

Tamil TIMES

APRIL 1984

TAMIL TIMES
Vol.III No. 6
April 1984
Price 65p

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

UK/India/Sri Lanka.....£7.50
All other countries£12.50/ \$20

Published
monthly by
TAMIL TIMES LTD
P.O. BOX 304
London W13 9QN
United Kingdom

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Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the editor or the publishers.

Printed By Astmoor Litho (TU) Ltd,
21-22 Arkwright Road, Runcorn, Cheshire.

JAFFNA DISTRICT UNDER MILITARY SIEGE

GOVT. DECLARES WAR AGAINST TAMILS

The Jaffna district is under military siege with four thousand troops of the Sri Lanka forces running amok on a daily mission of ramage against Tamils committing murder and arson on a massive scale. The people of Jaffna have never before faced such sustained and concentrated violence.

Scores of men and women have become fatal victims of the indiscriminate fire power from the death squads of the Sri Lankan armed forces. Hundreds of properties, including shops, churches, petrol filling stations and vehicles of all descriptions have been set ablaze.

Several hundreds of Tamils have been arrested and their whereabouts are not known. It is feared that many of them would have been killed and their bodies disposed of under the powers given to the security forces to dispose of dead bodies without the need to have an inquest.

Although the main thrust of military atrocities is in the northern Tamil district of Jaffna, other Tamil dominated towns like Trincomalee, Vavuniya and Batticaloa also suffer their share of the violence from the security forces.

The present wave of atrocities has reached a new high since the appointment of Mr Lalith Athulathmudali as Minister of National Security on March 23.

Evacuation

The evacuation of Sinhalese residents from the Jaffna district for no apparent reason in mid-March was the ominous signal for the latest round of atrocities against the Tamil people.

On the pretext of taking counter-measures against 'terrorists', the government and its security forces have declared a virtual war upon the civilian Tamil population. Jaffna district has been cut off from the rest of the country. Rail services to and from Colombo stop at Vavuniya, 60 miles from Jaffna town.

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Communications with the rest of the country have been severed almost totally. A naval blockade has been imposed covering the entire sea front of the northern province. Fishermen have been prevented from going to the sea. There is an acute shortage of food and other essential consumer items including kerosine and petrol.

In addition to the reign of terror by the security forces, the government would appear to have decided on starving the Tamil people into submission.

Death squads

Four thousand troops of the Sri Lankan combined forces of the army, navy and air forces move around menacingly in armoured carriers with machine-guns wreaking death and destruction daily. No civilian ventures out even to buy essential food items for fear of becoming a fatal victim at the hands of the marauding death squads of the Sri Lankan army. The curfew imposed on Jaffna has allowed the military death squads to carry out their mission of murder mayhem and arson without fear of being identified.

The state-controlled media and the government have completely suppressed any news about the atrocities by the security forces. Garbled and very often totally false reports about 'shoot-outs' and 'battles' with 'terrorists' are being published in the media.

No foreign reporters or observers are allowed to go to the Tamil areas and falsified accounts are being fed to the foreign media through Defence Ministry spokesmen, so much so that the reports that appear in the international media have given a picture of 'army battles with separatist guerrillas'. However, the ages and sex of victims of indiscriminate and senseless killings by Jayawardene's death squads give the lie to the fraudulent claim of 'battles with separatist guerrillas'.

BURNING & KILLING TO SAVE BUDDHISM!

The latest round of government sponsored pogrom against the Tamils of Sri Lanka, particularly in the Jaffna district, continues unabated. So far, over 150 people have been killed, several more were injured and hundreds of properties set ablaze by the death squads of the Sri Lankan army.

Buying time on the pretext of the so-called Round Table Talks, the government had planned the latest attack upon the Tamil people. It is a diabolical lie to say that the action of the security forces was directed against 'terrorists' or in retaliation to 'terrorist actions'.

As a prelude to the current offensive, the Jaffna district was placed under military rule under Brigadier Nalin Seneviratne, the brother of Ana Seneviratne who as Deputy Inspector General of Police supervised and presided over the burning of Jaffna in August 1977.

The Tamil Government Agent of Jaffna, Mr D. Nesiah, was replaced by Mr Camillus Fernando who as Government Agent presided over the burning and sacking of Trincomalee in July 1983. In mid-March the Sinhalese residents of Jaffna were evacuated on government orders for no apparent reason although none of them had been harmed in any way. Additional military men, including naval and air force personnel, were transported to Jaffna about the same time.

Postponed

The so-called Round Table Talks were unaccountably postponed by President Jayawardene despite the objections from the Tamil representatives. Curiously enough, the spokesman for the Round Table Talks, Mr Lalith Athulathmudali, was appointed Minister of National Security on March 23.

The first act of the Minister after his appointment was to visit the Buddhist Mahanayakes of the Malwatte and Asgriya Chapters in

Kandy and receive their blessings to 'wipe out Tamil terrorism'. With their blessings, he proceeded to Jaffna and exhorted the death squads of the Sri Lankan troops, 'You did a splendid job in 1971; now rise to the occasion and do it again to end "Tamil terrorism" '.

The reference to 1971 was to the mass murder of over 15,000 Sinhalese youths who were suspected of being 'terrorists' belonging to the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP).

Defenceless

Within days, the 'Sinhala Vee-rayas' (Sinhala heroes) of the Sri Lankan army had killed over 150 unarmed defenceless civilians, including women and children. They had burnt scores of properties and vehicles. Although specially trained in anti-guerrilla warfare in Malaysia and western countries including Britain and unable to track down the 'Tigers', the 'Sinhala Veerayas' take revenge upon innocent Tamil civilians and their property.

'Kill and burn' is their operative slogan. Any Tamil, man or woman, old or young, does not matter. He or she should be massacred to protect 'Sinhala Buddhism'. Sri Lanka is the land of the Sinhala-Buddhists and the Tamils are there to be slaughtered!

The Great and Noble Buddha, if he is alive today, would be first to disown the so-called Buddhists of the Sri Lankan variety who burn and kill to 'safeguard Buddhism'. He would be in the forefront to cleanse the Buddhist Sangha (clergy) of those who desecrate the holy yellow robes and give their blessings to burn and kill in the name of Buddhism.

Many a tamil king who had sat on the country's throne from ancient times up to the last king of Kandy, Sri Wickrema Rajasinghe, had done enormous service for the protection of

Buddhism. It was Sir Pon-nampalam Ramanathan who spearheaded the Buddhist Temporalities Ordinance and played a prominent role in setting up the Buddhist Theosophical Society during British times.

When the Sinhalese were becoming mesmerised with western civilisation and the English language, it was Ramanathan who, on September 3, 1904, in the much acclaimed speech at Ananda College, chastised the 'denationalised Sinhalese gentlemen' and asked, 'If Sinhalese lips will not speak the Sinhalese language, who else is there to speak it? . . . How is a nation to be lifted out of error, reformed and advanced into plains of higher knowledge except by its own language?'

The threat to the Sinhalese or Buddhists comes not from the Tamils. The real threat to the Sinhalese, and for that matter to the whole country, comes from those foreign powers who have military designs particularly in Trincomalee and from their lackeys within the country who advocate 'defence and friendship pacts'.

The real threat to Buddhism comes not from the Tamils, but from the intolerance, oppression and violence that pervade and permeate Sri Lankan society. It was the famous Sinhala-Buddhist scholar, Dr E. W. Addikaram, who said:

'The Buddhists who get worked up over real or imaginary wrong-doings of others are injuring themselves first. They are also creating an oppressive atmosphere which is not conducive to any spiritual growth. A person with even a little sensitiveness can feel this oppressive atmosphere in Sri Lanka today.

'If Buddhism is love and compassion, who in this world can touch it, let alone destroy it? But if Buddhism is merely an empty shell devoid of the essence of love, the earlier it disappears the better it is for the world.'

THE ENTHRONEMENT OF FALSEHOOD IN SRI LANKA

By S. Sivanayagam

In their fight against Sinhala state terrorism and state oppression of Tamil people, the Tamil youth militants have killed policemen, soldiers, air force men, collaborators, spies, informers, and other 'anti-social elements'. But I would rather think that the biggest damage they have done is to make Sinhala politicians and Sinhala newspapermen turn into a pack of liars!

If one were to trace the genesis of barefaced public lying in Sri Lanka, one will find that public lying became acceptable and got 'institutionalised' as a result of the Sri Lanka government's battle against what they have been calling 'Terrorism'.

Loss of lives among the armed forces is one thing, but when the people who influence a country's politics, the legislators and the Press, learn to lie with public approval and social sanction, the consequent damage to Sinhala society is going to be colossal and far-reaching.

Truth, as has been said, is indivisible. One cannot go on talking falsehoods convincingly when it comes to events affecting the Tamil people and switch to Truth on matters Sinhala. Like the drug habit that Prime Minister Premadasa keeps worrying about, the lying habit is corrosive and is likely to become pervasive.

Minister of Murder

Recently, there was an example of a seemingly honest attempt on the part of a newspaperman to get at the truth, which was however quickly shot down by an important politician. The newspaperman was Vijitha Yapa, editor of THE ISLAND, and the politician was Lalith Athulathmudali, the recently appointed Supremo of the North and the East, whose new portfolio is described by the government as Minister of National Security, which many Tamils refer to as Minister of Murder!

Yapa was asking the Minister about the absolutely unprovoked killings and serious wounding of civilians at Chunnakam by air force men in an orgy of violence. But for their poor marksmanship on a busy market place area, several hundreds would have been killed. The questions and answers went like this:

Q: *But how can you prevent the excesses committed by the Armed Forces in Jaffna and the Northern Province?*

A: This is part of the problem. Most journalists do not go to the North but get news of excesses committed by the armed forces from people who phone you. They are often victims of the very propaganda carried out by the terrorists and anything which is said by them is true while the government's

statements are viewed with suspicion.

Q: *But the incidents in Chunnakam in the North . . . ?*

A: According to the information I have received, the Air Force men were fired on by terrorists who were on the roofs of some buildings. The servicemen fired back. Unfortunately, while terrorists were killed, there was also the death of a lady who had been marketing. She had been accidentally hit by a stray bullet. But the first reports to the media were that the Air Force had shot at the crowd because they panicked.

Q: *What about the pregnant woman who was shot?*

A: No pregnant woman was shot. This is like the story of the rapings of some girls in Jaffna in July. It was not true but it went round like wild fire. But even Prabhakaran has admitted in a recent interview that there was no such incident. The events in Jaffna last week were blown out of all proportions. Some reports in Canada had spoken of 300 people being massacred and many girls raped!

It is obvious from the above that the Minister was determined to hide the truth and was even getting into difficulties in making his version stand. Let us begin by trying to believe some part of the story as told by the Minister. For example, that fairy tale about terrorists on roof tops.

Let us accept that he was fed that fairy tale. Let us accept that he believed it himself. What makes the Minister conclude that a 'stray bullet' which according to him accidentally hit a lady who was marketing, cannot possibly hit a pregnant woman? Do stray bullets have a habit of avoiding pregnant women? According to the Minister the only 'non-terrorist' who was killed was the lady with the marketing bag!

Here is a list of nine people, including one woman, who died instantly at the scene of the shooting. Eight died of gunshot wounds and one, Subramaniam, a market keeper at Chunnakam collapsed and died of heart failure. Here are their names and ages and places of residence. Can the Minister identify which of them were terrorists on roof tops?

Vallipuram Sinnathurai (80) of Chunnakam; Thambimuttu Sundaralingam (38) of Chunnakam; Balasubramaniam (50) of Chunnakam; S. Anandan (25) of Uduvil

East; P. Thiyagarasa (40) of Chunnakam; Ganesham (42) of Anaicodai; and Yogarasa (43) of Chunnakam. The dead woman was Pasupathy Thavamany of Atchuveli, the 'non-terrorist' of whom the Minister made some kind reference.

