



# THAMILEELAM NEWS

OCTOBER 85



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## Rajiv must help us get our basic rights —Uma Maheshwaran

The first to arrive on the 'secret mission', on August 25 night, was Uma Maheshwaran, secretary general of the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) which is modelled after modern guerilla organisations like the PLO.

□ Did you ever expect any Tamil leader staying in India to be deported.

■ No. I had never thought so. The decision to deport Balasingham and Chandrachud came as a shock to me. But because they were too anti-Thimpu talks they had to face the consequences.

□ Do you think the Indian Government was provoked by Jayawardene into passing the deportation orders.

■ I can't comment on that. Maybe there was some provocation somewhere. In any case, I don't expect that we will be asked to leave, unlike those two who deserved to be deported. We are here as refugees.

□ What sort of impact did the deportation orders have on the other Tamil leaders hiding in Madras.

■ I don't think the leaders are hiding. They are all here as refugees. Once they complete discussions among themselves, they will come here and meet Rajiv Gandhi.

□ But what about the impact. How did they take the deportation orders.

■ They were shocked and, obviously, panicky. They began wondering about the Indian Government's sudden anti-Tamil attitude.

□ In other words, there are chances that other leaders could also be asked to leave.

■ Yes. But you see I don't expect it to happen.

□ Suppose it happens, what then.

■ First of all, the Indian Government won't let it happen. It just can't support the Jayawardene Government massacring Tamils.

□ Why did you airdash to Delhi on August 25.

■ I was asked to come here by G. Parthasarathy and Romesh Bhandari. That was about a week back. I was not in India then. As soon as I landed in India, I came to Delhi, mainly to explore possibilities for resurrecting the Thimpu talks.

□ You were in Thimpu.

■ No, I was not there. Someone else represented PLOTE in Thimpu.

□ But The Telegraph reported that soon after the Thimpu talks you came to Delhi.

■ It was an utter lie. I was abroad then. Don't ask me where.

□ What is the difference between PLOTE and the ENLF which comprises four militant groups.

■ There is an ideological difference. We don't believe in the sudden hit and attack method. We believe that this won't enable us have Eelam, as we desire. On the contrary, the adoption of such methods will only help the Jayawardene Government massacre Tamils further.

Our idea is to prepare a mass organisation and go for a mass struggle and at the same time, prepare progressive forces in Sri

Lanka to work against Jayawardene. Then we can win. These are not the view-points of the other four groups. Their constant aim is to kill Sinhalese. We are against that. We are only against the Jayawardene Government.



PLOTE leader Uma Maheshwaran

□ So would you call yourself a moderate and those organisations as hard-liners.

■ No, not really. Like them we believe in armed struggle. But this does not mean we go killing some people only because they are Sinhalese. Our job is to protect Tamils.

□ To protect Tamils means killing Sinhalese.

■ No, it does not mean that. On the other hand, as and when Jayawardene's troops come to massacre the Tamils, our job should be to prevent them from doing so. But that does not mean we pick up any Sinhalese on the street and kill him, like the ENLF people do.

□ In other words you are not united.

■ No, we are not.

□ In that case will you be able to achieve Eelam.

■ As long as we are disunited there is no question of our achieving Eelam.

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## DEMOLISH ALL REPRESSION

# Sri Lanka feels the push for peace

## Colombo

Without quite making up its mind about how it would proceed, the new Sri Lankan ceasefire monitoring committee began its work at the weekend.

The existence of the committee, established after the mediation of the Indian external affairs ministry, is a product of the pressure on both sides in the ethnic conflict to settle their dispute. Because it was created without direct talks between the parties, however, it is having to make up its own rules as it goes along.

The committee is nominated by the government, but includes two chairmen of citizens' committees from the northern and eastern provinces, whose names were taken from a list put forward by Tamil militants. It started off by going on a visit to Busa, the big detention camp in the southern part of the island, where suspected terrorists are held and interrogated. The members took with them a list of missing Tamil youths, in the hope of bringing some news to their parents.

This week they were visiting Trincomalee, which should have been an eye-opener for those nine members of the committee who have no first-hand experience of the destruction wrought by the conflict. The chairmanship of the committee will rotate at each of its sessions by alphabetical order.

The Indian government has plainly been leaning on the Tamil militants to whom it plays host - willingly or not - to make an agreement that should halt the terrorist campaign. In the course of the last few weeks, India has also found out the limits of the pressure it can apply without causing a spasm of unrest in its own state of Tamil Nadu.

The West has also applied pressure on the Sri Lankan government to some extent. The Sri Lankans are being allowed to bankrupt themselves in the struggle against the northern separatists and are not being rescued, encouraged or helped in their struggle by the West.

