

HOT SPRING

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Vol. 2

13th October 1991

No. 1

Thank you.

ARMY ESCALATES WAR

Politicians at Cross Roads

The Armed Forces of the Government of Sri Lanka are beginning to play an active role in politics. Especially the views of the Armed Forces on the conduct of the war in Tamil Eelam have developed to such an extent that the government hierarchy is virtually pressurised to accept the views of the Armed Forces.

It is pointed out that while the Sinhala capital of Colombo was in a political turmoil with some members of the ruling UNP throwing in their lot with the Opposition in a bid to oust President Premadasa from power, the Army was carrying an escalated and extended war all over Tamil Eelam territory.

Mannar, Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi areas in the North and Batticaloa and Amparai in the East witnessed war on a large scale, while the political crisis in Colombo rocked the whole political establishment. It is pointed out that at no time during the whole war which is now one year and four months old, was the Air Force called into action on such an escalated scale in the Eastern Province. Both in the Batticaloa and Amparai Districts there were heavy aerial bombardments carried out extensively.

Political observers note that the Sri Lankan Army has been advocating a more aggressive warfare in Tamil Eelam, while President Pre-

madasa's opponents were charging him of giving arms to the LTTE. Mr. Premadasa who had been put on the defensive by his political opponents, was pressurised into opting for strong military action in Tamil Eelam by the Army.

In order to secure the loyalty of the armed forces and in order to meet the charge against him that he was trying to settle with the LTTE, President Premadasa's government had been escalating the war in Tamil Eelam despite the political turmoil.

Some political observers state that President Premadasa was not too sure of the armed forces standing by him in the event of a crisis in Colombo, and was therefore trying to engage the forces in the North East on active military duty. They also point out to the President's recent speech wherein he has said that his opponents had tried to turn the armed forces against him.

ISLANDS OFF JAFFNA BEING MILITARIZED

The small Islands off Jaffna are being militarized. The Sri Lankan Army has opened up new camps in the Islands of Analaitivu and Eluvaitivu.

Last week the Sri Lankan Army entered the Island of Analaitivu and made a house to house search. It was expected that the Army would leave after the search. But the Army has stayed put in the Island of Analaitivu by

putting up a new camp there. The Army has also opened up a new camp in the nearby small Island of Eluvaitivu.

It is further learnt that the Sri Lankan Navy has put up two additional divisions of the Navy at Nainativu. There is already a naval camp at Nainativu. Now this camp has been further strengthened by the addition of two new divisions.

Navy patrols on the seas off Jaffna have also been increased.

Cannon Attack

Naval boats off the seas at Senthankulam started cannon fire attack towards 6.30 p.m on Thursday, October 10th.

P. M. K Reiterates Support For Tamil Eelam

Dr. S. Ramdas, the leader of the Pattali Makka Kadchi (Working Peoples' Party) in Tamil Nadu reiterated his support for Tamil Eelam demand. He was speaking to Pressmen in Madras following the party's Delegates' Conference.

Dr. Ramdas continuing said that in Tamil Nadu only the AIADMK and Congress (I) were opposed to the LTTE. Dr. Ramdas stressed that no punitive actions should be taken against the LTTE or its supporters in Tamil Nadu.

He criticised the government both at the Centre and in Tamil Nadu for failing to publicise their position in regard to the LTTE. He

also dismissed as untrue the theory that the LTTE would cause law and order problems in Tamil Nadu.

Akkaraipattu Rounded Up

The village of Akkaraipattu in the Amparai District was rounded up on Wednesday, October 9, by the Special Task Force.

It is learnt that about 200 persons were arrested by the STF. An Army Spokesman said that 142 of the arrested persons have been detained and that the others have been released.

Gun Boat attacks Valvettiturai

A gun-boat of the Sri Lankan Navy started firing towards residential areas around the coastal town of Valvettiturai on the night of Sunday, October 6.

At the same time artillery shell attack was launched

from the Palaly Army camp also directed towards Valvettiturai.

Reports also state that two shells exploded at Katkivalam in the Point Pedro area.

I am Prepared to be Hanged

The late Mr. C. Vanniasingam, a former Federal Party Member of Parliament for Kopay, was a leader of the Eelam Tamils in the forties and fifties. Born on 13.10.1911, Mr. Vanniasingam died prematurely at the comparatively young age of 48 on the 17th September, 1959.

An undaunted and fearless freedom fighter who lived up to his words, Mr. Vanniasingam thundered in Parliament that if to fight for Tamil rights was treason he would be willing to commit that treason and be prepared to be hanged.

We reproduce just an excerpt from his speech in remembrance of the departed leader:

"..... If to fight for one's language, not to pull down others' language but secure for Tamil its rightful place alongside with Sinhalese is treason-

If to defend our traditional homelands against infiltration and invasion by another set of people in a manner gravely prejudicial and detrimental to our political, economic and cultural interests is treason-

If to fight for the civic rights of a people who produce sixty percent of the wealth of this country, who have made this country their only home, is treason-

If to fight against the semi-slave conditions in which the Tamil labourers in estate areas live is treason-

If to fight for a change in the structure of the government whereby a suitable division of powers, not a division of the country, by establishing a federal form of government is treason-

And if to launch a campaign to enforce these demands is treason-

I am willing to commit all these acts of treason and face the consequences of this treason rather than suffer the process of slow torture. One could any day be prepared to be charged for treason and be hanged....."

