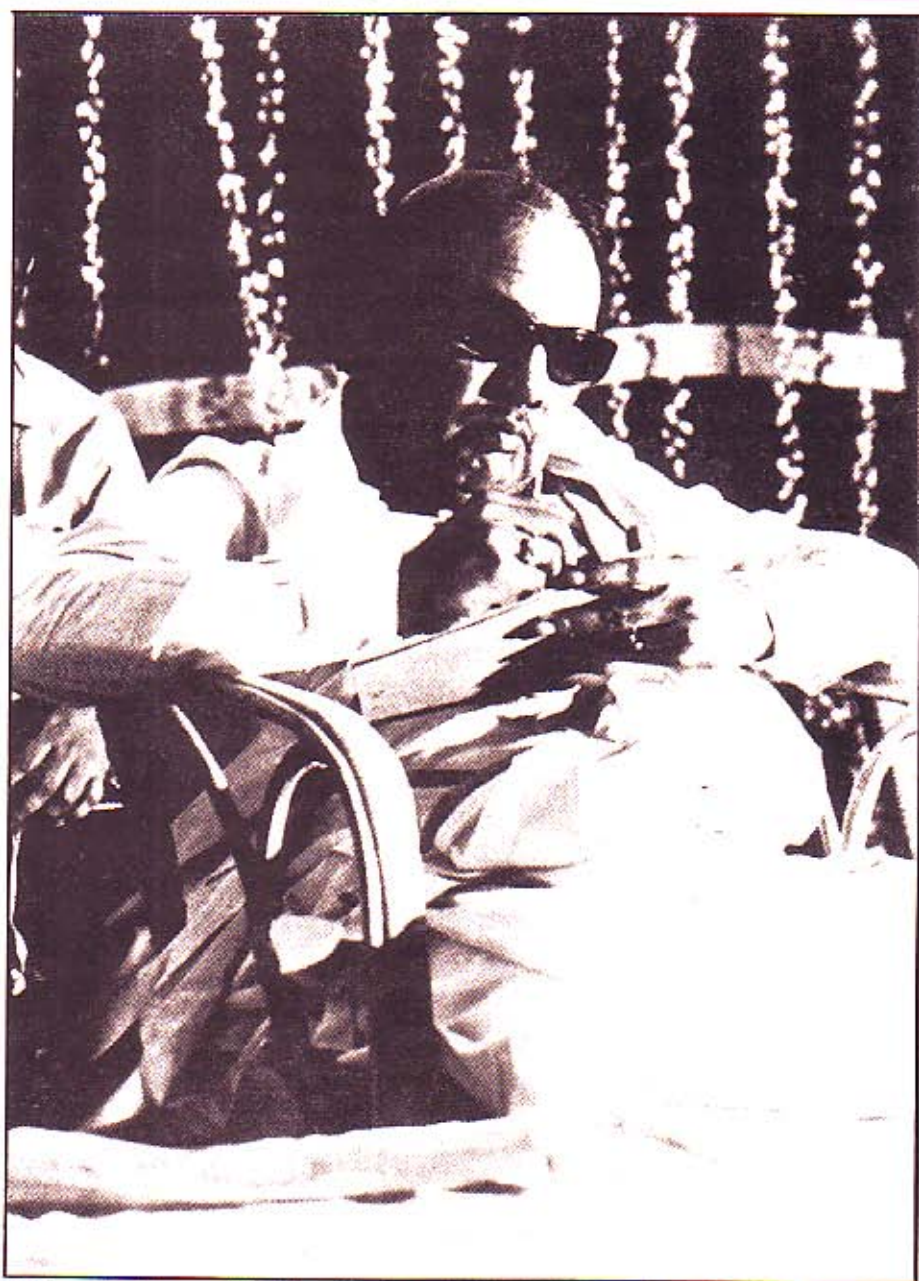


Tamil **TIMES**

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of what you say, but I'll
defend to the death your
right to say it."