Ronnie de Mel, the finance minister, told the National Chamber of Commerce, virtually on the eve of the presentation of his annual budget, that the country faced economic disaster unless the conflict was ended.

De Mel boasted of the economic achievements of the past seven years. "We doubled and even trebled growth," he said. "We reduced unemployment from 26 per cent to 12 per cent. We doubled investment as a percentage of gross domestic product. We brought inflation down to zero. We reduced our budget deficit. We could even have had a surplus this year in normal circumstances. We achieved a substantial surplus in our balance of payments. We amassed international reserves which represented nearly six months of imports."

But he added: "All these economic achievements, of which we can be justly proud, will be jeopardized and even nullified if the present problems in the north and east are not solved."

Western diplomats in Colombo have observed that the Sri Lankans are on a spending spree for defence materials. Six second-hand Bell helicopters have been bought via Singapore. Britain is supplying Cougar high-speed patrol boats, plus small arms and ammunition, and boots and berets.

Pakistan is reported to be equipping a battalion of troops. China is thought to be selling guns and so is Yugoslavia, though this has been denied. But all this material has to be paid for and extended credit terms are not being offered. Britain is giving no more than the 90-day credit available to any customer.

Military expenditure was publicly stated to be 14 billion rupees (£370m) for 1985, though that is certainly an underestimate. Much defence spending is concealed in the budgets of other ministries - home affairs and education, for example. At the same time, the government's income is actually declining. The

price of tea, the country's prime resource, is now down to 31 rupees per kilo, from 60 rupees (£1.59) a few months ago. Less tea is being sold (except for a small burst of activity on the market recently when Russia bought a large quantity) and the tax take has dwindled to nothing, since no tax is levied if the price drops below 34 rupees.

Next year's budget deficit is estimated to be at least 30 billion rupees (£795m) and informed sources are already predicting that state corporations and some government-owned business undertakings are to be sold off. Unprofitable and unsaleable units will be closed.

The Indian prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi, and the Sri Lankan president, J. R. Jayewardene, met at the weekend in private conclave at the Commonwealth summit. They no doubt had further discussion on the working paper produced by the Sri Lankan government which forms the basis of its offer to the Tamils. The paper has not yet been made fully public in Sri Lanka (a slightly worrying state of affairs if the government is to carry its Sinhalese population with it along the road to reconciliation). The paper is referred to as either the "Indo-Lankan proposals" or the "HWJ proposals" after H. W. Jayewardene, the president's younger brother, who has been leading the Sri Lankan negotiators.

The proposals offer directly-elected provincial councils, local control of police recruitment and of village land settlement. Tamil militants want the provincial councils to be linked in a regional government. They want total control of law and order and of all land settlement, and a recognition of the north and eastern provinces as a traditional Tamil homeland.

The government says linkage is not possible - the eastern province is not overwhelmingly Tamil in the way the north is, and the Muslim and Sinhalese inhabitants do not want to be swallowed up. The Tamil homeland cannot be recognized since the Sinhalese farmers uprooted by the huge Mahaweli River developments have to be resettled and cannot go further south. The virgin jungle in the eastern province cannot be reserved for Tamils alone.

So there is a great deal left to obstruct a possible settlement. Sri Lanka's friends hope that the pressure on all sides can be continually applied, and that the last three years of rebellion can become a dwindling memory as the interrupted development of the area is taken up again in peace.

THE TIMES

# OPINION

## BLOOD - SWEAT - TEARS.

We hear the sporadic murmuring of our people - 'WHAT IS PLOT DOING'.

The People's Liberation Organisation of Thamillelam is involved in a massive programme of mass mobilisation in preparation of a PEOPLE'S WAR, while at the same time building up its army.

Only an army built on a political philosophy based on people's needs will be in a position to take on the forces of the racist state backed by the resources of imperialism in a prolonged GUERRILLA WAR.

For the liberation struggle to be successful, the people necessarily have to become partners in the struggle. They have to understand the difficulties and sacrifices involved.

The PLOT calls on the Tamils of the U. K. and over-seas not to be disheartened by the misguided antics of reactionaries in the guise of liberation fighters and revolutionaries.

The promise of the PLOT is not a quick or over-night solution to our problems as promised by some cheap tricksters. The immediate future holds for us BLOOD, SWEAT, and TEARS. But we assure our people the final VICTORY.

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Where did you acquire arms training from.

■ The PLO—one of its constituents, the PFLP—and some African and Western countries I can't name.

They helped you willingly.

■ Yes. Because our freedom struggle is similar to theirs. Especially considering our anti-imperialism stand.

What about the other groups. Don't they also have an anti-imperialism stand.

■ No, not at all. Their basic aim is to kill Sinhalese, thereby giving rise to communal tension in Sri Lanka.