Here is a list of 24 names, ages and places of residence of those who were grievously injured in the wild shooting, some of whom are believed to have succumbed to their injuries later. If many of them survived, it was again their good luck and the servicemen's bad shooting:

Muthukumar (65) of Chunnakam; S. Kalithasan (51) of Jaffna; S. Bawany (female, 25) of Tellipallai; Kanagaratnam (39) of Atchuveli; Annarasah (31) of Chunnakam; Mumthaj (29) of Jaffna; Nagapooranam (female, 61) of Chankani; Kali (45) of Mallakam; Krishnapoopathy (female, 52) of Uduvil; Chinnarasah (40) of Chunnakam; Subash (33) of Atchuveli; Uruthirakumar (42) of Mavidapuram, Arumugam of Ponnalai; S. Subramaniam (63) of Atchuveli; Manikkar of Jaffna; Sekarajasingham (19) of Jaffna; Kanapathipillai of Tellipallai; Kumaravelu (54); Parvathy, an expectant mother; Ponnambalam (50); Sathiyathan (25); Patrick (19) of Tellipallai, Srikanthan (40) of Palaly; and Ponnammah (female, 50) of Chunnakam.

Does it seem in the eyes of the Minister that this is a list of 'Terrorists'? That they were on roof tops? If they were on roof tops, how come the bodies were all on the roads? Why were no inquests held?

Is it the position of the government that every man, woman or child who gets shot by a serviceman is a 'Terrorist' and gets covered by the law that compels immediate cremation (no burial even if the victim happens to be a Christian as was decreed on July 24, 1983 — with one exception where a tough Magistrate, a Hindu, ordered a burial and the police acceded) without an inquest?

While the Minister is blandly correct when he says that the Colombo journalists do not go to Jaffna and investigate the facts for themselves, why should they and how could they when there is a censorship on and they cannot report anything independently? The 'ISLAND' interview was a rare instance of a Colombo journalist posing

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'BRUTE FORCE CANNOT VANQUISH THE TAMIL CAUSE'

DAVID SELBOURNE, in this exclusive interview covering the recent events in Sri Lanka, comments on the self-destroying Sinhalese leadership, lack of an effective Tamil national leadership, unchecked army and police brutalities, officially promoted violence against the Tamils and the failure of the authorities to bring to account the perpetrators of the July 1983 violence.

Referring to the unseemly struggle for suc-

cession to Jayawardene, he considers that thuggery, and not diplomacy or political finesse, and certainly not the well-being of all the people of Sri Lanka, has become the main credential for high political office, and regards it as a miscalculation if the Sri Lankan government expects Britain and the US to clean up the political and economic mess in the turbulent and growingly rotten banana republic of Sri Lanka.

Q: What is your reaction to the renewed outbreak of violence in Jaffna?

A: There can be no surprise at it; just as there can be no surprise, given the current absence of the rule of law in Sri Lanka, that the ghastly July crimes have themselves gone unpunished, and that those who carried them out have literally got away with murder. I wonder how my friend Lalith Athulathmudali, who like me is a lawyer and a contemporary at Oxford, can now preside over the 'security' of a nation where the civilised norms of justice to which he is supposed to adhere have been so entirely abandoned. Grief at the further loss of innocent life, yes; but surprise, no.

The combination of a cynical lack of intention on the part of the Sri Lankan government to reach any genuine settlement with Tamil demands, and the Tamils' discredited leadership — discredited for its sheer lack of skill and sense of direction — have made a bloody battlefield of what ought to be the subject of urgent political accommodation with Tamil fears and aspirations. Who can benefit from this failure? Certainly not the Sinhalese, whose leaders are self-destroying, and who are taking the economy down with them.

Q: But what, in your opinion, is wrong with the Tamils' political leadership?

Ineffective leadership

A: You have a growingly important national movement with a no-longer effective national leadership. It has abandoned its people in their darkest hours; and it has been duped into believing that there are some among the current Sinhalese leadership who are seeking a political rather than a violent solution to the 'Tamil problem'.

It is national movement which has damagingly inadequate spokesmen inside and outside Sri Lanka, London included; it is divided by sectarian and personal rivalries among the expatriate groups who promote the cause of Tamil self-determination; and it is deceived by its own wishful thinking that the world, sooner or later, is

bound to hear its people's cries and come to their assistance.

Moreover, it is extremely difficult for the justice of its political and moral case to be heard clearly in international forums and the international press, whose daily diet is political violence of one kind or another. And — to despots — criticism, by Amnesty International or by foreign jurists, of the subversion of civil and human rights, as in Sri Lanka, is a small price to pay for political survival.

After all, in today's world a combination of internal despotism and external dependency, in return for relatively small amounts of arms and foreign capital, is nothing novel. The drowning man can find even a crocodile's tail reassuring — briefly.

Q: Are there any positive features in the present political situation?

A: There can be nothing positive in unchecked army and police brutalities, hit-and-run attacks on soldiers and policemen, random firings, the shooting of innocent market-folk, pregnant women and passing schoolboys, and the advertising man's pretence that these are terrorists or 'guerrillas'.

State brutality and folly can no more succeed in Jaffna, than in Belfast. Indeed, no matter how many times Athulathmudali runs about to temples, barracks, Cabinet meetings and press conferences — and even to Delhi — the Tamil issue, like the Irish issue, cannot possibly be resolved by military rule, officially promoted violence disguised as the 'struggle against subversion' and phoney Round Table discussions.

As I wrote right from the beginning, these talks were never intended to be serious, and will therefore lead nowhere. However, if you consider it a positive thing — and I am flatly opposed to all forms of terrorism, whether organised from Colombo or anywhere else — then army occupation of the Northern province, and the cruelties committed against its citizens, absolutely ensure the growth of the separatist movement.

Q: In your judgement, as someone who has been following and writing about the affairs of the Indian sub-continent for ten

years now, are there any differences in the present situation from what it was last June when you visited Sri Lanka for the 'GUARDIAN' and other papers?

Struggle for succession

A: First, the struggle for the succession to Jayawardene has reached new and more unseemly levels. It looks from here as if thuggery, and not diplomacy or political finesse — and certainly not concern for the well-being of all the people of Sri Lanka, Sinhalese and Tamil — is becoming the main credential for high political office.

This spells present and future disaster for Sri Lanka as a whole. Certainly, each of the present contenders for national leadership seems to be falling over himself in the misuse of state power and in the effort to prove that he can commit national economic suicide, and political hara-kari, more efficiently than the next man.

Second, the sickening failure of the authorities to bring to account the July malefactors, when hundreds were murdered in cold blood, including under-trial prisoners, has placed the whole legitimacy of Colombo rule in question.

Further rounds of violence and counter-violence merely compound the problems: of murder as state policy, of economic disaster, and of the fundamental denial of the Tamils' basic civilian protections. It is this trampling rough-shod on the elementary human expectations of the Tamils — not the Sinhalese refusal of their maximum, or separatist, demands — which is slowly dragging down the whole policy and economy of Sri Lanka.

Q: Why do you feel as strongly as you do about the Tamil cause?

Law of the jungle

A: I am an outsider. I can hold no brief for the Tamils as such; nor for some of the methods they have been driven to use in pursuit of their own interests. Moreover, Sri Lanka is no paradise island for millions of the Sinhalese either; the Tamils ignore this at their peril.

But in a Hobbesian struggle of all against all, in which it is the law of the Ceylon jungle which determines the outcome, the largest responsibility for what is happening in Jaffna clearly lies with those who hold and misuse power in Colombo; and who abdicate the duties they owe to all Sri Lankan citizens to keep the peace judiciously, within the existing state's boundaries.

The issues are those of fundamental human rights, including press freedom in Jaffna, the rule of law, of basic moral imperatives and of political justice. I would take the same view if it were the Sinhalese who were an oppressed minority people, under Army occupation and cornered for massacre in their home city. The one consolation for those who retain their faith in the ultimate triumph of reason and justice — even in Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland — is that the Sinhalese authorities cannot gain their truly barbarous ends in Sri Lanka; the ends of the mass expulsion of the indigenous Tamil population, and the elimination of their birth rights.

I have no doubt in my mind whatever from my visits to Sri Lanka, that this is their ultimate and wholly insane intention.

LANKAN ARMY ON SHOOTING SPREE

The Sri Lankan Minister of National Security, Mr Lalith Athulathmudali, has told the media that those killed in the district of Jaffna were 'terrorists' and the killings took place in the course of confrontation between security forces and 'terrorists'. The foreign media, including the reputable BBC, have without proper verification repeated these ministerial falsehoods.

What happened in Chunnakam, a small but busy town six miles from the northern Tamil city of Jaffna, on March 28, is typical of the indiscriminate atrocities that the Sri Lankan security forces have been inflicting upon the Tamil population for the past few weeks.

And the continued cover-up of these atrocities by the government and the new Minister of National Security through falsified statements to the media confirms that the atrocities are being committed with full governmental sanction.

On March 28, at about 10.00a.m., several men belonging to the Sri Lankan Airforce proceeded in jeeps to the Chunnakam police station to 'deal with the Tamil police officers' who had helped to put out the fire started by the army on March 21 in the Chunnakam bazaar, in the course of which several shops were burnt.

The Tamil police officers had already fled. Disappointed and frustrated at the absence of the police officers, they proceeded to the Chunnakam market and sprayed volleys of bullets into a crowd of shoppers. The result was the instant deaths of 10 persons and serious injuries to several more. The Market Keeper, the officer in

charge of the market, dropped dead of a heart attack.

But they cannot vanquish the Tamil cause by brute force; and, as in the case of the British in Ireland, in their heart of hearts, they themselves know it. Moreover, despite Britain's historic colonial responsibility for the destruction of Tamil sovereignty in the ancient Tamil homelands, the belief in Colombo that Britain will help the Sinhalese to clean up the growing political and economic mess they are making in Sri Lanka, is a profound miscalculation.

Britain will pay for dams, but not for floods of political violence. And, some day soon, it will be realised in Colombo that the US will not commit themselves wholeheartedly to Sinhalese interests either, even with the bait of Trincomalee. The Americans will avoid, if they can, being dragged too far into the unstable affairs of yet another banana republic — and a growingly rotten banana at that — in the Indian Ocean; while the price of turning Sri Lanka into an American aircraft carrier will be a politically fatal rupture with India. American strategic interests cannot afford it.

Q: How can you say this?

A: I use my political judgement.

SEVERAL KILLED, WOMEN & CHILDREN INCLUDED

The Airforce personnel then proceeded along Kankesanthurai Road and upon reaching Mallakam (two miles from Chunnakam) began shooting at random into a crowd of people and more were killed and/or injured. Thereafter, they proceeded further along the same road and on reaching Tellipalai junction (two miles from Mallakam), fired indiscriminately into a crowd of children going out of Union College and 32 students were injured.

Indiscriminate

The news of this senseless and indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians by Airforce personnel was given a false twist by the government, when at 6p.m., the Colombo radio announced that the security forces had repulsed a 'terrorist' attack in course of which seven terrorists were killed.

Indiscriminate

'They just fired': A government source who asked not to be identified since he was contradicting the official version, said between eight and 10 people were killed and at least 50 injured, some seriously. He said a pregnant woman, school-children and elderly people were among the casualties.

'No one who was present said they heard any shots fired by anyone else,' the informant said. 'They said the troops just went

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TO OUR READERS

Since commencing publication in October 1981, TAMIL TIMES has appeared monthly. Over 100,000 copies have been despatched to subscribers and non-subscribers. But from our records, we can safely say that not all recipients or readers have become subscribers.

In view of the frequent censorship and proscription of papers like the 'Saturday Review', TAMIL TIMES remains the only regular journal focusing attention on the problems facing the Tamil-speaking people of Sri Lanka. Its continued publication and indeed its expansion is absolutely crucial in the struggle against oppression and human rights violation in Sri Lanka.

This task cannot be performed by a few, however, dedicated they may be. All those who wish the paper well should contribute their share to this task. The least that one expects is:

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into the market and fired at random for a stretch of 3.5 to 5km. The government is harming itself by putting out a version that no one believes.'

He and the other sources said the firing was apparently in retaliation for the fatal shootings several days earlier of two Airforce men.

The assailants were believed to be Tamil rebels seeking a separate State in the Sinhalese dominated nation.

Unprovoked

'The Airforce took revenge', said the Rev. B. Deogupillai, Roman Catholic Bishop in this mostly Hindu area. 'It was unprovoked. They went into the market place, bought some provisions and opened fire.'