— Voltaire

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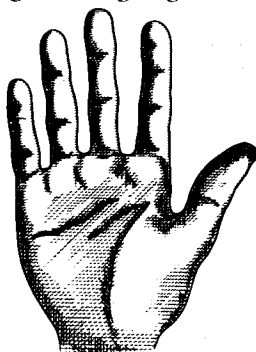
*Mathuvelu Karunanidhi, the dismissed Chief Minister of the South Indian
State of Tamil Nadu*

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A CONSTITUTIONAL OUTRAGE

The recent dismissal of the DMK led state government in Tamil Nadu constitutes a grave assault on Indian democracy. There is no doubt that the dissolution of the State Assembly and the ouster of a duly elected state government while retaining popular mandate call into question the democratic credentials of those who demanded the imposition of direct Presidential rule.

The call for the dismissal of the DMK administration was backed by a prolonged campaign mainly by the opposition AIADMK and Congress(I) which were soundly defeated by the DMK at the last round of State Assembly elections. Without accepting the people's verdict and playing the role of a political opposition in a democratic society, they were carrying on a relentless campaign to topple the state government.

The assumption to power of the Chandra Shekhar minority government in Delhi and its reliance on the support of Congress(I) and AIADMK for its very survival have been maladroitly used by these parties to unseat a democratically elected state government. Very few people will doubt that continuing to cling on to power was the one and only reason for Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar to have collaborated in enacting this constitutional outrage.

The ostensible reason given for the dismissal of the Tamil Nadu government was the so-called deterioration of the law and order situation in the State arising from the alleged failure by the State Government to take action against the unlawful activities of the LTTE. Compared to many other states in the Indian Union, the law and order situation in Tamil Nadu before and at the time the State administration was dismissed could have been described as very healthy by Indian standards. As to supporting the Tamil militants including the

LTTE, Congress(I) and AIADMK cannot claim immunity. It is a matter of history that the Congress(I) administration from the Centre and AIADMK's MGR administration in Tamil Nadu provided support and legitimacy to the Tamil militant groups including the LTTE. In any event, for some time before its dismissal, the Karunanidhi government in Tamil Nadu had begun to 'take action against Sri Lanka Tamil militants' and in fact ordered its police force to round up hundreds of young men thereby incurring the accusation of 'betrayal' from the Tigers.

The fact that Tamil Nadu Governor S.S. Barnala was firm in his refusal to submit a report to the President of India recommending the dismissal of the State government and the President had to act on the basis of a report from the Union Cabinet is proof of the fact that the Chandra Shekhar administration has acted motivated more by political and opportunistic considerations and not because the situation in Tamil Nadu warranted such a draconian and undemocratic step of removing a democratically elected government.

India is a vast country with a diverse population faced with immense problems. In spite of the scourge of violence that has rocked some States of the Indian Union and frequent communal clashes, the respect which India enjoys in the world is because it has by and large succeeded in maintaining itself as a constitutional democracy. The people of India and those who have steered the country's destiny since independence are rightfully entitled to be proud of the country's democratic tradition and institutions. However, recent history is replete with examples of popularly elected State governments being dismissed by politically motivated executive action from the centre. Persistence in such a course would spell disaster to Indian democracy in the long term.

CIVILIANS BEAR BRUNT OF WAR ON TAMILS

While round-the-clock air sorties continue in the Gulf, a longer-lasting but much less publicised bombing campaign has been going on in northern Sri Lanka, where the Tamil Tigers are fighting for a separate homeland. With the Tigers in control of the entire area, apart from three government bases, Sri Lankan forces have resorted to aerial strikes which have destroyed many civilian targets.

Last week the army bombed and shelled Jaffna, the largest town in northern Sri Lanka, for four days. In further incessant attacks, almost 300 bombs were dropped on Velvettiturai, birthplace of Velupillai Prabhakaran, the Tiger leader, and the second most densely populated town in Sri Lanka. In the attacks, 500 houses and two large schools were reduced to rubble and more than 100 other buildings, including two historic Hindu temples, were damaged beyond repair.

Bombers also hit a crowded market place in another town south of the Jaffna peninsula, with a 90 per cent refugee population, killing 22 people and seriously wounding 13. A refugee camp in a girls school, six miles outside Jaffna, was almost totally destroyed, killing two people and wounding four. At an ancient shrine to Ganesh, the Hindu elephant god and the patron saint of truck drivers, bombs killed three and wounded eight.