But haven't other groups acquired arms training from the PLO and others.

■ Only the EPRLF has done so, and that too only from the PLO. The others haven't had training in arms.

You mean they just picked up guns.

■ Yeah, exactly so.

How do you manage to put arms and ammunition inside Sri Lanka.

■ Obviously stealthily—by smuggling.

Are you meeting Rajiv Gandhi.

■ Yes, as soon as the other leaders arrive here. We are required to meet him as a united group.

Have you thought of the things you will tell him.

■ Yes. Things like violation of the ceasefire by the Jayawardene Government. Then, Jayawardene is not at all serious in solving the problem. His speeches clearly indicate that he is interested in intensifying the problem.

What can India do in this matter.

■ If it wants, it can. It can stop the violence by snubbing Jayawardene. And Rajiv Gandhi can force him into granting basic rights to Tamils in Sri Lanka.

If Rajiv Gandhi does that, won't it mean India's direct interference.

■ Yes, it would, in a way. But then, being an immediate neighbour, he can afford to do so. He can, in fact, even tell the Jayawardene Government to implement the ceasefire modalities quickly.

If Jayawardene starts a war against the Tamils what then.

■ We won't mind it at all. We have enough manpower, arms and ammunition to face his attacks.

Did you flee to Lebanon during the Thimpu talks.

■ That's not true at all. I was abroad all right, but not in Lebanon.

Are you able to organise your movement while staying in India.

■ Yes, yes.

Which political party is your host in India.

■ All, like the DMK, AIADMK, Congress and all the Communist parties.

Are you not a wanted man in Sri Lanka.

■ Yes I am. If they catch me there I will be finished instantly.

# News

SEPTEMBER 1, 1985.

## OBSTACLES OF PEACE.

While speaking at the House of Commons the Indian Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi has stated that the CIA and the Buddhist monks are the main obstacles for the solution of the Sri Lankan Tamil problem and they create the tension in the country.

SEPTEMBER 2, 1985.

## ARMY ATROCITIES IN MANNAR.

In Mannar 46 Tamils who were working in paddy fields were shot dead by the Sri-Lankan army. Following this 77 Tamils have arrived at Rameswaram as refugees. Among them 50 per cent are women who lost their husbands to the army atrocities.

## PLOT SECY. GEN. ON THE NEW DRAFT.

The Secretary Genral of the PLOT Com. Uma when expressed his views on the new draft of proposals said that the proposals negotiated by the Sri Lankan government and the Indian authorities were unacceptable in the present form and the liberation organisations would jointly put forward their views to the Indian authorities.

## CALCULATED MURDER OF FORMER M.P.s.

Two former members of Parliament Mr. V. Tharmalingham (Manipay) and Mr. Alalasundram (Kopay) were abducted and killed by an armed group. Their bodies were found near their houses.

## PLOT CONDEMN THE KILLINGS OF THE M.P.s.

The PLOT condemned the killings of the the M. P.s as activities insited by the Imperialistic leadership and warned the people and the liberation organisations to be aware of such elements and tear their masks.

## ERAVUR POLICE STATION ATTACKED.

The Eravur police station was attacked by the Thamillelam Freedom Fighters killing six police officers and injuring twelve others. Also four officers were reported to be missing.

## REFUGEES RESCUED BY INDIAN NAVY

Twenty four Tamils including 6 children who escaped to India in a small boat in fear of army atrocities were rescued by the Indian navy when their boat was turned-over by waves.

## HARTAL AT BATTICALOA.

The people of Batticaloa observed hartal on the 3rd of Sept. demanding the release of the Tamil in the Sri - Lankan prison. All schools and shops were closed.

September 3, 1985.

## ARMY POST ATTACKED BY T.E.F.F.

The army post at Srimapuram which is in the south of Trincomalee was attacked by the Thamillelam Freedom Fighters, killing 5 Sri Lankan home guards and injuring several others. In retaliation the houses at Veeranagar, Linganagar, Palaiyuttu, Thirukalur, Manthoppu, Arasa -dy, Urmalai, Madathady villages were set on fire by the Sri Lankan forces and thugs.

SEPTEMBER 5, 1985.

## LAND MINE KILLS SECURITY FORCES.

In the south of Batticaloa, a land mine exploded killing 6 Sri Lankan police and 3 soldiers.

## FUNERALS OF EX-M.P.s

The funeral procession of Mr. Tharmaling -am and Mr. Alalasundaram, who were killed by unidentified gunmen, took place on the 5th. More than 8000 people took part in the procession and chanted slogans against the government, L.T.T.E. and T.E.L.O.

SEPTEMBER 6, 1985.