Mr Gamini Navaratne, editor of the English weekly 'SATURDAY REVIEW', said three or four jeeploads of troops blocked approaches to the market and sprayed the crowd with bullets. He said the Airforce men 'took revenge on innocent people' after leaving their barracks where they have been confined following the shooting of their colleagues.

Mr Navaratne said nearly all the victims were aged 30 or above, much older than most of the separatist rebels who are referred to here as 'the boys'.

Further violence

From March 28 onwards, there have been reports of incidents of indiscriminate killings, arson and arrest by the security forces.

On March 29, forty persons were arrested in Point Pedro and taken away to unknown destinations and their whereabouts are not known. Several shops in Atchuveli and three petrol filling stations were set ablaze.

In Poovannakarai in Batticaloa, the houses belonging to the families of Kanapathippillai and Thambirasa and their farms were burnt down. People travelling to and from Jaffna were harassed and beaten up by security forces near Manukulam and Vavuniya.

Intensive house to house search operations were carried out in Kondavil and Kokkuvil and on April 4, two community centres were destroyed by the security forces.

On April 9, the army fired at civilians at random in the city of Jaffna. Several civilians were killed and more were injured. Following an ambush in which a few army personnel were injured, the security forces went on a rampage in the city and several shops were burnt down, including the Jaffna co-operative store.

Gun-shots and bomb blasts were heard throughout the city that afternoon and it

was like a deserted city with no people or vehicles on the streets. It was in the course of this ramage that the Church of Our Lady of Refuge was attacked by the army. The statue of Mahathma Gandhi located in front of the Jaffna Hospital was also damaged by the security forces.

Helicopters were seen flying in the Gurunagar area firing shots indiscriminately from the air. A number of cars, vans and other vehicles were set on fire by the ramaging security forces.

Shot and burnt

On the morning of April 11, sixteen dead bodies of civilians were found near Ariyakulam culvert in Jaffna. Fifteen of them had been shot and then burnt using old tyres. Four partially burnt bodies of civilians were found on the Naval Road, Jaffna, near the railway level-crossing. Before burning, they had been shot.

On the morning of April 12, the army shot and killed five civilians including a railway linesman on duty. On the same day, twelve persons were killed outside Jaffna city — one at Sirupiddy, three at Chunnakam, three at Inuvil, one at Padamani and one at Kokkuvil. At 3p.m. on the same day, three civilians were burnt alive in their car at Kokkuvil. All these killings were carried out by the security forces during and outside curfew hours.

FACTS BEHIND THE ATTACK ON NAGA VIHARE & SINHALA SCHOOL

During the years of anti-Tamil violence throughout Sri Lanka and the frequent police and army atrocities in Jaffna, one redeeming fact was that none of the Sinhalese civilians or their property was subjected to retaliatory violence by Tamil people or the so-called 'terrorists'.

Even during the genocidal attack of July 1983 when over 2,000 Tamils were massacred and over 150,000 Tamils became homeless refugees, no harm was done to the Sinhala residents or their property in the Jaffna district. So much so that the head of Priest of the Naga Vihare in Jaffna, contradicting false rumours maliciously spread during July 1983, announced publicly that no Buddhist temple or property belonging to the Sinhalese in Jaffna had been attacked.

However, on April 10, the Sinhala school and Naga Vihare (not the Naga Deepa Vihare) in Jaffna town were attacked and damaged. Why did this happen?

The Sinhala school was being used by the security forces as an operational point in their daily campaign of rampage in the Jaffna city. On April 9, the army personnel stationed at the school attacked the Catholic church of Our Lady of Refuge situated near the school. The bombing of the church left it with severe damage and the priest had a

narrow escape from the ensuing fire.

The church was made the target of attack because some members of the clergy had, in a letter to the President, disputed the government's version about the shooting spree by the Air Force personnel at Chunnakam on March 28, besides giving refuge and succour to those displaced in South Sri Lanka following the anti-Tamil violence of July 1983.

Diabolical bombing

Enraged and provoked by this diabolical bombing of the church, some of the parishioners had attacked the school and the Naga Vihare in retaliation on April 10. The practice of the government in permitting places of education and religious worship in Jaffna for the security forces to congregate or operate from and convert them as part of the institutions of oppression of the people of the area is the direct

cause of this rather isolated and uncharacteristic attack on the school and the Vihare.

While the injured feelings of the parishioners are understandable, their action in attacking the school and the Vihare is rather unfortunate and should not be repeated.

Not uncharacteristically, the state-controlled media and the Minister of National Security gave wide publicity to the attacks on the school and Vihare and put the blame on 'Tamil terrorists'; they deliberately suppressed the news about the army bombing of the Church of Our Lady of Refuge.

Later, when the news of the attack on the church had spread through other sources, the government's information department has spun another false story — the attack on the church by the army was an act of returning fire at 'terrorists' who were using the church premises to shoot at the security personnel!

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*Lull me not into languid dreams;
Shake me out of this cringing in the dust
Out of the fetters that shackle our mind,
make futile our destiny;
Out of the unreason that bends our
dignity under the indiscriminate*

*feet of dictators;
Shatter this age-long shame of ours,
And raise our head
into the boundless sky,
into the generous light,
into the air of freedom.*

'INDIA TODAY' STORY & THE TRINCO CONNECTION

Was the 'India Today' article about 'terrorist training camps in South India' a deliberately planted story? This question was raised by opposition MPs in the Sri Lankan Parliament when government MPs, led by Prime Minister R. Premadasa, gave official sanction and backing to the anti-Indian hysteria that was being whipped up throughout Sri Lanka.

Banner headlines

The article in the 'India Today' of March 31, 1984, was given the widest possible coverage in every section of the Sri Lankan media with banner headlines beginning March 21st. How did the Sri Lankan press get hold of a copy of the article well in advance of the magazine's release?

The events that followed the publication of the 'India Today' story gives credence to the view that it was deliberately planted to serve several ends. To follow the scenario:

The round table talks stood unaccountably adjourned for over two months in spite of the objections from the TULF; orchestrated and widespread anti-Indian propaganda in the media begins; from the President and Prime Minister downwards, the 'story' is raised as an issue of national security; highly inflammatory speeches are made in parliament; a new Ministry of National Security with Mr Lalith

Atulathmudala as Minister is created and he flies to Jaffna 'to wipe out terrorism' with the blessings of the Maha Sangha.

The President announces the establishment of a 'National Defence Fund' to 'protect the shores of Sri Lanka'; the Federation of Buddhist Associations calls for a defence pact with a 'friendly foreign power'; additional military units are sent to Jaffna and they engage in a daily ramage of killings and arson; and the necessary climate is thus manufactured with consummate cunning, for which President Jayawardene is well known, for the Industries Minister, Mr Cyril Mathew, to announce in parliament on April 4, that his Ministry had decided to lease out the Oil Storage Complex at Trincomalee to a company called 'OROLEUM', an apparently West German—Pakistani Consortium. It is not widely known that a US company has a controlling interest in the West German part of this Consortium.

Local opposition

Tenders for the lease of the Trincomalee Oil Storage Complex were called in April 1982 and the government was negotiating with the US Coastal Corporation for the last two years but the lease was not awarded, due to local opposition which felt that the leasing out of the Complex was the first step

in converting Trincomalee into a US naval base.

India too had openly expressed serious concern and objection to the government's plans. Incidentally, it is learnt that the Indian Oil Corporation had also tendered for the Oil Complex and from a commercial point of view, the Indian tender was the most favourable.

China Bay

Built by the British Admiralty over forty years ago, the Oil Storage Complex is sited at China Bay, Trincomalee, on the east coast of Sri Lanka. It comprises 99 refined oil products storage tanks, each of 12,000 metric ton capacity. The whole complex is about 600 acres in extent and part of it abuts the sea.

Trincomalee is one of the finest natural harbours in the world and its strategic position in the Indian Ocean is of vital importance to any superpower which has military designs in the Indian Ocean scene and the Far East.

The pro-US stance of the Jayawardene government and its eagerness to allow naval facilities to US was of deep and natural concern for India which wants the Indian Ocean declared a Zone of peace.

DISTURBING TURN IN SRI LANKA

'The situation in Sri Lanka is again becoming tense.' This latest sum-up offered in the Lok Sabha on behalf of the Government of India does not certainly carry any exaggeration. There are two aspects of the developing situation which are particularly disturbing from the standpoint of those who have been working for a negotiated and amicable settlement of the issues.

Wild allegations

The first is the absence of any worthwhile progress in the search for an enduring political situation to the Tamil question. The second is the marked anti-Tamil stance adopted by some of the Sinhala political leaders, especially those in the government who have for their own reasons been feeding the ugly situation with wild allegations

concerning India, and especially Tamil Nadu's role in the current crisis.

Following the genocidal attack on the Tamils in June-July 1983, India's good offices promoted a major effort to find a negotiated political settlement within the framework of a united Sri Lanka.

It is worth reiterating at this exceptionally difficult time that this process has been aimed, not at imposing any external solution on Sri Lanka, but at reducing the tensions in the situation, bringing together political and ethnic forces between whom relations had collapsed because of a savage attack on the minority, narrowing the substantive differences and making a wise choice of the way to go.

At one stage, things began to look promising. Following the intensive talks held in New Delhi during Mr J.R. Jayawardene's visit in late 1983, a

set of informal proposals emerged which were looked upon as a worthwhile basis for a negotiated settlement.

Goodwill

The Tamil leaders — the TULF leaders as well as the representatives of the Indian, and especially plantation, Tamils — developed positions that were firm in essentials, yet flexible and reasonable in terms of what might work politically, given earnestness and goodwill all round.

Unfortunately, on the other side, matters deteriorated steadily. What started as an all-party process got distorted with the inclusion of religious groups, especially the Buddhist elements, who changed the character of the dialogue and shot down, or were

PLEASE TURN OVER

used to shoot down, all the reasonable ideas that emerged on giving the Tamils a wider measure of self-administering opportunities within a united Sri Lanka.

In fact, the major Sinhala parties have made it all but obvious that there is no political will to go beyond an experiment of doubtful value — the District Development Council — in a substantive sense and to agree to a larger regional unit for the northern and eastern provinces and to a meaningful devolution of powers.

In all this, the government of Mr Jayawardene — which has been blowing hot and cold — bears a heavy responsibility. The question of a single regional council aside, there has been no progress on the various issues exercising the Tamils such as the status of Trincomalee, the land settlement and colonisation policy of the Government and, above all, elementary security in their daily life and work.

Committed

The government of India has done well to reiterate at this low point in the regional situation that it stands committed to the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka and to a peaceful solution through political means. By the same token, it cannot be insensitive to developments that signal hostility simultaneously to the Tamils of Sri Lanka and to India.

Peace and unity cannot be secured, nor the future of the island nation

spoken for, in the absence of a fair and just settlement acceptable to the Tamil minority and indeed to all the ethnic component parts of Sri Lanka.

Grave risks

The TULF leader, Mr A. Amirthalingam, has warned that the two-month recess in the talks means grave risks and has called for a new Indian initiative to save the Tamils from a major repression and attack.

By courtesy of THE HINDU, International Edition, April 14,

UN CONVENTION ON TORTURE

Alleged torturers will be liable to trial anywhere in the world under the terms of a draft convention against torture which the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has agreed to send to the UN General Assembly after six years of discussions.

The Commission agreed in March on the text of the draft Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment. It now goes through the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly which alone can adopt a final text.

Universal jurisdiction

Two of the most difficult issues before a working group of the commission had been the idea of universal jurisdiction over alleged torturers and an effective implementation mechanism.

This year, articles were agreed on universal jurisdiction. The draft convention stipulates that any state party must prosecute, try or extradite any alleged torturer no matter what his or her nationality and irrespective of where the alleged abuses were perpetrated.

Agreement on proposals

However, there was no agreement on proposals for a Committee Against Torture (to be established by the Convention) to initiate inquiries and investigations into situations where torture is being used systematically. Nor was there agreement on the terms whereby the proposed committee would examine reports to be submitted periodically by states' parties to the Convention. The General Assembly will have to decide on these issues.



