

Tamil notions of learning  
and education  
gravely skewed

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Joint Task Force:  
Much ado  
about nothing

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Children in Jaffna cycling to school in the rain

Pic by Buddhika Weerasinghe

## Legal strategies afoot to sink Joint Task Force

By a Staff Correspondent

The Joint Task Force for re-settlement, reconstruction and rehabilitation in the northeast, to be set up by the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers may not take off the ground due to legal snags, informed sources said. Interest groups, backed by the People's Alliance, Sihala Urumaya and the JVP intend to challenge the legality of the Joint Task Force, according to the well-informed legal sources.

If the courts uphold the legal challenge the Joint Task Force would be able to function only as a cosmetic, advisory body to the Prime Minister's Office and the Department of External Resources, they said. President Chandrika Kumaratunga stated earlier this week that the JTF

should be grounded in the laws of the land.

"Her statement is a clear indication of the stand the opposition plans to take regarding the functioning of the JTF", said Selvam Adaikalanathan, MP, leader of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation.

"According to the draft, the JTF is going to function under the Prime Minister's Office. If that is the case, what is its real status? Is it going to be a Department, Board, Corporation, Commission or a statutory body in any other name? Will there be a statute passed by the Parliament prescribing its powers and functions in concrete terms?"

On the other hand, if it were just going to be an administrative arrangement within the Office of the Prime Minister, what is the statutory body under which it would be ultimately placed for control? Who

would be made answerable for accountability and transparency in respect of operations of the body?", Tamil legal sources asked.

They pointed out that matters assigned to the JTF have been already earmarked for the 3RP (Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Program) under the Prime Minister's Office. The PM's office has already begun work related to relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction at the national level. If brought under the PM's office the JTF's work cannot be confined to war torn areas.

The legality of the powers that may be vested in the JTF in formulating policy guidelines has also been questioned. When it comes to, Legal experts said that in matters of policy planning, the Ministry of Finance, Planning Ministry and cabinet are automatically involved in evaluating the JTF's functions and

operations. The JTF will have no legal basis under the present circumstances to bypass them.

If it did so the JTF would seriously undermine not only good

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### Thais analyse Norway's role

Vidar Helgesen, the deputy foreign minister heading the facilitation team, said there were three reasons why he believes Norway was approached by the warring parties in Sri Lanka: its long-standing development cooperation with Sri Lanka dating back to the 1970s, and the network of individual contacts at a high level and among non-governmental organisations built up since then; the fact Norway is a small country to the north with no strategic interests in Sri Lanka; and the reputation Norway has built from peace efforts in the Middle East and Guatemala.

Helgesen said Norway's decision

to become involved was a "natural extension of our tradition of being active in development and humanitarian work", and of being supportive of United Nations peace efforts.

"If we have experience, knowledge and a network," he said, Norway believed it could play a useful role.

Eric Solheim, the special envoy involved since Norway took the plunge four years ago, said "we cannot enforce [anything]... but we can assist the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government if they so wish".

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## Thais...

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Surat Horachaikul, of the international relations department at Chulalongkorn University, believed Norway had become involved for reasons linked to history and reputation.

"Promoting peace is a historical legacy" for Norway, he said, enshrined in the Nobel institute, and the country had contributed significantly to the Middle East peace process that culminated in the Oslo accords 10 years ago.

In the Sri Lankan process, Norway was "perpetuating a reputation, and enhancing stature", Surat said. There was a need, "almost in the post-modern concept" of the word, for Norwegians to support this peace mission.

But Surat is still looking for missing links in the chain that led to Norway's initial engagement. A party of international academics, including Americans, Britons and Norwegians, went to Sri Lanka prior to 1998 on a mission that was part fact-finding and part tourism. A number of reports came out of that trip, he said, "but I still don't know how Norway came to be the one [to take up the facilitation]".

Helgesen, who has been involved in the facilitation work over the past year, said Norwegians years ago took part in a number of missions, some of which looked into religious questions.

Whatever the background, Surat said, Norway was an appropriate choice for the job as the United States and Britain both have political legacies and economic interests in Sri Lanka that would make for unease.

Norway, he said, should be given credit for the accent on humanitarian and development issues as a means to ensure a sustainable peace on the island, which has suffered grievously economically and politically after 20 years of fighting.

Senator Pensak Chaksuchinda, former deputy chairman of the Senate foreign affairs committee, believes Norway was approached by the LTTE and Colombo to play a role in the peace process after it made known its willingness to help.

"Norway has made itself known

as a country willing to assist weaker people," she said, citing its humanitarian work in East Timor, and its hard-core opposition to the ruling military junta in Burma.

Norway, said the former long-time resident of Denmark, also has earned a reputation for being a "truly neutral" country by fighting for the equality of nation states all along.

Helgesen pointed to the ceasefire agreement and the "face-to-face" talks under way between the conflicting parties as major developments in the Sri Lankan situation this year.

But the Norwegian facilitators, who also head the international monitoring team made up of five Nordic countries (Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Norway), have not escaped criticism from some groups in Sri Lanka.

"We fully respect people's different views as to how suitable [we are]... and we are prepared to engage with anyone who would like to voice their concerns," Helgesen said.

The talks taking place at the Rose Garden resort in Nakhon Pathom from today till Sunday will follow up the humanitarian and development issues raised at the first round in Sattahip, he said.

Following an initiative from Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickeremesinghe, Oslo will convene an international conference next month. "It will not only be a donors' conference, but more than that it will show very important political support for the peace process," Helgesen said.

The peace process over the past year has drawn "unprecedented international attention" from countries like Japan, India, the United States, and the European Union. He said this would be "signified" by the meeting in Oslo, the first at a political level to address humanitarian and development issues.

Helgesen said Norway had not set itself a deadline for achieving certain targets in the peace process? "That wouldn't be a question at all. As long as the parties want us to play a role, we will put in the effort.

"Ending conflict is a complex and often long-winding process. If we are called upon [to help], we have to take responsibility to stay the course."

# Tamil Guardian comments...

The President's rhetoric about the need for political 'cohabitation' enunciated most recently in her address to the country last Thursday notwithstanding, the UNF government is desperately aware how exposed it is to sudden dismissal and how vulnerable the peace process is to this and her other powers. Kumaratunga's main opposition People's Alliance (PA) and its Marxist cum Sinhala nationalist ally, the Janatha Vimukthi Perumana (JVP), are already confidently predicting a return to power soon. Adding further to the UNF's woes, its internal row with the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress is defying resolution. As we have pointed out before, the success of any negotiation process relies crucially, amongst other things, on the domestic stability of the leaderships of the involved parties and the developments in Colombo will inevitably cast a shadow on the discussions in Thailand.

But the characteristics of the second round of talks in themselves give cause for optimism. After the fanfare of the landmark first round in mid-September, this week's talks have less of a media profile. The 'business as usual' air is indicative of the stability of the Norwegian peace process as is the upgrading of the LTTE's panel and the overall expansion of both teams. Some observers also point to the LTTE delegation's transit through Colombo as a sign of growing trust between both sides. But this is not to say there won't be some hard talking in Thailand. The peace process is, after all, intended to resolve one of Asia's most protracted conflicts. But the step by step approach that the protagonists and the Norwegian facilitators are resolutely adhering to despite Kumaratunga's efforts to stampede the UNF into a premature and disruptive discussion on 'core issues' augers well for the future.

The talks this week will seek to further develop the agreements reached in principle at the first round: the formation of a Joint Committee to deal with the issues relating to high security zones and a Joint Task Force for humanitarian and reconstruction activities. Given the importance of the two structures to the progress of the Norwegian initiative both to disperse a peace dividend amongst residents of the north and east and to sustain mo-

mentum Kumaratunga and her allies will undoubtedly strive to disrupt their formation and later their functioning. As ever, whilst piously declaring support for resolving the conflict, the UNF's opponents will seek to undermine the individual components of the peace process. The UNF's attempt to clip the President's military powers is not mere petulance. It is well known in Colombo that a handful of military commanders loyal to Kumaratunga and over whose appointment and removal she has final authority are deliberately and repeatedly stressing the internationally supervised ceasefire agreement.

Constrained by the constitution despite its popular mandate for peace and faced with Kumaratunga's implacable and barely disguised hostility, the UNF is utterly reliant on international support both financial and moral for its survival. But after decades of ruinous violence, Sri Lanka is now on the threshold of lasting peace and economic revival. It is therefore incumbent on the international community to resolutely back the Norwegian initiative and thereby ensure the progress achieved since the UNF came to power last December can continue.

The theme of ethnic reconciliation in Sri Lanka was amongst those raised last week at the conference on Tamil language and culture held in Jaffna by the Arts and Culture section of the Liberation Tigers. Two senior members of the LTTE, Mr. Puthuvai Rathnathurai, head of the Arts and Culture section and Mr. Para, head of the Tamil Eelam judiciary, called on the Sinhala people to support the ongoing peace process and urged greater understanding between the two communities. The segregation between Tamils and Sinhalese brought about by the years of high intensity conflict has, they rightly argued, reinforced prejudices and widened the ethnic divide. From a Tamil perspective, however, the split itself did not begin with the escalation of the conflict in the early eighties but through the anti-Tamil discrimination enacted by the Sinhala dominated state for the decades before that along with the periodic bouts of communal violence directed against the Tamil community in the south, of which the Holocaust of July 1983 was the worst.

Amid welcome local and interna-

tional efforts to promote reconciliation on the island, there are fundamental aspects of the ethnic question that must be borne in mind. Firstly, as Mr. Rathnathurai pointed out, the Tamil struggle has not sought to deprive Sinhalese of their rights or territory but to secure and protect Tamil rights and territory. Secondly, as Mr. S. Pulithevan from the LTTE's political section told the conference, the Tamil people simply do not feel secure within a Sinhala dominated state whose armed forces are responsible for horrific atrocities against them. These are issues that will no doubt be discussed in later stages of the Norwegian peace process.

But amid the ongoing ceasefire, the objective conditions for ethnic reconciliation are noticeably improving. Large numbers of Sinhalese are visiting the Tamil north and east for the first time, interacting directly with their Tamil neighbours. Cross regional trade, spurred by more expatriate funds reaching these areas, is increasing. Whilst there are some in our opinion, self serving voices which lament the 'lack of civil society involvement' in the peace process, the reality is that grassroots contact between the communities is rapidly growing arguably the first step in successful reconciliation.

But there are obstacles too. As Mr. Para pointed out, the Sinhala press has contributed to fuelling anti-Tamil sentiment by underplaying or ignoring Tamil grievances, whilst sowing anxiety and fear. Responsible reporting by the press on both sides is vital for building harmony: whilst many people will travel to regions dominated by other communities, the vast majority are informed solely by the media as to events and perspectives.

But more importantly, leading Sinhala parties have regularly exploited the ethnic divide for their own ends. The insidious campaign being presently waged against the government's peace efforts by the main opposition Sinhala parties is typical. Those advocating greater civil society participation in the Norwegian initiative would do well to first challenge these powerful opponents of the peace process and on whom popular sentiment will have an immediate and considerable impact.

## Legal strategies...

Cont. from page 1

governance but also legitimate governmental powers, which would be challenged legally, according to legal experts.

According to senior UNF sources the JTF would be asked to recognise the mandate of the External Resources Department as the principal and co-ordinating agency of the government for foreign loans and grants.

