Delhi's sensitiveness, the Tamil United Liberation Front made comprehensive proposals for a settlement. The main thrust of the TULF package is the acceptance of Lanka's political unity, subject to the rights of the Tamils to be recognised as a national minority to autonomous self-governance in the allotted spheres, as in India. Colombo dragged its feet on this specific TULF package and after repeated reminders from Delhi came forward with a 57-page answer, only to negative the TULF package.

The Colombo document specifically rejected the TULF demand for preserving the territorial contiguity of the north and the eastern regions which have been the traditional Tamil areas. This alone would prove Colombo's real intention. It wants to divide the Tamil groups on communal lines and keep the eastern region as its own forward area for a future attack on the Tamils, herded into the northern province. In this, Jayawardene sought and secured the help of President Zia-ul-Haq. The Pakistan dictator visited Colombo and exhorted the Muslims to work with the Government in defeating the so-called attempts at dividing Sri Lanka by "extra-territorial loyalists".

Scorched Earth Policy

New Delhi can't afford to look upon silently when Colombo carries on a war on Tamils with aerial and artillery fire acquired from countries which are not exactly friendly to India despite their professions to the contrary. It can't afford to turn a blind eye to the so-called security cordons thrown around all military, naval and air installations in the northern province because these have rendered the Tamil population vulnerable to liquidation in the name of the Government fighting the extremists. It can't afford to ignore the enormous input of fire power into the Lankan military machine by Pakistan, Israel and, not the least, the United States. It can't afford to gloss over the American strategy of fanning extremism at both the ends, in the Colombo government as well as among some militant groups also.

The so-called American support to India's peace initiative does not preclude its own option of encouraging its client Government in Colombo to pursue the path of scorched earth in the north and the east.

New Delhi especially can't afford to forget the latest threat being faced by estate workers

of Indian origin in the central highlands. The UNP Government has set upon the nearly 1.8 million Tamils of India origin, outside Jaffna and eastern regions, chauvinist forces which are helped by troops which follow no rules and obey no command. There have been reports of Lankan army having already become a state unto itself. On a longer range, this may pose a serious threat to democracy in the island, but with shortsightedness, characteristic of all dictators, President Jayawardene is bent on encouraging the troops in their spree of loot and kill.

Politics By Other Means

In the face of this reality, New Delhi should judge for itself what it should do without waiting for signals from Colombo. These signals, at best and worst, could only be misleading because they are tailored to the strategy of liquidating the Tamils population so that there is no Tamil question in the future, in a political sense. If it comes to that, President Jayawardene will not hesitate to borrow a leaf or two from other dictators to argue that war is also "politics by other means" and, therefore, it also leads to a form of political solution.

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has said that India is anxious to ensure the return to Lanka of more than one lakh Tamil refugees here in conditions of "safety and self-respect". Here too, Colombo has been adopting a dubious policy. It has so far given no word of taking back the refugees. In Colombo's view, "some persons may have left Lanka's shores and it is for them to return, if they wish". India has a good case to start the process of direct dialogue with the Colombo Government by making a demand for the return of the refugees to their hearths and homes since they pose an impossible burden on her.

About playing the role of an honest broker between the two parties to the ethnic strife, it should be realised that there, indeed, is no such role, in fact or fiction. The Colombo Government's ploy is to make India responsible for the resistance it has to encounter in its genocidal war on Tamils as a whole.

Unfortunately, New Delhi is mentally unprepared to assume such a responsibility which would be morally and ethnically justified. Late Indira Gandhi was almost convinced that India might have to play the role played by China during the Korean war. The successor-Government seems very anxious to keep off the troubles by just imagining that they don't exist, and if they do, don't cross into India's shores. The danger here is the possibility of New Delhi becoming a *privity* to the unholy war of Colombo on a large and proud ethnic minority. This is bound to have wide-ranging repercussions on India which has to contend with the presence of an overwhelming majority of the world Tamils within its policy.

New Delhi should stop burning its candles at both ends. It should play a more positive role to impress on Colombo that it can't be taken for a ride any more. After Colombo's rejection of the TULF package, there is absolutely no chance of success for any future dialogue. Such a dialogue, if initiated again by India, will be used by Colombo only to a more aggressive pursuit of the military solution. The gulf between the two sides to the Tamil ethnic issue leading to the demand for a separate Eelam

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President's Letter*continued*

had been waiting in some abandoned house close by. His feet were smashed and he sustained injuries in the abdomen, and legs also.

On Saturday 29th March, 1986, some people had come to Point Pedro in a car and lorry from Jaffna to buy a boat and transport same to Jaffna from Point Pedro. Naturally some people had collected at the Beach over this transaction. The Army Camp sentry must have thought that something untoward was taking place. Within minutes, a helicopter came and opened fire and the whole town was transformed into an area of panic. The car was damaged and one man was injured.

The market place was deserted and people ran in all directions for shelter and the town came to a standstill. A little while later mortar shells were fired from the Camp into residential areas. One such shell fired fell on the roof of the house of one Mrs. Thaiyalnayaki Satchithananthan, a 60 year old widow of Main Street, Point Pedro, causing damage to the extent of Rs. 5,000/-.

Your Excellency will agree that all these could have been avoided if only the Security Forces were mindful of the innocent civilians in the area. Besides these events, the area was peaceful.

We have constantly and consistently maintained that densely populated Point Pedro town is not the place for an Army Camp and have even suggested that this Camp be closed and the personnel be housed at Palaly, if so advised. We still earnestly request that the Point Pedro Army Camp be closed and the innocent people be allowed to live in peace – the barest minimum Your Excellency could guarantee, especially when the ban on fishing, destruction of crops, impediments to transport of food items by lorry and stoppage of rail services have already hit hard the economic life of the people. We are also human beings with the right to live and with dignity.

Repression in the Guise of Stability – continued

disavow separatism. The 14 Tamils left it, robbing Parliament of all credibility in Tamil eyes.

The death toll in 1985 was 1,200, including 200 Sinhalese servicemen.

