

The Bhutan REVIEW

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UNHCHR VISITS BHUTAN, NEPAL

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Jose Ayala Lasso arrived in Kathmandu on July 31. In Nepal he will hold talks with His Majesty's Government and representatives of human rights organizations. He will also visit the Bhutanese refugee camps in eastern Nepal on August 2.

The post of High Commissioner was set up by the UN General Assembly on 20 December 1993 in accordance with the recommendation of the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in June 1993. Ayala Lasso who was appointed the first High Commissioner early this year has already visited countries in Europe and Africa is currently meeting with governments and human rights groups in Asia.

Earlier Lasso paid an official visit to Bhutan from 27 to 30 July. He was granted an audience by the King Jigme Singye Wangchuck and also met Foreign Minister Dawa Tsering and Home Minister Dago Tshering.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, 73RD SESSION

The National Assembly of Bhutan will meet in Thimphu for its seventy-third session sometime in September or October. The announcement was made recently by the National Assembly secretariat.

The National Assembly has 150 members excluding the King, of whom 105 represent the public, 12 are from the monk body and the balance 33 are nominated by the King from among government officials. The delineation of constituencies for the 105 members "elected" from the public has little bearing on the actual population - Lhotshampas of southern Bhutan who constitute close to half the total population are represented by just 12 members.

WHO REALLY RULES BHUTAN?



"Pardoned but not released" - Tek Nath Rizal in jail

In the annual report released recently by Amnesty International (AI), one passage stands out: "As the local Bhutanese authorities in the south re-

portedly continued to pressurize Nepali-speakers to leave the country, Bhutan's Head of State, King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, appar-

ently sought to counter this by himself visiting villages in the south to try and dissuade the people from leaving." This begs the question,

who really rules Bhutan? The King or his minions? Is it plausible that the government of an absolute monarch, and the King himself, is unable to rein-

in over-zealous local authorities?

Amnesty International, in its annual report, **Report 1994** has charged the Royal Government of Bhutan with holding hundreds of suspected government opponents in detention without charge or trial, some for more than two years. AI also states that the use of torture and ill-treatment by security forces continued to be reported in prisons and police stations in the south.

According to the report, the Royal Government denied AI permission to send an observer to witness the trial of Tek Nath Rizal in 1993. Abducted from Nepal and incarcerated without charge since November 1989, Rizal was tried during 1993 under a Security Act promulgated only in 1992. After a 10 month farcical trial Rizal was found guilty of four of nine charges and sentenced to life. He was

"then pardoned but not released"; he will be released only after the southern problem has been resolved.

At least 10,000 refugees

fled the country during 1993, the report states. Refugees reported various deliberate measures by local authorities to force genuine Bhutanese into exile, including threats and coercion to obtain signatures on migration forms agreeing to accept compensation and to willingly leave the country. Some were evicted because of relatives already in refugee camps, and others because they had relatives among political prisoners being held in Bhutan, the report further adds.

Each year AI brings out a compendium which monitors the general human rights conditions as well as specific issues or cases of concern in individual countries. **Report 1994** covering the human rights situation between January and December 1993 in 151 countries was released this July. The 352 page report this year is dedicated to victims of human rights abuse and to the

men and women who provide AI with information, often at great risk, to make the country reports possible.

See also Page 3

NO SOUTHERN PROBLEM, TERRY JONES

After three and a half years as Royal Government spokesman and UNDP Resident Representative for "northern" Bhutan, Terrence D. Jones left the country on 16 July. Contravening all United Nations norms of impartiality, Jones all along worked against the interest of southern Bhutanese in particular and downtrodden Bhutanese in general. He turned a blind eye to the gross violation of human rights that took place during his tenure. He preferred to be a party to government regulations which required a six year old child to produce a No Objection Certificate from the Royal Bhutan Police for school enrollment. He went along with government regulations that deprived UN funded higher studies/training abroad to hundreds of southern Bhutanese simply because of their ethnic background. Jones not only sanctioned UNDP financing for the government propaganda machinery but shamelessly spoke out in support of discriminatory policies of the Royal Government.