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A major new report published by Amnesty International on 4 April — 'Torture in the Eighties' — marks the start of a long-term campaign by Amnesty International to expose and end the use of torture as a tool of state policy.

The report covers allegations of torture and ill-treatment in some 98 countries. Sri Lanka, too, figures prominently in this infamous list. The report shows that prisoners have been tortured or cruelly treated in at least one out of every three countries within the last four years.

However, although it cites allegations of torture or ill-treatment of prisoners in nearly 100 countries, Amnesty International emphasised in a news release of 4 April that government secrecy and intimidation surrounding such abuses often made corroboration of torture claims difficult. It said it was extremely likely that many other cases had not yet come to light: cover-ups and censorship made a full survey impossible.

The report discloses that, since 1980, Amnesty International has acted on 2,687 cases in 45 countries — not including its appeals for many people seized in mass arrests — and has learned of abuses in dozens of other countries. But the organisation is not issuing any 'blacklist' of

TORTURE IN THE EIGHTIES: An Amnesty International Report

countries as this would be incomplete and open to political misuse.

The cruelty is often systematically applied as part of 'state-controlled machinery to suppress dissent', the 263-page report says.

Men and women of all social classes, ages, trades and professions are victims; children have been tortured in El Salvador and infants forced to watch their mothers being tortured in Iran, according to Amnesty International's information.

Most of the torture documented in the report is aimed at intimidation, punishment or extracting confessions from political prisoners. Methods range from beatings and whippings to such specialised techniques as the Syrian 'black slave', an electrical apparatus that inserts a heated metal skewer into the victim's anus.

Some methods, such as the pain-causing drugs forcibly given to some political prisoners in the Soviet Union or the use in a number of countries of electrodes on sensitive parts of the body, make verification of torture or ill-treatment especially difficult, the report says.

The evidence comes from victims, witnesses, medical examinations, court records and former security agents who

took part in torture sessions.

The report includes case studies of situations in which public pressure, supported by international opinion, has helped to limit or halt torture. It outlines a practical 12-point programme that governments can use to prevent torture. The study points out that torture most often occurs during a prisoner's first few days in custody when visits by family or lawyers are banned — often under laws giving the authorities wide-ranging powers to deal with emergencies.

It says that when statements extracted under torture are accepted by judges as evidence and no official inquiries are made into torture complaints, a clear signal has been given to security forces that torture is tolerated.

'Torture can be stopped,' it says. 'What is lacking is the political will of governments to stop torturing people.'

In its report, Amnesty International urges that the international anti-torture convention drafted by the United Nations Human Rights Commission should be adopted. It is due to go through the Economic and Social Council to the UN General Assembly which alone can adopt a final text.

OBITUARY

Mrs May Ivy Holland (nee Morrow)

May Morrow was born in Limehouse in 1895, and trained as a secretary. After two jobs she was accepted and trained as a Wesley Deaconess, served in the Kingsway Central Hall and then went to Ceylon. She worked at Point Pedro and Vannarponnai, learning Tamil and working with women's groups in surrounding villages. After her first furlough she returned to marry the Rev. Bernard Holland at Batticaloa, and they were stationed at Kalmunai, Batticaloa and Trincomalee in the Eastern Province until 1950. They were greatly loved.

Their understanding and friendliness made them welcome guests in Hindu homes and people of all races and religions were always made welcome in their Manse.

The war brought long periods of separation and the responsibility for bringing up and arranging the education of the three children (Hazel, Bernard and John — all of them born in Ceylon) fell on May during those difficult years of evacuation and shortages.

Re-united with her husband, from 1950-1966 May served in English Circuits (Welshpool, Burselm, Macclesfield, Keighley and Consett) where she made many close friends. She retired to Reigate where she was widowed in 1970 and then moved to the Methodist Home for the Aged in Croydon where she died on 20th January 1984.

Wherever she went May brought her own brand of Cockney humour and down to earth common sense. Hers was a strong personality, independent, forthright and practical — and all her qualities and gifts were dedicated to the service of God and the care of her family. She was impatient with the limitations of increasing old age, but met this challenge with fortitude and by the end, feeling that her useful life was ended, she went gladly and peacefully to the Lord whom she had known and served for so long.

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**EVOLUTION OF THE TAMIL QUESTION (PART III)****THE EMERGENCE OF
YOUTH MILITANCY**

BY PROF. KARTHIGESU SIVATHAMBY

Professor Sivathamby, Jaffna University,

is a Scholar of Tamil Languages, Culture and Drama

(Continued from last issue)

The one factor which changed the whole character and course of the Sri Lankan Tamil Question is the emergence of youth militancy expressing itself through violent attacks on the armed force and the police and on those whom it thinks are traitors to the Tamil 'Cause'. **There is a guerrilla strategy. Described as 'terrorists', their actions have been directed against the state as an institution.**

The emergence of this movement has radically altered the character of politics and modes of political communication among the Tamils. There is a ban on these types of organisations — 'The presenting of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and other similar organisations law' (1978).

The underground character of the movement, their guerrilla-type organisation and the ban imposed on their activities make it virtually impossible for anyone to discuss in critical, academic terms the nature and the features of their activities. However, due to reasons of political expediency, there have been interesting articles and reports giving some insight into the organisation and motivations of the movement. The articles in 'Weekend', 'Sun', 'Sunday Island', and now in the book 'The Agony of Sri Lanka' by T.D.S.A. Dissanayake, provide useful pictures of their organisation and activities.

The publications of the various groups of the movement, pamphlets, leaflets are distributed in places where the public gathers — markets, bus stands, etc., with such smoothness that before one realises what is happening, one has a leaflet in the hand. The changed modes of communication are also seen in the wall posters. With a ban on their movement and with censorship of news about them, they use the wall posters as the media for their 'messages'.

Going by such material as is available, there are at least five organisations: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, led by Prabhakaran, People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam, led by Uma Mahesvaran, Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation associated with the late Kuttimani, the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front and the Tamil Eelam Liberation Army, with information relating to leadership not known.

It is quite evident that, in spite of a common aim — the establishment of Tamil

Eelam — these organisations are not united.

All the groups speak in terms of Marxist concepts of political and economic liberation. All of them advocate armed struggle for the establishment of Tamil Eelam.

It is significant that in the posters and handbills there is no reference to past ethnic glories or to a golden age of Tamil culture — a characteristic feature of the rhetoric and the Dravidian Movements of Tamil Nadu. Here the emphasis is on the Marxist formulation of the Tamil Question. It is equally clear that these organisations clearly oppose the TULF for its parliamentarism.

For the reports and analysis, it is evident that the field of recruitment for these groups comes mainly from those who have passed the A.L. examination.

Had it not been for the role played by the Tamil expatriates living in various parts of the Western world, concentrated more in England and the US, the Tamil Question would not have received the international attention it has. It is not difficult to identify the motivating factor — most of them had been victims of discrimination, either at the level of the admission to the University or at the level of employment.

To have a full understanding of the mind of the Tamil expatriate, it is essential to understand the highly centrepetalist character of the family unit in the Sri Lankan, especially the Jaffna Tamil social organisation. One studies more to earn more and one earns more to better the family prospects. Really speaking, the family or the household is yet the basic social unit in Jaffna life. Centrifugalism occurs only to enrich and strengthen the centre (the family). And when it is found that the locus of that centre is threatened, then, it is natural that here is a rallying of forces. With the threat to property and life, the dreams of seeing a family of well established brothers and sisters and of a well earned retired life in the place of your birth, with the soil under your feet belonging to you, are shattered. For people who are confronted with various disabilities in the earning, discrimination and uncertainty of status in their own place of birth disturbs them. This deprivation has led the more articulate of the expatriates to pool their resources to publicise their cause.

A survey of Tamil political demands and activities in Sri Lanka since 1977, including an analysis of the socio-economic and ideological orientation of the struggle. Reproduced by kind courtesy of LANKA GUARDIAN of March 1, 1984

Ethnicity and political consciousness

It would be quite correct to hold that the politicisation of the large mass of the Tamil population started only with the threat they had to face to live within his own social unit of existence. When faced with the reality of discrimination and its ethnic base, ethnicity decides the form and content of political consciousness.

Attention should be paid at this stage to the difference in the class character of the ethnic cry raised to the level of the Sinhala masses. Recent analyses by Kumari Jayawardene have shown the class content of the ideology of Sinhala-Buddhist revivalism had been anti-minority. In terms of historical conditioning there was a latent anti-Tamil content. As the country passed from colonisation to neo-colonisation with the consequent changes in production relations there was a logical outflow of the anti-Tamil content.

At the levels of the Tamils, the anti-Tamil cry of the Sinhalese, at the start, affected only the English-educated state sector employees. It soon affected the small shop owners too. With the broadbasing of education through free education and use of the national languages as media of instruction, there came into being a new group of young men, from the lower income groups and from the peasantry and the underprivileged groups, who too were discriminated against because they were Tamils. Thus ethnic consciousness has become an important factor in political consciousness. **This is also the reason why the caste problem, which was once the major contradiction among the Tamils, is not surfacing today in the manner it used to do.** It is not that caste has ceased to be an operative factor in Tamilian socio-political life, particularly in intra-Tamil matters. The major contradiction now is the ethnic area, for it decides the crucial question of employment. Being the major contradiction it also determines the nature of the politicisation.

A correct understanding of the class character of the Tamil Question as it stands today is important. **A clear distinction should be made between the class basis of the ethnic cry among the Sinhalese and the Tamils.**

At the level of the Sinhalese, the ethnic cry (first priority in terms of language now in terms of religion) is whipped up to complete a process of establishing class

hegemony started prior to independence but in greater earnest after 1956. At the Tamil end, the ethnic cry has become the rallying point against common oppression. It is true that at the start the Tamil cry was raised by a class to preserve its own interests but with the Sinhala bourgeoisie using this cry along with state power to consolidate its position there is a change. Today the Tamil cry is raised as a rallying point for all those who are faced with the same type of oppression. The change from FP (1948) to TUF (1971) to TULF (1976) is also a qualitative change and the continuity of the slogan is coterminous with the continuity of the leadership too. But it is now clear the slogans are tending to be different. The basic contradiction the leadership of the TULF has with its own rank and file is an expression of the changed class nature of that rank and file.

It is because of this historical change that those non-Marxists concerned with the Tamil questions are now taking a Marxist position and the Marxists who are drawn into it are able to see the justification of the ethnic consciousness.

It is this context that the impasse referred to at the outset becomes significant in relation to the turn the character of the problem is going to take.

The Tamil Nadu (and Indian) interest

The Indian interest and the anxiety in Tamilnadu over the Sri Lankan Tamil Question arise from two facts. Firstly, it is also a problem of the Indian citizens, those who have to ultimately be sent back to India. They have been described as people of Indian origin and there is a diplomatic agreement (Sirima-Sastri Pact) in operation relating to them. So, when something is done to them, whether as labourers or as Tamils, it is the duty of the government to express concern.

'In Sri Lanka there are Tamils of Indian origin and Sri Lankan Tamils of Indian origin. I have a sympathy for the Sri Lankan Tamils. The affairs of the former is Foreign Affairs; that of the latter is Internal Affairs.'

— M. Kalyanasundaram

— 'Virakesari', 10.9.1981

By extending the language problem to full ethnic proportions and starting to attack them as Tamils, the path was irretrievably paved for Indian concern over the up-country Tamils. And given the economic significance of the plantation labour, the sheet anchor of the economy yet, the leadership of the Tamils of Indian origin can speak with a sense of confidence the Sri Lankan Tamil leadership cannot possibly have.

Tamil Nadu's concern for the Tamils of Indian origin living overseas has been a point of irritation between the centre and Tamil Nadu in India. Sri Lanka was not the

only place from which Indian Tamils were ejected. They were sent back from Burma and Malaysia too. Rehabilitation for them was ill-planned and poorly executed. So when the human traffic from Sri Lanka also started moving, there was concern. The level of consciousness of this problem is well indicated in modern Tamil literature.

The sympathy for the Sri Lankan Tamil cause lies in the logic of the history of nationality formation in India during and after independence. Nationality formation within India was on an ethnolinguistic basis. Tamils and Bengalis constitute two of the highly conscious ethnolinguistic groups in India. The Pure Tamil movement, the Dravidian Movement, were all part of the Tamil consciousness. Post-independent India accepted the linguistic basis of the states (1956). This social psychology of Tamilian consciousness, per se and within an all-India framework, is well reflected in Tamil literature, especially in poetry from Bharathi to Bharathidasan.