The U.S. State Department accuses both the army and the Tamil rebels of extensive human rights abuses. Amnesty International documents torture and 'disappearances.' The opposition parties, the clergy and the bar association have condemned the use of the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act to detain opponents, including leftist Sinhalese youths accused of links with Tamil terrorists.

The economy is under the severest strain. Tourism has been badly hurt and investment is drying up, while arms spending has trebled in two years. Debt-servicing may absorb 25 percent of export income next year just when commodity prices (tea, rubber and coconut are the main crops) have slumped. With a third of the population living on food stamps (worth \$20 monthly) and prices rising steadily, economic and trade union unrest may introduce instability into the Sinhalese south. 'The worst year since independence' is the finance minister's bleak prediction.

Western donors, distressed by the harrowing conflict and the darkening human rights picture, support India's call for a negotiated settlement. But the government, knowing the people's mood and fearing a backlash in the south, cannot make an offer acceptable even to the moderate Tamils. Only a Sinhalese consensus can sustain a viable compromise.

Mrs. Bandaranaike is the key to that consensus. But she wants elections. The Sinhalese opposition demands the restoration of democracy as firmly as the Tamils demand decentralization and devolution. Both are the antithesis of the 'centralization of power' that was to have opened new vistas for Sri Lanka.

(By courtesy of International Herald Tribune, 22 & 23 April 1986. The author is the Editor of 'Lanka Guardian')

Teachers Protest Against Arrests

The Joint Front of Teachers' Trade Unions has, in a press statement, condemned the Government for arresting Trade Union leaders and activists.

The Joint Front's press release on the recent arrests states "This Government is continuously suppressing the civil and democratic rights of this country using the Prevention of Terrorism Act and Emergency regulations brought into effect on the on-going ethnic problem... The Government is now using all these powers to suppress political opposition on the pretext of eradicating 'terrorism'. The recent arrests are a clear indication of this. It is now clear that the Government is using

these powers to suppress in very undemocratic ways the protests of Trade Unions against the economic measures of this Government that heaps heavy burdens on the masses. Trade Union activists are among those arrested recently.

The Government has extended its repression by arresting the President of Sri Lanka Jathika Guru Sangamaya Mr. G. Dahanayake on 8th January. Having arrested him at his school he is now detained at the Kollupitiya Police Station, it is reported."

While vehemently protesting this arrest of Trade Union leaders and activists, the Joint Front has called for the immediate release of all those arrested.

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JAFFNA SHELLED

Shelling from the army camp situated within the Jaffna Fort in northern Sri Lanka on the morning of 6 April 1986 left two people dead and more than ten injured.

Some buildings in the city were also damaged. The dead persons were Manuel Anthonipillai (30), father of four children, and Xavier Shayanathan (26), father of a child, both of Gurnagar, Jaffna.

The areas most affected by the shelling were Gurnagar, Pannai, Grand Bazaar, First Cross Street and Athiadi.

The retaliatory attacks by Tamil militants left two army personnel injured, according to government sources.

The four hour shelling by the security forces also damaged the Chelvanayakam Memorial Pillar situated opposite the Fort.

ARMY FORCES PEOPLE ONTO STREETS

More than 60 families in Nilaveli in the eastern Trincomalee district have been rendered homeless and are literally living on the streets.

These families, whose homes were situated close to the Army Camp, were given orders by the army to quit their homes. Besides ordering them out of their own homes, the army also had given orders that the displaced families should not be admitted to the refugee camps in the area. As a result these families have no other place to go except to live on the streets of Trincomalee.

Why Tamils Should Not Be Returned to Sri Lanka?

The international human rights organisation, Amnesty International, has reaffirmed its opposition to refoulement of members of the Sri Lankan Tamil community presently living abroad because it feared that, if returned, Tamil civilians not involved in combat would be at risk of being victims of human rights violations.

The following are extracts from an appeal dated 11 April 1986 made by Amnesty International to all governments of countries in which Tamils have sought asylum:

In recent years Amnesty International has called on governments of those countries in which members of Sri Lanka's Tamil community have sought asylum not to return them to Sri Lanka against their will. Amnesty International urgently renews its appeal to such governments not to order the refoulement of members of the Tamil community, at least for a further period, in view of renewed reports of widespread human rights violations by security forces personnel which have reached Amnesty International since its earlier appeals.

There has been, notably since the autumn of 1985, a further escalation of violence both on the part of government forces and of armed Tamil groups seeking the establishment of a separate state, accompanied by reports of widespread human rights violations from all parts of Sri Lanka.

Amnesty International reaffirms its opposition to refoulement of members of the Tamil community because it fears that, if returned, Tamil civilians not involved in combat would be at grave risk of being victims of human rights violations. These include:

- *Arbitrary killings by members of the security forces, often in reprisal for the killing of their own men or of members of the Sinhalese community.*
- *"Disappearances" of people allegedly by security forces personnel.*
- *Arbitrary arrest and detention, often long-term and incommunicado.*
- *Ill-treatment and torture after arrest.*

The most recent reports of extrajudicial killings are described in: *SRI LANKA: Some Recent Reports of Extrajudicial Killings, September 1985 to March 1986* (ASA 37/03/86), April 1986. This describes a number of incidents involving such killings by security forces personnel, who in recent months have also resorted to aerial bombings causing the deaths of mainly non-combatant Tamil civilians. The victims include men, women and children. Such reports have been received by Amnesty International with increasing frequency in recent months.

"Disappearances" were first reported in 1983, and particularly since 1984, Amnesty International has received an increasing number of reports that families of people reported to have been arrested by the security forces are unable to establish the detainees' whereabouts. In many cases, officials deny knowledge of their arrest or detention; in other cases officials stated they had been released. There are fears that some of the "disappeared" may have been killed, their bodies having been disposed of by security forces personnel. Such reports have recently sharply increased: in its latest report of 24 January 1986, the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances stated that it had transmitted to the Sri Lankan Government 194 cases of enforced or involuntary disappearances, and Amnesty International has received dozens more reports of such "disappearances" during 1986.