It was not surprising, therefore, that even as the country is going through its most serious crisis with the King pledging to abdicate if he cannot find a solution, in his part-

ing interview with *Kuensel* Jones chose not to question the regime's policies or acknowledge problems in the southern half of the country. Responding to a pointedly leading query on the problems he sees Bhutan facing today, the man at the helm of international assistance to Bhutan saw growing urbanization as the only cause for concern! It is extraordinary that anyone in Bhutan could be capable of ignoring the reality of the forced eviction of thousands of southern Bhutanese. Still more extraordinary is the ability of Jones to pretend that he is unaware of the massive inputs from UN sister agencies and the international community for the relief and welfare of refugees generated by the very government he advocates others should learn from. Most extraordinary is the failure of Jones, with all his professed sympathies for Bhutan, to see the threat that the current situation poses for the nation.

Instead, making a mockery of the concerns being expressed by the international community and adding to the indignity of refugees made homeless and stateless by the same government, Jones says: "I encourage you to simply show the rest of the world

how a government can function because there are many governments around the world that need instruction and advice and guidance." The brazen suggestion is likely to be especially unpalatable to governments like the United States which has flayed the Royal Government through its annual State Department reports, and human rights groups such as the Amnesty International which continues to be concerned by the poor human rights situation in Bhutan. It is incredible that the country representative of the UN system which is guided by principles that not only encourage but actively support the establishment of democratic institutions around the world, is able to flaunt his sycophancy and overtly espouse the cause of a totalitarian government that is currently in the docks for its human rights record.

The transfer of Jones was long overdue. Abundant personal favours and the chance for the Joneses to hobnob with royalty so clouded his vision, that decisions emanating from the UN system in Thimphu during the three years Terry Jones spent in Bhutan always lacked moral conviction. With his departure, the Bhutanese refugee community heaves a sigh of relief.

AKIKO NAITO-YUGE NEW UN CHIEF IN BHUTAN

The new Resident Coordinator for United Nations Systems Operational Activities for Development in Bhutan and UNDP Resident Representative, Ms Akiko Naito-Yuge recently took over from the controversial Terrence D. Jones (see separate story). Presenting her credentials to the Foreign Minister on 22 July, Ms Naito-Yuge said that considering the financial constraints faced by the world body, the focus of UN assisted programmes would be in areas where there will be maximum impact.

Under the circumstances prevailing in the country, programmes geared towards establishment of the rule of law, respect for fundamental freedoms and rights of citizens and democratic reforms are the needs of the hour. With over 17 years of working experience in the United Nations System, it is hoped that the new Resident Coordinator will take a holistic approach to development which, among others, include human rights and democracy.

The Bhutan REVIEW

THE TRAGEDY OF REFUGEES

But for the fact that the media is at the site of the upheaval, recording and transmitting pictures and voices as proof of the disaster, one could have been forgiven for refusing to believe that over a million Rwandan refugees crossed over the border into Zaire in just three days in mid-July. The tragic consequences of such a massive displacement were immediate; the scale of the human tragedy now unfolding on the Rwanda-Zaire border is so immense that it is mind-boggling.

The swiftness with which the lives of people in the small central African country suddenly turned topsy-turvy is incredible. In just over three months, the political turmoil sparked by the death of the country's President, a Hutu, in an air crash on April 6 reportedly claimed over a million lives, mainly minority Tutsis and some moderate Hutus opposed to the government, while more than two million Rwandans are now refugees.

Over the course of the 14-week civil war, the minority Tutsis were at the receiving end for much of the time as the majority Hutus who formed the government since the end of the 1950s went on a rampage, mindlessly killing innocent Tutsis and forcing a large number of them to seek refuge in Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda. The bodies of hundreds of thousands Tutsis were fished out of the rivers and lakes in Burundi. But with the advance, and eventual victory, of the rebel forces of the Tutsi dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) there was a sudden panic flight of the former oppressors, the majority Hutus. Fearing reprisals at the hands of the victorious rebel forces, well over a million Rwandan Hutus, civilians as well as members of the defeated government forces, trudged into Zaire.

Over a million human beings, significantly more than the entire population of Bhutan, huddled together in vast open spaces; it is a tragic situation which has drawn worldwide attention for its sheer enormity. A desperate battle is being waged against cholera even as logistics for providing clean drinking water, food and shelter are still being organized. For governments and humanitarian agencies that have responded yet again to another man-made crisis, it is a nightmare.