With the attack on the Sri Lankan Tamils on the basis that they are Tamils, the anxiety about the linguistic brethren arose as a natural expression of extra-terrestrial ethnic solidarity. This is not something new in Indian politics. There had been expression of solidarity with Bengalis living in Pakistan and even with Punjabis living in the United Kingdom. There have been instances when the Central Government of India had expressed concern over the problems of such groups. Thus arose the demand in Tamil Nadu about voicing Indian concern over the Sri Lankan Tamil issue.

To add to this, there are the strategies of the parties of Tamil Nadu. DMK, under Karunanidhi, has claimed leadership of the Tamils all over the world. Any inactivity by M.G. Ramachandran and his ADMK government could lead to massive gains to DMK, the biggest of the opposition parties in Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu Congress (I) cannot isolate itself from Tamilian sentiments. Nor can the two Communist Parties keep silent over the 'legitimate demands' of the Sri Lankan Tamils. Thus, there has been an all-party consensus on the Sri Lankan Tamil issue.

Though there had been concern over this problem since 1956, discernible political interest starts with the 1974 deaths in the Tamil Research Conference and in 1979. Interest in the Sri Lankan Tamil Question increased with militant youth seeking shelter in Tamil Nadu.

Since 1977 there has been an additional fear in India, the fear of an American takeover of Trincomalee.

What had started as a problem of language of the government gazettes, of attacks on the suruttu kade and the thosai kades, and of media of instruction and marks to enter the University, has now become a problem of geo-politics.

SPECIAL FOCUS

A MILITARY THRUST TOWARDS 'FINAL SOLUTION'?

● ... air force men kill civilian Tamils ...

At least ten Tamil civilians were killed and more than twenty-five were seriously injured by Sri Lankan Air Force personnel on the 28th of March 1984. The Air Force personnel fired at random in and around the market town of Chunnakam in the Northern Province. And it would appear that the stage is being set for President Jayewardene's final solution to the Tamil problem. We hope that we are wrong.

● ... following 'unbridgeable gap' at amity talks ...

It was about a month ago that, at the opening sessions of the Sri Lankan Parliament, President Jayewardene reported on the impasse that had been reached at the round table conference which had been initiated at the instance of the Indian Government. He said:

'The Tamil representatives of the north have to satisfy the extreme elements that seek separatism through the bullet. They have to convince them that the solution they accept and wish the others also to accept comes as close to separation as possible within a united Sri Lanka. The leaders of the Sinhala and Muslim people on the other hand have to explain how the proposals they put forward are as far away as possible from secession. There is an almost unbridgeable gap between the two positions.'

● ... and failure of Sri Lankan Government to offer any solution ...

The style was familiar. The elected government of Sri Lanka distanced itself from the problem and became an innocent bystander — a detached observer of a problem, a problem with the almost unbridgeable gap. Here was a government which sought to govern but which itself had no solution to offer — at any rate no solution which it could publicly declare.

● ... other than a planned build-up of the Sinhala army in Tamil areas ...

But in early March, Brigadier Nalin Seneviratne, who has been described as a 'tough soldier' was posted to the Tamil area in the North as the co-ordinating officer. Soon thereafter, the Tamil Government Agent in Jaffna was transferred and replaced by a Sinhala officer. The infamous army camps in the north where Tamil prisoners were tortured in 1981 and 1982, were

re-opened. Indiscriminate arrests of persons in Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Vavuniya and Jaffna were carried out. Some were arrested as hostages for wanted youths. Sinhala settlement of Tamil areas in Trincomalee and Batticaloa was intensified. There were moves to vest 5,000 acres of land in Trincomalee in the Port Authority. Food supply to the Jaffna peninsula was curtailed and attempts were made to introduce a limited rationing system.

● ... and a high profile United States association ...

In the meantime, the unprecedented visit of US Defence Secretary, Mr Carl Weinberger, to meet President Jayewardene in Colombo in late 1983, was followed, in January this year, by the visit of Mr Joseph

The renewed killings of Tamil civilians in Sri Lanka follows upon the failure of the round table conference to offer any meaningful solution to the Tamil national question. It is proposed to focus attention on some aspects of the contextual background.

Addabo, the Chairman of the Defence Appropriations Committee of the US House of Representatives. Mr Addabo thanked the government of Sri Lanka for having approved the 'revival' of the Voice of America transmissions from Sri Lanka — transmissions which had been stopped for more than twenty-five years. Mr Addabo said that the United States will consider a proposal made by the Sri Lankan government that the US provide modern naval training for the Sri Lankan navy. He also said that on his return to the United States he would immediately recommend that funds be released to Sri Lanka for defence purposes.

The US senators Mark O. Hatfield and Thomas F. Eagleton visited Sri Lanka later in January and in February Deputy Assistant Secretary Mr Howard B. Schaffer held discussions with President Jayewardene. He said that the relations between Sri Lanka and the United States were 'excellent' and added that the United States had a high regard for President Jayewardene. Mr Schaffer paid a compliment to the Sri Lankan embassy in Washington, 'a small embassy which had done well in countering

Eelam supporters in the United States'. It was against this backdrop of a high profile US association that the visit of President Jayewardene to the United States in June was announced.

● ... coupled with an expensive legitimising propaganda effort ...

And then came the publication in Sri Lanka of an article in an Indian magazine, which gave the sensationalised account of the so-called training of Tamil guerrillas in South India. It was an article which appeared in an issue datelined 31st March 1984 but it was published in Sri Lanka on 21st March by a Sinhala-owned daily which has at all times consistently supported President Jayewardene. And it was published despite the fact that the government had banned the dissemination of any information spreading separatist ideas.

● ... which labelled the Tamil struggle as 'leftist inspired' ...

The article described the Tamil struggle as left inspired. Again the style was familiar. In July and August 1983, when hundreds of Tamils were killed and thousands were rendered homeless by a systematic planned attack, the government of Sri Lanka said that the attack on the Tamils was left inspired — presumably a left inspired attack on a left inspired Tamil liberation movement. In 1981 and 1982, when Amnesty International reported on the torture inflicted on Tamil prisoners, the government of Sri Lanka said that the report was left inspired. In 1983 when David Selbourne, the Oxford don, expressed his concern at the continuing oppression of the Tamils of Sri Lanka, the government of Sri Lanka said that his concern was left inspired. In 1983, when Aquino was shot dead in broad daylight in Manila, President Marcos said that the killing was left inspired. We are reminded of Hitler in 1930 and the burning of the Reichstag — that too was left inspired, at least according to Hitler.

● ... in the hope that the world may listen ...

And the world listened then as it may sometimes listen, even today, because the world prefers to listen to that which it prefers to believe. It prefers to close its eyes to Hitlers in the making. It is so much more convenient to put it all on the communists, the Marxists and the leftists, so that the world

may go on with its own business with an easy conscience, without being bothered too much by torture, by rape, by genocide in a distant land.

● . . . but, in truth, a propaganda cover for a 'Biafra' type solution . . .

And so if a systematic attempt is made by the Sinhala army to terrorise the Tamils in the North and East of Sri Lanka in pursuit of what President Jayewardene described, in July 1983, as the 'Malaysian solution' to the Tamil problem, it will not matter too much — after all the Tamil liberation struggle is left inspired. It is a nice phrase and a convenient label. Any public relations agency concerned with moulding world opinion in such a way that the Sri Lankan government can buy the time to set about doing 'a Biafra' in Jaffna could not have improved on such a phrase. It is, of course, a mistake which the United States has often made in Asia and Africa — the mistake of too readily categorising a whole national movement as Marxist, a mistake which has often resulted in driving national movements into Marxist hands.

● . . . because 'the world had not believed the government before' . . .

And the Indian journalist who wrote the article was obviously mindful of the power centres of the world. He spoke of 'super-power intervention' to prevent the establishment of Tamil Eelam. Which super-power did he have in mind? He went on to say that the Tamil guerrillas in Tamil Nadu 'await with anxiety President Jayewardene's visit to the US in June'. The readers of the article were left with little doubt as to what the writer had in mind. And on 21st March, within a few hours of the publication hitting the streets of Colombo, the Sri Lankan Minister for Information Dr Ananda Tissa De Alwis announced that the government was purchasing 'large numbers' of copies of the magazine for distribution to its embassies abroad as 'proof' of the threat to Sri Lanka.

He said: 'A piece of paper will be attached to each of these magazines. It will carry this message — "We have told this story to the world. The world has not believed us. Now the Indian journalist has told the truth."' The world which did not believe the Sri Lankan government would believe the word of an 'Indian' journalist. And, of course, in this area the views of Dr De Alwis do command respect — he has considerable expertise in the area of public relations, having served for many years as head of a leading international advertising agency.

● . . . but would the world believe the Sri Lankan government now?

The article by the 'Indian journalist' had clearly served to help the Sri Lankan gov-

ernment to legitimise its proposed 'Biafra' action against the Tamils of Sri Lanka. It served to divert attention from the failure of the government to take any steps whatever to compensate the thousands of Tamils who have lost everything in the holocaust of July and August 1983. It served to divert attention from the systematic campaign of successive Sinhala governments to oppress and terrorise the Tamils of Sri Lanka into submission. It served to divert attention from a continuing oppression and a terrorism which had its beginnings in 1948 when around one million Tamils who were born in Sri Lanka were de-citizenised, disenfranchised and rendered stateless: an oppression and a terrorism which resulted in hundreds of Tamils being killed in 1958 when they had demanded a federal state, and when they had not demanded separatism and when there was no guerrilla movement whether leftist inspired or otherwise: an oppression and a terrorism which deprived thousands of intelligent and qualified young Tamils admission to the universities and which drove them to the streets: an oppression and a terrorism which resulted in the burning of the Jaffna public library by the Sri Lankan army: an oppression and a terrorism which has bred violence in its wake. And the article by the 'Indian journalist' served to divert attention from the cause by seeking to sensationalise some of the effects. But, on Minister Dr Ananda Tissa De Alwis's own admission the world had not believed the government of Sri Lanka before. We wonder whether the world would believe it now.

● . . . and so the stage was being set . . .

Two days after Minister de Alwis's announcement, the young Minister of Trade, Mr Lalith Athulathmudali was appointed Minister of National Security. On 24th March, the new Minister of National Security visited the Buddhist Mahanayakas to receive their blessings to wipe out 'terrorism'. On 25th March the energetic Minister visited Jaffna, and is reported to have told the Sinhala armed forces: 'You did a splendid job in 1971 (a reference to the abortive insurrection where more than ten thousand Sinhala youth were killed by the armed forces', and so do the same now.' And so the stage was being set.

● . . . for the massacre that was to follow . . .

And, then a few days later, on 28th March, we have the so-called ambush of Sinhala air force men in Chunnakam — a so-called ambush in which, according to the communique of the Sri Lankan Defence Ministry, the troops suffered no casualties. A so-called ambush which was no ambush at all.

All telephone communications were jammed until the government released its

official version of 'an ambush'. More than ten Tamils including a woman, were killed and more than twenty-five seriously injured. The Defence Ministry communique calmly admits that it was a case of 'revenge shooting'. A revenge for what? A revenge shooting which killed at least ten and injured more than twenty-five but the communique contains no words of regret.

The communique contains no expression of horror at the indiscipline of the air force. The communique contains no promise, no reassurance that the government will ensure that such revenge shootings will not occur in the future.

● . . . to be explained away as the act of an 'indisciplined army' . . .

And again the style was familiar. In July 1983 too the armed forces shot and killed more than forty youths 'in revenge' but there was no expression of regret, there was no attempt to hold an inquiry. When President Jayewardene was asked as to why no inquest or inquiry was held, he replied that there was no purpose since the bodies had already been burnt. And so, as in July and August 1983, the government would have the world believe that these are the acts of an indisciplined army and air force, which the government can neither discipline nor command.

● . . . but facts and President Jayewardene's own admission falsify this explanation . . .