Amnesty International continues to receive reports of torture similar to those described in its October 1985 "File on Torture", which detailed allegations that detainees arrested under the provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) were subjected to prolonged beatings while hanging upside down, had their heads tied in bags with burning chillies and had pins inserted under nails and in heels. It has also received several reports in recent years that detainees have died under torture and that dozens of detainees, especially in recent months, have been shot in custody "while trying to escape"; inquests into such deaths, if held, are not known to have been published in the press.

Whereas hundreds of arrests under the PTA of Tamil men, especially in the age group of 17 to 35 years old continue to be reported from the north and east of Sri Lanka, many of them

being held incommunicado for many months, reports of arrest and detention under the PTA of people on suspicion of having "terrorist links" have in recent months also affected members of both the Sinhalese and Tamil communities in other parts of the country, including the centre, the south and the capital Colombo itself. Below we give some examples of such arrests.

On 28 November 1985 the Minister of National Security announced that "several people, mainly Sinhalese, suspected of having separatist terrorist links have been arrested by security authorities". The Minister named two left-wing groups, the Samajawadi Janatha Viyaparaya (Socialist People's Movement - SJV) and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna Nava Pravanathayaya (JVP-NP), as having alleged links with one of the main armed Tamil groups, the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE). In the *Daily News*, Colombo, 29 November 1985, the Minister of National Security stated the strategy of these groups to be the establishment of armed guerilla groups "to create trouble in various parts of the country so that the forces would be compelled to withdraw from the north to maintain security in other areas". At least one hundred persons were reported to have been arrested in this connection in December 1985, although some recent reports put the number at 200.

Other recent reports of arrests cover both the centre of the country and the capital Colombo in the south. For example, following reports of violence in the central hill country where members of the Tamil community employed in tea plantations live, according to a report in the *Sun*, Colombo, of 24 February 1986, "police teams yesterday began arresting persons allegedly responsible for the recent violence in the hill country plantation areas". There have also been recent reports that dozens of persons have been arrested in Colombo allegedly suspected of "terrorist activities": on 20 February 1986 the government announced it had "uncovered a terrorist attempt to cause unrest in the city of Colombo" (*Island*, Colombo, 22 February 1986), after which 38 persons were reportedly arrested. The Minister of National Security, according to this press report, linked the alleged "plot by terrorists" with the Tamil Eelam Army. Further such arrests were reported in March: according to the *Daily News*, Colombo, 6 March 1986, 23 young men were taken into custody from a lodging house in Colombo because police suspected that some of them were involved in terrorist activities. The same reports stated that the previous week the Maradana police had raided another lodging house in the Maradana police area, Colombo, and taken into custody 40 youths, who were "also remanded pending investigations".

Amnesty International has also received several reports that Tamils seeking political refuge abroad who have been sent back to Sri Lanka against their will have been arrested and detained without charge or trial, although in some cases they appear to have been detained only for short periods. Amnesty International does not know what has happened to the people refouled in all cases. For example, four Tamils, three of whom had lived in Sweden, and who, according to the *Island* of 27 August 1985, had "clandestinely helped the terrorists", were arrested by the Colombo police on 25 August 1985 after having been forcibly returned to Sri Lanka, under police escort from Sweden. They were reportedly released after a week's detention. Earlier, the *Sun*, 31 July 1985, reported that two Tamils, sent back from France against their will, had been arrested by police on arrival at the Katunayake International Airport. They were handed over to police from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), but Amnesty International has not been able to establish what happened to them after arrest. There have been complaints about the conditions in which such detainees have been held at the fourth floor Colombo office of the CID: one man subjected to refoulement from France on 27 April 1984 stated that, on return, he was arrested, interrogated and not given food or drink during a five-day detention period.

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY...

Rethink Policy on Sri Lanka

INDIA MUST "rigorously rethink" her policy and options in relation to the Sri Lankan ethnic problem, says the influential and independent daily, *The Hindu*.

In a strongly-worded, lengthy editorial last week, the daily said, "Unfortunately, India's Sri Lanka policy during much of the Rajiv Gandhi administration has been characterised by superficiality in approach to the issues and a tendency to give the island government the benefit of the doubt for too long."

The "lack of coherence" in the policy has been fed by well-intentioned efforts to find a quick solution by forcing the diplomatic pace and by an inadequate knowledge of the gravity of the situation on the ground.

The Indian Foreign Secretary Romesh Bhandari's shuttle diplomacy, resting on the "rather vague good neighbourliness policy that has received a good chit from outsiders and achieved nothing else, represents a route that has taken India nowhere," it says.

As a neighbouring power many times the size of Sri Lanka, India is bound to have a large influence on the island's psychology and thinking, an influence marked by self-restraint so far, but India's *Locos Standi* in this matter must be asserted even while favouring a moderate but fair and workable solution within the framework of a united Sri Lanka, the Madras-based paper said.

While seeking to influence Sri Lanka, the

most important element is solidarity with the Sri Lankan Tamils who have been living through an unprecedented time of troubles, says the paper, adding that there must be a serious geo-political reckoning of the impact of the Sri Lankan government's bringing into its military response, "undesirable and dangerous external elements of various types."

The Prime Minister's recent remarks in Parliament and the Foreign Minister's forthright condemnation of the "elements of genocide" unleashed against innocent Tamil civilians by the Sri Lankan security forces reflect deepening national concern over the intensification of the crisis.

By exploiting the weaknesses, political immaturity, and divisions among the militants and bolstered by various types of military inputs "procured from an assortment of reactionary allies", Sri Lanka has come up with an increasingly hard-hitting response to the problem, it said.

But this professionalism has, over the last two years under inspiration from Internal Security Minister Athulathmudali, expressed itself chiefly in the "heroism" of taking a small toll of militant and a very large toll of innocent Tamil civilian lives.

The eminently moderate objective of gaining for the island's Tamils a secure and honourable basis of self-administration within the framework of a united Sri Lanka, does not seem any nearer attainment in early 1986 than it was in late 1983. The reading in Colombo at this sensitive stage seems to be that the "limits" of India's role in the situation have been exposed, the editorial concluded.