The military claims it only bombs known Tamil Tiger targets, but admits it uses aircraft – Sia Marchetti single-engine training planes, adapted to carry two bombs underneath, Chinese Y-8s and Y-12s and British Avros, small cargo planes from which home-made bombs are pushed out of the back – which do not permit accuracy.

The bombs – oil drums filled with gelignite or flammable gas and rubber tubes, which stick to the skin like napalm – have no ballistic stability. 'Sometimes we ourselves are mortally afraid of where they are going to land', said an army colonel.

The Jaffna Citizens Committee estimates more than 70,000 buildings in the north and east have been destroyed, more than 6,000 people have been killed or are missing and more than 1.2 million are now displaced. Damage is estimated at well over £600m.

The pressures of war are acute. There is no cash economy, fishing has stopped and essential drugs are not available. Petrol costs £20 a gallon, 13 times more than in the south. There is no electricity, paraffin for lamps costs 10 times the Colombo price and matches are unavailable.

Sri Lankan forces have resorted to bombing to quell insurgents in the north, Julian West writes from Jaffna

Food shipments to the north have been diverted or delayed – in the last three months, only 3 per cent of deliveries have got through. 'People are on the brink of starvation. They are dying in silence', said the local government agent.

Northern Tamils comprise less than 16 per cent of the 16 million population, and large numbers are opting for the promise of liberation offered by the Tigers. The bombing of civilian targets, in particular refugee camps, schools and hospitals, has convinced Jaffna's inhabitants that the Sinhalese majority in Sri Lanka is trying to commit genocide. 'This is a war to kill all Tamils', said Dr. K. Shanmugasunderam, head of the Velvettiturai Citizens Rehabilitation Committee.

'We are fighting a war and we are fighting it to the finish', declared Sri Lanka's Deputy Defence Minister, Ranjan Wijeratne. 'The people of Jaffna must move out. We are going to finish this war and fast'.

At this point in the conflict however, the war seems no closer to a conclusion



Tamil Tiger recruits some not yet in their teens, paraded in a village in northern Sri Lanka

than it did last June, when the Tigers broke off 13 months of negotiations with President Ranasinghe Premadasa's government. A brief ceasefire, called by the Tigers on New Year's Day, ended under pressure from the military.

The army believes the Tigers – beleaguered by bad weather, hostile international opinion and a crackdown on their activities in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu – are weakening. 'Strategically, that was the time to hit them', said a colonel in the Northern Command.

The Tigers, an army of several thousand men and women, seem equally confident. 'We firmly believe we will win this war', said Anton Balasingham, their political spokesman. The movement would prefer 'a political solution to a political problem', but he admits there is 'now no alternative but to fight for an independent state'. Both sides are locked into a military solution.

(Courtesy of 'The Independent' 13.2.91)

Battle for Elephant Pass

The LTTE commenced a sustained attack on the Elephant Pass Army Camp during the second week of February with a view to capturing the last remaining military post between Jaffna in the north and Vavuniya, in what is described as a Mankulam-type assault on the Elephant Pass Camp. The Tigers had been building bunkers and fortifications in the north and south of the camp which is situated on the narrow stretch of land that separates the peninsula from the mainland. The Tigers control the areas to the north and south of the camp which depends for its supplies and reinforcements from the air.

Having fortified their positions around the camp, the Tigers are reported to have inched their way towards this strategically placed camp and launched a major offensive to capture it in the same manner in which they eliminated the Mankulam army camp only two months ago.

Government forces have responded with massive bombardment from the air on LTTE positions near the camp. In addition in a major offensive areas under the control of the Tigers in Vavuniya, where an indefinite curfew had been imposed, are reportedly being attacked from the air and ground troops have begun to move out. While security forces have claimed that a large number of Tigers have been killed, scores of civilians are reported to have been killed in indiscriminate bombing raids. The advance of the troops from Vavuniya is reported to be slow owing to the stiff resistance from the Tigers, mines and booby traps.