But facts are stubborn. The recent changes in the administration of the Tamil areas, the appointment of a new Minister of National Security, the build-up of the army in the North, the increase in tempo of military rule, the re-opening of the army camps, show rather, a government in control, working to a plan. And we are reminded of the words of President Jayewardene to the 'Daily Telegraph' correspondent Ian Ward in July 1983, significantly two weeks before the terrible holocaust of July and August: 'I am no longer concerned with the lives of the Tamils'. Mr Jayewardene was frank and it may be a mistake that the world has not taken him at his word.

● . . . and suggest a move towards a final solution in violation of the rights guaranteed by the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights which Sri Lanka has ratified . . .

And the question that arises is whether the Sri Lankan government is moving towards the undeclared final solution to a problem, which in the perception of the government of Sri Lanka is a problem with an unbridgeable gap. This is a question that must concern all those who are working for the protection of human rights.

The first article of the International Convention of Civil and Political Rights

declares that all peoples have the right of self-determination and the Tamils of Sri Lanka are a people with a common language, a common culture, a common history and a traditional homeland. It is on the basis of the rights of self-determination that all the other human rights of a people can be secured — without the right of self-determination, all other human rights will remain merely pious aspirations written on thin paper.

However, it would seem that in the eyes of the government of Sri Lanka the solution to the Tamil problem does not lie in recognising that the Tamils of Sri Lanka are a nation, it does not lie in recognising that the Tamils of Sri Lanka have the right to freely determine their political status.

It would seem that to the government of Sri Lanka, the solution does not lie in the removal of the oppression and the discrimination, the solution does not lie in a federal constitution but the solution lies in the annihilation of all those Tamils who have the courage to stand up for their rights. It would seem that to the government of Sri Lanka the solution lies in the creation of a servile minority which satisfies the Hitlerite doctrine that the role of a minority is to serve the majority. We hope that we are wrong in our perceptions.

● . . . a path of genocide and therefore a need to placate India temporarily . . .

We hope that the government of Sri Lanka has not decided on the path of genocide. Such a path would of course make it necessary to placate, in particular, the feelings of India, at least until the grim deed is done and we wonder whether the recent visit of a senior Sri Lankan Minister to New Delhi has something to do with this. India will no doubt be informed of the proposed visit of President Jayewardene to the USA in June this year and the possibility of a friendship treaty with the USA. India will no doubt

be informed that unless the Indian government agrees to restrain the feelings of solidarity that her people have with their brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka, the Sri Lankan government will have no option but to strengthen US interests in the Indian Ocean.

● . . . and persuade the United States . . .

And, in June, perhaps President Jayewardene will seek to persuade President Reagan that with US support his government can survive. He will seek to explain away the continued failure of his government to manage the plantations and the economy. He will seek to explain away the corruption that surrounds him and which prevents him from mobilising the manpower necessary for the effective management of the country. He will seek to explain away seven years of failing to go anywhere but trying to somehow stay in the seats of power.

The Sri Lankan government will seek to persuade President Reagan that the national interests of the US will be served by supporting a regime which has postponed elections, which has taken away the civic rights of the leader of the main opposition party, which has organised intimidatory demonstrations by its goon squads before the homes of judges of the Supreme Court.

And the government will seek to persuade President Reagan that the best cure for the economic problems that face Sri Lanka, is not the effective management of the resources of the country, but a strong dose of racism and continued intransigence on the question of treating the Tamil nation equally and fairly.

And the government will do all this, in the name of securing democracy in Sri Lanka and as a friend of the Shah of Iran. Perhaps it will also add that the national

interests of the United States in the Indian region will be best served by alienating the feelings of more than 50 million Tamils.

● . . . but, in the meantime, a 'Biafra' style operation in Tamil areas . . .

And as the talking goes on, we fear that more and more Tamils will be killed in the weeks and months ahead. We fear that no young Tamil will be safe in Sri Lanka. We fear that the killings will be legitimised on the ground either that they were the result of rivalry between different Tamil liberation groups or that they were in retaliation against so-called 'ambushes'.

We fear that in this way, the Sri Lankan government will seek to blunt the feelings of moral outrage amongst the people of the world — a moral outrage which found expression in the international media in July and August 1983. We fear that the Tamils of Sri Lanka will be called upon to pay a heavy price in terms of human life and suffering for their struggle to be free from a continuing oppression.

● . . . and we hope and we pray that we are wrong . . .

We hope that the Sri Lankan government will prove us wrong. But if the Sri Lankan government proves us right then it might well remember the words of an Indian patriot in 1907 that in martyrdom there is an incalculable spiritual magnetism which works miracles. *'The soil which has drunk the blood of the martyr imbibes with it a sort of divine madness which it breathes into the heart of all its children, until there is but one over-mastering idea, one imperishable resolution in the minds of all, beside which all other hopes and interests fade into insignificance and until it is fulfilled, there can be no peace or rest for the land or its rulers.'*

This is the lesson of history and the Tamil people will provide no exception to its teachings. And those who do not learn from history are condemned to re-live it.

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**NO TAMIL BASES
IN MALAYSIA**

Malaysia has described as baseless the claim by a Sri Lankan newspaper that the Tamil Liberation Army has set up bases on its territory.

The deputy foreign minister, Mr Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir, yesterday said Malaysia's policy had always been that of non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations.

Newspaper report

He was commenting on a newspaper report that the guerrilla group now fighting for a separate Tamil state in the island had set up bases in Malaysia.

ENTHRONEMENT OF FALSEHOOD IN SRI LANKA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

awkward questions to the Minister, but what was the net result? The Sinhala public has been served another acceptable dish of falsehoods!

Dastardly events

Let us go back the dastardly events of July 24, 1983 in Jaffna. Within ten hours of the midnight ambush of July 23 when 13 soldiers of the Sri Lanka army were killed by the Liberation Tigers, army reprisals against the peaceful civilian population had begun in Jaffna.

Armed army personnel in civils hijacked a mini-passenger van and went on an indiscriminate shooting spree and left over 40 Tamils dead, on streets and homes. When the Jaffna police began gathering evidence about the killings, the order came from the Ministry of Defence in Colombo that there shall be no inquiries or judicial inquests, and action be taken to ensure that the bodies be handed over to the relatives and **immediate** cremation be stipulated. No burials will be permitted, said the order, even in the case of Christians.

A reference to this Jaffna massacre was published in the 'GUARDIAN', London, in its issue of August 7. David Beresford in a despatch from Colombo, said: 'President Jayewardene of Sri Lanka claimed yesterday that his army withheld information

from him on massacres that had been committed in the northern region of Jaffna. . . . Asked yesterday why no inquests had been held in the Jaffna instance, President Jayewardene said: "I didn't know until a couple of days ago. It is too late now."'

David Beresford in a separate despatch had said: 'The leader of the Opposition Mr A. Amirthalingam, who lives outside Jaffna, has claimed that he telephoned the President the day after the massacre took place, Monday July 25, to inform him. He said: "We'll look into it and do what is necessary to stop it."' Beresford added: 'At least two other prominent figures in Jaffna are believed to have made similar representations to the Presidential office the same day. The President says that no inquests have been held because he was informed too late.'

It is quite possible that as I write this from Madras on April 15, the President of Sri Lanka might not be aware of the killings in Chunnakam on March 28! Probably he will be informed 'too late' — sometime in May — so that nothing could be done about little matters like inquests.

Anyway, who wants inquests, unless some misguided fool wants to know the Truth? But who wants to know the Truth anyway? The State of Sri Lanka is at war with the Tamils, and in war, as in love, as all fools know, all's fair!

INTERNATIONAL TAMIL CONFERENCE

An International Conference organised by the Tamils of USA and Canada will be held from June 30 to July 2, 1984. The objectives are:

- (a) To promote the Cultural Heritage of the Tamils of the World.
- (b) To address the matters affecting the future of the Tamils as a people all over the world.
- (c) To assemble the best personnel available within and outside the Tamil Community for the creation of an International Tamil Centre in New York.
- (d) To deliberate on the Human Rights Violations of the Tamils of Sri Lanka.

The headquarters for the Conference will be the Holiday Inn, Nanuet, New York.

For further particulars, contact the Secretary at 89 Tennyson Drive, Nanuet, New York, 10954, USA. Tel (914) 623-6510.

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KUMAR ANANDAN'S CHANNEL SWIM FUND

We published in our December issue the setting up of a Fund to assist Kumar Anandan, the well known multi-world record holder, to make an attempt on a 4-way swim of the English Channel.

Since then, he has been training for a minimum of 4 hours a day. He trains at the Mitcham Sports Grounds and at the Tottenham Court Road Y.M.C.A. When he called at our office last week, he was a different man from the chubby person we saw in December. He now looks more like himself before his near fatal accident in 1981: he looks really fit.

Anandan was disappointed at the response to the Fund Appeal. Towards the £6,000 required for a 4-way attempt, only £245 has been received so far by the 'Tamil Times'. This does not meet even one quarter of the cost of one-way swim. The official body for this swim, the English Channel Swimming Association's fee for a one-way swim alone is around £1,000. This includes supply of two boats, for officials and for piloting. Even for a two-way swim, he will need £3,000. Due to the poor response Anandan has not been able to devote his full effort and concentration on training.

If he had had sufficient funds, he would liked to have stayed at the Central Y.M.C.A. and trained there. This way, he would have been able to swim in the Y.M.C.A. pool whenever he liked. Time is running short for this 'never-say-die' sportsman. He is confident he can do a two-way swim which no Asian has done before. He says he will keep going as long as he can beyond the two-way mark. In his

previous record-breaking attempts, Anandan kept going until he broke the record or collapsed. During his 187-hour cycling record, he was knocked down by a car on the fifth day and broke his collar bone and two ribs, yet he completed the last three days cycling with these fractures. Such is the man's spirit.

We are convinced he can do it. However, he will not be able to make the attempt if at least £3,000 is not collected for even a two-way swim. That will be a real tragedy - success will be a credit to all of us. However, we are confident that 'Tamil Times' subscribers and other well-wishers will come to his rescue. His visa has been extended up to December 1984 on our sponsorship. In granting the extension, the British Home Office has added a footnote, 'Wishing you the best of luck for your swim'.

Anandan is determined to swim in August even if he has to beg or borrow to meet the bare expenses. This is the first time that a man will be attempting to swim the English Channel with a pin and a plate holding his hip and leg together.

Please send your cheques (crossed A/C Payee only) to the Kumar Anandan Channel Swim Fund, c/o Tamil Times, P.O. Box 304, London, W13 9QN

Remittances received so far are as follows:

S. Muthulingasamay (Saudi Arabia)	£50
S. Thiagarajah (UK)	£10
M. Sidamparapillai (UK)	£5
S. Kumarathevan (West Germany)	DM300
V. Nithiananthan (Kuwait)	£100

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FROM THE PRESS . . .

BEWARE OUR ENEMY'S FRIEND

Sri Lanka is working itself up into a war psychosis. It sees two enemies: the Tamil terrorists, who ambushed some air force men in Tamil-dominated Jaffna last week and provoked them into running amok, leaving 14 dead; and India, which expressed 'regret' over the death of the Tamils and thus caused official outrage in Sri Lanka. The Prime Minister, Mr Premadasa, claimed on television this week that India was supporting an imminent invasion of its southern island neighbour.

The most articulate man in Sri Lanka's Cabinet, Mr Lalith Athulathmudali, has been put in charge of a new Ministry of National Security and given sweeping emergency powers in the Tamil north and east of the country. A national defence fund has been established as an exercise in mass mobilisation and to finance the island's new effort 'to defend our shores'.

'How long can we tolerate this nonsense?' Mr Premadasa asked, in a parliamentary debate set off by an Indian report that training camps for Tamil rebels were operating in southern India. The new Security Minister, who doubles as deputy Defence Minister, speaks more coolly about India, making a distinction that others fail to make between the policies of the Tamils of Madras and those of the government in Delhi. But behind the ritual bows to the traditional ties of friendship, relations between Sri Lanka and its big sister to the north are worsening fast.