Courtesy: *The Hindu*

Bloodshed in Paradise

by Thomas P. Fenton

Tamil separatists in Sri Lanka suffer violent opposition at hands of Sinhalese majority

"UNDOUBTEDLY the finest island of its size in all the world." Marco Polo's 13th century description of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) is as current as today's travel brochures about the "tourist wonderland" off the south-eastern tip of India. Not so, however, his later observation that "the inhabitants of Ceylon are not fighting men," for the Indian Ocean paradise is being torn by a racial war against the Tamil people.

War contradicts both the postcard beauty of Sri Lanka and the fact that the 16 million citizens of the democratic nation are deeply religious and highly educated. Why, then, this bloodshed in paradise?

Battle lines in the 30-year war are drawn between the majority Sinhalese (72 percent of the population) and the minority Tamils (21 percent). The Sinhalese are mostly Buddhists and are firmly in charge of the parliamentary government of 80-year-old President J.R. Jayawardene. Tamils, Hindus and Christians, for the most part, are concentrated in northern and eastern provinces of the pear-shaped island.

The Sinhalese have rewritten history either to eliminate the Tamils altogether or to cast them

in the role of "invaders" from South India. The government's own tourist booklet, for instance, dates the history of the nation from the coming of Buddhism in 247 B.C. "Civilisation began to flourish," the guide states "and the island's Indo-Aryan culture reached dazzling heights." It omits all reference to the Tamils except to mention "frequent" invasions from South India.

Recent studies give evidence that the Tamils predated the coming of Buddhism by over 300 years. In any case, the Sinhalese and Tamil peoples have lived together in relative harmony on the West Virginia-sized island for over 20 centuries.

Although the Tamil people initially welcomed independence from Britain in 1948, they came to regret their political naiveté when the ruling Sinhalese began to trample on the rights of Tamils.

● The Ceylon Citizenship Act disenfranchised a million Tamils who were descendants of those brought over from India in the 19th century by the British to work the tea, rubber and coffee plantations. Of these, 90,000 are still without Sri Lankan citizenship.

● The "Sinhala only" language act in 1956 humiliated Tamils who speak the only ancient classical language still in use today and effectively barred Tamil-speaking citizens from civil service positions.

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NEAREST UNDERGROUND STATION: PLAISTOW

● The abolition of a merit system for admission to higher education and the establishment of an informal quota system discriminated against qualified Tamils in favour of the Sinhalese.

● Article 6 of the 1972 constitution made Buddhism the state religion.

Representatives of all the Tamil groups on the island responded with a convention of their own in May 1976 and declared that the Tamils are a national distinct and apart from the Sinhalese.

This declaration of independence and increasing terrorist acts by some Tamils have incurred the wrath of the Jayawardene government and militant Buddhist clergy. Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists detailed the abuse of human rights and state, "The army and police regularly tortured political suspects and carried out political killings in June 1981."

In a letter to President Jayawardene in November 1982, the Senate of Priests of the Diocese of Jaffna wrote: "We wish to express our great concern at the gross violations of human rights that have taken place recently in the North under the cover of emergency and anti-terrorist laws. We wish to place on record our deep sense of horror and distress on the violation of fundamental rights of persons concerned and the harassment and inhuman treatment meted out to some of our brother priests and others who have been taken into custody."

Tom Fenton is director of Third World Resources, a documentation and information centre about developing countries, 464-19th Street, Oakland, CA 94612.

By courtesy of MARYKNOLL Messenger (March 1986)

BOOK REVIEW

By S.D. Muni

Instead of realising the essential factors that have contributed to the recent ethnic problem, the Jayawardene regime continues to bank on a coercive approach and military solution to an essentially human and social issue.

THE ethnic situation in the third world is worsening and becoming one of the major sources of strife and instability. In our part of the world, no South Asian country is completely free of this; the worse case in this respect being Sri Lanka.

A theoretical question which arises in the analysis of any ethnic situation is why and how an ethnically diverse society yields to conflict and violence on ethnic lines. Diversity per se may contain within it the roots of incompatibility. But it is the process of socio-economic and political development which instead of turning this incompatibility into harmony, precipitates an intense conflict and insecurity. Sociological theory does not seem to have addressed itself fully to the transformation from ethnic incompatibility to ethnic conflict.

Dr. Vadik's latest study on Sri Lanka raises this question and, in fact, addresses its attempt to analysing why it has happened in the once-peaceful island. There have been instances of eruption of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka even before independence. But what Sri Lanka is undergoing at present is totally unprecedented. In the '50s the Tamil leaders had made a demand for a 50-50 representation of the Sinhalese majority on the one hand and the other minorities including the Tamils on the other. Accordingly, they were seeking a 40 to 45 per cent share in the national cake and in decision-making. From that demand, the Tamil position has shrunk to asking for autonomy in the areas dominated by them which is less than one-fourth of the island, in terms of area and population.

The factors that have been responsible for the deterioration in the ethnic situation

in Sri Lanka can be grouped into three categories – political, economic and international. Dr. Vadik takes his reader through the complexities of these factors and meticulously analyses how the Tamils have been gradually pushed into a situation of asking for a separate state.

In the political dynamics of Sri Lanka, the Tamils have been used as a pawn in the intra-Sinhalese competition and rivalry for power. Both the SLFP and the UNP made promises to the Tamils and backed out on them.

Economically, the question of language, employment, enrolment in higher education and land colonisation policies has inflicted growing hardships on the Tamils. In analysing the plethora of hard statistics on these economic indicators, Dr. Vadik's study gives the lie to propaganda material put in circulation by the Jayawardene regime which claims that there is no discrimination against the Tamils.

Dr. Vadik is absolutely right that the demand for a separate Tamil Eelam which remained a non-issue until the end of the '60s, despite the efforts of its lone advocate C. Suntheralingam, became a major political issue largely because of the discriminatory policies of Sinhalese-dominated Sri Lanka. The Sinhalese leadership had to resort to these discriminatory policies because of the complete mismanagement of the political process and economic development of the island.

It is unfortunate that instead of realising these essential factors that have contributed to the present-day ethnic problem, the Jayawardene regime continues to bank on a coercive approach and military solution to an essentially human and social issue.