During the previous week several civilians are reported to have been killed and many properties destroyed when fierce fighting broke out between government forces and the Tigers in and around the Kankasanturai area within the Jaffna peninsula. The army

Continued on Page 5

DIRECT RULE IMPOSED ON TAMIL NADU

DMK State Government Dismissed.

The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) led state government of Chief Minister Muthuvelu Karunanidhi in Tamil Nadu was dismissed and direct rule by the centre imposed on 30 January following a fourteen month long campaign by the Jayalalitha led, All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) and the Congress(I).

The dismissal provoked widespread protests by opposition parties and acts of sporadic violence in the state. Transport and bus services were the main targets - several vehicles were set on fire. The dismissed Chief Minister claimed that over ten thousand DMK party members and volunteers had been arrested and as many as seven persons immolated themselves in protest at the action of the centre. The National Front called for a country-wide protest. At a well-attended protest rally in Madras, National Front leaders like V.P. Singh and N.T. Rama Rao joined the Communist Party's E.M.S. Namboodripad to denounce the dismissal of a democratically elected government which was due to blackmail indulged in by the Congress and the AIADMK which they alleged threatened to withdraw their support to the minority government led by Chandra Shekar if it did not dismiss the state government.

The dismissal of the two-year-old DMK administration did not come as a surprise for it was in the air since the fall of V.P. Singh's National Front government at the centre in November last year. The AIADMK and the Congress(I) had been demanding the dismissal of Karunanidhi's government since December 1989 when the DMK was virtually routed in the parliamentary elections in Tamil Nadu. The campaign did not succeed and the DMK was a faction in the National Front led by the then Prime Minister V.P. Singh.

President R. Venkataraman issued the proclamation dismissing the state

government, dissolving the State Assembly and imposing direct rule on a Union Cabinet recommendation that the Tamil Nadu government was reluctant to deal firmly with extremists with international links. It was clear that the State Governor did not recommend intervention by the centre or the dismissal of the government. Under the Constitution the President could act on receipt of a report from the Governor, but in exceptional cases, he could act 'otherwise'. In this instance, the President would appear to have acted under the latter limb of the relevant Article of the Constitution.

The Tamil Nadu Governor S.S. Barnala had reportedly strongly opposed the Centre's move to impose direct rule. Arriving in New Delhi at short notice on 30 January, he met the Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar and later was seen by the Union Home Affairs Minister S.K. Sahai and Commerce Minister Dr. Subramaniam Swamy, all of whom would appear to have impressed upon him that the existing situation in Tamil Nadu did

not provide an alternative to the dismissal of the state government. Mr. Sahay took along with him the Director of Intelligence Bureau Mr. M.K. Narayanan and the Secretary to the Research and Analysis Wing, Mr. G.S. Vajpai and the two intelligence officials reportedly gave the Governor a 'lot of evidence' about the DMK's connivance in the unlawful activities of the LTTE in Tamil Nadu. However the Governor while agreeing that the law and order situation in Tamil Nadu was not very satisfactory, maintained that the dismissal of a duly elected Government was not the solution.

A last ditch effort by former Prime Minister V.P. Singh, and former Ministers P. Upendra and K.P. Unnikrishnan who called on President Venkataraman to prevent him from acceding to the state government's dismissal also did not succeed.

The dismissed Chief Minister Karunanidhi angrily said that the alleged activities of the LTTE in the state were only a pretext to topple his government. President Venkataraman in his recent Republic Day address to the nation referred only to Punjab, Kashmir and Assam as states facing a law and order problem. He never mentioned Tamil Nadu. The Central government had been pressurised by the AIADMK and Congress to dismiss his government under the threat of withdrawing support.

CIVILIANS SUFFER IN BOMBING RAIDS

Christopher Morris in Jaffna

Bombing raids by the Sri Lankan air force against areas held by the Tamil Tiger separatist guerrillas in the north of the country have continued unabated over the last few weeks.

Many bombs have hit civilian areas. Twenty-three civilians were killed in the town of Puthukudiyiruppu, when bombs fell on a row of shops next to a refugee camp.