Ethnic conflict and terrifying civil war in Rwanda or a sinister government-implemented expulsion programme in Bhutan, in the end, refugee-life takes on a common denominator. And as refugees forced to seek sanctuary outside our

own country we are painfully conscious of the extent of the crisis in Rwanda. Having had to initially fend for ourselves we can also appreciate the requirement of space and materials to house a refugee family, and the minimum water, food and medical supplies that are essential for bare survival. We can share in the desperation and helplessness of the Rwandan refugees in the battle against hunger and disease in the camps. And, having had to share in the pains of hunger and illness before outside help poured in, we, perhaps more than others, are overwhelmed by the sheer numbers in the Rwandan tragedy. But, if there is any misconception that the tragedy facing Bhutanese refugees in eastern Nepal is of a lower order simply because we are less than 87,000, then there is cause for protest.

Who will argue with the mother whose child died of cholera in the Maidhar refugee camp in eastern Nepal that her single loss cannot compare with the combined grief of thousands of Rwandan mothers because the same disease is taking a life every minute in the Rwandan camp in Zaire? Will the grieving widow in Beldangi find solace in reports that a million people were killed in Rwanda? Will the poor farmer in Timai camp forced to leave behind a tiny house be comforted by the knowledge that thousands of rich Rwandans were compelled to abandon palatial homes? Will the young child in Sanischare camp be consoled by the argument that her loss of a chance for proper schooling cannot compare with the loss of opportunities of thousands of students now in Rwandan refugee camps?

Refugee totals, or the percentage of a country's population forced to flee, do indeed reflect the extent of problems within the country and exposes the degree of oppression and fear that causes the exodus of refugees. But for each individual refugee who has suffered humiliation and indignity, been beaten and bruised, lost possessions and loved ones, and been uprooted from home and hearth, his pain and suffering are infinite in themselves. A thousand or a million, for someone who has lost everything, the cumulative sum of anguish and despair for the group is still only equal to his own.

Such feelings notwithstanding, the huge numerical disparity between refugee populations in eastern Nepal and western Zaire cannot fail to stick out. There is an even more significant difference, however, which may not be quite so obvious. It lies in the irony that refugee camps continue to exist in both Zaire and Nepal for completely contradictory reasons. There are Rwandans in Zaire because Rwandan refugees refuse to heed their Government's appeals to return home; there are Bhutanese in Nepal because the Bhutanese Government refuses to allow Bhutanese refugees to return home. The international community, oddly, must continue to provide for both groups -- that is the larger tragedy.

50TH SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The 50th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights was held in Geneva from 31 January to 11 March 1994. The International Service for Human Rights, an international association serving human rights defenders brought out a special edition of its quarterly publication **Human Rights Monitor** in April 1994 to cover the Commission proceedings. Produced below are excerpts from the publication.

The rights of refugees

The account presented by Mrs Sadako Ogata, High Commissioner for Refugees, drew the attention of all members and observers. One of the first questions Mrs. Ogata tackled was that of the exponential increase of the number of refugees and displaced persons within a country, by mentioning the situations in former Yugoslavia, Somalia and in different areas of Africa, Central Asia and the Caucasus. Most refugees are the victims of serious human rights violations and internal conflicts, often of an ethnic character.

Everybody recognizes, stressed Mrs Ogata, that the violations of human rights consti-

tute one of the root causes of the refugee tides and an obstacle to the return to their country. The respect of human rights in the countries of origin are thus of utmost importance. It is also just as important to guarantee human rights in host countries.

Following the dominant tendency during the cold war to distinguish between human rights and refugee issues, the link between these two issues has now become evident. The UNHCR registers an increasing number of human rights problems of refugees. Restrictive or even repressive measures, in addition to multiple racist attacks, affect women and young girls most.

The ideal solution to the refugee problem is clearly voluntary repatriation. Yet, with the condition, stressed Mrs. Ogata, that the refugees are able to return to their country in security and dignity. One cannot claim that thousands of Afghan refugees returned to their country in conditions of security. However, we can be more positive about the return of 370,000 Cambodians in 1993. The fact that a unit of the Centre for Human Rights exists in Cambodia and that in other situations international observers are sent to the field can considerably improve protection,

The international community must deal with the root causes of the refugee problem concluded Mrs. Ogata, and emphasized the importance of preventive diplomacy.