Dr. Vadik has very convincingly refuted the much-paraded argument of Sinhalese scholars and politicians that Tamil extremism can be compared with Sikh extremism. The basic differences between

the two situations have been ably brought out in the study.

It has also been persuasively argued that though Tamil Nadu and its internal politics exercise an influence on Indian thinking and our approach towards Sri Lanka's ethnic crisis, this influence is by no means decisive. That in spite of this influence, the Indian government has restrained itself from identifying with the Tamil cause completely and even gone to the extent of deporting some of the key Tamil leaders exposes the hollowness of the allegation against Indian policy.

The study suggests that there is an important nexus between the Jayawardene government's tilt towards the West both in strategic terms as well as in the realm of domestic economic liberalisation and what is taking place on the ethnic front. Sri Lanka's acceptance of western proposals like the Voice of America deal, oil tank farms, close connection with British and Israeli intelligence agencies and import of arms from Pakistan, China and western countries are all important manifestations of Sri Lanka's strategic tilt.

Economically the Jayawardene regime has opened up the island according to World Bank and IMF prescriptions and Japanese, Korean and Singaporean economic interests. This has brought about a growing disparity in income distribution and complicated the social situation along with the ethnic factor.

The Indian policy of restraint and peace initiative has been very carefully analysed in the study. At the same time the author does not rule out the prospect of a drastic change in India's approach if the situation in Sri Lanka were to deteriorate.

The usefulness of Dr. Vadik's study has been enhanced by the addition of valuable appendices wherein the texts of his interviews with prominent Sri Lankan leaders of all shades and opinions have been included. No serious scholar of South Asian affairs can afford to ignore this study.

By courtesy of The Times of India (March 16)

New Delhi's Response

continued from page 14

State has become unbridgeable, essentially because of the politics of trickery of President Jayawardene.

New Delhi also can't afford to forget the geopolitical aspects of American strategy in the region. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President of Maldives Abdul Gayoom have called for the implementation of the U.N. resolution for holding a conference on keeping Indian Ocean a zone of peace. In terms of the resolution, it is Colombo's responsibility to hold the conference. The Jayawardene Government is not inclined to hold it because it has already converted the island into a floating base for the American strategic purposes.

The American interest lies in keeping Lanka to its committed stance of looking up to Washington for everything. This presupposes the continuance of constant tension between Lanka and its northern neighbour. The Tamil ethnic issue has to be kept alive to ensure the constancy and aggravation of tension between the two countries. In the ultimate analysis, the Tamil ethnic issue is part of the larger battle for keeping South Asia free of imperialist intrusions.

(Courtesy of "News Today", 13 February, 1986)

Ethnic Crisis in Sri Lanka: India's Options:

by V.P. Vadik (National Publishing House, 1986, Rs 140)

THE TAMILS OF SRI LANKA

Walter Schwarz

Minority Rights Group

£1.80

A recently updated and re-issued report by the educational charity, The Minority Rights Group, entitled *The Tamils of Sri Lanka* provides an excellent starting point for anyone wishing to gain a basic understanding of the tragic and complex situation on the "paradise island".

The 15-page report, written by journalist Walter Schwarz, gives an objective and balanced account of the island's history since the arrival of the Portuguese in the 16th century. The European invaders found two quite separate and ancient kingdoms, Tamils in the north and Sinhalese in the south, a situation which persisted throughout Portuguese and Dutch rule until the advent of the British administration in the 19th century. The report points to the roots of the present conflict in a flawed constitution established by the British at the

time of independence in 1948, which allowed the deep-seated myths of separate cultures and religions, established over centuries, and the advantages gained by the Tamil community under colonial rule to produce a political arena fraught by separatist movements and racial tension.

The report shows how increasing friction has led to the coming together, both physically and politically, of two previously distinct Tamil communities and looks at the grievances felt by present-day Tamils, particularly in education and employment. The writer describes the developments in Tamil politics that have led to the formation of militant groups training for guerilla warfare and the call by many Tamils for the creation of a separate Tamil nation. He also provides background to the repeated outbreaks of violence since the holocaust of 1958, and outlines the negotiations for a settlement carried out under the supervision of the Indian Government. Finally, the report assesses the prospects for any future Tamil nation and recent developments in the struggle to find a solution.

Richard Dunstan

LETTERS

The Next International Tamil Conference

When and Where?

TWENTY years ago, in 1966, the First International Tamil Conference was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, with Fr. Xavier Thaninayagam as its chief organizer. Its general purpose was to set a stage for research and intellectual discussion on the various aspects of past and present status of Tamil language in the world and its influence on world civilization. It was the dream of the organizers that Conferences of that sort would promote international understanding of Tamil culture. Since then, four more International Tamil Conferences had been held at irregular intervals in Madras, India (1968), in Paris, France (1970), in Jaffna, Sri Lanka (1974) and in Madurai, India (1981).

Five years had elapsed since the Madurai Tamil Conference. But does anyone know about any details on the next Tamil Conference? As one who participated at the Madurai Conference in 1981, I still reminisce on the pomp and grandeur of the Closing Ceremony in which the then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was the guest of honour. The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu MGR and his colleagues presented a grand show of their organising talent. However, that occasion was also a proof of our old Tamil adage: "Like a fool who forgot to tie the holy knot in the hustle and bustle of wedding ceremony!". There was no delegate or participant from any country on the dais, to invite the Tamil scholars and enthusiasts to assemble at a future date. And that was the agony!

It was to the credit of Fr. Thaninayagam that he organized and staged the first four International Tamil Conferences, surmounting many of the obstacles which were stacked against his ideals. The 1981 Madurai Conference, though a success on its own merit, was poorer by the absence of Fr. Thaninayagam. And, we are feeling its effects now.