A Year in Retrospect

Hot Spring is one year old today and enters its second year of publication. We reproduce excerpts from our past issues to refresh the memories of our readers:-

"Helicopter Attacks Chavakachcheri Market Again. 12 Dead 18 Injured"

Lead News 14-10-90

"...In this context it would be relevant to recall what President Premadasa said towards the beginning of this year, when talks were afoot between the Government and the LTTE. He was then reported to have stated that the Army should be withdrawn from all its camps spread out not only in the Northeast but from other areas as well and that only the Police Force recruited from amongst the people of each area entrusted with the task of maintaining law and order in that area.

It was unfortunate that the President did not proceed along the lines of his thinking."

From Editorial of 21-10-90

Govt's Deepavali Greetings? Hospitals, Temples, Churches, Markets Bombed.

Lead News - 21-10-90

"We desire to preserve our individuality as a people. We object being bullied or terrorized"

From Sir Ponnampalam Arunachalam's speech to the Ceylon Tamil League in 1922.

Issue of 4-11-90

"...The insidious attempts to divide the Tamil Nation and the Tamil country, whether made by the Sinhala politicians or by the self-appointed protectors of Buddhism and the Sinhala race cannot serve to build up unity of which the Sinhalese are so vociferous. On the other hand, true unity can be built only by the recognition of the inviolability of the Tamil Country and the nationhood of the Tamil people in that country"

From Editorial of 18-11-90

"We have come on the cross road. The parting only remains"

N. R. Rajayarthiam, former M. P. for Trincomalee quoted in Issue of 25-11-90.

Ceylonese Nation is very young. It was hammered together by foreign imperialism. One language may lead to two states. Give parity or we may have to concede more later.

Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, former MP and LSSP leader quoted in Issue of 2.12.90

No Examinations NE. Over 88,000 children languish

Lead News - 9 12-90

In Jaffna

Charity money not paid. Govt. retains over Rs. 10 million

Lead News - 16 12-90

Health Dept. Dilemma Rs. 4 million worth drugs not supplied to Jaffna.

Lead News - 23-12-90

"... Is it power of the bullet that is sustaining the Tamils today? Our definite answer is a capital NO. It is indomitable will. The Tamils refuse to be governed by the Sinhalese..."

From Editorial of 30-12-90

"...The Sinhala politicians like the pre-revolutionary French nobles seem to have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing"

From Editorial of 6-1-91

Unabated Rape of Trincomalee. Militarization before Sinhalization.

- News - Issue of 6-1-91

"For President Premadasa's consolation, we re-iterate that peace emerges automatically, when aggression ceases. When Iraqi aggression of Kuwait ceases there will be peace, exactly as there will be peace in Lanka, when Sinhala aggression against Eelam ceases by withdrawal of the Sinhala armed forces. Let President Premadasa withdraw the Sinhala armed forces from Eelam and allow peace to reign in this Island so that he can talk peace in the Arab world with moral authority"

From Editorial of 27-1-91

Making and breaking promises is nothing new to Sinhala politicians. Revelation by a Sinhala gentleman

Article Headlines - Issue of 10-2-91

Peoples of Ceylon

UP in the North and away in the East, remote from the turmoil and strife of the heart of the Sinhalese kingdom, a new physical type, dark-skinned thick lipped, brachycephalic combining what ethnologists would call Mediterranean and Armenoid types, settled down and developed a separate race-consciousness, which has given us today a discriminated race-group which we call "Ceylon Tamils."

Extracted from the Report of Census of Ceylon, 1946 by A. G. Ranasinghe Superintendent of Census and presented to the then Minister of Finance, J.R. Jayawardene.

Issue of 7-7-91

"... The moment the Sinhala leaders realize the incompatibility of their pretensions to govern Tamils with the sovereignty of the people - they will abandon sweet words, pious preachings, borrowed words and slogans and leave the Tamils alone."

From Editorial of 31-3-91

Indo - Sri Lanka Accord. An Eeylom Notarial clerk would have done a better job.

Article Headline 14-4-91

Jayawardene Democracy at work

A certain Kanapathipillai Srinivasan is reported to have taken oaths as a Member of Parliament for the Jaffna District.

Investigations reveal the following:

Kanapathipillai Srinivasan had contested the 1989 General Elections as a TULF candidate and obtained 5919 votes.

Jaffna District had 592, 210 registered voters. 265, 058 of these votes were cast. (Indian Army support is another matter). So Mr. Srinivasan polled a mere 1% of the total votes and a mere 2% only of the votes cast.

Judged by any standard, he could only be classed as a defeated candidate.

But Jayawardene democracy has "elected" him M. P. and foisted him on a people who clearly don't want him

From Issue of 14-4-91

The Fourth "C"

"In the circumstances one is compelled to think that the Three Cs are in fact a fourth C. i. e Camouflage"

From Editorial of 17-2-91

"We reiterate that the LTTE and the Sinhala Army may fight the war, if it is the unfortunate choice. But the civilians need not evacuate. Nor need their houses, shops and other possessions destroyed by bombing and artillery shell attacks"

From Editorial of 3-3-91

Chelva's gains lost by Rajiv. Tamils must work for their Liberation

Article Headline 24-3-91

Separate Judiciary for Tamils and Sinhalese

After the British Conquest of the maritime belt of the Island of Ceylon, a Royal Charter of Justice was issued on the 6th of August, 1810. This Charter remained in force until repealed by the Charter of 18th February, 1833.