"It should be clearly understood that the LTTE would be a partner in negotiating loans and grants from foreign governments and donor agencies to bring in the money into the country's coffers. But the partnership ends there. When it

comes to spending the monies brought in thus, the LTTE cannot have a say because the involvement of the cabinet in this matter is inevitable in accordance with statutory requirements. As far as the loans and grants are concerned, only the Dept. of external resources can enter into contractual obligations on behalf of the government. While the LTTE would also be negotiating for loans and grants as an equal partner in the JTF, the signing of the contracts would be the business of the Sri Lankan government alone", a legal expert who studied the draft on setting up of the JTF opined.

However, LTTE officials who have studied the proposals on the JTF and the legal viability of the body, said that they would not bring up the obstacles as the main issue at the talks now, as the process is still one of confidence building. "We are also aware of the number of elements that are bent on throwing the spanner in the works. Hence we do not want to sound intransigent. But we will discuss the legal viability", an LTTE official said. He added that the UNF should be cognisant of the legal snags and devise appropriate strategies to make the joint effort to bring peace meaningful.



# The meek shall (of course) inherit the earth

By Rajpal Abeynayake

Much has been said in the columns about the IDPs. IDP is jargon double-distilled. It is an acronym that sounds so clinically accurate in describing refugees (aka internally displaced persons.)

"Despite the positive change in the culture of violence," Anglican Bishop Rev Duleep de Chickera warned, the "peace rhetoric does not have any meaning for most people, especially the poor in the conflict areas, who measure peace with development."

This has been the strident call around. It has been as if the poor have suddenly come out of the woodwork. Would there be any mention of this poor - - except in very cursory terms - - if there was no ceasefire, and the war was still in progress?

Peace rhetoric is a chic term to use, but at least the peace is there - - and even if Sri Lankans drown in rhetoric, it doesn't matter as long as the conflict can be averted.

But what seems curious is that there is a sudden urgency in redressing all the grievances of the war-affected, in one big mad frenzy.

They say about the peace, that years of mistrust and years of mutual suspicion cannot be cast aside

in a day or two. That's correct. But everyone seems to think that years of poverty, and years of refugee accumulation can be redressed in a jiffy.

If I see the righteous getting all wired-up about these statements, calm down. I wouldn't dare say that the poor should remain in their state of homelessness, hopelessness and poverty.

But, all I can see is that there seems to be an undue haste to resettle the poor, when hardly anybody among the do-gooders who ask for this now, ever paid any attention to their plight during the war itself which dragged on for so many years.

Wars end in different ways. One is not even sure that this one in Sri Lanka has yet ended, but I am reminded of something that was said about the way wars come to an end, and the way in which life goes on after a conflict. The Dalai Llama in the book *Beautiful Buddhism* says "Victory is a sign that God, or the gods are on their side. Consequently, the victors impose their law on the vanquished, most often by means of a treaty, which will never be anything but a pretext for revenge".

There has not been any apparent victor or vanquished in this Lankan conflict. There has also not been a

*The Dalai Llama in the book Beautiful Buddhism says "Victory is a sign that God, or the gods are on their side. Consequently, the victors impose their law on the vanquished, most often by means of a treaty, which will never be anything but a pretext for revenge".*

treaty in Sri Lanka - - even though there has been an agreement of sorts called the MoU.

Though there has been no winner, and no loser in the elemental sense, there have been certain ways in which the protagonists of the conflict have sought to position themselves after hostilities have ended. While the immediate 'stakeholders' position themselves in this way, into this cauldron have come certain pro-active actors who have sought to define the so called end-stage in their own way.

The sudden onrush of sympathetic sentiment about the IDPs can be seen in this light. The IDPs all along lacked toilets and sanitation, they always were eking out a mis-

erable existence, and in it is not as if there are sudden problems that have beset these wretched of the earth - - wretched albeit through no fault of their own.

They want to go home and that is understandable. Appeals have been made in large dollar terms for their re-settlement, which is all very well and good. But when people who have not expended any energy through the existence of this entire wretched war for their upkeep, now say that they are in a unholy hurry to resettle this wretched of the earth and give them a good life, their motives definitely become suspect. "Dirty civil wars, inter-communal violence and sometimes confrontations between

third world countries persist. Corrupt African bureaucrats, fighting each other for power and for the spoils of office by manipulating the religious and/or ethnic feelings of their civilian populations, must bear a heavy responsibility for the conflicts which bathe their countries in blood." I'd rather not cite the author of that quote - - but its content is rather self-explanatory.

This is not Africa, but are we better or worse? There are many ramifications than meets the eye during the times of conflict, and so it is at the time of peace. Why there is a sudden glut of sympathy for the refugees is a question that needs to be referred to in that light. The refugees want to go home no doubt, but somebody else seems to have grafted onto their cause. They have survived the war - - and they need to be resettled in a responsible manner, and in a manner in which it can be guaranteed that their new homes will be theirs forever. But even before such a guarantee can be given, there seems to be a desire to move the pawns of the game hurriedly again, in this game of chess that has not only moves the pawns fast, but uses the pawns - and when necessary, abuses the pawns.

## The tyranny of South Indian entertainment in Sri Lanka

By K.Sivapalan

Recently a large number of Tamil Artistes from Tamil Nadu went to Singapore to perform and collect money for Tamil Cine Artistes Association with its office in Chennai. It was claimed that this demonstrated the solidarity of Chennai Tamil Cine Artistes! It is a pity that even a few of them never got together in Chennai or in any other part of Tamil Nadu to show their concern for their suffering brethren in the North East of Sri Lanka.

For a very long time now Sri Lanka has remained a main area of distribution for Tamil films from Madras as Chennai used to be called. In fact it was said that film magnates like Cinemas Gunaratnam used to finance many Tamil films of yester years. Even Madras films depended a lot on Radio Ceylon for their publicity with film songs from the new films being broadcast in advance. Ra-

dio Ceylon Mylvaganam was a much sought after person in the Madras Cine field.

Just as the days when there were no problems in the North East with Theatres showing Tamil films being houseful most of the time even today there seems to be no problem as far as selling Tamil films to the Distributors or the fleecing of poor Tamils showing these trash with people like Kamal Hasan and Rajani Kanth, a Brahmin and a Kannadiga of Maharastrian origin, Sivaji Rao being his original name in lead roles. Nowadays North Indians are the main financiers for Tamil films and the Industry itself is in the hands of the Brahmins.

Another corrupt third grade cine artiste of Kannada Brahmin origin is at the helm of affairs in Tamil Nadu. One common factor amongst all these people is money and the utter disregard for the cause of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. Both the Tamil Cine field and nowadays the

Tamil Publishers make maximum use of the Sri Lankan migrants in the West and Australasia to make money using the commonality between the Indian Tamils and Sri Lankan Tamils, namely Tamil Language.

Dance Troupes with Tamil Cinema actresses who have lost their market in Tamil films seek markets in Europe where Sri Lankan Tamils live in large numbers. Some time ago another type of invasion from the so-called Tamil Nadu used to take place in Sri Lanka almost every week. Those were the Professional Tamil speakers whose sole aim was collecting money. These programmes were known as patti Manram. In Tamil the place where cattle were herded together is also known as patti. They will debate on topics like •EIs Kannaki or Mathavi better in preserving her chastity?

One amongst them will be the Adjudicator and he will give his

verdict according to the mood of the day or who is favoured by his Sri Lankan benefactor. Tamil name bearing persons from Wellawatte and Kotahena will flock Ramakrishna Mission Hall or Iynkaran Hall or a temple as the case may be to listen to these morons while a Krishanthi or a Parāmeswary would have been raped and killed on the North East on that day. A Tamil name bearing Minister or Member of Parliament who will be the Chief Guest of the day will extol the speakers from India and the day's proceedings will come to an end as though everything is fine for the Tamils in this country and the speakers from India will collect their fees and vanish.

This has now taken another trend. Week after week the Brahmin. Telugu, Kannada singers are swarming Colombo from Chennai under the sponsorship of various national Tamil media.

Already the very same irresponsible media are taking the youth and the lazy old Tamils living on the Money order economy away from our culture. The intrigue calculating and vicious culture of the middle class Madras Brahmin families which are alien to the Dravidian culture are being given in abundance day in day out by these media. As though this is not enough these third grade singers and dancers are brought here to further distance our youth from our culture.

These artistes have nothing in their minds than money. To them Tamils do not exist in this country. Money is the only culture known to them. By all means bring the best of art and culture from India and expose our youth to such cultures but not to these third grade cabaret artistes. By doing this a disservice to the youth of this country at large is being meted out.



# Tamil notions of learning and education gravely skewed

By Prof. S. Chandrasekaram

There are several agencies of education in society. But schools have monopolised education. Hence education today is generally confounded and is considered synonymous with education. According to a UNESCO study only 20 percent of the body of knowledge a twenty-year-old person may have would have been obtained through school system. There are, quite obviously, many other means by which we acquire knowledge in this world.

This is why the proponents of a radical school of thought on education that emerged in Latin America in the seventies came up with the idea of 'de-schooling'. They argued for 'dis-establishing' the school system. The main thinkers of this school were Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich. They argued that society should be de-schooled. Paulo Freire criticised the traditional schooling system as the pedagogy of the oppressed.

They said that school curricula are prepared and set by adults and imposed on children – by adults who have their own ideas, their own objectives and vested interests that pay scant regard for the child's point of view in preparing systems of education. Such adult-centric schooling systems nullify creativity in children. Adults select certain areas of knowledge from the vast sea of knowing and impose them as curricula on children. Such selection and imposition makes the knowledge imparted to children through adult centred curricula obsolete. This is so because knowledge is essentially dynamic, it is continuously created. Curricula act as retardants on the dynamism of knowledge, in their attempt to confine children to the information and methods of knowing imparted by them.

In Sri Lanka for example 4.3 million children are compelled to fit their abilities into a particular body of knowledge called the national curriculum, prepared centrally by a group of persons.

It is self evident that there is variegated talent and multifaceted interests among these children. The possibilities of developing and cultivating these talents and interests are almost boundless. But the curriculum permits children to develop themselves only along the path prescribed by it.

Only a few subjects such as maths, science, social studies etc., are considered vital for human development. Children's talents are essentially measured by the school system by their ability to excel in these compulsory subjects.

This is called compulsory mis-education.

Children are compelled to learn certain ideas and areas of knowledge by rote for reproducing at examinations. This system leaves no room for

creativity, innovation, critical thinking etc.,. We generally tend to look at school curricula in terms of the subjects taught. But there is a hidden curriculum determined by the agendas of the ruling elites who want to create a subservient citizenry. The hidden curriculum ensures that children grow into citizens who would unquestioningly obey the dominant political ideology and never think of challenging the authority of the ruling classes. Napoleon once said that if he wanted to spread an idea in society he would first introduce it in schools.

National systems of education with all their positive aspects such as equalising educational opportunities, standardising of language etc., are all underpinned by the hidden agendas of the ruling classes. This is essentially a Bismarckian idea. It was in Prussia that they first built a very strong nation state. And education was the weapons for achieving that objective.

In the USA, education is used as the primary means of Americanising immigrants. However, there is little resistance to this hidden agenda in the US schooling system because that country was able to provide opportunities for the economic mobility of migrants.

In the national schooling systems the emphasis is on teaching.