## MINI BUS STOPPED AND PASSENGERS ATTACKED

A mini bus which left Colombo to Jaffna with 18 passengers was stopped by armed Sinhala thugs in between Madavachi and Vavuniya and the passengers were stabbed and seriously wounded. On the same day two lorries were burnt in the area. Also two burnt bodies were discovered from the sight.

SEPTEMBER 7, 1985.

## ONE KILLED AT VAVUNIYA.

At Neriyakulam in Vavuniya one Jevaratnam, aged 32 was shot-dead by the army.

## ARMY ATROCITIES IN VAVUNIYA.

On the 5th of Sept. in Vavuniya, the Sri Lankan army went on the rampage attacking the houses at Puliyankulam, Nedunkaraichenai and Sinnakulam villages. They also killed 8 Tamils and injured two others.

# Round-up

SEPTEMBER 8, 1985.

ARSON ATTACK BY ARMY

In Trincomalee, during the past two days 40 Tamils were killed and 250 houses were burnt by the Sri Lankan security forces. Hundreds of Tamils have refuged at Sri Shanmugananda Maha Vidyalayam. Several others travelled to Muthur in boats. Sri Lankan navy fired at them killing a 70years old man and injuring two youths. The injured youths were arrested.

INDIAN P.M. CONCERNED.

The Indian Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi in a statement said that the Sri Lankan security forces have not conducted themselves like an army, and terrorism would not solve the Tamil problem whether it is from the forces or militants. Conversely, it would grow revenge and enmity and make the path for any solution difficult.

JAFFNA CAMPUS STUDENTS CONDEMN KILLERS.

The Students Union of the Jaffna Campus released a report condemning the killing of the former M.P.s. If the killings were the act of any liberation organisation which would hinder the liberation struggle. It is the duty of all liberation organisations to identify the perpetrators, the statement so continued

SEPTEMBER 9, 1985.

HOME GUARDS KILL TAMILS.

At Eraperiakulam and Nunaviakama villages, armed Sri Lankan home guards killed more than 50 Tamils in cold-blood.

HELICOPTER ATTACK ON TAMILS.

At Puliyanukulam in Vavuniya, Sri Lankan army fired on Tamils from a helicopter killing nine and injuring two.

SEPTEMBER 10, 1985.

HOUSE TO HOUSE SEARCH AND ATTACK

The Sri Lankan army personal engaged in an intensive house to house search at Periyapuli Alankulam, Neriyaikulam and Muthaliyarkulam in Vavuniya, Chettykulam areas and atrociously attack the innocent Tamils in their houses, killing 14. Thousands of Tamils fled the areas for safety into the nearby jungles.

SUPPORT FOR PRISON HUNGER STRIKERS.

The support for Welikade prison hunger strikers increases daily. Recently more than 5000 people participated in a march organised in Kilinochi in support of the strikers. Also the mothers front called Annaiar Munnani organised a demonstration and march in support of the hunger strikers, in Jaffna.

ACTIVITIES TO DISCREDIT PLOT.

A group which was involved in robbing and looting in the name of PLOT has been identified as a brake-away group from TELA, called SEVEN TELA. Several articles which were robbed by them have been recovered. The PLOT in a statement called the people to identify the groups which carry out robberies and thefts in the name of liberation organisations.

SEPTEMBER 12, 1985.

HOME GUARDS ATTACK REFUGEE CAMP.

On the 9th, the Sri Lankan home guards ferociously attacked a refugee camp at Nilaveli, which housed more than 12,000 Tamil refugees. Thirty three Muslims were killed and 3 were grievously injured.

ARMY ATROCITIES CONTINUE IN TRINCO.

The government forces have again accelerated their attacks on the Tamils in Trincomalee. Firing from helicopters and setting fire to Tamil houses and shops are in the increase. More than 50 Tamils have been killed.

TULF DENY REPORTS

The T.U.L.F. has categorically denied reports stating that they had accepted the new proposals formulated by the Indian authorities.

SEPTEMBER 13, 1985.

DEPORTATION ORDER WILL BE CANCELLED.

An Indian foreign relations officer has stated that the deportation order against Mr. Balasingham would be revoked, only when the condition which prompted his deportation ceased to exist.

POLITICAL PARTIES SET-OFF RACISM.

Both the U.N.P. and the S.L.F.P. parties set-off racism against Tamils at the by-election meetings in Mulgriya. Two Sinhalese were shot dead by U.N.P. supporters, while they were going to cast their votes.

SEPTEMBER 14, 1985.

TRAIN BLOWN-UP IN TRINCO.

The Tamileelam Freedom Fighters have blown up a train at Trincomalee by setting up an explosive.

TRIBUTES TO THE LATE LEADERS.