At Murukandy, south of the Jaffna peninsula, I was shown where bombs had fallen last week near a Hindu shrine, killing three people including a three-year-old girl. Local residents say there were no Tamil Tigers in the area at the time. Many people fear that the air force is deliberately targeting civilians, out of frustration at its inability to strike at the Tamil Tigers, who still control most of the north.

The bombs are often crude, some consisting of barrels of tar, petrol and rubber rolled from the back of transport aircraft.

In Jaffna itself, which has been without electricity or adequate food and fuel supplies for the last six

months, residents are accustomed to keeping an eye on the sky, waiting for the approach of Sri Lankan planes and helicopters. Nearly every house has an air-raid shelter, ranging from concrete bunkers deep underground, to shallow pits covered with bits of wood and railway sleepers.

In rural areas the shelter is more basic. Hiding under a tree as a helicopter hovered nearby, Kumar Sivanandan said: 'They came yesterday, and they'll come back tomorrow. But life down here goes on'. After a few minutes of firing, the helicopter left, and so did Sivanandan, his bicycle laden with bags of flour and onions.

The only access to the Jaffna peninsula is a night-time boat service across a narrow stretch of water. Bicycles, and mopeds compete for space on the tiny boats with hundreds of people carrying food or fuel. A ferry capable of taking larger vehicles was bombed by the air force last year. Despite Sri Lankan government assurances that the war is aimed specifically at the Tamil Tigers, the civilian population has suffered most.

Continued from Page 4

backed by airforce planes and helicopter gunships launched an offensive against the Tigers who, supported by improvised armoured vehicles stormed military positions on 6 February. Second Lt. Kumarasiri of the Gajabha Regiment was killed along with several other soldiers being injured in this encounter. Government sources claimed that thirteen Tigers were killed and fifty-seven injured but these claims have been strongly disputed.

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INDIA URGES RESTARTING OF PEACE PROCESS

From Thomas Abraham

COLOMBO, Jan 30.

The External Affairs Minister, Mr. V.C. Shukla, today suggested to the Sri Lankan President, Mr. R. Premadasa, that the time was right for Sri Lanka to take a 'bold initiative' to restart the peace process. Mr. Shukla did not specify what form this initiative should take, but said the Sri Lankan Government should take advantage of the fact that the fatigue appeared to have set in within the LTTE to start the peace process.

Briefing newsmen on the outcome of Mr. Shukla's 90-minute meeting with Mr. Premadasa this morning, the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Muchkund Dubey, said the Minister had said that 'the time is propitious for some bold initiative on the part of the Sri Lankan Government'. India felt that the time was right for a peace initiative, because after months of fighting, there was 'bound to be fatigue as reflected in the declaration of a unilateral ceasefire

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A Jaffna lawyer said: 'This is the worst it's been in eight years. The economic blockade, the bombing, it's definitely the worst'.

A Tamil Tigers spokesman, Anton Balasingham, told me he saw little hope of peace in the near future. More likely, he said, is an intensification of the military conflict.

The Tigers expect an assault on the heavily populated Jaffna peninsula to begin soon, and even moderate Tamils who privately question the tactics of the Tigers despair for the future. 'I don't believe in the gun', said one leading citizen, too frightened to be identified, 'but the younger generation thinks the only language the Sri Lankan government knows is the gun language. Perhaps they're right'.

A letter sent by the Jaffna Citizens' Committee to President Ranasinghe Premadasa paints a grim enough picture already. Six thousand Tamil civilians have been killed or are missing in the north-east in the last six months of 1990. More than 50,000 houses and 200 places of worship have been damaged or destroyed.

There is immense frustration and anger in Jaffna at what most people regard as the indifference of the international community.

'Our struggle is like a cry in the wilderness', one man told me outside the ruins of his bombed house in Velvettiturai. 'No one hears and no one cares. Why is that?'

(The Guardian, 7.2.91)

by the LTTE', and also because public opinion abroad, which was normally sympathetic to the LTTE, was in favour of peace.

Mr. Shukla also said the success of peace efforts would depend on 'the extent to which the legitimate aspirations of the Tamils were satisfied'. He pointed out that if the Tamils were to be weaned away from the LTTE, 'a really satisfactory offer would have to be made' on issues such as the devolution of power.