If we have to see the survival and revival of Tamil language and literature in this computer age, we need some reformists and organizers (of the calibre of Arumuga Navalar, C.N. Annadurai and Fr. Thaninayagam) who are blessed with a devoted passion to Tamil culture, versatility, international reputation among the academics, organizing skills and a strong will to be independent against political pressures. Even if we cannot work out plans on a grand scale, due to lack of any governmental support and financial resources, let us organize the next International Tamil Conference on a smaller scale. Let it be, at least devoted to academic discussion in the style of the 1970 Paris Conference. Let us not extinguish the dreams and ideals put forward by Fr. Thaninayagam and Annadurai. I would like to welcome any input on this by other knowledgeable readers of Tamil Times.

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Sri Kantha

SIKHS AND TAMILS

SOME people seem to think that the Punjab problem in India and the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka are similar and India cannot therefore point an accusing finger at us.

To begin with, the Sikhs have Punjab, a fully-fledged federal state in the Indian Union, like Bengal for the Bengalis, Maharashtra for the Marathis, Gujarat for the Gujaratis, Tamil Nadu for Tamils etc. Mr. Surjit Singh Barnala leader of the Akali Dal, the largest party in Punjab, is its Chief Minister. His cabinet ministers are also Sikhs, except for a few Hindus minorities thrown in here and there. Their language Punjabi, is the official language of the state.

Though the Sikhs form only two percent of the population, they constitute nearly twenty percent of the Indian armed forces, i.e. the Army, Navy, Air Force and Security personnel. Giani Zail Singh, a prominent Sikh leader, has been elected and is today functioning as President of India. Besides Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has promised to transfer Chandigarh presently the joint capital of Punjab and Hariyana, to full Punjabi ownership shortly. Also the map will be re-drawn to include all Punjabi-speaking areas from Hariyana into Punjab soon. What else do they want?

Just compare all these to the plight of the Tamils of Sri Lanka. Do the Tamils have a semblance of autonomy here? What percentage do they hold in Sri Lanka's armed forces? Is there a single Tamil soldier serving with the occupation forces in the North and East? Is the President of Sri Lanka a Tamil now? Or will a Tamil ever have a chance to be elected in the future? What is the status of the Tamil language when all letters to the North and East are sent in Sinhala only — a language that is not understood here?

The outside world has understood our problem in its correct perspective, despite the barrage of propaganda about terrorism and Marxism. That is the Tamil people are fighting for Equality and Justice and no more. Otherwise why should all the respectable countries refuse to supply arms and ammunition to Sri Lanka to fight the so-called terrorists except of course racist States like South Africa, Israel and Pakistan only?

R. L. Thevathasan
Chunnakam

GENOCIDE IN SRI LANKA

THE PRIME MINISTER has categorically stated that the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka cannot be solved militarily.

President Jayawardene was saying there cannot be any political solution to it. He was forced to say that as he was a prisoner of his own militarymen. How then is this genocide going to be stopped? Genocide is worse than apartheid. If apartheid would warrant economic sanction, why not genocide?

There is an effective way of bringing Sri Lanka to its senses. It is well known that its economy is dependent mostly on its export of tea and its greatest competitor is India. If India would resort to canalising its tea export and sell it by subsidising it at Rs. 10 a kilogram, the economy of Sri Lanka would be shattered. It may be said that by resorting to this, our workers in the plantations in Sri Lanka would be affected. That may not be true, because if that happens, Sri Lanka would only be hastening its economic ruin. So let the Government of India think about a solution on these lines.

T. B. Bharathi
Madras

(By courtesy of 'The Hindu')

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I WISH to draw attention to the protest statement addressed to the External Affairs Minister of India Mr. B. R. Bhagat by Mr. Harsha Abeywardene of the United National party, the ruling party in Sri Lanka. He has urged that India would serve the cause of peace in Sri Lanka if she desisted from assisting and harbouring Tamil extremists groups. On the contrary, India has been categorically denying this act. However, even if one concedes that India is involved in harbouring the extremists this could have been only after the July 1983 Holocaust of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. But, was peace there in Sri Lanka before July 1983? Certainly NOT. The Tamil people have been suffering from communal riots starting as far back as 1958. This has gradually escalated over the years as we have seen in 1961, 1974, 1977, 1981 and 1983. This is much to the 'credit' of the present government ruled by the U.N.P. in which Mr. Abeywardene is the chairman of the party. Therefore, there is no justification for his accusation of India harbouring the extremists.

K. Sivalingam, M.D.

Protest Against Persecution Of Political Opponents

THE GENERAL SECRETARIES of the SLFP, SLMP, LSSP and CP, President of the Bar Association, Mr. Nimal Senanayake PC, a representative section of the Buddhist and Christian clergy, members of Parliament and leading academics, artists and intellectuals have signed a statement protesting against the current wave of arrests in the South and asking it "to desist" from the use of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and emergency laws "to persecute political opponents".

The statement says:

Through this repressive course, the State is seeking to resolve the mounting problems created by its political and economic policies.

Where the government is free to arrest and detain persons without the obligation which exists under the normal law to produce them before a court, there is a great danger that these powers can be used against members of opposition parties and other organisations which are viewed with disfavour by the authorities so as to stamp out legitimate democratic rights of dissent and criticism.

We call upon progressive and democratic organisations, political parties and trade unions, students and intellectuals to exert pressure on the government to compel it to desist from the use of these laws to persecute their political opponents and, in connection with these arrests, to act in conformity with the normal process of law.

In the meantime, we call upon the government to make public the names of

all those arrested, to give due access to families and lawyers to ensure that they are held in humane conditions and free from harassment, physical coercion, torture and death. We also urge that inquiries and investigations are expeditiously conducted and the detainees either released or produced before the judiciary, under the normal law.

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Political Organisations

A.M. Karunaratne (SLFP), Indrapala Abeyweera (SLFP), K.P. Silva (SLFP), Maithripala Sirisena (SLFP), P.M. Podiappahamy (Desa Vimukthi), Somasara Dassanayake (SLFP), Thilaka Pinnaduwaage (MEP), Anurudha Ratwatte (SLFP), K.A. Wimalapala (NICP), Lakshman Jayakody MP (SLFP), N. Shanmugathasan

(CCP), Raja Kollure (SLCP), Sunil Perumpallachchi (SLFP), Dr. Wickremabahu Karunaratne (NSSP), Ariya Bulegoda (SLFP), K. Thirananagama (NICP), M. Haleem Ishak MP (SLFP), Bernard Soysa (LSSP), Richard Pathirana (SLFP), T.N. Perera (RMP), W. Disanayake (Janatha Sangamaya), Wimal Rodrigo (LSSP).