The purpose of teaching is learning but little attention is paid to the child's learning process. The recent

effits of all these reforms have been slow in reaching the classroom and the child although current curricula in Sri Lanka recognise learning processes such as the play method, activity method, group learning, preparing projects etc.,. Our top educational bureaucrats are now very familiar with the new ideas of education.

But it may be said that focus is still lacking on the results of reforms in the classroom, which is the basic unit where educational activity takes place. It is understood that the basic ideas discussed here have not percolated to schools in the northeast and the upcountry. The problem is that any reform has a cost content. No educational reform can be properly implemented without providing adequate training, human and material resources, infrastructure etc.,. It is reported that forty percent of schools in Sri Lanka have no electricity and for that matter telephone connections.

The fundamental idea behind modern educational reforms is to develop the self-learning capacity and ability in children. How many schools in the northeast and in the hill country have libraries, computers, educational toys and tools etc. to facilitate the development of self-learning in children. This lack of resources will make children depend again on the teacher for learning as in the older systems of education. The more affluent schools in the city and in the major provincial

infrequently subject to harassment and humiliation in the school. This is quite commonly seen in many schools that cling to the traditional teaching-teacher centred methods to educate children.

But contemporary definitions of intelligence include spatial, social, kinaesthetic, musical and such abilities. A superior system of education should recognise such intelligences among children and provide opportunities to develop them for the benefit of the society at large.

The Tamil community has stubbornly persisted in the traditional system of education and schooling, focusing on teaching and the restrictive definition of intelligence. The Tamil community is seriously lacking in artists, philosophers, painters, novelists, musicians, composers, political scientists, thinkers, historians etc., despite the social upheavals that the society is going through because it continues to define intelligence in very restrictive terms. Sri Lankan Tamil society and the notion of education to which it is stubbornly wedded leave little room for the development and flourishing of 'other' intelligences in children.

The question is often posed as to why the long struggle of the Tamils for their rights has not seen the proliferation art, literature and ideas as it happened in similar situations elsewhere in the world. One need not look far. It is rooted in the very system of education to which Tamils remain devoted to this day.

In the 70s a British scholar called Ronald Dore put forward the idea of 'Diploma Disease' that explained the linkage between occupation and educational qualifications. Dore did his field work in Sri Lanka and Kenya. According to him late developing countries like Sri Lanka linked occupation or social roles with educational qualifications. This had a tremendously adverse impact on the process of education in Sri Lanka.

The situation demanded that you had to have certain qualifications to obtain government jobs. In the 60s and 70s social mobility in Sri Lanka was largely linked to government jobs. So there was mad rush to obtain qualifications. The immediate casualty was the education system itself. Learning became restricted to examination purposes. The whole education system was geared to service examinations.

The lofty ideals of education and learning were lost. The entire Sri Lankan society was gripped by this odd obsession that education is synonymous with examinations. This obsession particularly afflicted parents. It totally distorted the education system in Sri Lanka. The ideals of fostering creative and critical thinking were abandoned for sake of coaching children to sit for exams. This system became a burden on children and often was the cause of stress among them, driving them as it were to sacrifice other pursuits or other kinds of intelligences.

But there was a problem. Sri Lankan schools were not attuned to

confine themselves only to examination oriented teaching. Schools traditionally had multifaceted functions. They had to promote games, literary activities, drama, music, according to facilities and resources available to them. It is not without reason that in Sri Lankan schools these came to be called 'extra-curricular activities'. Some schools in the city have as many as forty clubs dedicated to such activities, oriented towards various learning activities such as swimming, painting, debating etc.,.

In this sense the schools were found inadequate to meet the demands of the examination oriented education. The extra curricular traditions of the schools did not make them fully suitable for concentrating all their resources towards preparing children for examinations. This is why there was a massive proliferation of private tuition centres from the mid seventies, particularly in the north.

Times are changing again. Today only thirteen percent of job opportunities in Sri Lanka are available in the government sector. And the Sri Lankan government has been compelled to introduce reforms in education that would meet the manpower needs of trans-national corporations (TNC). The Sri Lankan state has to have a labour force with Information Technology and communication skills, problem solving and leadership skills, ability to work in groups, openness to ideas to attract TNCs here.

These skills are not only suitable for the local market but are required to produce for the global market. Globalisation is compelling our education policy makers to come up with an education system that will produce skills suited for the international market requirements. This is why at the cost of social equity, and the principle of equality our policy makers are encouraging English medium education.

This is why they are acquiescing in the unchecked proliferation of international schools. And this is the reason why there is a fast growing education industry that is parallel to the state education system. There is an alarming growth of computer institutes without any state regulatory mechanism. This is so because the state cannot provide any alternative system of education. The private educational institutions are mushrooming without proper accreditation or quality assurance.

Education is an end in itself. Globalization is now distorting education to suit its own needs. It is also transforming the indigenous idea of an educated person – one who felt a responsibility to his society and future generations, one took responsibility, gave moral leadership. Today, in this era of globalisation an educated person is one who can contribute his knowledge to enhance production – knowledge has become a factor of production.

*The Tamil community has stubbornly persisted in the traditional system of education and schooling, focusing on teaching and the restrictive definition of intelligence. The Tamil community is seriously lacking in artists, philosophers, painters, novelists, musicians, composers, political scientists, thinkers, historians etc., despite the social upheavals that the society is going through because it continues to define intelligence in very restrictive terms*

trend in education policy is to enhance the learning capacity of children. Different children have different learning styles. The idea of different learning styles was never recognised in traditional education systems. The idea today is to enhance the learning skills of children and to increase their learning capacity. Children should have a clear idea of their own learning methods about coming to know the world. This is called meta-cognition. Here you take responsibility for your own learning. Some of these ideas have influenced education policy makers in the west. And in turn their recommendations have over the years influenced our educationalists.

There have been three major reforms in our system of education in 1972, 1981 and 1997. But the ben-

town would be the actual beneficiaries of the modern reforms in education in Sri Lanka.

But this need not be the case. Poor countries such as Bangladesh and Tanzania have introduced alternatives to traditional teacher directed model of schooling. They are using community resources persons, para-teachers, radio, peer tutoring, self guided learning material, student constructed learning material in keeping with the socio-economic conditions of local communities.

Traditional schooling systems have defined intelligence in terms of linguistic ability and logical thinking. Therefore children with other abilities are discarded as misfits by these systems. Children who do not have linguistic and logical abilities are labelled as slow learners and are not



# The making of the Sri Lankan Tamil

By Prof. Karthigesu Sivathamby

**This column wishes to highlight those omissions and inadequacies, which have led to neglect and an alienation of Tamils in Sri Lanka. The writer is not for creating further divisions, but earnestly hopes to heal those already there**

The Sri Lankan Tamils as a group of people with definitive traits and characteristics that distinguish them socio-culturally and anthropologically from other such groups are today better known internationally than even the Tamils of south India. They are today seen as a politically well integrated community though spread across the world.

They are very much concerned with the maintenance and fostering of their cultural identity as Sri Lankan Tamils and are keen in transmitting their traditions to their younger generation wherever they live. A major feature of the feeling of oneness of this community is that it cuts across religious barriers. In the contemporary psyche of this society a Christian Sri Lankan Tamil is as important an inheritor of Tamil culture as a Hindu Tamil. More importantly this feeling of being Sri Lankan Tamil does not arise from any notion of classical cultural heritage coming top down but a consciousness that grows from within and arises from a shared tradition of life.

There is a certain degree of sturdiness and authenticity that characterise this consciousness. The apparent diversities that one sees in the community do not shake the essence of this unity. It needs emphasis that the bedrock of the Sri Lankan Tamil identity is the feeling that this island is the community's mother country. And that fact, namely its geography and history have shaped the cultural traditions of the Sri Lankan Tamils. Their feeling is that they belong to this island and nowhere else. And they are very proud of it. It is this sense of pride that has made them use the term Eelam, derived from the word Hela, and used in classical Tamil literature. Not very many non-Tamil scholars know that the word Eelam has the lexical meaning 'the Island of Simhala'.

It may come as a surprise to many that what is taken as the Sri Lankan Tamil community is really a socio-cultural aggregate of unevenly developed and, to a certain extent, once secluded, regions of the present northeast. Quite often the regional specifics of daily cultural existence of this community reveal marked differences in spite of its basic commonness of social organisation, kinship system and language. In fact a quarter century ago it was the differences that were articulated more than the commonness.

Starting from the east, the following are the geographically easily identifiable regions from which

the Sri Lankan Tamil community comes.

Batticaloa (including the Tamils of the Ampara district)

Trincomalee (reference is made here more to the residents of the hinterlands than the townsfolk).

The Vanni (Tamil Vanni really consists of the old Vavuniya and the Mullaithivu districts)

The Jaffna peninsula and the islands

The southwestern coast of Mannar and the Mannar Island.

The coast from Puttalam to Negombo. Besides these, there are two important two important regions of Tamil residence. They are Colombo (as the capital city) and the upcountry region referred to as the Malayaham in contemporary Sri Lankan Tamil. Today, the Sri Lankan Tamil identity draws itself basically from the six regions. There is a general belief that Jaffna is the most crucial region in the formation of Sri Lankan Tamilness. The fact that there was a state formation from the 13th to the 16th century in Jaffna lends credence to this belief. In colonial times, especially in the British period, a Sri Lankan response to colonialism and westernisation was conceptually formulated first in Jaffna through Arumuga Navalar who articulated the Hindu Tamil identity. Navalar cannot be taken as anti-British. His concern was mainly with Hinduism and the preservation of the Jaffna social order.

One cannot therefore argue that despite his contribution to Tamil writing, Navalar, can be taken as landmark in the rise of Sri Lankan Tamilness. Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan who inherited his religio-cultural legacy was opposed to democratising the Tamil society. (Today democratisation constitutes the sheet anchor of Tamil solidarity)

The scripturalisation of Jaffna Hinduism by the Navalar school peripheralised pre and non Sanskrit Tamil forms of worship like the rituals associated with Murugan and Kannaki amman.

When the Youth Congress of Jaffna was established in the 1920's its appeal was based largely within the framework of Indian nationalism.

In cultural terms the period of Navalar and thereafter show a steady process of Sanskritisation as described by the Indian sociologist M.N. Srinivas (or 'Agamisation' in Navalar's own words) in Jaffna. This leads to a virtual erosion of the popular Tamil cults and ritual traditions which constituted the strength of the culture of the other Tamil regions.

Due to the advantages Jaffna which

enjoyed in social and political terms, the Tamil problem was mainly articulated there. Until the question of land became central to the Tamil question, the problems of Jaffna tended to be presented and perceived as the problems of the Sri Lankan Tamils. As for instance, the issue of state sector employment was a problem mainly affecting Jaffna.

The other major region, Batticaloa in a way stands in contrast to the Sanskrit Hindu cultural traditions promoted by the Navalar school in Jaffna. Even in those temples of high gods, rituals are not that 'Agamised' as in Jaffna. This quite evidently seen at the Sivan Temple in Kakkaddicholai. Batticaloa retains

E. Kamalanathan, S. D. Sivanayagam, Saturday Kandasamy, Vettivel Vinayagamoorthy, Ira Pathmanathan,, to mobilise the masses, the pre-eminence of Batticaloa in Tamil politics was assured beyond doubt.

