

forests and wastelands far from Delhi, have become the forgotten poor of our society, fit only for exploitation. The voice of these people must be heard in Delhi.

I had given a commitment that we would safeguard the dignity of the farmers who work in the fields and on the threshing floors. We gave them better, more just prices for their produce and lightened their burden of debt. But our ambition to forge a national policy for agriculture remained unfulfilled for the lack of time. In this decade of the farmer, we shall continue to fight for his rights.

The National Front Government had wished to give the working classes and the weaker sections of our society not just concessions but a share in decision-making. We wanted women to be represented in the panchayats, labour to have a share in the management, and young people to have a say in the building and running of this country. We had wanted our educated youths to have secure and productive lives. We wanted to safeguard not only their physical but also their

mental well-being. We cannot forget our ex-soldiers. We have done our bit to improve their lot.

While we were able to set right our relations with our neighbours, particularly China, Nepal, Sri Lanka, our problems with Pakistan continue. We want friendly relations with Pakistan but in spite of our best efforts we could not succeed so far. Problems of Punjab, Kashmir and Assam still remain on the national agenda.

I wish to thank all those who gave their support to the National Front Government, specially the Left parties who gave us unflinching support. We are grateful to them.

This is the country of Bapu, of Netaji, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Jayaprakash Narayan and Rammanohar Lohia. The ideals of unity and social justice that they put forward before us will be the beacons that will light our future. I have faith in you. I have faith in the nation.

Jai Hind. ○ aus: 'Mainstream', 17.11.90

Sri Lanka

Zwischen dem 27. Oktober und dem 4. November 1990 besuchten zwei Abgeordnete des Europäischen Parlamentes sowie zwei Rechtsanwälte aus Belgien und den Niederlanden Sri Lanka. Nachfolgend veröffentlichen wir ihren Bericht im Wortlaut:

1. Aim of Mission

The mission was organised to complete a report on violation of human rights in Sri Lanka and the disappearance of Sri Lankans.

2. Background

Sri Lanka has had direct universal suffrage since 1931. The UNP (United National Party) replaced the SLFP (Sri Lanka Freedom Party) in the 1977 election as the governing party of Sri Lanka. The UNP extended its term of office by referendum in 1983 and cancelled the elections which were due to be held. The 1989 elections were held in an atmosphere of intimidation with the nationalist radical JVP calling for a boycott of the election.

Disappearances and extra-judicial executions have been reported with increasing frequency since mid 1983. In addition, in the late 70-s opposition groups engaged in armed struggle to establish a separate Tamil State. From July 1987, armed opposition escalated in the Sinhala majority areas of southern Sri Lanka and were particularly numerous towards the latter half of 1989.

In addition, the Prevention of Terrorism Act and Emergency Powers Regulations gives power to police and armed forces to arrest and detain suspects without any democratic accountability.

3. Methodology

In order to obtain the widest possible view of the current situation in human rights, we met Members of Parliament across the political spectrum, the State

Minister of Defence, the Army Commander, and representatives of a number of human rights organisations.

We met about 250 relatives of disappeared people and interviewed about 50 families. We have obtained at least 1500 written documented cases of people who have disappeared. Conclusions and findings in this report are restricted to information which was verifiable by verbal testimony or written report. Names and details of address have been omitted to protect the people involved and their relatives.

4. Findings

Reports were received of people who have been taken and their bodies later discovered often burned or mutilated. Other people were taken into custody and disappeared after release from custody. In many cases, people have disappeared without any trace. Families seeking information about their relatives from the police station receive no information and are still waiting to hear.

Various estimates we have received, suggest that at least 60.000 people disappeared in the South of Sri Lanka since 1987. This represents about one in every 250 of the population. This excludes the North and East of Sri Lanka. During our stay, we received reports of continuing disappearances, for example between 20 and 50 per week in the Kandy area since 1990.