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Others

A.M. Navaratna Bandara, D.N. Nadunge, Dilip Rohana, Gamini Amerasekera, Gamini Yapa, H.A. Perera, G.B. Keerawella, Jayanath Panditharatne, L.B. Wanigasekera, Lakshman Gunasekera, M.G. Karunadasa, Dr. Nanda Jayasinghe, P. Devaraj, P. Kulasekera, Dr. P.D. Kannangara, R.S. Canagarajah, Raja Wijetunge, Ronald F.J. Abeysekera, Sepali Kottegoda, Tara Coomaraswamy, Vasantha Wittachchi, T.C. Nimal Senanayake, Anita Fernando, Chitra Fernando, Jeffrey Abeysekera, Kuliyapitiya Prananda, Nelum Gunasekera, Padmini Weerasooriya, Sriyani Perera, Vasantha Somaratna, Anne Abeysekera, Daya Nissanka, Douglas Siriwardene, Gamini Haththetuwegama, Granville Rodrigo, H.A.I. Goonetilleke, Janaka, Wimalaratne, Jayaweera Ameraratne, Karuna Perera, Leena Irene, Haputhanthri, Manel Tampoe, Neelan Thiruchelvam, P. Sothinathan, Prins Rajasooriya, Jayatileke Kammallaweera, Radhika Coomaraswamy, Hector Abeywardana, S. Pathmanathan, Serena Tennakoon, V. Nandakumar, Prof. W.A. Wiswa Warnapala, Audrey Rebera, E.M. Bandara Manike, Prof. K. Sivathamby, Kumudini Samuel, Nimalika Fernando, Patrick Fernando, Sunanda Deshapriya, Vincent Wijenayake, Dr. B. Gajameragedara, Desmond Malikarachchi, Edwin Kothalawala, Gamini Samarangalla, Dr. Frank Jayasinghe, H.S. Bandara, Jani Silva, K. Ananthanathan, Lal Perera, M. Sinnathamby, Dr. Nalin de Silva, Newton Perera, N. Velmuruga, Nelson Ediriweera, Prof. R.A.L.H. Gunawardene, Raja Uswetkelawa, Rohana L. Piyadasa, S. Thillainathan, T.S. Piyadasa, V.L. Wirasinha, Y. Ranjith Amerasinghe, B.M. Piyasena, E.W. Appuhamy, Kamla Ranatunge, N.M.X. Sornabala, Nandana Marasinghe, Sarath Fernando, S. Balakrishnan, Nimala Balaratnam.

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The Tamil Times has an essential role to play in the struggle which is escalating with potentially dangerous consequences for the Tamils of Sri Lanka.

We must counter effectively the false propaganda of the Sri Lankan Government: We must alert world opinion to the true facts regarding the Government's Anti-Tamil activities.

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Deaths

AIYATHURAI, Grace (Daughty), wife of late Dr. S.T. Aiyathurai, mother of Sheila, Aileen, Prof Eric, Ranee and Rita. Died in Singapore. Funeral 29th March, 33 MacAuster Road, Singapore 3 & 145 Park Road, Colombo 5.

REV. FR. G. ANTONY GURUSAMY O.M.I. Funeral at Jaffna Cathedral, 21st March.

JESUTHASAN S., Primary Court Judge, Mannar, husband of Sarojini, brother of Dr. Alfred (UK), Rodrigo (Canada), Grace Satkunan (UK), Herbert (Canada), Anton (UK) died in Madras on March 11.

PANDITHAMANI C. KANAPATHIPALLAI (87), reknowned Tamil scholar and an eminent man of letters died on 13th March at his Tinnevely residence in Jaffna.

KRISHNAMOORTHY, N.N. Son of late N. Navaratnam and of Mrs. Saraswathy Navaratnam (Alvai North). Husband of Dr. Satha (64 Ellerdale St, London SE13), brother of Chandramoorthy (UK), Thedchanamoorthy (Denmark), Vasantharane Selvakumar. Funeral April South London Crematorium.

MUTTULINGASAMY, T.S. (70). Former Chief Accountant, Bank of Ceylon. Died 4 May Atkinson-Morley Hospital, Wimbledon. Husband of Parvathi, father of Sarojini Sundareswaran (Cyprus), Sivarajah (UK), Sivakumar (USA) and Arunthathy Pararajasingam (PNG). Cremation London, 10 May. 14 Midholm Road, Croydon, CR0 9AN.

RAMALINGAM - Meenadchipillai, wife of late Ramalingam, Member of Parliament, Point Pedro. Funeral 26th March "Kilanai", Karanavai North, Valvettiturai.

KULA SABANATHAN (79), formerly Editor and Chief Translator, Dept. of Education and Information, Govt of Ceylon, died on 2nd April in Tamilnadu. 185, 22nd St., Gandhi Nagar, Thirunelvely, South India.

VISUVALINGAM - S. (retired Education Adviser), husband of Pathmasini, father of Dr. Sarathy (UK), Prabakaran (France), Paskaran (UK), Kirupaharan (Saudi), Subathra and Sujantha (France). Funeral 5th April, Jaffna. "Saratasthan", Suthumalai South, Manipay.

DANIEL, K. Well known Tamil short-story writer and novelist. Died in Madras, March 25.

SANMUGAM - Sinnethamby (Sam), formerly of Walker Sons & Co. Ltd and official Ceylon Turf Club, father of Annalakshmy Wignarajah (Guam) and Krishnakumari Thiruchittampalam (Canada) died 28th March. Funeral Canada, 6th April. 4290, Blenheim St, Vancouver, British Columbia V6L 2Z4, Canada.

MANORANJITHA, wife of S. Sellathurai, Leeli Vanam, Urumpirai, mother of Athisayam and Thabeethai (Canada), Anandan (Germany), mother-in-law of Hunt, Chandran (Canada), died 31st March. Funeral in Canada, 2nd April. 58, Trotts Square, Scarborough, Ontario M18 1V8, Canada.