The Royal Charter of 1810 constituted two Divisions of the Supreme Court. The first Division was to sit at Colombo presided over by

the Chief Justice. The second Division was to sit at Jaffna presided over by a Puisne Judge.

The Colombo Division was to have jurisdiction over Sinhala Rata. The Jaffna Division was to have jurisdiction over Tamil Eelam.

The relevant provisions are as follows:-

"III - And we do further will and ordain. That Our said chief Justice shall usually sit and hold the FIRST DIVISION of the said Supreme Court at Colombo in the said Island and shall (subject to the Provisions hereafter mentioned) make Circuits throughout the Districts or Provinces of Colombo, Chilaw, Negombo, Caltura, Point de Galle, Matura, Tangalle and Hambantotte, for the Exercise of both Civil and Criminal Jurisdiction within the Said Districts or Provinces.

IV - And we do further will and ordain. That Our said Puisne Justice shall usually sit and hold the SECOND DIVISION of the said Supreme Court at Jaffna patnam in the said Island; and shall (subject to the Provisions hereinafter mentioned) make Circuits throughout the Districts and provinces of JAFFNAPATNAM, MANAR, PUTLAM, WANNY, TRINCOMALIB AND EATTICALOA for the exercise of both Civil and Criminal Jurisdiction within the said Districts or Provinces"

Issue of 18-8-91

Lament of a bard

Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn.
Thus lamented a bard of yore,
Who was no doubt a human to the core.
The brutal forces of states
That commit crimes of all sorts,
Thrive on pilfer, loot and bribe;
Derive pleasure in arson and rape,
Torture and murder,
Massacre and slaughter.
Terrorise the people to flee,
And thus have a spree:
Have neither the head nor the heart
To understand the words of the bard.
They are human only in form,
But in content, they are brutes.
Hence countless thousands mourn
For no fault of their own.

— Crito —

Governmental Aggression to suppress a minority's quest for self-determination

Excerpts from a paper presented on July 21 at the Conference on Tamil Eelam - A Nation without a State - at Sacramento.

"Every people has its special mission, which will cooperate toward the fulfilment of the general mission of humanity. That Mission constitutes its nationality. Nationality is sacred".

Act of brotherhood of Young Europe 1834

Last summer I spent five weeks in Sri Lanka reporting on the civil war in the North and East. I am not a scholar of Subcontinental politics or history, nor am I a think tank or development agency Intellectual - my work is more a glorified form of visiting with people than anything so respectable. When in Afghanistan, Kashmir, Amritsar and the Middle East, my job description has been amended to visiting with people who are fighting for independence. In my work, I have seen horrific torture, beatings, bombings and shootings, but nothing so terrible as I witnessed in Sri Lanka last year.

It is almost impossible to describe the extreme, off-the-chart beauty that is Sri Lanka, and the equally excessive horror of institutionalized racism and brutality that exists there. It is difficult for Westerners to comprehend the long-simmering rivalries and historical enmities of that exotic tear-drop of an Island...

As a reporter, it's difficult to get stories on Sri Lanka published. "People are exhausted by the years of stories of atrocities," a jaded foreign editor once told me. "We just don't have anything comparable in the United States, any history of such a violent and continuing resistance that our readers can relate to." I disagreed, citing the American Revolution against Britain. "Oh," said the editor, "Yes, well, but that was a very long time ago."

It dawned on me just recently, how very wrong the editor was. I was at a parade a few weekends ago in my home town of San Francisco, where the marching bands and floats were held up by demonstrators

from a militant group, the AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power, or ACT UP. The protestors lay down in front of the mayor's car, backing up the big brass bands, clowns and drill teams we had been waiting for. The crowd began to complain, saying that ACT UP was rude and impolite to interrupt our fun.

In *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill writes that "The fact of living in society renders it indispensable that each should be bound to observe a certain line of conduct toward the rest." In the July issue of the *Advocate* a national gay magazine, the founder of ACT UP, Larry Kramer characterizes his organization as "impolite", abrasive and rude - like the disease that is killing us. Kramer quotes President George Bush at a recent press conference where he says the president encouraged the use of "reason in setting disputes. Crusades..." he said "demand correct behaviour." Mr. Kramer pointed out that reason and politeness are in short supply just now for those who are living with AIDS. In the past decade, 110,530 people have died from the disease. Another 100,000 will die by the end of 1992. By the year 2000, 40 million people will be infected with HUI or AIDS. Ten million of those people will be children. In Mr. Kramer's view, and in opinions of Congress, the National Academy of Sciences and scientists who work treating AIDS Patients, the government is not doing enough research on AIDS, and governmental bureaucracy is preventing the release of life-extending drugs. "I am so tired of being ignored and let to die," says Mr. Kramer "And my president wants me to be polite."

I do not agree with all of ACT UP's disruptive activities, but I understand why they must resist - and sometimes resist violently - the policies of a government that hastens, through neglect, the death of people with AIDS...

Having heard the screams of children when the bombs are dropped - and the crash, and the silence afterwards - I am certain there is no such thing as a just war. Still, so long as there is something to be gained through the use of force, governments will go to war and as long as militants believe there is something to be gained by resisting - creating or restoring a nation, or preserving dignity and securing the right to self-government - they will.

In Sri Lanka, the attack by the government is worse than neglect. Amnesty International projects that 30,000 people may have disappeared as a result of government death squads and non judicial ex-

ecutions between 1987 and 1990 - in the South of Sri Lanka alone. That doesn't count the more than 6,000 Sri Lankans who have died as a result of fighting in the North and East of the Island since fighting began again in June 1990. This type of government aggression breeds a desperation which converts easily to violence.