India did not make any specific reference to the fighting in the North and East, and the recent aerial attacks in Jaffna peninsula but the Minister made a general statement that violence, or a military approach would not lead to a solution to the problem, the Foreign Secretary said.

Well-taken: India's suggestions that Sri Lanka adopt a peace initiative were 'well taken by Sri Lanka', Mr. Dubey said. Sri Lankan diplomats also confirmed that there were no discordant notes struck at the meeting, which saw a continuation of the cordiality that marked yesterday's meeting of the two delegations.

At his news briefing, the Foreign Secretary tried to dispel the feeling among many Tamils that India was washing its hands of the ethnic conflict. 'Our interest and our concern in it is intact', Mr. Dubey said. The only change was that with the departure of the Indian Peace-Keeping Force, India was relying on diplomacy and persuasion to make its views felt. 'The context is now different and that is why there are different perceptions about our interest', he said.

Going by what diplomats from India and Sri Lanka have said, India has made known to the Sri Lankan Government its desire for a quick, peaceful solution to the ethnic issue, but it is also clear that India has very little leverage to persuade the Sri Lankan Government to move in this direction. It would also appear that having made these points, India is not going to do very much more towards resolving the problem.

Mutual respect: One of the main concerns of Sri Lanka has been to emphasise that the relations between the two countries should be based on equality and mutual respect for each others sovereignty. The Sri Lankan Government's chief spokesman, Mr. Bradman Weerakoon, said both countries had agreed that this should be the basis for their relationship. He said the Sri Lankan side was very pleased when Mr. Shukla repeated three points he had made earlier in India,

that India would not be party to the process of disintegration of Sri Lanka, that Indian soil would not be used for terrorist activity against Sri Lanka, and that Indian forces would not be sent to Sri Lanka. Mr. Shukla also clarified that the question of foreign forces in Sri Lanka was 'entirely a matter in the domain of Sri Lanka'.

Trade: The two sides discussed the prospects of boosting trade and economic cooperation in some detail. An agreement on joint oil exploration in the Gulf of Mannar, and on a joint tea marketing strategy are likely to be reached soon. The Foreign Secretaries of both countries are scheduled to meet in New Delhi in March to lay the groundwork for a meeting of the newly-formed joint commission in April.

Mr. Shukla also met the Minister of State for Rural Industries, Mr. S. Thondaman, and the leader of the Opposition, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike.

Both sides happy: Speaking to newsmen this evening, Mr. Shukla said that 'both sides were happy' with the way the talks had progressed. He said that the major focus of the discussions had been on the ethnic issue, and India had made the point that any settlement should be on the basis of a peaceful dialogue. He said Sri Lanka had agreed with this. Asked whether he had suggested any halt to the aerial bombardment and military action in the North and East, Mr. Shukla said he had made the general point that violence would not be able to solve the problem.

Mr. Shukla said the two main Tamil demands for the permanent merger of the North and East and the revival of the North-East Provincial council had been discussed. India had said it was against the demerger of the two provinces, while Sri Lanka had pointed out that a referendum was a constitutional requirement. Sri Lanka had, however, given the impression that it would not press the issue of the referendum.

The Minister said that in response to reservations expressed by Sri Lanka on the attitude of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, he had explained that Mr. Karunanidhi would go by the national policy that Indian territory would not be used for subversive activities by any other country. Mr. Shukla said Mr. Karunanidhi had made this clear when he met him in Madurai. Mr. Karunanidhi had expressed concern about the refugees in Tamil Nadu, and said that he did not want to send them from camps in Tamil Nadu to camps in Sri Lanka.

Disappointed: Speaking at a banquet hosted by his Sri Lankan counterpart, Mr. Harold Herat, Mr. Shukla said his Government was 'disappointed' that the new year unilater-

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FIGHTING TO A FINISH?

Rita Sebastian from Colombo

The grouping of Tamil and Muslim political parties who, for several months, deliberated power sharing arrangements in the north-east provinces, are scheduled to submit their final draft this week, to President Ranasinghe Premadasa, under the auspices of the All-Party Conference. Although the President is on record that he will go along with any consensus decision, implementing it at ground level is not possible in the foreseeable future. Not as long as the Tigers are a presence in the region, and not as long as they continue to hold onto their guns.