Quite in contrast to this political Tamil leadership in Jaffna until the arrival of the militant youth was confined to the English speaking professional leisure class, comprising mainly lawyers. Except for K. Vanniasingham who was the master of wit and irony, the young Amithalingam inspired by the rhetoric of the Dravidian Movement and M. Sivasithamparam, no major Tamil nationalist political leader of Jaffna was persuasive communicator in Tamil.

Batticaloa, with its comparatively better structured feudalism aided by the geographical seclusion it enjoyed, especially in the Paduvanakarai region, was able to retain a basic, uncorrupted Tamilness.

In contrast, the social history of

many Tamil traditions and linguistic usage that had eroded or vanished elsewhere.

The Tamil Vanni was until the early sixties a closed book. Here too there was less caste rigidity (because of the immense availability of land) and marked continuity of non-Sanskritic Tamil rituals especially those associated with birth, coming of age, marriage and death. In fact this region was politicised only after the threat of Sinhalization became real. And thus in the Vanni there was an immediate fall back on the intrinsic Tamilness forgetting centuries of Sinhala Tamil tranquillity in the region. The comparative economic backwardness of the Vanni also made them to retain their traditional Tamilness.

Mannar presents a strikingly different picture. Here is a place with a history of a wonderful balance among Hindus, Muslims and Christians. This is perhaps historically the most important centre of Catholic activity. Mannar served as a key transmitting point for Catholicism in spreading the gospel among the Singhalese. There very rich religio-literary/artistic traditions here which have not been studied fully. They derive their historical roots from the Mathottam (Mahatitha) days. The history of the pearl fishery of this coast connecting it up to Tuticorin in south India on the one hand and Chilaw on the other is has not been explored fully. The strong Catholic tradition among the peasantry and fisher folk of Mannar has strengthened their Tamilness. (Rather than retaining and co-opting the social traditions of the past the Protestant Churches, through modernisation/westernisation created a sense of Tamil awareness. C.f. the rediscovery of Tamil traditions by the American Missionaries of Jaffna)

Without going into the details of the northwestern region where as mentioned in these columns earlier, Sinhalisation which went along with Roman Catholicism and confining ourselves to the present northeast, one should highlight three major factors in the development of modern Sri Lankan Tamil consciousness. They are:

1. The introduction of free education opened the flood gates of talent and intellect from regions and groups which had hitherto been kept out of education and upward social mobility.

2. The introduction of vernacular education too helped these regions and groups similarly and simultaneously.

3. The defensive mechanisms that arose among all Sri Lankan Tamils irrespective of their

Cont. on page 11

*Given the fact that Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayagam, the founder leader of the Federal Party had to depend on a batch of Tamil educated youth from the east, belonging to the rationalist movement there such as. S. E. Kamalanathan, S. D. Sivanayagam, Saturday Kandasamy, Vettivel Vinayagamoorthy, Ira Pathmanathan,, to mobilise the masses, the pre-eminence of Batticaloa in Tamil politics was assured beyond doubt.*

the matriclan Kudi system among all castes and the Muslims. In Jaffna the Kudi system is dormant and is only perceptible among the less Sanskritised caste groups. However, in Jaffna this Kudi system is not as systematised as in Batticaloa. The region's caste system is less rigid and the cultic traditions are such that they do not legitimise caste as in Sanskritised, Agamised Hinduism. Thus there is a better potential for social and political mobilisation which is not possible to that extent in Jaffna. This political mobilisation has been well demonstrated in the emergence of a primarily Tamil educated youth taking up to politics and leadership.

Given the fact that Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayagam, the founder leader of the Federal Party had to depend on a batch of Tamil educated youth from the east, belonging to the rationalist movement there such as. S.

Jaffna shows westernisation began early in the 19th century and was very pervasive - very few places in the peninsula were left untouched by inroads of modernity.

It is a pity that the history of the Trincomalee district, especially that of its hinterland, has not yet been properly researched and recorded even in terms of the history of the entire island. Post Magha Sri Lankan history has left it as a major blank!

The traditions of the littoral villages of the Trincomalee, starting from Thennameravady going down to Salli in the northern part of the district and from Mutur to Verugal in its southern part is not yet fully explored even though it is yet a repository of unique Tamil traditions (perhaps it is not known to many that there are Tamil speaking Veddhas living in this region). As in the case of Batticaloa here too land tenure and social organisation kept virtually intact



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## Tamils should rethink education, learning

Sri Lankan society, particularly the Tamil community, should rid itself of notions of education and learning that have stymied the growth of multifarious talent among their young. Reforms in the system of education in this country should focus on learning, on bringing out the latent intelligence in all children rather than measuring them on the Procrustean bed of tedious examinations.

As one of our writers, Prof. Chandrasekaran, points out "Traditional schooling systems have defined intelligence in terms of linguistic ability and logical thinking. Therefore children with other abilities are discarded as misfits by these systems. Children who do not have linguistic and logical abilities are labelled as slow learners and are not infrequently subject to harassment and humiliation in the school. This is quite commonly seen in many schools that cling to the traditional teaching-teacher centred methods to educate children".

The current intellectual poverty of Tamil society is largely due to its perception of education purely in terms of secure jobs, incomes and pensions. There are professional Tamils to whom the idea of pursuing an interesting subject for its own intrinsic value makes no sense. Many a Tamil youth who has decided to break with tradition oft encounters the question from stubbornly opaque parents and relatives "What kind of a job can you get with the subject you are studying?"

Yet one keeps hearing the lament among Tamil professionals that their community is woefully inadequate in presenting its case through the arts, literature and music, that the number of people who can put pen to paper and make sense either in English or Tamil cannot even be counted on their fingers. Driven by anxious parents to study and attend tuition classes most of the day and for seven days of the week from grade one, many Tamil children are mentally exhausted by the time they reach teenage. Their only means of acquiring knowledge become sheer rote. A recent report on the high incidence of juvenile diabetes in Sri Lanka attributes it to the stress caused among children by the system of education here.

The system of education upheld by Sri Lankan Tamils has produced over the years, mere cogs servicing the wheels of machineries discovered and developed by people from societies that have had less rigid conceptions and ideals of learning.

Tamil society has, with an almost self-destructive compulsion, destroyed its own ancient traditions of liberal education. Children in Tamil homes have few or no means to acquire knowledge from resources other than those provided at school. Few are the Tamil homes either here or abroad where one can find even a small collection of books. Children who are mercilessly and relentlessly driven to tuition classes by parents have little time to think or read or to travel.

Tamils should learn to respect learning. They should also respect childhood and the joys that come with it. Learning should bring joy and happiness.

# Inquiry reveals unbridgeable gap

By Seralaathan

Several incidents in these times of peace continue to show that the ethnic divide in Sri Lanka remains as unbridgeable as ever. There does not seem to be few meeting points for opinion on critical issues. The victim as usual is the truth. The chairman of the committee inquiring into the STF shooting in Kanchirankudah on 9 October made a pre-judgement this week in an interview to the BBC's Sandeshiya. His position seems to justify the STF's action.

The following details culled from the inquiries into the STF shooting in Kanchirankudah make it clear that truth and logic have fallen prey to inveterate hatreds and indelible convictions about the LTTE.

The STF said in the inquiry that they had first fired rubber bullets and tried riot control before they opened fire on the people in the protest procession. There were neither rubber bullets nor marks left by rubber bullets were found on the bodies of the dead and wounded persons. Neither rubber bullets nor rubber bullet marks were found on the participants of the procession. The empty teargas canister found at the scene of the shooting by members of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission who visited Kanchirankudah STF camp area on the day of the incident had apparently been obtained from old stocks. People who witnessed the incident said in their evidence before the committee that the STF at Kanchirankudah did not use teargas on the procession.

The weapons expert who gave evidence before the committee of inquiry said that the teargas canister found at the scene of the incident was manufactured in October 1989. According to him the said teargas had only five years of guaranteed shelf life and that even if it was preserved under good storage conditions, could not last more than ten years. The expert had also observed in his evidence that a canister of this type of teargas could only affect people standing or walking within an area of 100-sq.metre. It would not have been possible at all to disperse more than 100 people at the same time with a single-teargas canister.

According to the SLMM's evidence before the committee,

slippers and bicycles were found along the road by the Kanchirankudah STF camp. But the OIC of the Kanchirankudah STF camp has stated that poles, batons, sticks and stones were found inside his camp. According to statements SLMM members who gave evidence before the committee, there was no evidence that people had entered the STF camp forcibly and the iron barrier in front of the main gate of the camp had not been removed. This can be seen in the photos submitted by the SLMM to the committee. In a photograph submitted by the SLMM to the committee, the statue of Lord Buddha in the shrine at the entrance of the Kanchirankudah STF camp is intact, without any damage.

The SLMM took the photograph after the incident about 7.15 p.m. on 9/10/2002. The statue was intact when the Minister for Hindu Affairs, Mr. T. Maheswaran and Tamil National Alliance MPs visited the Kanchirankudah STF camp on 11/10/2002. The Minister and the Members of Parliament did not observe any damage to the statue during their visit. It was quite intact. This can be seen in the video recording of the Minister's visit to the camp. However when the committee of inquiry went to the camp on 20/10/2002 the statue was totally damaged and its broken pieces were heaped nearby.

The STF told the committee that the people in the procession had destroyed the statue on the day of the shooting incident. Only the remains of two tyres burnt in front of the camp are seen in a photograph submitted to the committee by the SLMM.

The SLMM photo shows that the resting sheds, checkpoints by the road had not been burnt. (The SLMM took photos around 7.15 p.m. after the incident). But later the resting sheds and checkpoints were burnt. In another photograph taken by the SLMM, the STF observation point 1 (inside the camp) is not damaged and its roof too is seen intact. The OIC of the STF's Kanchirankudah camp has stated in his evidence that persons who forcibly entered the camp through its eastern sector by cutting through the concertina rolls had pulled down the roof of the observation post and broke cement posts that are fallen in a southerly direction.

The STF claims that more than 100 people entered the camp by cutting the concertina rolls of its defence perimeter. But obviously more than hundred people could not have forced their way into the camp through a small gap cut through the dangerous concertina rolls within a very short time. If what the STF says is true then there should have been large gaps cut through the concertina in many places of the camp's defence perimeter.

But members of the committee

of inquiry found no such evidence when it visited the camp.

The OIC, Kanchirankudah has claimed in his evidence before the committee that 9 STF personnel were wounded in the incident. But not a single wounded STF officer or commando appeared before the inquiry committee. And their medical reports were not submitted to the committee of inquiry. The OIC of the Kanchirankudah STF camp, claimed that the people who came in the procession were shot below the knee. However not a single wound below the knee was found either on the survivors or the dead. There are clear discrepancies and contradictions in times and sequences of events in the evidences of the STF and the SLMM. For example the SLMM member stated in his evidence to the committee that he was received by an STF officer called Gunaratne at Kanchirankudah camp and that the (STF) officer showed him around.

But in his evidence the OIC of the Kanchirankudah STF camp said that he had received the SLMM member on that day and had shown him (the SLMM member) around the camp and its environs. The OIC of the Kanchirankudah STF camp claimed in his evidence to before the committee that an STF riot squad had come to the camp from Akkaraipattu through a secret path. This is incredible because the Kanchirankudah STF camp is located in an open space. The area around it is clearly visible from any direction. The only way the said riot squad could have reached the camp without anybody seeing it could have been through a secret tunnel.