The Thamileelam Students Organisation conducted a public meeting in Madras to pay tributes to the Late Tamil leaders Mr. V. Tharmalingam and Mr. Alalasu-daram. The Secretary General of the PLOT Com. Uma Maheswaran when addressing at the meeting said that the liberation organisations should be cautious that they would not fall in the trap of capitalism. There were attempts to kill the leaders while the talks were in progress. In this background a former trade unionist was ousted from the meeting, who had participated in the talks on behalf of a liberation organisation. The said delegate, during the election, worked for U.N.P. ministers. The liberation organisations must identify such elements and build up a unity to carry forward the struggle. India may not support the Liberation struggle but we should not involve in activities which would turn India towards the Sri Lankan government, so continued Uma.

SEPTEMBER 16, 1985.MUSLIMS SHOT DEAD BY SECURITY FORCES.

In Amparai district, 4 Muslims were shot dead by the Sri Lankan security forces.

TAMILS EVICTED FOR EXPANDING BASE.

A Sri Lankan Air Force base at Vavuniya has been expanded. The adjoining Tamil lands were acquired for this purpose without proper alternative to the residents, as a result several thousand Tamils have been made homeless.

SEPTEMBER 17, 1985.ARMY SHOOT SCHOOL GIRLS.

At Batticaloa, the Sri Lankan army forced their way into a school and opened fire killing two girls.

MUSLIM GIRL MOLESTED.

Sinhala thugs stopped a lorry at Madavachiya and molested a muslim girl in the lorry, whose father was also attacked.

SOLDIERS KILLED BY LAND MINE.

In Trincomalee at Kinniya road, two soldiers were killed when a land mine was set-off by freedom fighters.

SEPTEMBER 18, 1985.ARMY KILLED 140 INCLUDING CHILDREN.

One hundred and forty Tamils including children and old people were killed by the Sri Lankan army at a refugee camp in Nilaveli, Trincomalee.

TAMIL YOUTHS ARRESTED IN TRINCO.

More than 400 Tamil youths were arrested in Trincomalee by the Sri Lankan army.

SEPTEMBER 19, 1985.MOSSARD IN SRI LANKA.

According to a news report in the 'FORM' magazine, there are more than 100 Mossard personal involved in activities against the Tamils in the pretext of tourists, agriculture experts, and traders.

SEPTEMBER 22, 1985.ARMY SHOT HUSBAND AND WIFE.

In Mannar at Kallikulam area, the Sri Lankan army opened fire killing one Vellian, aged 22 and his wife with another youth Muthu, aged 16.

SEPTEMBER 24, 1985.PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS IN MADRAS.

The Tamils in Tamilnadu observed hartal on the 24th in protest of the atrocities in Thamileelam, which was a great success. Two Indian Tamils attempted to burn themselves in protest but they were saved with injuries.

PLOT ACTION AGAINST ROBBERS.

In a textile centre at Kurukkalmadam, Batticaloa, more than 10,000/- rupees worth of articles were stolen by an armed group. When the people reported this to the PLOT, they investigated the matter and apprehended the criminals and released the articles and returned to the owners.

PARENTS PERMITTED TO VISIT DETAINEES.

The parents of fifteen detainees were permitted to visit their children in Sri Lankan prison for the first time.

SEPTEMBER 27, 1985.POLICE STATION ATTACKED BY T.E.F.F.

The police station at Mavilachchi in Anuradhapura was attacked by Thamileelam Freedom Fighters.

JAFFNA CAMPUS STUDENTS DEMONSTRATED.

Jaffna campus students organised an 8 day march in protest against the arrests of Tamil youths and demanded to release them or to bring before the law.

SEPTEMBER 28, 1985.DRIVER AND CLEANER HACKED TO DEATH.

At Munrumurippu in Vavuniya, a lorry was stopped by Sinhala thugs and the driver and the cleaner was hacked to death. Both were Tamils.

M.G.R. TALKS WITH TAMIL LEADERS.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Mr. M. G. Ramachandran had talks with the leaders of the PLOT and E.N.L.F. separately regarding the proposed peace proposals.

# We are hoping for the best

The job of Savumiamoorthy Thondaman, leader of the Ceylon Workers' Congress (CWC), representing the interests of lakhs of plantation Tamils of Indian origin in Sri Lanka, is not a particularly enviable one. It is made all the more difficult by his being the Rural Industrial Development Minister in President J. R. Jayewardene's United National Party (UNP) Cabinet.