Mutual distrust

And so are relations between Sri Lanka's Sinhalese majority and the Tamils, who were the object of Sinhalese communal passions last July. The round table conference which was convened in January to devise a way of accommodating Tamil grievances has foundered on mutual distrust and a revival of Sinhalese communalism. When the parties reassemble in May, it will be only to perform the last rites. One result of the failure at the conference has been to destroy the credibility of the Tamil parliamentary party, the TULF, which for 20 years has won more than 75 per cent of the Tamil vote.

The TULF took the risk of sitting down with the enemy because it believed presidential promises to bring in an Indian-mediated plan for greater local autonomy. In the event, even President Jayewardene dissociated himself from the draft he had worked out with Mrs Gandhi's envoy, and his party refused to give the Tamils anything at all. So the real winners of the argument are the Tamil Tiger terrorists who will

now appear, to the millions of Tamils in Sri Lanka's north and east, as the only political alternative.

Mr Athulathmudali is basing his plans for a counter-terrorist struggle on what he believes to be the Tigers' two-stage strategy. The first task would be to set off disturbances in the north which then spread southward. The tinder is drier in the south than it was last summer as a result of 22 per cent inflation and mounting urban discontent. The second phase would be to provoke Indian intervention by convincing India that Sri Lanka means to threaten Indian security by handing over its Trincomalee base to the Americans. To listen to Sri Lanka's Prime Minister this week, India is already provoked.

'THE ECONOMIST', 7.4.84)

FROM AMNESTY'S FILE ON TORTURE



Father Aparanam Singarayar

Gurunagar is one of several army camps cited in the 'Report of an Amnesty International Mission to Sri Lanka, 31 January — 9 February 1982' (published in July 1983) as places in which detainees held by the security forces under the PTA are reported to have been tortured and ill-treated.

Father Singarayar was moved to Welikada Prison, Colombo, probably in January 1983. The following April Amnesty International received a report that the treatment he received in Gurunagar Army Camp appeared to have harmed his eyes, and that he was having difficulty reading.

On 17 January 1983 he and five other Tamils — two of them also clergymen — were charged with 'having information regarding the persons who robbed the Neervely Bank in March 1981, not informing the police of the commission of the offence and failing to inform the police of the whereabouts of the persons who committed the offence'. He was also charged

with having harboured suspects who had attacked the Chavakacheri police station in October 1982 and of withholding information on the movements and whereabouts of the suspects.

The six Tamil defendants were produced in court briefly on 6 February 1983, but their trial, which was due to begin the following June, has been repeatedly postponed and applications for bail denied.

While at Welikada Prison, Father Singarayar witnessed the killing on 25 and 27 July 1983 of some of the 53 Tamil prisoners being held in the prison under the PTA. The killings occurred during attacks reportedly carried out by Sinhalese inmates.

Refused to leave

Father Singarayar was himself attacked, but survived with his five co-accused and was subsequently moved with other Tamil prisoners to Batticaloa Prison in eastern Sri Lanka. Most of the Tamil prisoners held there under the PTA escaped on 23 September 1983, but Father Singarayar reportedly refused to leave and is still there.

Amnesty International has asked the Sri Lankan government to hold an independent inquiry into allegations that Father Singarayar was tortured. It has repeatedly appealed for him to be tried or immediately released.

Torture has been a long-standing concern of Amnesty International in Sri Lanka under the present and previous administrations. Reports of torture have regularly been put before Sri Lanka's parliament by members of the Opposition, and evidence of torture, supported by affidavits, legal testimonies and medical reports, has been presented in Sri Lanka's Court of Appeal and in the Supreme Court.

Please send courteous letters:

- *urging that Father Singarayar be either tried or immediately released, and that he be humanely treated while in detention;*
- *urging that the alleged torture of Father Singarayar be impartially investigated and that those responsible be brought to justice;*
- *urging the authorities to issue clear instructions to all law enforcement personnel that torture will not be tolerated under any circumstances.*

Send your appeals to: His Excellency President J.R. Jayewardene, Presidential Secretariat, Republic Square, Colombo 1, Sri Lanka; *and to:* His Excellency The Hon. Y.B. Werapitiya, Minister of Internal Security, Ministry of Internal Security, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

(By courtesy of 'AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER', April 1984)

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ATTACK ON JUDICIARY

GOVT. MOVES AGAINST JUDICIARY

The Chief Justice of Sri Lanka has become the subject of investigation by a parliamentary select committee at the instigation of the government. Following a decision at a Cabinet meeting presided over by President J.R. Jayewardene, a motion was rushed through parliament on April 14 to appoint a select committee to investigate and report on certain remarks made by the Chief Justice, Mr Neville Samarakone, QC, at a recent school prize-giving ceremony.

This unprecedented step against the highest judicial officer in the country has raised serious constitutional questions. The opposition in parliament staged a walk-out protesting against the government's move. The Sri Lankan Bar Association and the Civil Rights Movement have condemned the government's action. The Bar Association stated that there was no provision in the Standing Orders of the Parliament to appoint a select committee to inquire into the conduct of a judge of the highest court in the country.

CRM protests

The day before the motion was discussed in parliament, the Civil Rights Movement led by the eminent Queen's Counsel, Mr S. Nadesan, appealed to the government and the Speaker not to proceed with the controversial motion. But the appeal went unheeded.

The Civil Rights Movement, in a statement issued to the press, said:

'The proposal is unconstitutional as it violates the concept of the independence of the judiciary which is part of the basic structure of our constitution. The actions of such a select committee would be ultra vires the powers of parliament as they are not ancillary to the exercise of legislative power. Parliament has no judicial supervisory function over judges, in respect of whom its power is limited to removal from office for proved misbehaviour or incapacity, such misbehaviour or incapacity has to be proved by proper procedure as envisaged by Article 107 of the constitution and must be consistent with the independence of the judiciary which is fundamental to the constitution. It follows that any inquiry must be by an independent judicial tribunal similar to that provided under the Judges Inquiry Act of 1968 in India. In Sri Lanka no such procedure has yet been created.

'The Chief Justice has exercised his fundamental right of freedom of expression and people are free to counter his views and express contrary views. It should be noted that restraint on such expression of views

by judges is found in the constitution unlike in the case of army personnel and police officers. If nevertheless it is felt that the expression of such views impairs his functioning as a judge and warrants his removal from office then the only constitutional course of action open would be by means of a notice of resolution signed by one-third of the Members of Parliament asking for his removal, and the following of the proper machinery for investigating allegations of misbehaviour or incapacity envisaged in Article 107 of the constitution referred to above. The fact that so far this machinery has not provided, does not justify parliament resorting to unconstitutional methods which in effect undermine the independence of the judiciary.'

What the Chief Justice said

Very few persons holding such high office would have ventured out so frankly and publicly as the Chief Justice did when he spoke recently at a prize-giving ceremony. Apart from his rather oversimplistic explanation about the causes of the 1983 July violence, his remarks were, by and large, to the point and could not be contradicted.

Explaining the difficulties he faced in regard to the filling of vacancies in the Judicial Service Department, the Chief Justice said:

'For the past one year we have been trying our best to fill about 492 vacancies. Several have been eyeing these Jobs. But we have a ruling imposed on us that we should recruit only from a place called the Job Bank. I believe all you people have heard of this Job Bank.

'It has no place, no buildings, it is only in name, but it is a most powerful place because if I recruit somebody from outside I am surcharged for the salaries for one whole month or well over 18 months. I was trying to fill these vacancies.

The Job Bank send me once a month or so five or ten people who have got on to the Job Bank list through their MPs. Half of them are unemployed. Some of them are supposed to be typists but they cannot type a word. They can't spell. But we have to employ them. Some of them have the impertinence to bring letters from MPs which I throw into the waste paper basket. I cannot employ them and I am finding it very difficult to run the establishment.'

'I'm telling you all this to illustrate that the employable, educated youth of this country are unable to get jobs outside the Job Bank. The Job Bank is a fraud on the

youth of this country. It is like the blood bank. You have to wait for the donor and the donor here is the MP.

Cost of living — galloping

'The cost of living has been rising. I went to Australia in October. When I left the country at that time a coconut used to be Rs.1.25, but after I returned it was Rs.6.00. A loaf of bread, which was 60 cents in 1977, is today Rs.3.05. I believe, correct me if I am wrong, rice, which was one or two rupees in 1977 is today eight rupees to eleven rupees.

'I got those figures from my stenographers and my clerks because I wanted to find out why they were not taking rice. How can a man live like that? I have one minor employee who, because of all the rising costs of living, left Colombo and went back to his village in Kandy.

'He gets up at 2 o'clock in the morning and takes the train and comes here at 8 o'clock, takes the train back at 5 o'clock and goes home at 10 o'clock. There are a number of them travelling from various parts of the country. Some of the senior employees also travel from Galle because they can't afford to live here (Colombo).

The cost of living today is not merely rising but is galloping. Galloping like a race horse that has thrown its rider. And such a horse with no rider is out of control. That is what's happening today. The minor employees, especially the government servants, are in dire need. So if you want a job, the only one is in the mercantile sector.

'It is not easy for those who have no regular jobs. But the rich have always been all right. And so I want to tell you that the public service is good for me and good for those of us who are highly paid. Good for those who have free cars, free chauffeurs and petrol. We must be thankful for it.

President on poverty line

'I read some time ago in the 'SUN' paper that the President has said that his salary is a pauper's salary, and that he is living on the poverty line. I am surprised he is an elected representative of the people. He has all the powers; all the palaces in Nuwara Eliya and Kandy. They are paying a hell of a lot of money to keep him in poverty. It costs the country a hell of a lot of money to keep me in poverty on my pauper's salary. But we are a class by ourselves. I know it is difficult now even to join the public sector or the private sector to maintain ourselves the way we should be maintained. I am referring to this as I find our people are taking bribes. I cannot blame them.'

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OBITUARY

Dr John R. Wilson, MD, MRCP

The death occurred, after a very brief illness, of Dr Wilson on the 6th April in Colombo at the age of 73.

After a very all-round performance as scholar and sportsman in Royal College — he played cricket, rugger, football and athletics, winning colours in all four branches of sport — he entered the University College, Colombo, to embark on a medical career which took him to the very pinnacle as Senior Physician, General Hospital, Colombo.

He came over to England to complete his training at Kings College, London. In 1946, after his post-graduate studies, he offered himself for work in the campaign against tuberculosis, of which he was later Superintendent and Director. He was awarded the MBE by the Queen for his self-sacrificial labours.

He leaves behind three daughters — Mrs Loges Arulampalam, Dr Shanthi Wilson



Dr J.R. Wilson

and Mrs Kalashini Miller, and a son Deva Kumar who is a teacher at Trinity College, Kandy. His wife, Rasamany, predeceased him three years ago.

John was known for his strong Christian convictions and he practised medicine in a spirit of self-sacrifice. He took up work in the Tuberculosis campaign because during the last war and immediately following it TB had become a scourge in Sri Lanka.

*'Lives of great men all remind us
If we could make our lives sublime
And departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.'*

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LIBERATION OR DISASTER? — FACING THE CHALLENGE

The Tamil nation of Eelam is at the most turbulent juncture of its history in our living memory. It is a juncture produced by the cumulative effects of a political history of a hundred years. What began as Sinhala Buddhist revivalism in the late 19th century has become an oppressive Sinhala chauvinism and its enthronement as a ruling ideology has been amply documented and analysed in recent times by many Sri Lankan Scholars — many of them Sinhalese of Marxist persuasion.

With every passing day as more and more Sinhalese become de-sensitised to the real causes of Tamil grievances and give their overt and covert approval to Sinhala state terrorism more and more Tamils become convinced of separation as the only way out. Most Tamils have been driven to this decision by a process of negative reasoning based on the bitter experiences of day to day life. This alone is ample testimony to the fact that the Tamil people had long believed in living together with the Sinhalese as citizens of a united Lanka. But with each bout of genocide and its increasing ferocity and inhumanity this hope has been shattered as far as at least 70 per cent of the Tamils are concerned.