When the committee of inquiry visited the camp it found no evidence of a secret path by which the said riot squad could have entered the camp. Such a squad could have entered the camp only through its main gate. And above all evidence of the Kanchirankudah STF camp OIC is false and patently fabricated because there is no riot squad in the STF. Riot control is the work of the Police. The STF is an elite military/commando unit developed and deployed specifically for counter insurgency and offensive operations.

These are some of the facts. But to the south the STF's position is the truth, it is a foregone conclusion, logic and facts matter little. Politics determines truth. The divide is unbridgeable.



# Joint Task Force: Much ado about nothing

By V. T. Thamilmaran

The second round of peace talks between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE has begun yesterday in Nakron Pathom, Bangkok. It is no secret that discussion on the crucial issue of the modalities for setting up the Joint Task Force (JTF) to deal with immediate military and civilian concerns has occupied the centre stage of the talks this time.

At the time of signing the Cease-fire Agreement it was also agreed upon that immediate steps should be taken to restoring normalcy to the people of Northeast. Otherwise, the fruits of the agreement can't be meaningful as far as those people who had been trapped in the bloody war for more than fifteen years are concerned.

Originally, it was thought that by setting up the Interim Arrangement (Administration) much of the spade work could be done; and that proceeding from there towards finding the final solution to the crisis would be less cumbersome in a practical sense. However, at the first round of negotiations between the GOSL and the LTTE at Sattahip emerged the idea of the Joint Task Force. Logically enough, it has bypassed everything, including the interim arrangement, and occupied the foremost place in the agenda for talks this time.

Yet, the very idea of setting up the JTF is intricately connected with the resettlement of the IDPs as well. Hence the complexity is doubled. No doubt that it would be a Herculean task for the negotiators to handle the matter and finalising the tasks and guidelines of the JTF.

The published draft of the JTF contains provisions relating to its composition, powers and functions. However, there is an array of questions that warrants answers over the legal basis of this institution and its mutual relationship with other administrative structures that are already established according to proper legal process and authority.

Take for example, the status and relationship of the JTF vis-à-vis the Treasury. The powers and functions described in the Norwegian draft of the JTF can't be understood in isolation of the legal basis on which the entity is going to be established.

Let's look at some of those functions of the JTF. It seems that it has three functional attributes. These are *policy formulation*, *joint resource mobilisation* and *overseeing implementation*. In all three aspects, there are legal snags that need to be overcome by way of resorting to parliamentary or Presidential intervention. Has this

fact adequately attracted the attention of the relevant parties?

According to the draft, the JTF is going to function under the Prime Minister's Office. If that is the case, what is its real status? Is it going to be a Department, Board, Corporation, Commission or a statutory body in any other name? Will there be a statute passed by the Parliament prescribing its powers and functions in concrete terms?

On the other hand, if it were just going to be an administrative arrangement within the Office of the Prime Minister, what is the statutory body under which it would be ultimately placed for control? Who would be made answerable for accountability and transparency in respect of operations of the body?

In any event, could this entity function without being brought under the purview of one of the departments already functioning under the Prime Minister's Office?

These are some of the pertinent questions that arise given the important powers and functions assigned to the JTF by the drafters.

It is said that the JTF shall formulate policy guidelines for identification of needs, prioritisation of efforts and beneficiary selection processes relating to rehabilitation and reconstruction. But, matters that are expected to be assigned to the JTF have been already earmarked for the 3RP (Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Program) and the latter has begun its activities, of course, under the Prime Minister's Office. Under the 3RP, moves have been afoot to put in motion actions related to relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction at national level and these actions can't be limited to war torn areas.

But as it stands, the mandate of the JTF is limited to activities in the northeast only. The crucial question here is whether the 3RP that operates at the national level would encompass the functions of the JTF or *vice versa*? If the latter is the case, the whole purpose of setting up the JTF will be lost and it would become just another subordinate body functioning under the 3RP.

In that, all the necessary bureaucratic hurdles, including that of red tape would remain intact and the JTF would be reduced to a status similar to the cosmetic bodies which existed under the Ministry of Rehabilitation earlier. If it is so, on what ground could one justify the entire operation of the JTF with its so called vigorous and dynamic approach to the immediate problems of the people of the Northeast? Is the hype about the JTF empty rhetoric or a covert attempt to bring the LTTE into the day-to-day business of the normal governmental functions in the northeast region?

*Is the hype about the JTF empty rhetoric or a covert attempt to bring the LTTE into the day-to-day business of the normal governmental functions in the northeast region? If this is the case, the propaganda about accommodating the LTTE as an equal partner in the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction would stand exposed.*

If this is the case, the propaganda about accommodating the LTTE as an equal partner in the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction would stand exposed. Conversely, if the 3RP is brought under the JTF the identity of the latter will get blurred since national level operations have to be undertaken by both of them jointly. Knowing the mindset of the southern polity, it would be ridiculous to think of having the LTTE as an equal partner for carrying out national policy formulations.

Moving on to legal issues, the relevant question remains about the legality of the powers of the JTF in formulating policy guidelines. When it comes to policy planning, the Planning Ministry, Ministry of Finance and finally the entire cabinet do automatically come in for evaluating the whole exercise and bypassing them would seriously undermine not only good governance but also legitimate governmental powers. These won't remain mere academic issues when the activities of the JTF come under the scrutiny of the cabinet which is headed by the President.

Furthermore, it is understood that the JTF could establish and administer a fund; and all contributions of unspecific nature would be maintained in this fund. At the same time, according to the draft provisions, the members of the JTF are neither elected representatives of the people nor are they answerable to those elected by the people. The JTF is required to furnish monthly reports to the delegation at the peace talks as well.

In order to circumvent the legal barriers, the drafters have thought it fit to introduce two provisions concerning the roles of the Auditor-General and the Dept. of External Resources.

It is very strange to see a provision that provides for a separate audit process but, albeit, with the concurrence of the Auditor-Gen-

eral and the respective donors. The extent to which it is free to spend on its own is determined by the JTF itself. The self-styled mechanism of auditing would ensure that no corruption or excesses take place at the implementation level. Are these arrangements adequate enough to satisfy the legal requirements regarding public finance?

Parliament by legislation (Finance Act), the Public Accounts Committee (established under the Standing Orders of Parliament) by its reports, and the Treasury by its minutes have laid down a long series of complicated rules (and practices as well) the purpose of which is to secure responsibility to Parliament and to prevent corruption, waste and inefficiency. Obviously the concurrence of the Auditor General alone is grossly inadequate to check all the above and place the necessary curbs. In this context can the auditor general be answerable to Parliament if the JTF conducts its own auditing with his mere concurrence?

Article 154 of the Constitution and section 13 of the Finance Act No. 38 of 1971 describe the duties and functions of the Auditor-General. Art. 154 of the Constitution imposes a duty on him to audit the accounts of all public institutions including that of the Prime Minister's Office. Without the consent of the Finance Minister no auditor can be appointed for the purpose of auditing any public institution. Is there any meaningful role that he can play in the above situation? Or will his functions be reduced to the level of an accounts-clerk?

Also, under the Finance Act, expenditure over a certain amount of public money requires the approval of the cabinet. The meetings of the cabinet will be chaired by the President of the Republic. Is there any guarantee that the JTF's spending will be approved by the President?

Moreover, the JTF has been asked to recognise the mandate of the External Resources Depart-

ment as the principal and coordinating agency of the government for foreign loans and grants. Here it should be clearly understood that the LTTE would be a partner in negotiating loans and grants from foreign governments and donor agencies to bring in the money into the country's coffers. But the partnership ends there. When it comes to spending the monies brought in thus, the LTTE cannot have a say because the involvement of the cabinet in this matter is inevitable in accordance with statutory requirements. As far as the loans and grants are concerned, only the Dept. of external resources can enter into contractual obligations on behalf of the government. While the LTTE would also be negotiating for loans and grants as an equal partner in the JTF, the signing of the contracts would be the business of the Sri Lankan government alone.

However, the LTTE's point of view it could be argued that their *de facto* control over the Northeast is being legitimised by accepting themselves as equal partners in the operations of the JTF. As the JTF is expected to present plans and proposals for to donor agencies, the equal partners of the entity also would play a crucial role in directly negotiating foreign assistance. Certainly, it would give the image LTTE a boost.

But, the matter wouldn't end there. Those who are not so cynical raise the following questions related to the constitutional status of the JTF:

Is it going to be a forerunner to the Interim Government (Arrangement)? Is the JTF an embryonic entity that would evolve into the Interim Government very soon?

An affirmative answer to the last question seems to me more dangerous than any thing else. Because, it is very clear that the proposed interim arrangement can't be thought of without amending the Constitution. However, for the JTF, you don't need to amend the Constitution. Hence, the JTF, being a convenient and *ad hoc* tool, has become the darling of the UNF government, which is ironically headed by the President.

An overall reading of what is available in the context of the establishment of the JTF seems to suggest that it can't take off the ground without facing laborious challenges including legal. The lack of a solid legal basis for the JTF which goes to the very root of its existence might make all the current euphoria about it as a confidence building measure tall talk.



# A bibliographer's labour of love

By J. S. Tissainayagam

The Ceasefire Agreement has not only brought a halt to murder and mayhem, but also afforded opportunities to many Sri Lankans – especially Tamils – of immense ability, learning and skill, to visit the country of their birth without fear.

Tamils living overseas whose achievements have earned them a reputation and name, have been visiting the northeast over the past eight months since the Agreement was negotiated and given of their knowledge – be it on agriculture and crop management, computer software development, or the rehabilitation of reservoirs and irrigation canals.

One such visitor is a bibliographer and librarian, who lived the last several years in Britain. He is here to lend his expertise and knowledge for the redevelopment of the Jaffna library and similar institutions. What is engaging about the man however is that he already has a remarkable output, produced through sustained but silent labour, which goes to show the commitment he has to his work.

"It took me two years to compile *Noolthettam* that has 1000 annotated entries," said N. Selvarajah, speaking to the *Northeastern Herald*.

Selvarajah's beginnings were comparatively modest as the librarian of Chunnakam Ramanathan College in the 1970s. After a stint of being in charge of Sarvodaya's library in the Jaffna District, he became the librarian at the Evelyn Ratnam Institute in Jaffna and later at the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES) in Colombo.

He went on to found the Aiyoththi Library Services an organisation devoted to library development and was in charge of two of its publications dealing with library science and bibliography.

His visit to Sri Lanka was partly in connection with the publication of *Noolthettam* that was launched in Colombo last Sunday. This compilation of 1000 entries is classified into three: according to subject, which are the principal entries, followed by classification on the basis of titles and authors. They are also annotated. *Noolthettam* is formatted according to the Dewey decimal classification.

The significance of Selvarajah's work can only be seen when it is examined against the parlous state in which bibliographical classification of Tamil books from Sri

Lanka is.

"I believe there are between 5000 and 8000 volumes of Tamil writing from Sri Lanka," said Selvarajah. It is also important to note the volumes he is referring to are books starting with the *Story of Assambai* in 1895 and do not include writing preserved in *ola* form.

What is however alarming, but not uncommon in this country, is that these 8000 volumes are not recorded in their entirety anywhere. "It is the function of a national library to collect and record all of a nation's writings. This has not happened here," Selvarajah stressed.

It is the function of national libraries to compile lists of books, journals and other written materials published and unpublished within the borders of that country. Therefore India and the west include in bibliographies only Sri Lankan Tamil writing published in their respective countries. Sri Lanka that should have a central repository of Sri Lankan Tamil writing does not have one.