Again, this is not in any way an apology for violence; neither sides' atrocities can justify the others. But as Amnesty International stressed in their 1990 report on Sri Lanka a government has a superior obligation to treat its people with humanity.

"Governments bear the responsibility of protecting their citizens from violent crime and for bringing those responsible to justice. In doing so, however, they must ensure that fundamental human rights are respected. Under international human rights law, certain fundamental rights - particularly the right to life and the right not to be subjected to torture - must be upheld by governments at all times and in all circumstances."

When I arrived in Sri Lanka on August 2, 1990, the Gulf War had just begun. Alongside the headlines de-

scribing the U N, embargo in Sri Lanka's English dailies were headlines describing the government's version of its war against the LTTE. Since the fighting had reignited in June, government troops had been trapped in the Jaffna Fort.

Fabricated reports of the army's retaking the fort ran each day, next to swaggering declarations from then-defence minister Ranjan Wijeratne, who boasted in his typically flowery rhetoric that he would "push the LTTE out of the jungles and into the salty waters of the Palk Strait."

I decided to visit those salty waters to see for myself the truth of this war.

After a short trip to Polonnaruwa and Kandy on which a government tour guide took me and my photographer

we returned to Colombo top secure travel permits for Batticaloa and Anuradhpura. Although the minister of defense's office signed these laissez passer letters quickly and was extremely helpful, a somewhat different experience awaited us in the army-controlled North and East.

The checkpoints and arguments increased as we neared Batticaloa. Just outside of Chenkaladi we stumbled into an army operation in which three divisions were preparing to sweep down on the small villages outside Batticaloa. "Terrorists are hiding there", the lieutenants and colonel told us. They allowed us to drive on with the warning that their attack would be just 15 minutes behind us.

The villagers we met along the way swore they hadn't seen any LTTE fighters for days, then rushed off to find their children. When we came to Eravur, we saw the army had already visited. Their plastic lunch wrappers littered several of the looted stores, although the army sentries posted along the ruined rows of shops swore that the LTTE had looted the shops. Down the road in Kattankudi, villagers huddled into the yard of the mosque. They led us to the graves of more than 110 Muslim men, women

and children who had been slaughtered. Bullet marks covered the walls of the mosque where the faithful were mowed down as they prayed. Some villagers said they had seen the facts of a LTTE cadre among those doing the shooting. Other villagers said the killers were a government death squad and pointed out that the defence minister had, on the day of the massacre, been appealing for arms from Arab leaders. Still others spoke of dissension along LTTE leaders.

In Batticaloa, the villagers had stopped eating fish from the lagoon because of the large number of bodies found floating there.

The Catholic bishop there worried and waited for the return of Father Herbert, an American citizen and Jesuit priest who was a day late returning from a neighbouring convent. Father Herbert never returned. The last people to see him alive say he was being questioned by army personnel when they saw him.

A health care worker in Batticaloa says he has never seen such brutality; he whispered about his difficult, 12 hour - drive to Colombo to transport a 15 year - old boy whose larynx was punctured. "His larynx was damaged when two army officers cut his neck from ear to - ear" said the health care worker.

From Batticaloa we tried to drive to Trincomalee, but were turned back by army authorities - despite our travel passes. We drove on to Madawachchiya, where the roads were thick with refugees fleeing the fighting between militants and the army. Some would go to Colombo to stay with relatives, others would go to the West coast and try to get to the refugee camps in India. We decided to follow them to Rameswaram, where diplomatic sources told me more than 100,000 refugees had landed in less than three months.

We were detained overnight by the Army at Vavuniya, but the officers were good enough to allow us to use the phone to complain to the U. S. Embassy. We were told to stay for the night. The officers treated us

(Continued on Page 4)

At UN Sub-Commission Sessions in Geneva

SRI LANKA CONDEMNED

Sri Lanka's human rights record was attacked at the 43rd Sessions of the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities. The San Francisco based human rights organisation, International Educational Development declared:

"In sum, the (Sri Lankan) government became a racist regime, and enforced its racism through the most oppressive means. IED is convinced that the extreme racist nature of the Sinhala government justifies invoking the principle of self-determination of peoples and the application of armed conflict rules governing wars against racist regimes in the exercise of the right to self-determination."

The UN Sub Commission sessions commenced on the August 5 and ended on August 30.

Intervening in the discussions under the agenda item

on the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, with particular reference to colonial and dependent territories, International Educational Development said: "the international community must invoke self-determination due to persistent non-fulfilment of the rights of minorities who have been subsumed into larger states, because, as a last resort, it is the only means of assuring human rights."

The text of the statement reads:

In Sri Lanka, the armed conflict between the Tamil people and the Sinhalese government continues unabated. We concur with a statement, attached to this text, prepared by a coalition of Sinhalese and Tamil human rights organisations that:

"What is in fact happening is that the Sri Lankan Government is interpreting the failure of every western democracy to censure it for

its human rights record; and every item of foreign aid, however reluctantly given, as endorsement of its actions. This in turn has a demoralizing effect on the victims of human rights violations and those working for democracy, human rights and the right of minority nationalities to self-determination."