But, obviously, he is an expert tight-rope walker, performing his act with an adroitness that he himself is conscious of. As he concedes in an off-the-cuff remark, though a Minister, he has never given an impression that he will compromise on Sri Lankan Tamils' interests. That he will not hesitate to assert his independence was proved when he lashed out at the UNP passing a no-confidence motion against the then Opposition leader and Secretary-General of the Tamil United Liberation Front, A. Amirthalingam. He minced no words in denouncing the "July 1983 holocaust against the Tamils", as he calls it. He still has strong views on those tragic events.

Again, his being a Minister did not deter him from flexing his trade union muscle when the CWC led a successful nine-day strike of plantation labourers in July 1984, which clearly demonstrated his hold on them. He emerged from the strike unscathed and with his ministerial berth intact.

Thondaman, looking alert for his 73 years, never gives away much in his replies, which are terse and diplomatic. He is confident he can solve the problems of plantation workers of Indian origin, outside the peace talks between the Sri Lankan Government delegation and the Tamil liberation organisations. He is largely concerned over the issue of the statelessness of Tamils of Indian origin.

FRONTLINE met him for an interview on September 7 when he was in Madras for a few days:

**QUESTION:** What is your assessment of the present situation in Sri Lanka—the massacre of Tamils in Vavuniya and Trincomalee, Thimpu talks getting adjourned, two former TULF MPs being shot dead, etc ...

**Thondaman:** After the ceasefire, there was relief though there was accusation on both the sides (of ceasefire violations). But unfortunately, of late at Trincomalee, things have taken a bad turn. Actually, the trouble started with (the) July 1983 holocaust and also the problem of settlers in Trincomalee, Vavuniya and other areas.

Now that a settlement is being worked out, some interested persons who were responsible for the 1983 holocaust may be responsible for these troubles because their objective of the 1983 holocaust should not be lost sight of.

**Q:** Does it mean they are preventing a settlement?

**A:** They like to see the results of (the) 1983 holocaust. Their objective may be missed. They organised the holocaust on a purpose and now, when a settlement is taking place, their objective must be advanced. Perhaps that may be the reason. This is only my guess.

**Q:** You have been given a copy of the working paper here and you have also discussed it with Chief Minister M. G. Ramachandran and Electricity Minister S. Ramachandran. How does it compare with the CWC proposals tabled in the All-Party Conference of 1984, which the militants say contain the conceptual elements of their four cardinal principles and would like to discuss it if placed for consideration in the peace talks? Are the draft proposals a refinement or a limitation on the CWC proposals?

**A:** I had a look at the working paper but I had no chance to compare it with the CWC proposals. This has been worked out between the Indian Government and the Sri Lankan Government. This is not a final document but only a working paper, on which basis, to find ways and means (of solving the ethnic issue) ... Whatever point you can introduce in it or stretch it, is possible. It depends on the persons who are going to sit at the table and negotiate.

**Q:** After the Thimpu Phase II was adjourned, there was speculation that your CWC proposals might be tabled through a third party when the peace talks resumed. The Tamil groups were also willing to discuss them.

**A:** It should satisfy the other Tamil groups. I am directly involved in the statelessness (of Indian Tamils).

**Q:** The working paper says that the Sri Lankan Government proposes to grant citizenship to 95,000 people when all persons of Indian origin who have applied for Indian citizenship have been granted such citizenship and are repatriated. What is your comment?

### NATURAL INCREASE

**A:** Ninety-five thousand means nothing. I don't think it covers the real problem. Under the Sirmavo-Shastri agreement of 1964, the Indian Government agreed to take up to 6,00,000 people and there will be a natural increase. Then, only 5,05,000 applied to India. Therefore, India could not give citizenship to those who did not opt for it. Therefore, there is a gap of 95,000 between the commitment of India and the applications made. The Indian Government also said: 'We cannot give citizenship (to those) who do not ask for it.'

Therefore, Mr Jayewardene, two or three years back, accepted that 95,000 and its natural increase will be the concern of the Sri Lankan Government. After the final 5,05,000, only 4,00,000 and its natural increase have been repatriated to India. So, there is a balance of 1,00,000—all the ships (the ferry services) are closed—which have not been processed. Their applications are still unprocessed. I will agree for them to come to India.

**Q:** What are you going to do about stateless people?

**A:** The Indian Government and the Sri Lankan Government, in 1964, agreed to end statelessness. In all, (there are) about four lakhs of stateless persons today, who should be granted citizenship.

Already, the President has agreed with me and the Indian Government to grant citizenship. It is only a question of implementation. So, it is not correct to say 95,000 but 4,00,000 (who should be given citizenship). We are not talking in terms of numbers. We should find

ways and means of ending the statelessness. That should be the objective, not merely numbers.

**Q:** Would you press for a representative of the CWC being included in the Sri Lankan Government delegation to the peace talks just as the Sri Lanka Muslims pressed for the inclusion of a Muslim in the Government delegation?