Responsibility of States

A retrograde tendency is also to be observed in regard to another fundamental principle - that of the international responsibility of States. Governments with serious human rights problems endeavour by every possible means to duck their responsibility. They do this by becoming members of the Commission; by using the loophole of the advisory services (thus avoiding resolutions under agenda item 12 on violations) and pleading lack of resources. The most recent attempt involves the creation of an additional loophole by invoking terrorism as a cause of violations.

The argument of these present-day Pontius Pilates is simple. They admit that many murders are being committed in their countries but state that these murders cannot be attributed to the institutions responsible for public order; responsibility lies with groups

beyond the reach of State authority.

Nobody questions that certain terrorist movements commit unacceptable deeds, and everyone is ready to condemn such crimes. However, terrorist crimes cannot be treated as "violations of human rights", since hitherto such "violations" have fallen within the ambit of the international responsibility of the State.

TO BE A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION...

What would you do if you were a diplomat representing a repressive country? The first step you would take would be to move heaven and earth to ensure that no information on the seriousness of the situation reached Geneva. You would be the first to bring pressure on the officials of the Centre for Human Rights to induce them to shelve the files received, or at least to cut certain passages out of a draft report (of which you will have received prior notice thanks to the confidence of sympathisers).

As the non-governmental organizations keep up the pressure, submitting year after year well-documented files on the situation, the effectiveness of the preventive

measures you have taken will gradually weaken. You will then have to attack those who denounce your country and the experts of the Sub-commission who are incautious enough to submit draft resolutions condemning you.

When ultimately all these efforts prove in vain, you would consider the extreme solution - that of becoming a member of the Commission on Human Rights to seek to avoid condemnation more effectively.

The above may appear sarcastic and overdone; but it is a logical (process) which explains why so many repressive States are clamouring at the doors and becoming members of the Commission. Not only can a member State which is a member of the Commission parry attacks more easily; it can also come to amicable arrangements with other countries which are potential targets of draft resolutions.

It is thus not surprising that a number of the Commission have not ratified the **International Covenants** and have failed to reply to communications from Rapporteurs and experts. All too few of the

States on the Commission are genuinely interested in promotion and respect for human rights. This is regrettable but true. It is also the context within which human rights defenders have to operate at an international level.

By their membership of the Commission **China, Colombia, Libya, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru and Sri Lanka** effectively protect themselves from condemnation. Their delegations are also active in hampering the development of the system and weakening the procedures which might one day bring them directly under the spotlight.

Other member of the Commission (Cuba, Indonesia, Iran, Sudan) are fighting tooth and nail to block the supervisory mechanisms concerning them. The Cuban delegation is the most expert at this game. Thanks to its determinant role in most of the sensitive files, it blackmails the Commission with threats of blockage, and the price of condemnation of Cuba is continually rising.

[**Bhutan, earlier elected to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for a three year period beginning 1993 has now been elected (effective January 1995) to the Commission on Human Rights. - Ed.]**

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT 1994 - Excerpts

The year under review - 1993 - was a historic year for human rights at the UN with the convening of the first global conference on human rights in 25 years, followed by the decision of the General Assembly to establish a High Commissioner for Human Rights as a new high-level official with principal responsibility for all human rights activities within the UN system. The UN World Conference on Human Rights was held in Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993. The Conference was beset by political difficulties throughout and did not, by itself, achieve far-reaching results expected of such an event. However, it did raise the profile of human rights within the UN and focussed international attention on these issues.

The world's refugee population continued to grow in 1993. By the end of the year, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated the total number of refugees who had been forced to abandon their homes at almost 20 million. The vast ma-

majority fled to neighbouring countries; others went further afield. Many of the countries where large refugee populations sought protection are among the world's poorest.

Behind these movements of people whose lives have been irrevocably disrupted lie histories of persecution and brutality. Many refugees have fled in fear of arbitrary detention, "disappearances", torture or extrajudicial executions committed by governments cracking down on dissent or targeting specific ethnic or religious groups. Others have been forced to seek sanctuary abroad because their countries are racked by armed conflict in which government forces or armed opposition groups have shown blatant disregard for human rights.