The present situation in Sri Lanka is the result of a 40 year attempt by a permanent Sinhala majority to impose its rule on the Tamil people. Prior to the colonial period, Ceylon had two separate states, one Tamil and one Sinhala. When the British colonizers left the government in the hands of the Sinhala majority in 1948, the Sinhala government:

(1)Disenfranchised the plantation Tamils; (2)Colonized Tamil areas with Sinhala settlers; (3)Made Sinhala the only language; (4)Discriminated against Tamils in employment, education and resources; (5) Resorted to

state violence against Tamil people to intimidate them into submission.

In sum, the government became a racist regime, and enforced its racism through the most oppressive means.

Acts against the Tamil people have been so numerous and costly in terms of life that it seems pointless to recite them here. However several recent ones, illustrative of the many, merit comment:

(1)On 12 June 1991 when 170 Tamil civilians were massacred by Sri Lankan armed forces in Batticaloa some were burned alive, others hacked to death

(2)In November, 1990, the Sri Lankan Air Force bombed Jaffna Hospital 2 days after the International Committee of the Red Cross reopened it.

(3)In May, 1991, a medical team of Medecins Sans

Frontieres (from France) was attacked.

The Sub-Commission needs no reminders of the many statements made by the most credible non-governmental organizations and the reports of numerous high level parliamentary investigatory committees. What is surprising is that, like the Turkish Kurdish situation, the Sub-Commission and the Commission have paid scant attention.

In this case, IED is convinced that the extreme racist nature of the Sinhala government justifies invoking the principle of self-determination of peoples and the application of armed conflict rules governing war against racist regimes in the exercise of the right to self-determination. Indeed, the international community must invoke self-determination due to persistent non-fulfilment of the rights of minorities who have been subsumed into larger states, because, as a last resort, it is the only means of assuring human rights.

Governmental...

(Continued from page 3)

well, and one even came to our room for a drink before retiring. "You should be careful of the shooting," he said in reference to the helicopters that patrol the main roads of the North. "If you were to come off of the road where I've told you to drive tomorrow, we would shoot you which would be a shame." In the morning we said good-bye, confirmed the road we were to stay on, and set off. All was well until we hit a small mine. "Oh, this road has been mined for months!" a villager would tell us later. My photographer patched up our car as best he could, and we drove on to Vankalai.

In Vankalai we could hear a distant, almost subsonic booming noise. "Oh, that's just the shelling," said the priest, who allowed us to stay with him for the night. The Priest told of the looting of villagers' houses by soldiers: "All of my parish have left, except for the very old, because it is too dangerous to stay here," he said. He walked us to the beach in the morning, and found a group of merchants who were moving supplies to Mannar Island.

On Mannar Island we were greeted by a helicopter shooting up the town square. Because of the cut-off of petrol, life has gone back-

wards more than a decade; there is only one bus each day to Talaimanar. We climbed on top of the bus, and locals pointed out the landmarks from where the LTTE had blown out the bridge linking Mannar to the Main island, to where the IPKF had once been billeted. Finally we came to Talaimannar, the last point in the trip to the refugee camps in India. At midnight we stumbled out to the beach, along with hundreds of families seeking to make the crossing. A boat of refugees had recently been caught by the Sri Lankan Navy, and stories abounded of the fate of those caught. We boarded a boat meant for five with 20 other people and set out for Rameswaram.

Sunrise exposed a silent armada of refugees who had crossed the Palk Straits overnight. We watched the lines of families stand in line after line for food, clean clothes and a bath. The Rameswaram bazaar did a brisk business, with buses of refugees stirring the dust and scattering shoppers. In the afternoon we returned to Talaimannar, where groups of newly arrived families camped and waited for the boats to deliver them to Rameswaram.

In the morning we left for Vankalai, where the situation had become much

worse. The looting had expanded right up to the doors of the church. Parishioners had piled their goods inside the parish hall. The Priest was beside himself at having to leave them. "What else can I do" he asked. "It isn't safe here," He introduced us to an elderly man whose son had been caught crossing to Rameswaram. The father showed us where his wrists had been bound, and where he had been beaten with a plastic pipe. We drove him to his home in Vidattaltivu. His youngest son wept when he asked, "Where is my brother."

In the morning we left for Pooneri. We left our car and borrowed bicycles which we drove North. The roads were pocked from helicopter fire, but several small merchants took their chances and hauled bags of rice to the North. In the evening we reached Pooneri, where five people had just been killed by helicopter fire, and several more were injured.

On the next day we went to the political office of the LTTE and arranged to travel across the lagoon to Jaffna. There was no crossing that night, they said, because of the helicopter attacks and the full moon. Suddenly, a helicopter swooped down and began shooting in the nearby street. A shepherd came to the door with a bullet fragment in his back, I shared

my medical kit, and the boys decided they would take us across the lagoon. We poled across the water in a tiny canoe weighted down with one of the helicopter's victims in a rose-scented casket.

The fighting on Kayts and in Jaffna intensified for the week that we were there. There is no way to describe the mass destruction of what was once a town, or the indomitable spirits of those who have decided to remain in their homes. Each morning we were awakened with the sound of helicopters and jets. In the Manipay Hospital the halls were flooded with the injured and dying. Doctors showed us the burned victims of barrel bombs, the shattered victims of mines. They pointed to holes in the operating theatre ceiling and floor where government planes had recently fired on the hospital. "I don't know how much longer we can stand this" said the doctor.

Children, just babies, have learned to crowd into the nearest bomb shelter at the sound of incoming airplanes. It is a heart-stopping feeling when you see the nose of a fighter plane declining to ward your neighbourhood, your kovil, your home.