"This is especially unfortunate because roughly about 70% of Tamil writing by Sri Lankan authors is published outside the country," says Selvarajah.

He estimates that only between 500 and 700 titles by Tamil authors from Sri Lanka would have found a place in the bibliography compiled by the Sri Lanka National Library Services Board. "How would they have a comprehensive bibliography when they do not have access to exhibitions of Tamil books overseas?" asked Selvarajah an amused smile playing on cherubic face.

An important reason for Tamil books – even those published in Sri Lanka – not being registered at the national library is due to printers who are obliged to send copies to the archives being either lazy, or constrained by costs to do so.

"I do not think it is a deliberate policy of the government to sabotage Tamil writing. Rather, it is sheer carelessness. They do not have sufficient number of staff that read and understand Tamil. Of course you could say it is deliberate on the basis these organisations do not recruit Tamil-speaking staff," Selvarajah conceded.

Of publishing done of Tamil books by Sri Lankan authors overseas, almost 80% is in south India. Since most of the books are self-published, these author-publishers prefer India because publishing is very cheap.

"The other advantage is the Government of India has a scheme whereby the state purchases around 300 to 400 books to distribute among the school and state libraries. This guarantees that at least

*The significance of Selvarajah's work can only be seen when it is examined against the parlous state in which bibliographical classification of Tamil books from Sri Lanka is. c "I believe there are between 5000 and 8000 volumes of Tamil writing from Sri Lanka," said Selvarajah. It is also important to note the volumes he is referring to are books starting with the Story of Assambai in 1895 and do not include writing preserved in ola form.*

some books sell. Usually the remaining are distributed by their authors among known people," Selvarajah said.

In Europe the system is different. Here, with advances in technology, desktop publishing is available to all who wish to use it. The only cost is that of printing, since most books are privately published. The core constraint is distribution however. Due to the limited reading public of Tamil books, they tend to be distributed free through Tamil literary circles, bookshops specialising in catering to Tamil clientele, or to friends and relatives.

"The Tamil book-publishing industry in Europe and the west is not a profitable one. It is mostly a labour of love. I would include my own books in the same category," said Selvarajah.

Tracing the history of book publishing in Tamil and bibliographical studies, which are in a way intertwined, he said output had been on fairly even keel till about the 1960s. They took an upward climb soon after.

"I think the introduction of *swabasha* as the medium of instruction in the late 1950s and early 1960s helped this trend," Selvarajah said. The imposition of controls on importing books by the SLFP government of Sirimavo Bandaranaike in the 1970s also helped by forcing Tamils of Sri Lanka to write, and the trends that were established refused to dry up even after book imports were liberalised later.

The upward trend of this period reached a plateau between the late-1970s and early-1980s after which there was a steep rise once more, "And the trend is still going on," says Selvarajah.

He attributes three different stimuli for this second upsurge of Tamil writing from Sri Lanka. First, with the war, Tamils from Sri Lanka had a story to tell; second the relative economic prosperity in western societies and India for some immi-

grant Tamils give them the luxury to indulge in literary production.

"Thirdly, immigration has allowed us to view our national problems from a distance and helps to give it perspective," said Selvarajah, with a far away look descending upon him as if to emphasise the point.

However, unlike post-colonial literatures in English for instance, where immigrant writing has focussed on non-white experience in western societies such as alienation and inability to come to terms with new realities, Selvarajah says Sri Lankan Tamil writing, especially fiction, does not necessarily conform to that mode.

"Much of the writing in poetry and short stories tends to be experiential. Interestingly, there is very little love poetry; much of the verse is revolutionary or speak of the horrors of war," explained Selvarajah.

There are also important non-fiction works that have come through the meeting of cultures. He spoke of a German – Tamil dictionary with contemporary references compiled by V. Saravanabawan in 1992 as one example.

Selvarajah looks upon his own work as path breaking in the general bibliography category of Sri Lankan Tamil writing. There have been subject bibliographies compiled in the past. *Sri Lankan Tamil novels published between 1895 and 1975* prepared N. Subramaniam of the University of Jaffna is one such. S. H. N. Jameel has published a bibliography of Sri Lankan Muslim writing from 1895-2000 in four volumes, which though having 1975 entries, is unfortunately not annotated. Another work is *Bibliography of Sri Lankan Tamil literature* prepared in the 1970s by Kanagasenthinathan. Bibliographies of Tamil writing in Sri Lanka, compiled in Tamil, is pretty much limited to these.

Speaking of the Jaffna public li-

brary onto whose board of advisors he was appointed in 1991, he said it had always remained a municipal library. "Jaffna library, despite its vast resources, was not famous till it was burnt down," he said. "And then it assumed a political significance."

Since it was not a national library, Jaffna did not have a book depository. Therefore, all books published in Tamil did not reach it. Since the depository was the National Library Services Board in southern Sri Lanka (first at the University of Peradeniya under the able guidance of H. A. I. Goonatilleke before it was shifted to Colombo), printers in the northeast were reluctant, or just careless about sending copies of published works in Tamil for registration.

Selvarajah said there was an attempt to make Jaffna library a regional library for the northeast, but the project did not take off.

He said a national library is a structure, which has a legal book depository. Jaffna library however, even if it is reconstructed, will remain a municipal library. A possible solution is to make it a wing of the National Library Services Board as in the U.K where the national library has wings in different parts of the country. If this is accomplished, Jaffna library could legally access resources for library development for collecting, cataloguing and compiling bibliographies.

Selvarajah believes that a national bibliography should be put together once the Jaffna library or a similar institution catering to the compilation of Tamil books and journals is set up. This will be an authoritative body with the necessary legal backup. "Till then I will do it," he says.

Now the first volume of 1000 entries is complete. Selvarajah is compiling the second volume that will contain the next 1000 entries. He expects to bring out six or seven volumes to cover a substantial portion of his area of specialisation. He said his visit to Sri Lanka is also partly a fund-raising mission. He hopes to go to France and Malaysia shortly to drum up financial support for the forthcoming volumes.

"I also hope to obtain support from authors by asking them to provide information about their books. They could send me a copy, if they can afford it. Otherwise, even vital information about the book such as title, author's name, printer, contents, number and size of pages would be welcome," said Selvarajah.



# LTTE should be role model for reconfiguring development

By Jude L. Fernando

*Kwame Nkrumah once said, "Seek ye first the political kingdom and everything else be added unto you." It seems so plausible then. It was only 30 years ago, and look! "We sought the political kingdom and nothing has been added unto us: a lot has been taken away," replied Chinua Achebe.*

The international Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) affirms the right of self-determination as the right from which all other fundamental human rights flow and there is indeed, a positive relationship between right to self-determination and economic development. Among many examples, the Indonesian case has shown that economic development can be fragile where it rests on the failure to respect human rights and the right of self-determination, even though Indonesia was once presented as a system successfully combining economic growth with rigid control of civil and political rights.

Political freedoms and economic development overlap in mysterious ways, and achieving a healthy relationship/tradeoff between them is far more difficult today than it was during the Cold War. Today, we have to simultaneously deal with the consequences of the timing as well as the substantive contents of the trade-off, because the worldwide tolerance of 'politics of identity' over 'politics of redistribution and social welfare' is widely exploited by those controlling the development industry. They do so to subvert the social struggles reacting against the inequalities resulting from it.

One fruitful way of engaging the trade off between political freedom and economic development in Sri Lanka is to consider the risky moral decisions made by a few on behalf of the majority. Risky, because the results of such decisions are unpredictable, given that key decision makers do not have absolute control over the environment within which they work.

Hence, the emphasis should be on individual as much as community perceptions of development and freedom, given the fact that the evolving social system which is highly materialistic and individualistic, and that the community is fast becoming simply instrumental. Here the crucial questions are how long are masses willing to allow for a trade-off in favor of their respective nationalist projects? How will they react to a colossal failure of development? What would be the impact of such reactions on nationalist projects?

The individual's perceptions about economic deprivation and exploitation, traditionally

known as class relations until the NGOs summarily removed it from the vocabulary of social justice, is a major factor determining the coherence of a political community. This means that one cannot simply over-sell political freedoms. And the people's complacency under economic hardships despite their desire for political freedoms cannot be taken for granted. To do so would drag Sri Lanka to a situation far worse than what Achebe noted in the post-Nkrumah Africa.

We have plenty of thorny issues needing serious reflection.

First, are there significant "ideological differences" between the general public (Tamil and Sinhalese communities) and their representatives (LTTE and the government, and various interest groups in the South) in terms of the trade-offs they are willing to make between maintaining political freedoms and economic development?

Secondly, to what extent the absence of such 'ideological differences' is an imposition by the respective representatives on the represented, either through coercion, or ideological manipulation. Under the prevailing conditions, these questions are not easily verifiable. None of the representatives of either community would dare try to! Yet, it is an important question because it is about moral responsibility of the representatives to the represented.

The LTTE's capacity to minimize such "ideological differences" far more effectively than the government, with its coercive apparatus and ideological control over the political consciousness of their community, is becoming questionable, despite the fact that some actions by the government have frustrated the Tamil public. A number of post-ceasefire events in the northeast seems to widen the 'differences' mainly centered on the issue of individual economic well-being vis-à-vis the political community. Perhaps, the most important determinant in maintaining such ideological coherence is the intra-community perceptions both local and in the Diaspora.

Often, the Tamil and Sinhala Diasporas involvement in their respective nationalist projects are episodic, inconsistent and unreliable. Like Jewish, Palestinian, Irish, and Sikh Diasporas, they are willing to assist the struggle for nationhood, yet remain ambivalent about their role in economic development. Most of them are unlikely to return to the country, and particularly the Tamils abroad are likely to distance themselves from the Eelam project if the prevailing anti-terrorist campaign appears to threaten their well being. Paradoxically, it is also possible that there are those who while enjoying comfortable, luxury lifestyles while extending fanatical support for nationalist projects

irrespective of the sufferings of the local populations.

Similar argument applies to local 'middle classes' (intellectuals, businessmen, NGO professionals, and those well connected with the power holders). They send their children to the best schools in Colombo. They are usually educated in the English, enjoy the luxuries of the more liberal lifestyles in Colombo, travel abroad, but at the same time, remain quite insistent that the nationalist project should not be compromised for the sake of development. They function as global cosmopolitan networks that include their ideological opponents. They drink, dine and dialogue together in a space theoretically known as the civil society, but experienced in real life in five star hotels, pubs and conference centers. They show remarkable dexterity to use each other to realize their respective nationalist projects, and are better shielded from economic and political sufferings compared to the masses.

The current crisis has brought financial fortunes to some of this middle class elements - those who function as consultants, heads of NGOs, mediators between the 'locals' and the 'outsiders,' information and propaganda producers and managers, or simply some by virtue of their contacts and linguistic capabilities. This, in turn, gives them a native/indigenous outlook and opportunities of leadership within their communities in many similar highly anglicized elites who assumed the leadership positions immediately after independence, although they continued to speak and act in the language of their colonial masters.

Their cultivated cosmopolitan outlook gives them the public appearance of being liberal, open for dialogue and well mannered and civilized, in contrast to the distaste for 'those unruly, militant nationalists and terrorists'. It is indeed comical to see how some of them who hardly had any involvement with the crisis during the past 20 years are now struggling to become stakeholders in the struggle for freedom.