The patterns of human rights abuses that Amnesty International seeks to combat have become more and more complex in recent years. The hopes for peace and justice raised by the end of the Cold War have not been fulfilled. A spate of local wars, often ac-

companied by the virtual disintegration of state authority, have spread turmoil and terror. On different continents, some new (or newly revived) democracies have made a shaky but promising start; others have descended into political chaos. Nationalist, ethnic and religious conflict, famine and repression have led to massive movements of refugees. More and more countries, especially wealthy ones, have closed their doors to people who need and deserve sanctuary.

These horrific events illuminate the interdependence and indivisibility of human rights more powerful than any abstract argument. In this increasingly volatile human rights environment, Amnesty International offers a structure for people from all continents to campaign for human rights and influence events worldwide as well as in their own regions. Amnesty International is determined to adapt to the evolving realities by adjusting its responses. It must play its role within the broader human rights movement. And it must transcend its Western roots

and continue to develop as a truly international, multicultural human rights movement.

This annual report exposes the enormous gap between the rhetoric and reality -- what governments say about human rights and what they actually do. It could not have been put together without the contribution of the thousands of human rights activists who are standing up for human rights in their communities; many of them have had to risk their lives or defy their government to search for the truth.

As government repression and bitter civil conflict threaten large parts of the world, it is becoming increasingly clear that humanity's best hope lies with the millions of ordinary people involved in the worldwide human rights movement. We are proud to be a part of this movement, and urge all readers to join us in action.

"IN QUOTES"

"Governments that victimize human rights activists almost invariably have a great deal to hide. If they cannot tolerate people speaking out for the most basic rights of their fellow citizens, it is highly likely that they will not tolerate dissent and therefore rely on fear and violence to maintain their power."

REPORT 1994, Amnesty International.

"I am not a politician. I do not make rhetorical statements. I do not make threats. If the southern problem cannot be resolved, if a permanent solution cannot be found, then the king should be held accountable and resign."

King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, quoted in The Times, London - April 19, 1994.

MEDIA SCAN

Modern Spirit

The Minister, seated in an armchair, launched into a speech advocating the benefits of government intervention in matters relating to tourism, heritage and the environment.

"How can we let happen to Bhutan what has happened to our neighbours? It would be a disaster that would spell the end of our culture." The Minister of Trade and Industry (whose portfolio covers tourism), Lyonpo Om Pradhan, a member of the inner circle of the King's cabinet was alluding to the catastrophic

effects tourism has had on the cultures, peoples and environment of Nepal.

With the flag of the Thunder Dragon stationed behind his desk and a photograph of the King above his chair, Minister Pradhan spoke with the authority that juxtaposes his position. Eloquent and elegantly dressed in *kho*, the Minister beguiles his subjects with a charm that exposes his years as the kingdom's Ambassador to Delhi.

Can a country exist in the 1990s where televisions are as good as forbidden, national dress is obligatory and telephones have only just reached half the population? And what do young and old, educated and non-educated think of the government and its rigid policies? And finally what of the future? Can Bhutan continue to resist a world whose electronic magnets know no borders and appear to have no limits?

SAWASDEE (Thai International Airways) - June 1994.

Nepalese migrants turn backs on Bhutan

A farmer of Nepalese descent, Ganeshyam Pockeral, in a few days will sign away his citizenship of the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan where he was born, and move to a United Nations refugee camp in Jhapa, east Nepal. He will not say so, but he is part of a campaign of ethnic expansion.

He is not being expelled. His land has not been confiscated. He has not been threatened or coerced. The government, dominated by indigenous Drukpas, wants him to stay: indeed, it has tempted him with money.

For a week Mr Pockeral, now homeless, has been sitting under a blue tarpaulin sheet on the banks of a river with his wife and four children. When his emigration documents are ready, he will leave. He says nothing can change his mind. What he does not say is that he is convinced he will return and reclaim his land and more besides, when southern Bhutan is controlled by ethnic Nepalese.

Nepalese in southern Bhutan say the authorities have gone out of their way to treat them well. "Bhutan is a good country. The king is a good man," Mr Pockeral says. He and 37 other legally resident ethnic Nepalese families who are planning to leave have been offered a three-year tax holiday in a royal edict issued last week. Some have agreed to stay. The king has made several personal trips to southern Bhutan to persuade legally resident Nepalese to stay. There are perhaps 150,000 ethnic Nepalese left in Bhutan after the exodus.