My photographer and I returned to Colombo after seeing the wreckage of Jaffna. In Colombo, the same flowery threats filled the newspapers. Only this time the defense minister spoke of "strategic targets" being hit by the

army, and residential areas being voided by bombers. Even though the Jaffna Fort has been relieved and the Jaffna Hospital reopened by the Red Cross, the rubble that is Jaffna is being ground to fine pebbles. Letters I receive from the friends I made in Sri Lanka tell me that the fighting is just as bad this summer in Jaffna.

The continued fighting defies reason. Continued attacks on civilian residential areas is both a violation of internationally accepted human rights, and poor military strategy for a country that claims to be serious in its pursuit of unity and peace. *Wasn't it the military philosopher Sun Tzu who cautioned, "The worst policy is to attack cities. Attack cities only when there is no alternative." Those who are truly interested in dialogue and in the preservation of that heart-breakingly beautiful island should remember what Sun Tzu told his students: "For there has never been a protracted war from which a country has benefitted."*

1500 huts put up by NGO's

Tamils' Rehabilitation Organization, The Relief and Rehabilitation Organization and Red Cross Society have together put up 1500 huts in Ariyalai, Navatkuli and Araly areas.

Refugee families now occupying school buildings will be accommodated in these huts

COST OF LIVING AND PENSIONERS

The payment of the cost of living allowance to the pensioners has been a chimera.

It was Premier Premadasa who made an election promise that if he were elected President, he would ensure that the cost of living allowance was paid to the pensioners. He has been duly installed as Executive President. Many summers have since lapsed and the wish of President Premadasa has now been farther to his thought and promise. The pensioners have perforce to assume that this promise is a dangled carrot on an election platform to lure the votes of the poor pensioners and their families.

The announcement of the payment of the cost of living to pensioners was made over the State Radio, the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, but later it was vehemently denied on the Floor of the House that such an announcement had ever been made! Such pronouncements have been many and have

been duly retracted. They merely reflect the calibre of our politicians.

There is no gainsaying the fact that money had been allocated by the Treasury for the payments of this allowance to the pensioners. But the then Minister of National Security, Mr. Lalith Athu'athmudali, who had been given this portfolio, by the ex-president Mr. Junius Richard Jayewardene and with a view to acquit himself honourably this difficult office, diverted this money for the purchase of military ware for the Security Forces. The end result was that he was removed from this office by President Premadasa. Now deprived of office and portfolio his bragadocio is that he could have won the war against the Tigers if he had been in office. Such boasts can best be confined to the 'ifs' of history. The main grievance of the pensioners however is that as a result of this policy, the pensioners lost their -cost of living allowance.

Recent newspaper reports state that there is a Public Administration Circular on this subject which is gathering dust on the Treasury Shelves because Cabinet approval has not been forthcoming and the stern purse-holding paterfamilias of the financial menage has no money!

The question which has to be posed before the Government is why the pensioners have been confined to limbo and treated as spent forces of government languishing in penury and shouting themselves hoarse in the deaf years of a spendthrift government. They have become a voiceless and pitiable lot, laid widowed of the will to take trade union action.

If State and Corporation employees had been treated in this fashion, strikes could well have become the order of the day. The Government wisely decided to pay those employees and the one-time state employees who had given the best years of their

lives in Government, were cast into the dust-bin of history.

No one seems to view the plight of the pensioners in the context of a spiralling cost of living. In the North East, their position is still more pathetic. Their pensions have been inordinately delayed. They are still awaiting their August and September pensions, while they should be paid their October pensions by now. The cost of living in North East has risen to unprecedented heights - when for example a bar of soap is fetching Rs. 50/- and a bottle of kerosene is in the region of Rs. 200/-, how could he eke out a living in a situation such as is being experienced now?

An Aide memoire of the World Bank report has characterised Sri Lanka as a 'disaster scenario' with 20% of National Budget for 1990 diverted for the strengthening of the military muscle of the Security Forces in the North East. It is, therefore, inevitable that the rate of

inflation in the country is as high as 20%. As a sop to the cerberus of the World Bank, the Government may resort to high taxation, retrenching the cadres of State Sector employees. The incentive Retirement Scheme propagated by the Government was in accordance with the dictates of the World Bank. More stringent measures must be in the offing. Devaluation of the Rupee is staring nakedly in the face of the Sri Lankan economy and may well be the coup-de-grace for the Government.

Are pensioners being led like lambs to the slaughterhouse of the Government? They are in effect being taxed for the war in the North East. Never in the history of a Government's fiscal policy have the pensioners been asked to pay for a war. Dharmista Sri Lanka has proved an exception in more ways than one, and in Budgetary planning too Sri Lanka paves the way and a model for the Third World not to follow this ruinous way!

A PENSIONER

OUR READERS' LETTERS

The Editor,
Hot Spring.

I have read with interest the letter of Mr Seenithamby of Vathiry appearing in the Hot Spring of 06-10-91. It is most timely because he has imperceptibly conveyed his appreciation and suggestions for improvement of Hot Spring after a year of appearance on the local scene of journalism. I believe you are now entering the Second Year of publication. The fact that you have continued to flourish inspite of the difficulties with which we are confronted, such as lack of fuel, electricity, newsprint and the like imposed by the powers that be, is an achievement worthy of being shouted from the roof tops.