RAJAN SELVANAYAGAM, former Second M.P. for Batticaloa, died on 28th March at the age of 50. He was elected as an Independent candidate but later joined the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and was appointed the Political Authority for the Batticaloa District. He leaves behind his wife, Indranee, a son and a daughter who are pursuing their studies in the U.K.

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- **Sunday 15th June, 4pm.** – London Tamil Congregation 14th Anniversary Thanksgiving Service at Putney Methodist Church. **6.30pm** Fellowship Dinner.

For tickets please contact: David Jayarajah 01-642 5598 or Chandra Sethurajan 01-743 5294

- **Saturday 19th July, 6.30pm** – West London Tamil School Annual Prize-Giving at Acton Town Hall

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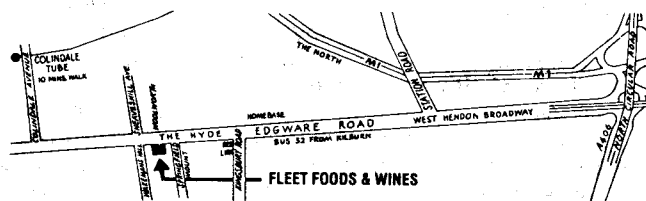
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EXPLOSION WRECKS TELEGRAPHIC OFFICE

A BOMB exploded in the Central Telegraphic Office in Sri Lanka's capital city, Colombo, on the morning of 7 May 1986 which left at least eleven people killed and over 100 injured. The explosion wrecked two floors of the building.

None of the Tamil militant groups has claimed responsibility for the bomb blast, and some have positively denied responsibility. Despite this denial, the Sri Lankan Ministry of National Security attributed the explosion to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as it did in the case of the bomb explosion which destroyed the Air Lanka plane that occurred three days earlier. The LTTE had denied both accusations.

The bomb explosion ripped through the bottom two floors of the building less than 500 yards from the official residence of the country's President. It was powerful enough to stop all clocks at exactly 9.23 am in the building.

Unconfirmed reports circulating in Colombo speculate that a certain left group which was specifically targeted by the government for severe repressive measures in the recent past and which is mainly composed of

members belonging to the majority Sinhalese community might have been responsible for their explosion.

The whole of the ground floor was a heap of rubble after the explosion and windows along the front of the building were shattered and timber and masonry from the building were hurled up to one hundred yards away. Many of those killed and injured were trapped in the rubble and were rushed off to hospital in private cars and buses as and when they were recovered. Panic gripped the city as ambulance and fire engines, their sirens screaming, raced towards the devastated building.

AIR LANKA PLANE BLASTED

AT LEAST 14 persons died and 40 people injured in an explosion aboard a Sri Lankan airliner at Colombo's Katunayake International Airport on 3 May 1986.

The bomb blast ripped the tail section off the aircraft which was on the ground and passengers were boarding at the time of the explosion, 9.10 am. Soon after the explosion, all international flights from and to the airport were suspended.

WHY?

Were the passengers of the Air Lanka plane which was blown up asked by stewards not to occupy five rows of seats at the rear, and persuaded to occupy the front seats? If so, why was this done?

Is it not true that the passengers who survived the blast were taken to a hotel and kept for eight hours and that none of them was questioned or permitted to be interviewed? If the authorities were keen to establish the facts relating to the blast, why were the surviving passengers not interviewed?

No one has claimed responsibility for the blast, although the government of Sri Lanka put the blame on Tamil

'Separatists'. First the Sri Lankan Ministry of Defence claimed that the Tamil Militant group, EROS, was responsible. However, subsequently the Ministry of National Security claimed that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) planted the bomb. The LTTE promptly disclaimed responsibility and denounced it as "an act of pure terrorism aimed to kill innocent civilians which deserves outright condemnation". All other

Tamil militant groups also have disclaimed responsibility for the explosion.

The Lockheed Tristar had left Gatwick airport in London on the night of May 2 stopping on its way at Zurich and Dubai before landing at Colombo airport on the morning of 3 May. It was scheduled to fly on to Male in the Maldives Islands (800 kms from Sri Lanka) carrying mainly French, British and Japanese tourists.

The bomb, reportedly concealed in packages of raw meat which are regularly airlifted from Colombo to hotels in the Maldives, exploded as the ground crew were closing the aircraft's hold after loading the cargo.



INDIAN DELEGATION IN COLOMBO

continued from page 1

The visit by the Indian team followed a document taken by hand to New Delhi by the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, Mr. A.C.S. Hameed. The earlier Sri Lanka response categorically rejecting the TULF proposals was regarded by Delhi as totally negative and India's annoyance was reflected in the sudden cancellation of Romesh Bhandari's previous visit.

It is learnt that the document delivered by Mr. Hameed and other assurances given by Colombo were regarded by India as providing an opportunity for further movement in the direction of greater powers being

granted to Tamil areas of the north and east of Sri Lanka.

The leader of the TULF, Mr. A. Amirthalingam, is reported to have said that it "opens the door for an advance on the earlier proposals by the government last August." Those who know the details of the document claim that they show more flexibility over the most sensitive issues of land settlement, law and order and the composition of the country's public and armed services. However, they do not provide for the linkage of the northern and eastern provinces, which the Tamils regard as non-negotiable.

Mr. Amirthalingam was, however, not optimistic about the outcome of the talks between the Indian team and the Sri Lankan government because

"the Sri Lanka Tamils had been let down so many times with the government going back repeatedly on the proposals it itself had made". Nevertheless, he did not want to prejudge the outcome. It would appear that the TULF is pinning all its hopes on India's efforts.

While in Colombo, the Indian team had discussions with not only the government leaders, but also with Mrs. S. Bandaranaike, the SLFP leader, Mr. S. Thondaman, the CWC leader and Mr. Neelan Tiruchelvam.

It cannot be doubted that the clash between the Tamil militant groups, LTTE and TELO, that occurred during their stay in Colombo would have embarrassed the members of the Indian delegation.