The Times, London - April 4, 1994.

Kind Authorities, Good Country, Good King - why, indeed, should a poor illiterate farmer stay in such a place? Perhaps Christopher Thomas at The Times in London knows more about human character than we do.

BHUTAN

A prisoner of conscience, a former adviser to the King, was sentenced to life imprisonment in November, then pardoned but not released. Hundreds of Nepali-speaking people who had been arrested in 1993 and previous years remained in detention without charge or trial throughout the year. They included possible prisoners of conscience. The use of torture and ill-treatment by the security forces continued to be reported.

At least 10,000 Nepali-speaking people from southern Bhutan fled to Nepal, bringing the total who had fled since 1990 to 85,000. Many had left as a result of unrest due to the government policy of national integration on the basis of northern Bhutanese traditions and culture and the continuing census operations which were being conducted in the south of the country to identify Bhutanese nationals (see previous Amnesty International Reports). Among them were many refugees who had been classified as illegal immigrants during the census.

Some refugees said that although they had been classified as Bhutanese citizens in the census, local authorities had deliberately taken various measures to force them into exile. Some reported being threatened by local government officials and coerced into signing a migration form which stated they had agreed to accept compensation for their land and leave the country willingly. Some said they had been forced to leave by the authorities because they already had relatives living in refugee camps in eastern Nepal, others because they were relatives of political prisoners being held in Bhutan. Many refugees said that their Bhutanese citizenship cards and other papers had been confiscated by the Bhutanese authorities before they left the country. The houses of some refugees were reportedly dismantled by authorities after they had left the country.

Attacks on civilians in southern Bhutan, including incidents of armed robbery during which villagers were beaten or stabbed and sometimes killed, continued to be reported throughout the year and were attributed by the government to members of opposition groups, termed "anti-nationals".

The government of Bhutan and Nepal reached an agreement in October that the refugees would be screened and classified into four different categories. Discussion on the mechanism for verification and what would happen to the four categories of refugees was deferred until February 1994. As the local Bhutanese authorities in the south reportedly continued to pressurize Nepali-speakers to leave the country, Bhutan's Head of State, King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, apparently sought to counter this by himself visiting villages in the south to try and dissuade the people from leaving. The King also reportedly instructed district administrators not to accept emigration applications without first checking to see whether those submitting them genuinely wished to emigrate. The King also reportedly continued to reject proposals made by some members of the National Assembly that suspected government opponents should be expelled from the country.

Tek Nath Rizal, a prisoner of conscience, was convicted in November on four out of nine charges under the National Security Act, 1992, and sentenced to life imprisonment, after a trial lasting 10 months. He had been arrested in 1989 for allegedly initiating unrest among the Nepali-speaking population in the south, after he had petitioned the King over his concerns about the 1988 census and had campaigned against the government's policy of national integration. In a royal decree issued in November, the King pardoned Tek Nath Rizal but said he would only be released after the governments of Nepal and Bhutan had resolved the refugee problem.

Hundreds of other suspected opponents continued to be detained without trial. Some had been held for more than two years. Deo Dutta Sharma had completed more than three years in detention without trial by the end of 1993 and many of some 170 or more untried political detainees at Chemgang detention camp had been held for more than two years by the end of 1993. At least 20 other political prisoners were tried during the year but details of the charges, the proceedings and the outcome of the trials were not known.

Former political detainees reported that after the International Committee of the Red Cross first visited Chemgang detention camp in January their shackles had been removed and conditions had improved. There were new reports of torture and ill-treatment at police stations and prisons in the south but these were fewer than in previous years. In one case, a former detainee said that he had been beaten on the soles of the feet while in custody at Gaylegphug police station and kept handcuffed for eight months while in detention at Lodrai Jail in Gaylegphug District.

There were allegations of abuses by "anti-nationals", but details were difficult to verify.

In January Amnesty International told the government that it wished to send an observer to the trial of Tek Nath Rizal, but the authorities refused to permit this. Amnesty International continued to call for his immediate and unconditional release, and all other political prisoners to be promptly and fairly tried or else released. Amnesty International also sought information about the case of Deo Dutta Sharma: in response, the government informed Amnesty International of his place of detention but did not disclose the charges against him or whether his trial had begun.