### OPTIMISM

**A:** I am confident I will sort out my problem outside the conference. (With) my relationship with the Government and the President, I am confident, at that level, I can sort it out as most of the matters have been agreed to informally by us. So, it is only formally making it into an agreement.

**Q:** To go back to the working paper, how does it compare with the CWC proposals?

**A:** I am told some of the elements have been taken from the CWC paper. They have specified something. Unspecified things may be included in the future talks.

**Q:** Mrs. Sirmavo Bandaranaike of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the Buddhist Maha Sangha say there should be a referendum on any peace agreement between the Tamil organisations and the Sri Lanka Government.

**A:** For political purpose, the National Front (consisting of the SLFP, some Buddhist organisations and political parties) ... they will oppose. Sirmavo Bandaranaike's civil rights were removed. They did not like it but the Government did it. The Israeli (interest) section ... many people opposed it. But the Government said 'accept or kick out'. The elected Government will have to do things: when they do, it is in the national interest. It is possible there will be opposition from the SLFP and the Buddhist Maha Sangha; everybody will try (to oppose).

**Q:** Will the Tamil militants be amenable to a peace agreement?

**A:** You are in Madras. So, you will be able to assess their attitude (better) than myself. I am just on a visit.

**Q:** How is the relationship between the Indian Tamils and the Jaffna Tamils? Is it a close relationship?

**A:** It is like asking what is the difference between the Tamilians of Tamil Nadu and the Tamilians living in Bombay. The language is common but they live in two different places. Just like Tamilians of Tamil Nadu and Tamilians of Bombay, we have that sort of relationship.

**Q:** What do you think of the Muslim equation in the ethnic issue?

### POWERFUL MINORITY

**A:** The Muslims are in a powerful minority. They are powerful supporters of the Government. Therefore, the Government will not do anything that will affect their interests.

**Q:** There are reports that the plantation Tamils are also joining the militants as there have been random arrests of them. Again, it is said there may be violence against the plantation Tamils in the near future ...

**A:** About 2,00,000 people have already migrated to North and East when there was shortage of food during the SLFP days (and), when there was trouble ... communal violence in the estate areas. They thought that

North and East were the safest places. They were without any assistance, on their own. They have encroached on Government land and they have settled themselves at a lot of expense. Perhaps, after 1982-83, the Government, got into a notion ... some of those Ministers and other Sinhala politicians thought these 2,00,000 people settled in Tamil areas have been deliberately planted by the Tamil leadership and did everything possible not to regularise their encroachments while the Government's policy is to regularise such encroachments all over the country.

These 2,00,000 people are now undergoing great difficulty and suffering; they have been uprooted from their settlements. Some of them live in jungles and some of them are herded into refugee camps.

There may be stray cases of plantation Tamils getting recruited by the militants but not in substance.

They (the Government) were trying to arrest a lot of plantation youths. Immediately, the CWC took a strong line, protested and the Government put an end to the arrests. Here and there, there were a few arrests and they were released.

The Government has agreed to regularise the encroachments of 2,00,000 people but now the whole place is disturbed.

**Q:** Do you expect an agreement to be reached between the Tamil organisations and the Sri Lankan Government?

**A:** We are all hoping for the best. Our hopes may be one thing; what is happening may be something else. □

Frontline, October 8-18 1983 T. S. S.

## 18 TAMILS KILLED

### IN SRI LANKA

THE STATESMAN Oct. 3  
COLOMBO, Oct. 2.—Eighteen Tamil militants were killed when security forces raided their hideout in Sri Lanka's Vavuniya district, the Defence Ministry said, reports Reuter.

A spokesman said a cache of ammunition, including 87 mortar shells, five mortars, 500 detonators and 500 kg of explosives, were recovered from the guerrilla camp.

The security forces rounded up nearly 400 suspected separatists in the northern and eastern provinces during the past six days, the spokesman added.

AFP add: Police have detained more than 600 Tamils from eastern and north-central Sri Lanka for screening in connexion with militant separatist activity, a newspaper said today.

The PLOT leaders—Uma Maheswaran and R. Vasudeva also met Bhandari in Madras and they also felt the "handpicked" panel would not do the job impartially. ... strong reservations about the Sri Lankan Government-appointed panel to police the ceasefire.

PLOT leaders said they were not prepared to enter into full negotiations with the Colombo regime until their demands for a firming up of the ceasefire have been met.

# Detached from reality

It is the sneaking hope that the military option can be used successfully that tempts some in authority in Sri Lanka to keep the tackling of the core issues in cold storage. The present impasse has been very useful from the point of view of logistics of the country's armed forces. Those in the know are, however, convinced that the path of conflict will only hurt both sides as the cyclical violence which is endemic in such a situation will continue to take a large toll of innocent lives.