In a dramatic turn of events however, the Eelavar Democratic Front (EDF, the former EROS), the Tigers known ally, has joined forces with the rest of the Tamil groups, barring the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP).

The EDF, was one of seven signatories to a memorandum submitted to Indian External Affairs Minister, V.C. Shukla during his 3-day official visit to the island at the end of January.

Included in the demands, in the eight-point memorandum was that the process of devolution initiated by the Indo-Sri Lanka agreement be further strengthened, to ensure the safety, security and political aspirations of the Tamil speaking people; that the merger of the north-east provinces be made permanent without recourse to a referendum; that the sixth amendment be repealed; State aided colonisation stopped and the dissolved North-East Provincial Council be reconvened by repealing the Provincial Councils (Amendment) Acts and the Provincial Councils Election (Amendment) Act of July 1990.

The memorandum elicited nothing more from Shukla than the expected assurance that it would be taken note of. On the question of the permanent merger of the north-east provinces however he is said to have drawn attention to the proviso in the Indo-Lanka accord that stipulates the holding of a referendum.

The month also saw the return of EDF member S. Bashir to Parliament, signalling the return of the remaining 12 EDF members as well. The EDF members resigned their seats en masse as protest against the government's military offensive in the north-east. They alleged, that heavy aerial bombardment had led to large-scale destruction of both life and property, specially in the north. The EDF for so long dubbed as 'fence sitters' seem to have taken some hard decisions. It is reliably understood that with General

Secretary Vellupillai Balakumar, by choice or circumstance, defecting to the LTTE, Central Committee member Shankar Raji, in charge of their international relations, is tipped to take on the mantle of leadership. A meeting of the Central Committee is said to be in the offing when Balakumar, Pararajasingham and two others will find themselves out of the grouping.

Shukla's visit to the island, the first by an Indian official of Cabinet ranking in two years was essentially a fence mending exercise. Thirty-two months of 'Indian occupation' in the form of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in the north-east provinces had led to bitter rhetoric, souring relations between the countries. The visit therefore, hailed by both countries as a major success, smoothed the ruffled feathers of the establishment. As a top bureaucrat saw it, India had moved from her known policy of interference to one of 'persuasion and suggestion'.

Shukla's visit was directed towards three broad objectives. Firstly, it was to re-establish a relationship with the Sri Lankan Government in the face of President Ranasinghe Premadasa's perceived hostility to India. In this regard Shukla was primarily concerned with assuring Colombo that India would not permit the destabilisation of Sri Lanka from Indian soil, nor did she contemplate sending troops to the island again. Added to it the crack-down on Tamil militants in Tamil Nadu and the surprising dismissal of Chief Minister Karunanidhi, coinciding with the end of Shukla's visit were indications that India was taking Colombo's concerns into consideration. Colombo was well pleased at the turn of events and made much of the fact that India was supportive of the Government's view that the Tigers needed to be militarily and politically marginalised.

The second concern of Shukla was to assuage Tamil public opinion that India was not distancing itself from the Tamil problem and that India was deeply concerned about the tremendous hardships caused to the Tamil people in the north-east. Whether this had any impact on the Sri Lankan leadership, or was dismissed as rhetorical utterances to appease Tamil and South Indian sentiment is not known. The third concern of Shukla was to emphasise the growing relevance of the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord of 1987 as a basis for national reconciliation in Sri Lanka. In this regard he emphasised the need to strengthen and give effect to the scheme of devolution envisaged by the accord, but was relatively non-committal on the mer-

ger issue. Having regard to the sensitivity and the complexity of the issue of the merger, Shukla while acknowledging the strength of Tamil sentiment seems to have felt that it was not proper to persuade the government to go beyond the accord on the vital issue.

As to the on-going conflict between the government and the Tigers, Shukla called for a 'bold initiative' on the part of the government to see an end to the conflict. What form that bold initiative should take was however not spelt out. As far as the government is concerned there will be no negotiations unless and until the Tigers fall in line with the government's conditions for getting back to the negotiating table.