BUILD-UP TO THE 73RD SESSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The 73rd session of the National Assembly of Bhutan has been scheduled for sometime in September or October this year. Making this announcement recently, the National Assembly secretariat called on members and government departments to submit points for deliberation.

The focus of the last few sessions has been the problem in the south. In a routine that has now become customary, the sittings have been exclusively devoted to Lhotshampa bashing on the basis of inflammatory proposals, often purporting to originate from southern Bhutanese Assembly members and public themselves, calling for sterner measures against southern Bhutanese. In the process, the most offensive and blatantly racist sentiments are allowed to pass for nationalistic fervour. The "elected representatives" from the south who total only 8 percent in the Assembly must suffer the indignity in silence.

The notification from the Assembly secretariat is the signal for district administrators to begin the task of briefing their "representatives" for what has now become an annual ritual (the Assembly has not met twice a year since the problems in the south began). This time, however, the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) has obviously taken the lead. The Commission which flaunts its credentials as an equal opportunity employer and trumpets its non-discriminatory functioning -- claims that are legitimately contested by Bhutanese of every hue, regardless of ethnicity, not part of the special coterie or in current favour of royalty -- has never missed an opportunity to fan the flames. Under a wily Secretary the RCSC has, in fact, with some outrageous reports, been singularly successful in facilitating some recent past performances in the august body. This time, too, the orchestrations have begun.

In a much publicized statement, the Secretary of the Commission, Deputy Minister Khandu Wangchuk, expressed disappointment over the "increasing number of Lhotshampa officials absconding the country with government money." In an interview carried by the Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS), and covered by *Kuensel* under the title **More Lhotshampas abscond**, Wangchuk said that "such action on the part of Lhotshampa officials despite the non-discriminatory policy followed by the royal government and the trust bestowed upon them is not only disappointing but is bringing about considerable embarrassment to the Royal Government."

The report goes on to state that during the year three southern Bhutanese government employees at the very lowest rung of the civil service cadre "absconded" from the country, two allegedly with a total of Nu.61,664 of government funds. A student of architecture in the United States also reportedly failed to return. These four cases in 1994, which have

reportedly brought the total number of civil service "absconders" to 465, have resulted in the

ern Bhutanese in the civil service, the Assembly has openly proposed bans on recruitment and promo-

tops or whisper in the hallowed halls of the National Assembly to publicize allegedly just and fair

policies being followed by the government, but blatant discrimination against southern Bhutanese is impossible to conceal. Applicants for jobs have been denied opportunities despite adequate qualifications and merit; students have been denied scholarships granted or financed by bilateral donors and international agencies; dedicated officials who have put in years of service in the Royal Government have been deprived of well-deserved promotions and other benefits.

In the instances cited here, the Royal Civil Service Commission cites non-receipt of NOC from the Royal Bhutan Police to deny a Malaysian Government scholarship to one candidate, directs the concerned department verbally to drop two candidates for a UNDP/ Government of Australia financed training programme, while the Department of Education cancels a Government of India scholarship to a 2nd year medical student because the Royal Government suspects his father of being involved in anti-government protests.

Meanwhile, the main mechanism for screening out lhotshampas remains in place. The requirement of No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the district administration and police in the case of southern Bhutanese candidates continues even today for employment, training, higher studies and so on. This NOC remains elusive. In addition, new obstacles have been introduced. Travel restrictions within the country for southern Bhutanese have further helped deny Lhotshampas of opportunities for schooling and employment.

Considering that the "absconding" of 4 persons represents less than 1 percent of the total number of civil servants that have "absconded" over the past three years, the government has little reason for disappointment or for labelling this an "increasing" phenomenon. And if it is the money that the Royal Government is concerned about, surely there is no "increase" on this front since the amounts in question are a trifling compared to the millions and millions of Ngultrums that past absconders have allegedly stolen. The recent public campaign by the Royal Civil Service Commission Secretary must be seen for what it is - a shameless attempt to create an uproar in the upcoming National Assembly.

ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN

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འབྲུག་རྒྱལ་ཁབ་རྒྱུ་རྒྱུ་



ROYAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
Tashichodzong, P.B. No. 163, Thimphu

No. RCSC/PEB/06(317)/91/

Thimphu, Dated 5th. Sept. 1991.