A large number of reports were received alleging direct or indirect involvement of the police and armed forces. Sometimes, it appeared that vigilante forces

operating on behalf of armed forces and police took away relatives at night. Sometimes police in uniform, or police in plain clothes, but known to be police took away relatives. The Prevention of Terrorism Act and Emergency Powers Regulations appear to be abused.

When we asked the Minister of Defence and the Chief of Army for explanations of the killings and disappearances, the Chief of Army attributed some killings to army deserters and people dismissed from the Army. The Minister of Defence admitted that there had been some excesses in the Jaffna area and during the JVP insurrection, but stated that there was a police investigation underway.

We were appalled by accounts of brutality. For example, we received one account of six boys who were publicly shot and beheaded and mutilated by police (some in uniform) in front of a bank for allegedly raiding a bank. Two boys had been in police custody at the time of the bank raid and it was, therefore impossible for them to have taken part in the raid. In another case, a mother reported that her son had been abducted in the early hours of the morning and two days later his head was left outside her home.

In addition, we discovered many groups are restricted in their operations. For example trade unions may not operate in the free trade zones and are intimidated if taking part in industrial action elsewhere. H.M. Ranjith disappeared after making a complaint about dangerous machinery. Lawyers are threatened who make habeas corpus applications on behalf of disappeared and some lawyers have actually disappeared themselves. Journalists have to exercise extreme caution and some have disappeared as a result of publicising the human rights situation. The killing of Journalist Richard de Zoysa and disappearance of Lakshman Perera, UNP municipal councillor for Mount Lavinia, co-authors of a satirical play are significant because this raised the consciousness of the middleclass of Colombo to the gravity of the situation.

Conclusions

1. Although the army and authorities deny responsibility for the killings and disappearances, the scale is such that the State cannot be absolved from responsibility. The State has either failed in its duty to maintain law and order or has condoned the activities of the security forces.

2. The Government claims that the JVP problem was resolved in December 1989. It claims that any problems of violence are now restricted to the North and East of Sri Lanka. According to the Government, the situation is normalised in the South but it is apparent that many killings and disappearances continue.

3. It seems clear to the delegation that many people are affected by a climate of fear and terror in the country. If this continues, it is feared that there will be retaliation and blood baths in the future.

4. Fear of economic collapse has fuelled the intimidation and the continuation of the underlying climate of violence and repression.

5. The growth of human rights groups illustrates an increasing will to find a solution to the problems of the country through peaceful and democratic means.

6. For a lasting solution, mutual trust and harmony among various communities should be promoted. No distinction should be made on the basis of caste, race, ethnicity, religion or language. Human, civil and democratic rights of all communities should be

M.P. produces bones of 14 year old

SLFP MP Mahinda Rajapaksa (Hambantota) yesterday produced the bones of what he claimed to be a 14 year old child and bullets found near the bones. Mr. Rajapaksa told

Parliament that he had travelled "throughout the country" and seen "bodies and bodies".

He claimed that he had picked up bullets near the bodies.

aus: 'Island', 21.11.90

guaranteed in actual practice by the state, legal process and law and order forces in the country.

Recommendations

1. According to President Premadasa the latest foreign aid package to Sri Lanka shows that the Government's programmes and policies are endorsed by the whole world (Reported in the Sri Lanka Daily News, Monday, October 29th, 1990). Despite the European Council of Minister's Declaration of October 1990 linking aid to human rights in Sri Lanka, which we welcome, we feel that there must be a real mechanism to identify progress in human rights and law and order, before any further aid packages are agreed.

2. We support the visit of the United Nations Subcommittee on Disappearances and Human Rights which was accepted by the Minister of Defence for February 1991.

3. We support an investigation into disappearances by an independent body and would support the resolution of the Sri Lankan Bar Council for an enquiry by an independent Commission.

4. We wish to encourage increased cooperation between the Government and the International Red Cross.

Christine Oddy, Member of the European Parliament
Alex Smith, Member of the European Parliament
Bernard Dewitt, Belgian Lawyer
Corjan Schoorl, Dutch Lawyer

November 1990