Like its more illustrious predecessor, the Saturday Review, it has won the plaudits of the English educated community and has always spotlighted the woes and problems of our community in the Northeast at the bar of the world community.

While the journalistic world in the South has turned a blind eye to our problems by building narrow walls of chauvinism, you have been the lone champion of the down-trodden North East. It is to your credit that you have fearlessly exposed the travails of the Tamils in the wake of the ethnic conflict, which has continued

and is still continuing with unabated fury.

It is not only my sincere wish but I will be echoing the voices of the many both at home and abroad that you will have more strength to your elbow to expose our problems without fear or favour to the world at large even though it may be a voice lost in the wilderness of an ethnic conflict.

M. Selvam
A Reader
Jaffna.

Editor,
Hot Spring,
Sir,

I have been a regular reader of Hot Spring from its inception.

It struck me as I read the last week's issue (No. 52) that next week you will be a

two-year old child and I thought I must send you my birthday greetings.

I make bold to state that Hot Spring has served a most useful purpose at an appropriate time. Since the outbreak of the war, Tamil Eelam has been cut off from other countries and Colombo is making false 'propaganda about the situation here.

In these circumstances the publication in English of a newspaper from Tamil Eelam serves our people well.

You have given details of atrocities caused in our land and people. You have also given expression to the public sentiments and argued the case for Tamil Eelam.

I wish long years of life for Hot Spring.

Yours Truly
S. Selvendra

Valvettiturai

Hot Spring aprang at a very crucial time of Tamils' history. It was a long felt need that the true Tamil opinion to be put across to the non-Tamil speaking

public. There is a lot of misinformation regarding the cause of the Tamils. Let the Hot Spring make it fall flat hot-hot. I hope there will be more informative articles on Economics and Education. May God bless its growth.

M. Sivathanan
Retired Education Officer
Pandateruppu.

Movement of People Restricted in Mannar

All persons of either sex between the ages of 10 and 30 living within the Island of Mannar which is under Army control have been completely debarred from leaving their island habit at by the Army.

The Army permits only limited movements of others as well. The other inhabitants of Mannar are only permitted on Fridays to leave the island. Any person who wants to go into the island can only do so on Mondays according to Army orders.

Ponnalai Village Comes Under Attack

The Sri Lankan Army encamped at the Valanthalai junction in Karainagar started firing from their camp. The shots were directed towards the Ponnalai Junction. This happened on Monday, October 7 at about 7-30 a. m.

Within half an hour a helicopter which hovered over the area started firing from above.

Early in the morning the same day towards 1-30 a. m. shell attack was directed toward Ponnalai.

It is further learnt that the roof of the Ponnalai Varatharajah Perumal temple was damaged by the attack.

Croatian Parliament Declares Independence

The National liberation wind has begun to blow towards the Balkans.

The Croatian Parliament has voted for independence seeking to secede from the Yugoslav Republic.

Aerial Bombardment in Poonakari

One Killed - Many Injured

Sri Lankan Air Force planes bombed various places in Poonakari. One person died as a result and several were

injured. Many houses and shops too were damaged. The attack took place on Sunday, October 6.

The dead person has been identified as K. Selvaratnam of Vannerikulam. The injured include R. Balasingam, N. Thanabalasingam, S. Thiagarajah, M. Rajadurai, N. Seevaratnam, K. S. Subramaniam, K. Thavarajah, Tharmanasingam and Mahalingam. The injured were admitted to the Poonakari hospital.

HOT SPRING

VOL: 2 SUNDAY 13th October 1991 ISSUE 1

FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER

President Premadasa has said that his opponents tried to turn the Armed Forces against him.

He has come out with the revelations only after he won the first round of the bout against the Combined Opposition - Dissidents' Alliance:

President Premadasa's revelations are very instructive.

At the time the political crisis in Colombo started there was suspicion that the Armed Forces might take one or other side in the dispute. Whether suspicion was justified or not, the political rivals did make an impression by their own speeches that the armed forces were also on one or the other side of the divide. The suspicion was further strengthened by the sabre-rattling of the armed forces as far as the war in Tamil Eelam was concerned.

The armed forces came out with a statement that they would uphold the law. What made the armed forces to come out with such a statement? It was because there was a general feeling that the armed forces could throw in their weight with one or the other side. The purported reason for the armed forces' statement was to dispel the suspicions already engendered.

But did the statement in any way dispel the suspicions? It really did not.

Immediately after the Impeachment Motion against the President was known, the President reacted sharply by proroguing parliament. There was a furore. There was talk of a constitutional crisis as distinct from a political crisis. The Army statement was very vague in that it spoke of upholding the law. The legal propriety of the Impeachment Motion and the Prorogation of Parliament were subjects of debate in Colombo. Clearly the Army statement said that the Armed Forces would uphold the law and thus kept those interested guessing as to the real position of the armed forces.

President Premadasa's recent revelation - after he had averted the crisis - that his opponents had tried to set the armed forces against him, has confirmed the general suspicion that the armed forces would take sides.

Perhaps President Premadasa may now feel comfortable. But be it President or anybody else, whenever a crisis develops, it will hereafter be the fate of the antagonists to be at least bothered about the position of the armed forces - whether in fact or not the armed forces are inclined to favour one side or the other.

How has this become possible?

All governments are to be blamed for this sad state of affairs.

In the pursuit of imperialist designs - in the desire to keep the Tamils under subjugation and under the tutelage of the Sinhalese - all governments had been compelled to strengthen the Sinhala Army.