We should remind ourselves that the costs of war are disproportionately born by women and children, particularly those in families that lost their breadwinners and those who continue to live in refugee camps. The women are forced to be symbols culture and share an increasing responsibility for economic well being of the family. Children are passive recipients of the actions of their adults. The allocation to development assistance to them is not primarily based on need and helplessness, but on politico-security interests, fundraising potential for NGO projects, local authority relations, and areas that are easily accessible. Development aid is disproportionately concentrated in 'towns' used as 'show pieces' of

the humanitarian virtues of the rich and the powerful.

One could argue that in the South, afore-noted 'ideological differences' are growing, by pointing to the failure of the Sinhals Urumaya and the JVP to exploit ethno-nationalism, and the remarkable silence of the traditional detractors of a political settlement to the ethnic crisis. This may not be due as much to radical ideological shifts, but, rather, other convictions, inevitabilities and uncertainties. First, the war is not winnable and it cannot be tolerated any longer for economic and social reasons. Second, public is reacting against their so-called guardians of the nation exploiting the war for selfish economic and political gains, and the legal system failing to bring them to justice. Third, external actors, especially the donor community, want peace. Finally, the narrowing of 'differences' is a temporary phenomenon and the reality will be seen only if and when a 'final' solution is offered or groups powerful enough to challenge the state power based on anti-autonomy agenda, emerge.

The potential of ethno-nationalism in the South to sabotage peace and the LTTEs ability sustain its leadership are primarily based on how they engage with economic development. Economic development cannot be neglected until the 'right political conditions' emerge.

During the past 20 years, war has marginalized the common people in the development process. Reintegrating them into the process is a Herculean task, because the tendency of the present development paradigm excludes and marginalizes social groups from it, rather than incorporating and sharing its benefits.

The war did not completely halt development, but simply development has reconstituted itself according to the powerful interest groups who controlled it. The World Bank, various NGOs and trans-national corporations (TNCs) continue to exploit the helplessness of the nation and the political uncertainty. No regulatory mechanisms exist to ensure the civic and environmental responsibility of the evolving business-networks, now interpreted as results of the 'peace-dividend.'

They implement programs on a haphazard and scattered basis guided by political realities, the preference of NGOs, donors, and the local authorities, rather than the needs of the people and the environment. The old social cleavages that defined social inequalities, submerged in the name of the 'nationhood', have resurfaced with a vengeance as development today is highly individualized and competitive - a dog-eat-dog activity.

When one or other community (or both) is finally satisfied or dis-

satisfied with what the achievements of their nationalist struggles, there will be nothing left in the economy that they can say belongs to them or the political capacity to reclaim them. Then some commentator might remind us of the saying, 'Be careful what you ask for, because you just might get it!'

The claim that we have no control over the development process as long as it is under the dictatorship of triad multilateral institutions, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and World Trade Organization (WTO) process is naive, fatalistic and would be catastrophic. History is full of examples of how subordinate groups have reconfigured and subverted the dominant paradigm or hegemonic powers through creative reflection, commitment to moral and ethical responsibility, and a political praxis.

Such progressive interventions hampered by the primary focus of the government and the LTTE on consolidating their respective power bases through patron-clientalist networks and maintaining the flow of foreign aid, without a planned intervention in economic development.

Mean time, economy functions according to the logic of extracting maximum profits (through commissions from sale of profitable state property, squandering of aid and the exploitation of natural resources) as quickly as possible and transfer them to their individual coffers often in foreign countries. Such crony Statism is not good even for capitalism!

There isn't much help from the opposition in the South, either. Typically, from the moment it loses power, it opposes every proposal of the incumbent and tries to topple the government. The public can no longer trust their elected representatives who have no commitment to any coherent political ideology or policies. They are simply commodities bought and sold by the political parties and businesses without any consultation with the voters.

By the time the government consolidates its position vis-à-vis the opposition; it would time for the next election. We might have neither peace nor development; perhaps the conditions would be ripe for the next episode of *Bihisyana* and war between the LTTE and the government.

Paradoxically, the LTTE, given its political power over the northeast and relative isolation in the global development industry, and the fact that the southern nationalists can do little about its affairs, can be a role model to the government by developing an institutional infrastructure to reclaim and reconfigure economic development in favor of the entire country.



# Paratroopers opened fire

## “without justification”

*As the courts in Sri Lanka take long-delayed action to bring to book errant military and police personnel for human rights violations in massacres like those at Mylanthanai, Mirisuvil, and Bindunuwewa, this is an account of a testimony given by a soldier of the British Parachute Regiment about an incident now popularly known as ‘Bloody Sunday’ where, on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1972, British soldiers opened fire on civilians in Northern Ireland.*

By Fern Lane

At the time of going to press (17<sup>th</sup> October 2002), the first British soldier actually involved in events on the ground has been giving evidence to the Inquiry. The former member of the Parachute Regiment, identified only as 027, told the Inquiry on Wednesday morning that his colleagues opened fire on the civil rights march “without justification.” In his written statement, Soldier 027, who is on the witness protection programme because of possible reprisals, said that he did not see any gunmen or bombers in the Bogside on 30 January 1972.

Soldier 027’s statement says that when he arrived in Rossville Street, another paratrooper began firing “without hesitation” straight at a crowd behind a rubble barricade. Other soldiers also began firing but 027 said that when he scanned the crowd through his rifle sights he could not see anyone resembling a gunman or bomber. Six people were killed at the barricade.

After some minutes he relayed a ceasefire order but two paratroopers went into Glenfada Park, where they killed a further four people. He followed them into the area and saw a crowd fleeing in panic. He told the Inquiry that he could not identify any targets for the soldiers and that the crowd posed no threat to them.

In his original statement given to the Royal Military Police a few days after Bloody Sunday, Soldier 027 had said he had seen a gunman in Rossville Street and a petrol bomber in Glenfada Park. The reason he said this, he explained, was that he had come under intense pressure from other members of the regiment and did not want to “stick his neck out.” He said

that the sections of his statement were “fabricated” in order to place other paratroopers in “a better light.”

The soldier, who was not called to give evidence to the Widgery Inquiry, has said that when he told a lawyer about his colleague firing at the crowd at the barricade, the lawyer ripped up his statement and returned later with another for him to sign. This statement, submitted to Widgery, contained the claims about the supposed gunman and bomber.

Soldier 027 is expected to give evidence until early next week.

The Bloody Sunday Inquiry heard on Monday that documents, which were supposed to accurately record instructions given via radio to British Paratroopers in Bogside do not match events on the ground.

The inquiry was hearing evidence from Soldier INQ2091, who at the time was a subaltern attached to headquarters Infantry Brigade at Ebrington Barracks. On Bloody Sunday itself he was on duty as a watch-keeper in the operations room making a log of radio communications.

The inquiry was told that an order was given verbally at 4.07pm on a secure radio network, Bid 150, for a unit of 1 Para to go into Bogside. They were ordered to go through Barrier 14 at William Street. However, three more units of 1 Para went into the scene at different sites, some of them in armoured personnel carriers.

Soldier INQ2091 said that a verbal order would have been passed on to a watch-keeper who would ensure that it was accurately written down, for later transcription. However, there is no record in the transcribed log - the original having been destroyed - of the order to send in three more units of the Paras after the initial burst through barrier 14. The official log does also not tally with the recordings taken

of British Army communications by a local radio enthusiast.

INQ2091’s explanation for this was that, as Ebrington Barracks could not operate a secure radio link, the order may have gone through on a network in the Brigade Major or Commander’s offices.

Also giving evidence on Monday was General Tickell, the former British Army Chief of Staff, who told the inquiry that although he recalled “some talk” that intelligence had been received “to the effect that the IRA would hijack the march,” he could not recall the name of a single member of HQ staff with whom he had discussed the matter or from where such intelligence had come.

ber 1971, dealing with future British military activity:

“The risk of casualties is high (this is in relation to a number of options, one of which is going into the Bogside or the Creggan) and apart from gunmen or bombers, so-called unarmed rioters, possibly teenagers are certain to be shot in the initial phases; much will be made of the invasion of Derry and the slaughter of the innocent.”

Tickell’s belief that there was intelligence prior to 30<sup>th</sup> January to suggest that the IRA would be present on the march was questioned by Lord Gifford QC. He suggested out that, from a note written by General Dalzell-Payne on 24 January, the major problem for the army

force levels available and we can only hope to deal with two or three large scale demonstrations at any one time. In order to deal with them effectively, however, we must take stronger military measures which will inevitably lead to further accusations of ‘brutality and ill-treatment of non-violent demonstrators.’” Tickell told the Inquiry that he could not say what “stronger military measures” meant.

The author of that paper, Major General Henry Dalzell-Payne, appeared before the Inquiry on Tuesday and denied that the Army had considered shooting demonstrators in order to enforce the ban on marches.

Under questioning from Arthur Harvey QC for the families, Dalzell-Payne claimed that firing on the crowd “was the last thing in the world that we were going to do.”

He said that senior officers had merely wanted to introduce “firmer measures” to arrest hooligans after they had refused a request for more troops. However, apparently anticipating poor publicity for the army in relation to the 30<sup>th</sup> January civil rights march, Dalzell-Payne had written: “The only additional measure left for physical control is the use of firearms i.e. ‘disperse or we fire - Inevitably it would not be the gunmen who would be killed but ‘innocent members of the crowd.’ This would be a harsh and final step, tantamount to saying all else has failed and for this reason must be rejected except in extremis. It cannot, however, be ruled out.”

Dalzell-Payne told the Inquiry that opening fire would have been in response to “our soldiers being killed at random.”

Harvey asked whether his paper reflected the British Army’s inclination to apply “martial law to civilian situations.” Dalzell-Payne said that on reflection, he felt it was “not clear enough in some respects and was open to various interpretations, one of which you have adopted.”

Despite what he had written in his paper, he said he agreed with Harvey that “it would be wholly unconscionable in a western democratic society to shoot dead people for defying a ban on marches.”

(Photoblast / Republican News)

*The soldier, who was not called to give evidence to the Widgery Inquiry, has said that when he told a lawyer about his colleague firing at the crowd at the barricade, the lawyer ripped up his statement and returned later with another for him to sign. This statement, submitted to Widgery, contained the claims about the supposed gunman and bomber.*

In his statement to the Inquiry, Tickell had said that he could not remember what the march on Bloody Sunday was for. “It was general knowledge that there was to be a large procession taking place from the Creggan / Bogside on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1972,” he said. “I cannot now recall the reason for the procession...”

Despite his senior position, Tickell also denied ever seeing a number of important documents concerning the situation in Derry, including the proposed shooting of rioters, which passed between the various departments of the British Army, many of which are annotated to the effect that he was included in the circulation. For example, he said he had no recollection of General Ford’s memo dated 14<sup>th</sup> Decem-

was the effect on unionist and Protestant public opinion of the sight of thousands of civil rights marchers.

“There was, I suggest, in the early part of the week, no fear that there would be any confrontation with the IRA,” he said. “I do not know the answer to that,” said General Tickell.

Matters appeared to suddenly change after the matter was discussed by the Joint Security Committee - of which John Taylor was a member - which met on 27<sup>th</sup> January. Minutes of the JSC record that “the operation might well develop into rioting and even a shooting war”.