The average citizen who lives away from the zone of action and counteraction has no knowledge of the intensity of the problem, nor is he truly aware of the violence and the carnage which have featured every incident that has worked against the principle of cessation of hostilities. That average person, whether he is a Sinhalese or a Tamil, has shown this tendency to disassociate himself with the conflict because he believes it stems from ethnic dogmas rather than actuality.

The size of the country and the nature of the people are such that centralisation of the power to rule and the concentration of the control of the economy in Colombo are thought of as a natural order of things. That an acceptable political solution will have to provide for a meaningful devolution of powers is still not recognised. The only thing the man in the street will concede is that the problem itself was a creation of politicians and that they should find a solution.

The failure of successive governments to pay attention to a problem which could have been solved before violence escalated is the standard excuse the average citizen trots out whenever he himself has become aware of any of the numerous instances in which the forces have taken the 'retaliatory' measures. The drama over the deportation by India of some of those who represented the Tamil militant groups in the India-assisted talks and the murder of two Tamil politicians helped serve the Government's interest in buying more time to achieve its real designs.

## GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE

The large-scale military operation which was run in Trincomalee for nearly a fortnight while the talks remained stalled was indicative of the Government's attitude to use peace as a means to run a war. "We are waging a battle in Trincomalee," the President proclaimed in the muzzled press. Justifying every operation as caused by the need to flush 'terrorists' out of their

camps is standard procedure. Any observer should be well aware that any action run against militants will inflict casualties on the armed forces too. The figures of next to nil losses in the forces make the whole thing laughable.

The unitary nature of the Sri Lankan Constitution is held up as the inviolable concept which prevents the Government from offering devolution of power as a solution. The true reason is the bandwagon of Sinhala chauvinism which those in power set in motion long ago and which has served the political ends of the party in power. The moderate success of the open market economy that has been in existence for eight years has had an impact on everyone's personal life in proportion to his wealth and hence the capital is as detached from reality as Thimpu is from Trincomalee.

## ECONOMIC PRESSURES

There are pressures building up on the economy not only because the ethnic conflict has triggered another cycle of expenditure on arms and an appreciable increase in the defence budget. The difficulties the tea trade has run into in the international market and the total collapse of the tourism industry are constricting the inflow of foreign exchange which is so easily drained by the import of capital goods and every imaginable type of consumer durables and non-durables.

The slump in the tea industry has nothing to do with the ethnic conflict, but the collapse of tourism can be attributed only to the troubles that have racked the country since the crisis blew up two years ago. The luxury hotels of Colombo have no occupancy to speak of and the casinos that were built by the dozen, hope the rich locals will continue to try their luck at the roulette, blackjack, baccarat and the slot machines.

Not to be outdone by the President, who was a witness to Sri Lanka's Test triumph and who found its timing most suitable to lead his party to victory in the hustings at Mullikirigala, the Opposition leaders are reported to have turned up at the match that might have decided the one-day series. The sensing of victory did not prove right this time but the cricket loss was a letdown of the Lankan Tamil sentiment and India's cricket diplomacy was a failure too.

The setting up of a powerless three-man non-official agency to monitor the cessation of hostilities is bound to be an exercise in futility as at least two of the members are beholden to the Government. Sovereignty will not permit

the acceptance of an international peacekeeping force and the forces will still be free to pursue their military objectives. The primary one is that of creating a security zone around Trincomalee before the focus is set on Batticaloa.

The military movement is also aimed towards cutting off Mannar in the north-west. Already hit by the non-running of trains, the town is also starved of electricity which is fuel-based since Mannar is not connected to the national grid. An exodus of Tamils from Trincomalee and Mannar will fulfil objectives too as the attempted change in the demographic profile is being facilitated. The infringement of fundamental rights by way of arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings and excesses by the armed forces, etc. is being carried out with impunity and still the man in Colombo will continue to believe the problem can be wished away or that the problem does not exist at all. □

A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

## PLOTE

Some of the guerrilla groups, including the People's Liberation Organisation for Tamil Eelam, have brought in instructors from the fighting in Beirut.

Mr Shirley Skantha, a PLOTE leader, says his group has 6,000 armed men in the field on the island and it is believed that there may be around 20,000 all together, though not all with modern weapons.

PLOTE is waiting for what it believes will be a direct confrontation with Government troops, although it cheerfully admits to two bank raids in Colombo to meet its financial needs.

Other groups have differing strategies. While Eros has bombed holiday hotels and government buildings to inflict economic damage, the liberation "Tigers" and the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation have concentrated on "hit-and-run" tactics, ambushing army and police patrols, inflicting heavy casualties but also provoking reprisals.

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