Not a single government that ruled the Island since independence had been able to win the confidence of the Eelam Tamil masses. But all governments had been trying to rule Tamil Eelam and its people by deceit and treachery. And after it became no longer possible to rule Tamil Eelam and its people by deceit and treachery, the governments have resorted to rule the Tamils and their country by military suppression.

For this purpose, the governments have been strengthening their armed forces and today a major 25 per cent of the budgetary expenses is voted for Defence in a Buddhist country! No doubt the armed forces realize their own power and strength and if in these circumstances the politicians begin to fear the Frankenstein Monster of their own creation, they have only themselves to blame.

The Armed Forces will not always be content with the fight against the Tamils only.

Who was NOT Thanu? Misinformation dispelled

Mr. S. Alagaratnam of Urumpirai South Urumpirai has sent the following letter:.

A foreign English language magazine published a story under the caption 'Who was Thanu'? It was written by a 'Canadian-based Eelam Tamil.

The story stated that Thanu alleged to be the belt-bomb girl involved in Rajiv Gandhi's murder, is an Eelam Tamil girl. Please don't ask me who found her name to be Thanu or what connection, if any, she had with the bomb explosion that killed Rajiv Gandhi. These are secrets which the concoctors of the stories connected with Rajiv Gandhi's death would one day reveal to the utter disgust and dismay of the public.

For the moment, I am only concerned with the aforesaid story in the English Language magazine. It said that 'Thanu' was the daughter of the late Mr. A. Rajaratnam who was one of the persons recently posthumously honoured by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam by the grant of the national award 'Maa Manithar' (literally meaning great man)

It so happens that the late Mr. Rajaratnam and I were personal friends. When he and I were in Colombo our families too had moved closely. He went over to Jaffna some-time in the seventies and I who was still in Colombo then, lost the close contact I had with him. But I was one of the hundreds who were there to receive the casket containing the body of Mr. Rajaratnam, when it arrived in Colombo from Madras well past midnight. It was inside this casket that we found a note in Tamil which 'read therein sleeps Ceylon's Netaji.'

A local Tamil daily published the story in the English Language magazine mentioned above. After reading this Tamil version of this article, I was convinced that this Thanu was indeed my friend's daughter both in flesh and spirit, even though I was doubting in Rangan getting caught alive by the Indian Police, especially if he had had any hand in this assassination.

I was anxious to find out the truth of the story mentioned above. I know Mrs. Rajaratnam and I knew her to be living at Chavakach-cheri.

I am seventy five years old and bicycling 13 kilometres is a painful thing for a seventy five year old. Nevertheless I could not resist my desire to check on the truthfulness or otherwise of the story. I bicycled to Mrs. Rajaratnam's house on September 29th. There I found Mrs. Rajaratnam and her second daughter drowned in sorrow over the death of the third in the family, Aquino (Kalaivani) who died at Manal Aru on September 8th 1991. The second girl who was at home with the mother, is now lame, having suffered a compound fracture in her leg, again in a war with the Sri Lankan Army, a few months back.

The first girl of the Rajaratnam's is in Canada now with her husband, Mr. Arumugam an Eelam Tamil from Velanai. These are the three children Mr. Rajaratnam had by his second wife. Mr. Rajaratnam had been married earlier and the first wife died leaving behind only

one son. I am told that this boy is now in Germany. I have been invited for the 45th day alms-giving ceremony of Aquino and I shall be at Mrs. Rajaratnam's house on October 22nd to share in the grief of the mother and the second sister.

It will now be clear that this story that 'Thanu' was Rajaratnam's daughter is nothing but the figment of imagination of journalists who try to dig out scoops.

It is quite clear now that the arrest of 'Rangan' alive is as false as the story that 'Thanu' was the daughter of the late Mr. A. Rajaratnam referred to.

I have sent letters to the foreign English magazine and the local Tamil daily setting out the true story. I shall be thankful if this letter is given publicity in your paper to dispel the misinformation many people already entertain based on the 'story'.

SPORTS NEWS

Soccer

Beginners' classes for Soccer referees are being conducted at St. Patrick's College, Jaffna on week ends.

Those desirous of following these classes may submit their applications.

These classes started at 10 00 a.m. from 12th October, 1991 and would be continued thereafter on week ends.

Cricket

World Cup Cricket Competition has been scheduled to take place in Australia and New Zealand in 1992.

South Africa will be one of the participants at this

Contest after a lapse of 30 years.

Vijayakumar

Old man injured by shell attack

An elderly person named Saravanamuthu Sivasubramaniam (aged 52) sustained severe injuries when an artillery shell launched from the Palaly camp exploded in the village of Pannalai near Telpallai in the Vatikamam North area on Sunday, October 6.

The injured person has been admitted to the Jaffna hospital in a serious condition.

Sinhala Tamil Conflict more akin to Hindu Muslim Conflict before partition of India.

This team is of the view that it is most unlikely that the Sinhalese and Tamils will live in peace, at least in the coming decade. We in India sometimes make the mistake of comparing this ethnic conflict with some of our own separatist movements. To compare Sri Lankan conditions with Nagaland or Bordo-type movements will be a big mistake. A comparison between the antipathy and problems between Hindus and Muslims before the partition of India in 1947 may be nearer the mark, as the differences are extremely deep-seated with historical roots going back to several centuries.

- Major Shankar Bhaduri &

Major General Afsir Karim

In The Sri Lankan Crisis - A Lancer International Publication, 1990