Inescapable alternative

An independent homeland for the Tamil nation which has traditionally inhabited the northern and eastern provinces has become an inescapable logical alternative thrust on the Tamils by a history made by the forces of Sinhala chauvinism. It is an irony of Sri Lanka's recent history that the very Sinhala Buddhist forces which took upon themselves the task of 'preserving Sri Lanka's integrity' under a unitary state became the

agents that precipitated the conditions for the separatist demand. But such ironies are not unusual in history. Every thesis brings forth its antithesis. An important qualification one may make even at this darkest, hopeless hour of the selfsame history is that the Tamils will still accept a genuine federal solution. This again shows the distinctiveness of Eelam Tamils as a nation that has evolved in a soil shared by the Sinhalese people in the large context of Lanka. The Tamils have made their more than 'fair share' of contribution to the creation of the island civilisation of Lanka for over 2,500 years.

Even the most rabid Sinhala chauvinist implicitly admits this when he charges,

By Shanta Mithran

viewing reality through his own ideological prism, that Tamils had enjoyed more than their 'fair share' in the economy, education and other fields. Nothing can obliterate the role played by the Tamil-speaking people, which includes the Muslims, in the making of Lanka.

But federation and regional autonomy have been completely over-ruled by the UNP government. The SLFP has also made its stand clear and there is not a single political party with a respectable political base among the Sinhalese that is prepared to go beyond the empty husks called District Development Councils. As the tragedy of 'amity talks' was being staged with great fanfare to the 'exhilaration' of his excellency, the oppressive state apparatus went into top gear and Jaffna's military

occupation became perfectly complete. The 'amity talks' went into recess just as the armed forces resumed their rampage in Jaffna under the usual guise of 'apprehending terrorists'.

UNP's glib talker Lalith Athuladudali, who served as the governmental spokesman for the 'amity talks', suddenly turned Minister of National Security and took a helicopter to Jaffna vowing to put an end to terrorism. He is now busy with his 'mopping-up' operations.

Is there any hope of a negotiated settlement?

The question itself is ridiculous when seen in the light of the behaviour of the government. But it reflects the pathetic state of the Tamil leadership which seems remarkable only for its incapacity to grasp the immediate tasks that demand attention and accomplishment. But alas! It is a leadership that has always shied away from the challenge posed to it by the turbulent political developments of the national question. All Tamils of Eelam would prefer a peaceful solution but to believe that a peaceful and honourable solution is feasible under the present circumstances would amount to a dangerous delusion. Not many Tamils suffer from such delusion although they despise violence and bloodshed.

The Tamils can regain their dignity as a nation only through struggle. No oppressed nation in history has ever had any other option. If liberation is the negation of oppression then struggle is the dialectical motion of liberation.

Turning point

The present situation raises many questions concerning the political orientation and the organisation of the popular liberation movement. Past experiences need to be evaluated objectively without any room for sectarianism. The goal is to liberate the Tamil people and there cannot be a liberation movement without their active participation. The 1970s marked a turning point in the growth of the political consciousness of the Tamil people.

It was during this period that a popular and progressive Tamil nationalism became overtly expressed as a protest against ethnic discrimination which hit the lower middle and the poorer sections of the Tamil people on a large scale in the spheres of education, employment and other economic means of social mobility and against the overall relegation of the Tamils to a second-class status. With time the radical content of Tamil nationalism has developed almost in proportion to the escalation of oppression. Youth militancy is the most visible manifestation of this radicalisation. People have

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protected the guerrillas in the midst of enormous hardships including mass murders and rapes visited on them by the occupation army which often gives vent to its wrath by resorting to such acts after suffering a guerrilla attack.

In the eyes of the people the guerrillas are liberation fighters and the Sinhala army personnel are blood-thirsty murderers, vandals and rapists. People feel what they live. They do participate in the struggle but in a passive unorganised way. They are basically defenceless in a situation of escalating military atrocities. This defencelessness has made them pay heavily in terms of lives, property and general safety.

It is time we asked the question how to make the people defend themselves and play their historic role in the liberation struggle. Different liberation groups speak more or less in the same political language; their goal and the avowed means are all the same. They all speak of mobilising the people. But they are not willing to talk to each other and create a united front. We see continuous fission in their ranks and this has severely depressed the morale of the people.

A continuation of this situation cannot be good for the cause. It can only help the enemy to tighten its oppression of the Tamil people. We should be willing to learn the lessons of other liberation struggles in addition to having a fuller comprehension of the context of the Tamil struggle, its friends and enemies and the path it must traverse in order to win. All peoples have their traditions of struggle although some have yet to make their major revolutions.

The Eelam Tamils may not have a great revolutionary heritage but they have certainly had phases of struggles in which there was wider mass participation. Some of these struggles have occurred in the form of civil disobedience against the implementation of the Sinhala Only Act. We have also had mass action of a more militant form against untouchability. Of course, the struggles were led by different political movements. In today's context we must pull together every little strand of past actions of protest and assimilate them into our political consciousness. That is how the past is made to serve the present in any struggle.

Basic lessons

It is of paramount importance to understand the basic lessons of all successful liberation struggles in the third world. They have relied on an integration of different levels of organisations and practice in a hierarchical order headed by a party which enjoyed the growing confidence of the masses by virtue of its correct and able leadership. Can we regard the TULF as such a party? Has it ever dared to mobilise the Tamil people to struggle in a sustained way along the 'Gandhian lines' to which it pays

lip service from platforms and in foreign press interviews?

Going by the experience of the past few years it can be said that the only way to create a political party capable of leading the struggle is to bring about a unity of the liberation forces, according to certain basic principles. If the goal is an independent state then it is important to define its political and economic framework in terms of the aspirations of the Tamil people. A phrase like Socialist Eelam is not only inadequate but could be misleading in the absence of a proper political programme. Socialism itself has acquired varied meanings, good and bad, in the minds of the people. The term often beclouds than clarifies the political stand of some of its users.

It would seem that that immediate tasks of liberation are very much democratic in content. People's aspirations are to be free and economically secure. Tamil people belonging to different classes want liberation from a common oppressor. It is national oppression that provides the basis for a broad united mass movement of different classes. The direction and the stages of the struggle have to be determined with due regard to the diversity in class interests of the forces that will constitute the backbone of the mass movement.

Crucial social relations

How does the liberation movement programme the struggle for the mobilisation of the different sections of the people? Do we have a political economic analysis of our society in terms of class formations and their needs and interests? What are the crucial social relations within the Tamil society and the entire island that define the economy of Tamil Eelam? How do we formulate the agrarian question for the whole area of Tamil Eelam? What are the demands of the fishing communities? What is the character and political significance of the working class in the Tamil areas? How does caste oppression work and how do we incorporate the struggle against it into the broad political strategy? Finally, what are the main forces of the liberation struggle?

These are some of the questions that cry out for answers immediately. But answers cannot be found from text books or by guesswork. They can be found only through collective investigation, analysis, reflection and exchange.

Until we have concrete answers to these and several other related questions our comprehension of the struggle will be lop-sided and its course in the complex geopolitical situation in which we find ourselves cannot be properly visualised. It is time all Tamil liberation organisations and concerned groups and individuals including non-Tamils began addressing their minds seriously to these matters if freedom is to be won and lived permanently.

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WOMAN'S VARSITY NAMED AFTER MOTHER TERESA

The first woman's university in Tamil Nadu was inaugurated on March 2 by Mother Teresa and it was named after her by the State Chief Minister, Mr M.G. Ramachandran.

Laying the foundation-stone for the new university buildings, the Chief Minister said Mother Teresa was an embodiment of all that was good in woman, and he could not think of a better name for the university.

Mr Ramachandran said the women's university was not just a degree-conferring institution. Its main objective was to undertake research on women's welfare and to suggest schemes for providing equal rights for women and ensuring that they need not always be subordinate to men.

The Chief Minister said the State Government's vocational education scheme would be included in the next Five Year Plan with the help of the Central Government, and introduced from 1985. The Tamil Nadu Government had formulated several schemes for the welfare of people which would be announced in the budget. He appealed to people to co-operate with the Government and offer suggestions for the successful implementation of schemes.

Mother Teresa, inaugurating the university, said it was fitting that a university

was being started exclusively for women. 'The woman gives life to a family. The family, which prays together, stays together. If we stay together we will love one another, and God loves us.'

'Let us not allow any single child to die of hunger, or pine for love. All works of love are works of peace. Sharing love is the greatest joy in life.'

Mr Malcom S. Adisheshaiah, MP, and chairman of the committee constituted to set up the women's university, said the functions of the university would be monitoring all discrimination between boys and girls in schools and removing them; acting as consultants of schools, colleges and universities to eliminate discrimination between men and women; and formulating schemes for women's welfare.

HONOURED

Mother Teresa called upon people to love one another with a pure heart and thus contribute to peace in the world.

Addressing a special convocation of the Madras University, which conferred upon her the degree of Doctor of Laws (*honoris causa*). She said: 'All the terrible things happening throughout the world could be traced to the absence of love and compassion.'

'NO CURBS ON TRAVEL TO INDIA BY SRI LANKANS'

The Deputy High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in Madras has denied as 'misleading and incorrect' certain press reports that the Sri Lankan government has introduced new regulations restricting travel to India by Sri Lankans.

A press release by the Deputy High Commission says: The existing exchange control regulations permit an allocation of 2,000 Indian rupees per individual for travel to Indian group countries comprising India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangla Desh, Burma and Maldives, once every two years for holiday or pilgrimage. Similarly, the cost of air passage could also be met only once in a two-year period. There is no restriction on the number of prepaid tickets and no restriction on travel by train.

Certain agents had not followed the procedures and have been selling air tickets more than once in two years. Hence, the present notification to travel agents is only an administrative procedure to ensure their compliance with existing regulations.

'It is important to note that the Controller of Exchange has drawn attention to travel agents to existing regulations in the context of the need to conserve foreign exchange and not with a view to placing any new restrictions on travel to India,' adds the press release.

MALE ORDERLIES ACCUSED OF HOSPITAL MURDER

Six male nursing orderlies have been charged with the murder of a police sub-inspector when he was a patient in a hospital in the Sri Lankan capital. They are accused of using knives and clubs to kill Inspector S. Waswaran during last July's disturbances.

The inspector, who was stationed at Matara in the south, was at home in Colombo on sick leave when he was attacked by a gang on July 29. The magistrate refused an application for bail. The case continues.

INDIAN RESEARCHER IN U.S. WINS AWARD

Mr Poneseril Somasundaran, 44, a professor of mineral engineering at Columbia University, the United States, has become the youngest recipient of the Antoine M. Gaudin Award given by the Society of Mining Engineers and the American Institute of Mining, metallurgical and Petroleum Engineers of the US. Prof. Somasundaran, who hails from Kerala, has been cited 'for his outstanding work concerning the role of surface phenomena in the beneficiation of fine particles'. He was installed as a Distinguished Member of the Society on October 21, during the SME-AIME autumn meeting in Salt Lake City,

Utah.

Prof. Somasundaran's research in flotation (separation of components of crushed one etc., by their different capacities to float) flocculation (formation of five particles into masses) and grinding of minerals and enhanced oil recovery is supported by the US Department of Energy, National Science Foundation of the US and some companies.

Prof. Somasundaran, son of Mr M.G. Kumara Pillai, a freedom fighter, has conducted research on Indian resource problems. He has for instance developed a scheme for the beneficiation of rock phosphate available in plenty near Missouri, but which is of low quality.

COMING EVENTS

Tamil Women's League in UK

There will be a social evening on Friday, 27th April, from 7 to 10p.m. at Hampstead Town Hall, Haverstock Hill, London, NW3 (Near Belsize Park Tube Station). Tickets are priced at £2 (adults) and £1 (Children). Food and drink available. For more information and tickets, please call 01-226 2367 after 4p.m.

S.C.O.T Tamil New Year Lunch

Tickets priced at £4 (adults) and £1 (children) are available from the Treasurer, Mr M. Thiagarajan, 24 Brook Avenue, Edgware, Middlesex, HA8 9XV. As usual, the lunch will be at the Lola Jones Hall, Greaves Place, off Garratt Lane, Tooting, London SW17.

London Tamil Congregation

The annual Easter Service will be conducted this year by the Rev. Swaminathan Jacob who has now returned to the United Kingdom and has taken up charge of a Methodist Church in Oxford (78, Burford Road, Carterton, Oxford OXA 3AE). The service will be at 4p.m. on Sunday, 22 April at Putney Methodist Church.

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