A paper by General Dalzell-Payne of the military operation branch, also dated 27<sup>th</sup> January, states: “It is not possible to enforce the ban rigidly with the



# Titanium, peace and Japanese interests

Japan is a major consumer of Titanium ore found on the north-eastern coast of Sri Lanka, from Kokkuthoduvai to Pulmoddai.

Titanium is a very expensive and much sought after metal in the modern world. Klaproth, the German scientist who discovered the metal named it after the Titans of Greek mythology the incarnation of natural strength. The aerospace industry finds it indispensable. Titanium alloys are essential for making planes, satellites, space craft etc., and titanium dioxide is the basis of the paint industry.

Titanium is three times stronger than steel, while weighing only 42% as much, making it an ideal strong, lightweight metal for structures such as airplanes and rockets. It is also chemically inert under normal conditions, enabling its use in medical implants such as pacemakers.

The beach sands of the coast between Mullaithivu and Trincomalee contain the richest titanium ore in the world. The concentration is almost 54 percent. This is quite higher than the concentration found in deposits elsewhere in the world. The titanium ore is ilmenite. It is a by-product of the crude monazite sands on Sri Lanka's northeastern coast. The titanium ore is washed ashore by tidal and wave action mainly on

beaches of Pulmoddai.

Annually about fifty thousand tons of ilmenite are produced in Pulmoddai. The Japanese are the main buyers. They ship it directly from the northeast coast. The ilmenite bought by them goes chiefly to the production of titanium dioxide. An SLFP politician made an allegation in 1989 that a ton of the ore which at that time was fetching 120 US dollars in the world market was being sold at a mere 50 US dollars and that no tender procedure had been followed in the sales. Somebody, in between, was making a cool 2.5 million US dollars every year.

Exploration and development of titanium mineral deposits were on the rise in 1995. In South Africa, a new producer of titanium concentrates was expected to commission a titanium slag operation by year end. At full production, the operation was expected to produce 195,000 tons per year of slag. In Western Australia, plans were announced to proceed with the development of the Been up deposit. The deposit was reported to be 4% heavy mineral sands and low in impurities with the potential for 500,000 tons per year of ilmenite.

Domestic environmental problems related to ilmenite include (1) land use conflicts where heavy-mineral sands deposits ex-

ist principally along the Atlantic coast and (2) the potential for water pollution from pigment-producing processes. Solutions to the latter problem include the development of economic, environmentally acceptable processes for making synthetic rutile or titanium tetrachloride from lower grade ilmenites and the development of methods to recover and recycle spent sulfuric acid as well as to neutralize and control the effluents produced. The two U.S. producers using the sulfate process treated their spent acid effluent with calcium carbonate and lime, producing a gypsum by product.

It has been felt over the years that the country could make very substantial profits by setting up a titanium dioxide plant at Pulmoddai. A detailed proposal to this effect was submitted to the government in 1990. (The technology for processing ilmenite into titanium dioxide remains almost exclusively with two Multi-national corporations Dupont and Kermaggees.)

A titanium dioxide plant would require a large supply of fresh water. The Yan Oya river which flows between Pulmoddai and Thiriyai was considered an ideal source of supply.

The LTTE which realised the

importance of Pulmoddai in the mid eighties has systematically scuttled efforts by the government to secure the area. In fact some Tamil militants, particularly the EROS, were inclined at that time to see a sinister link between the establishment of the military cum settlement zone in Weli Oya and the titanium sands of Pulmoddai. Although they gave some credence to the theory that the government's main aim at that time was to drive a wedge between the northern and eastern provinces to break the territorial contiguity of the Tamil separatists Eelam project, there was speculation among some of them at that time that something ulterior, business interests to be precise, was at stake.

The government attempt to isolate the hinterland of Pulmoddai with several strategically placed settlements and the progress of the Yan Oya irrigation scheme were seen as further confirmation of this belief.

The control of that part of the northeast coast between Kokkuthoduvai at the southern extreme of the Mullaithivu and Kuchchaveli in Trincomalee helped the government ship the ilmenite out of Pulmoddai safely.

The army presence in Kokkuthoduvai, Kokkilai, Pulmoddai, Thiriyai, Kallarawa

and Pudavaikaddu, wittingly or unwittingly, insulated the titanium rich sands from the designs of the armed Tamil groups. The Navy also had a unit at Kuchchaveli.

In 1988, however, the LTTE blasted a pumping station on the Yan Oya river scheme. It also developed links with the Muslim population in Pulmoddai. In recent years the Tigers have stepped up attacks in and around Pulmoddai.

In fact, a suggestion that the plant should be built in the south and the ilmenite be shipped there was made in 1990 when the proposal to build the titanium dioxide plant was first placed before the UNP leadership. The security situation in Pulmoddai and its hinterland was considered precarious even at that time despite the presence of the IPKF to the south and the army to the north and northwest. However, it was assumed at that time that the ilmenite could be safely shipped to the south mainly because the coast between Kokkilai and Kuchchaveli was dominated by the Army and Navy. Things have changed today. The LTTE dominates the sea in these parts. And the Japanese and MNCs have to do business.

## The making...

groups and regions due to the imposition of Sinhala only.

Regarding point three, it would be useful to distinguish the two important phases in the development of Sri Lankan Tamil consciousness. The first came with the legislative enactments and administrative impositions relating to the use of the Sinhala language and the marginalisation of Tamil. This affected the educated Tamils more than the Tamil peasantry, fisher folk and artisans. In the second phase, begins when the state aided Sinhala colonisation became a direct threat to the very existence of the peasantry and fisher folk. It was at this point that Tamil awareness was taken to the last Tamil man and woman.

Speaking of the Sinhala impact, one should not forget the positive influence of what happened in Sri Lankan Tamil theatre. It should be said to the credit of Sarachandra that without his Maname Vithiyathanan would not have lunched on his quest for the rediscovery of the Tamil Kooththu. But what distin-

guishes this interaction from the other impacts was that it was friendly and acknowledging each other's importance. While ancient political history was being used to fight contemporary issues in Sri Lankan politics, Tamil and Sinhala artists and scholars in the fields of theatre and literature were speaking about the mutual contributions of their respective cultures. These artists strove to construct what the charlatans destroyed.

Perhaps most crucial factor in the emergence of Sri Lankan Tamilness was the arrival of the Tamil youth in the arena of politics. Coming in first as a challenge to the political 'mollifiers' among the Tamils, they with the knowledge of Tamil only and with no chance ever to learn Sinhala, demanded equal rights as sons and daughters of this country. The tragic irony was that it was at this time administrative and legislative barricades were put up, preventing them from joining the national mainstream. The more those barricades worked the more they felt their Tamilness, this time cutting

across the hitherto divisive castes and regions.

And when the need for their political mobilisation arose the pattern of recruitment showed that here were groups paying scant regard to the taboos and social barriers and inhibitions which had weighed heavily upon their preceding generations. The Sri Lankan Tamil community had produced its own youthful dissidents and the state and the security forces decided to treat them as they did the JVP. But there was a distinction between a Sri Lankan government treating the Sinhala miscreants and a Sinhala dominated state dealing with the Tamil youth. This constituted the last straw on the already loaded camel's back. Sri Lankan Tamilness has not only become permanent but started asserting its uniqueness.

Supported by a rich tradition of art and literature which draw from the resources of the variegated regions and subcultures of the northeast, they are creating a new symphony which demands not only close listening but deeper and sympathetic understanding.

## Mafia women break last taboo

By Juliet Dwek

A deadly shoot-out in a sleepy, southern Italian village has marked a new, dark era in mafia savagery. Women have become both the victims and the suspected killers. The last mafia taboo has been broken.

The villages of Quindici and Lauro are about an hour's drive from Naples, and lie only a mile apart.

Two local families - the Cavas and the Grazianos - have been fighting a murderous campaign for control of the valley for 30 years.

The villagers have borne the brunt of this brutal mafia war. This year, in an unprecedented move, it seems the Italian mafia has become an equal opportunities employer.

On 26 May 2002 the peace of the Lauro valley was once again shattered by a tirade of bullets, killing three people, and seriously injuring five more. They were all women. The youngest, 16-year-old Clarissa Cava was still a schoolgirl.

Her two aunts - Maria Scibelli and Michelina Cava - were killed as they flung themselves in front of Clarissa

in an attempt to save her.

Clarissa's sister Felicia was left paralysed by bullets while her cousin Italia is now in a coma.

The police arrested nine members of the rival clan - the Grazianos.

Among them were four women - Alba Scibelli - 41-year-old mother of four, her mother-in-law Chiara Manzi - 62 - who was found with a 9mm gun stuffed down her bra - and Alba's two daughters Stefania Graziano, 19 and Chiara Graziano, 20.

"Up until now, there's been a code of honour which meant the mafia war was between men only," said Public Prosecutor Domenico Airoma.

"It was tacitly forbidden to hit a woman or even worse a teenager." But in recent years, women have occupied important positions in the mafia - even directing strategy. It is in the Naples mafia - or the Camorra as its known - that women have been most prominent.

With women now believed to be killing other women, the last taboo appears to have been broken. -BBC



## IDPs central to Jaffna politics



Refugee children at the Sabapathy welfare centre in Maruthanamadam in Jaffna

Pic by Buddhika Weerasinghe

The problem of the refugees in Jaffna has dogged all Tamil politicians from the north since the Sri Lanka army captured the northwestern parts of the peninsula in 1990. Douglas Devananda, the leader of the EPDP, last week issued a leaflet in colour explaining the services that he had rendered to the refugees in the islands of the peninsula when the army captured the area months after Eelam War II started in earnest.

The leaflet shows a youthful and leaner Douglas speaking to hundreds of

refugees seated on the road, probably to safeguard their lives – the army was ordering people to move out of their homes in order to flush out any 'terrorist' who may have hidden among them. That even Douglas, a staunch ally of the Sri Lankan armed forces in the north and trusted friend of President Chandrika Kumaratunga should feel impelled to list the services he rendered the people of the Jaffna islands when they were on the run

as refugees shows the importance of the Internally Displaced Persons in northern politics.

The Tamil United Liberation Front and the Liberation Tigers made this one of the core issues when they were consulted by the Indian government about implementing the Indo-Lanka Accord. The predicament of the people who were evicted by the army overnight from Manalaaru (Weli Oya) in 1984 was the central problem which the Tigers wanted resolved before the Interim

Administration was set up at the time. The Manalaaru IDP's staged a marathon sit in protest in front of government offices in Mullaithivu demanding their resettlement. When the LTTE's Jaffna political leader Thileepan started his fast unto death at the time, one of his main demands was the resettlement of the Manalaaru refugees.

After the army took Jaffna in 1995, Douglas Devananda devised programs to build a support base for himself among the IDP's of Jaffna. One can see the remains of the assistance rendered by him in many forms to the refugees in several welfare centres for IDPs in the peninsula's Valigamam Division.

Today, the refugee question is in-

evitable for every politician and social worker in Jaffna because the majority of the IDPs there are from the peninsula's political heartland – Valigamam North. Kankesanthurai, the electorate that returned the federal party leader S.J. V Chelvanayagam, is now a vast high security zone.

Jaffna's refugees have always wanted to home to their villages and towns. But their voice was not heard beyond the peninsula until the ceasefire agreement was signed, and as the pall of fear, cast on Tamil society by the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Emergency Regulations, began to lift slowly.



By the side of a cadjan fence of the refugee shelter



A saree cradle in the refugee shelter