To
The Secretary,
Ministry of Communication,
Thimphu

Dear Sir,

Ref : Your letter No. MQC/F&A/Genl/25/90-91/7132 Dated 31/05/91 forwarding Fellowship Nominations.

Sub : RETURNING REJECTED NOMINATIONS

Course Title : M/D/S PCM Marconi System.

Location : Malaysia.

With reference to the nominations for the above mentioned course, submitted by your Ministry/Department/Agency, I have to inform you that they have been scrutinized in the Commission and nominations of the following candidates have not been found to be suitable for approval for reasons shown against their names :-

Name of the Candidate	Reasons for rejection
1. Damber Singh Rai	Due to non receipt of NOC from the Royal Bhutan Police.
2.	
3.	

Hence the nomination documents are returned herewith.

Adm PL refer to department
Yours Sincerely,
Khandu Wangchuk
Secretary



ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Ref. No. : Edn/C-11/90-91/ 2537

Date: 12.4.199

Withdrawal of Scholarship

It is now confirmed that D.P. Adhikari with House No. 80/1 and Thana No. 343 from Biratnagar, Chitwan is actively involved in anti-national activities. His son Khem Pr. Adhikari is doing 2nd year MBBS in Hyderabad, India under Government Scholarship.

In view of the foregoing, the Scholarship of Master Khem Pr. Adhikari is hereby withdrawn with immediate effect.

Thingley Gyantsho
Director General

- Copy to :
- The Secretary, Royal Civil Service Commission, Thimphu for information.
 - The Jt. Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Thimphu for information.
 - The Jt. Director, Bhutan House, Kallangpang for information.

T/PLC/4/90-91/ 2537 18 June, 1991

The Director
Ministry of Communications
Thimphu

Sub : Nomination of Candidates for Training in Australia

Sir,

We have earlier sent nomination of ten candidates for training in Australia under the Australian Govt UNDP financing. The RCSC has informed us verbally that out of the ten candidates, two engineers namely, Mr. Pushpa Mini Pradhan and Mr. Rabinal Pokhrel are not eligible for training and have advised us to nominate two alternate candidates.

Accordingly, we have nominated the following candidates

- Mr. Tashi Tshering, A.E. Projects
- Mr. Kencho Namgyel, J.E. Switching

The above names have already been intimated to RCSC vide this office letter No. T/PLC/4/90-91/1188 dated 12.6.91 (copy enclosed) to expedite the matter. Therefore, the Ministry may kindly accord approval and forward the case to RCSC for further necessary action please. The following forms in respect of the candidates are enclosed for your perusal:

- RCSC-TDA form
- Audit Clearance
- Nationality certificate.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,

TSHERING DORJI
DIRECTOR (T)

Encl: as above

government's alleged grave disappointment and concern over the "absconding" of Lhotshampa officials in "increasing numbers".

It is evident from the brouhaha over three employees of little consequence that the whole issue has been raised exclusively with an eye towards the upcoming Assembly session. In each of the past three sessions the Assembly has, short of demanding mass public execution of all ethnic-Nepalese Bhutanese, been permitted to insult and humiliate the southern Bhutanese community with complete abandon. In the case of south-

tions, removal from sensitive posts and even a complete purge. Through such a charade, the Royal Government has been able to choreograph an intense defense of its alleged policy of non-discrimination and better than fair treatment of the ethnically different southern Bhutanese community. But what is the real truth about the policies that guide the Royal Civil Service Commission?

Copies of letters from relevant departments of the Royal Government speak for themselves. The Secretary of the RCSC and others, too, may yell from the roof-

REFUGEE CAMP INFORMATION

Location	District	Refugees	Students
Timai	Jhapa	8,199	3,365
Goldhap	Jhapa	7,820	2,990
Beldangi I	Jhapa	14,703	5,054
Beldangi II	Jhapa	18,834	6,690
Beldangi II Ext.	Jhapa	9,599	3,575
Sanischare(Pathri)	Morang	16,725	5,250
Khudunabari(N)	Jhapa	6,991	3,206
Khudunabari(S)	Jhapa	3,469	
Total		86,340	30,130

Cumulative births: 3,839

Cumulative deaths: 2,574

The above figures are as of June 30, 1994.