Although the Gulf War seems to hug the headlines and there seems only minimal coverage in the media on the north-east war, the continuing wailing of sirens as ambulances ferry the injured from airport to hospital in Colombo and the number of combatants killed on both sides is evidence that the war has intensified. Whether he believes that the Tigers can be militarily defeated or not, State Minister for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne is determined that they must be eliminated.

As the operations continue, so does fierce lobbying by international agencies to see an end to the conflict and an end to the human suffering in the north-east by a civilian population trapped between the two warring sides.

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Inside Jaffna

A reporter's impressionistic view of war

Franklin Raviraj

I was approaching the 'Punthottam', the well-fortified barrier, manned by the Sri Lankan soldiers at Vavuniya town before crossing into the 'Liberation Tigers' territory in the north and the mini bus in which I was travelling was checked and waved past Saliyapura, Nochiyagama, Medawachchiya and Rambawewa army camps 18 kilometres from Anuradhapura. Passing Thandikulam on January 2 we will soon move into LTTE territory. It's less than two miles from Vavuniya and is already hot and bustling on the second day of the unilateral ceasefire announced by the political front (PFLT) of the Liberation Tigers.

The tempo of life here is a mixture of desperation and hope pitted against gruelling odds. Leading out from the North is a link of thousands of cyclists spread out from Omanthai to Vavuniya town and beyond. They have all reached the half way point of a 200 mile round trip from Jaffna in a desperate search for food and kerosene oil. 9.30am Vavuniya town and at the same incredible scene getting bottle-necked at the army check-point. One by one the tiring body search and baggage scrutiny is conducted while staccato questions are thrown at each person. Nearly 100 aggravating the bottle-neck they have all got to be cleared before proceeding either way.

An obliging soldier puts me on a Jaffna bound lorry for my interview with LTTE top runger Dilip Yogaratnam, 'Yogi'. The exasperating scrutiny once again 200 metres on at a LTTE check point. It is like a tragi-comedy as the army issues a permit to proceed to Colombo and the LTTE issues permits to enter the North.

At the LTTE checkpoint I abandon the lorry. It could be evening before its turn for the LTTE check. Scores of people, Jaffna bound, hitch rides on cycles, lorries and as a last resort fall prey to the owners of passenger vehicles who charge a staggering Rs. 1000/- for the 70 mile run to the Karativu ferry which is within 10 miles west of Elephant Pass.

From Omanthai, through Puliyanikulam, Mankulam, Panikankulam, Kokavil, Murugandy, Kilinochchi and turn off before Paranthan on a cratered road 13 miles to Poonari the Karativu ferry.

You have to undergo as much as a

dozen LTTE check points. The 70 mile stretch was devoid of any armed service or police presence. The ferry across to Sangupitty takes only Rs. 5. Those ferrying cycles across part with an extra Rs. 10. The ten mile trip to Chavakachcheri takes another Rs. 100. Much if not all, of the transport income from Vavuniya to Jaffna is believed to go to the LTTE Treasury.

The final lap to Jaffna costs another Rs. 100. It's 9.30am as I get off in Jaffna.

I check into Hotel Subhas which stands miraculously and on my way see two LTTE gangs filling up what appear to be bomb craters on the roads.

Life, or what passed for it, seemed to cling desperately to a semblance of normalcy. But no one strolls about here. Faces keep glancing skywards. Most of them live in fear of some airborne attack. Most buildings reduced to piles of rubble, stand out as far as I could see, silhouettes of ruins against the darkening skyline. Resigned to accepting what they cannot change civilians have all become fatalists in this war-ravaged landscape.

A handful of shop-keepers who have miraculously managed to survive keep a few shops open into the late evening. They pay their taxes to the LTTE. The once bustling nerve centre that served over five lakhs of Tamil speaking people now barely affords shelter to stray dogs and cats.

In this scenario I go for my interview with 'Yogi'. Three days after I make contact LTTE cadres take me in their transport to meet the LTTE top runger at their headquarters at Kondavil, three miles from Jaffna.

As I enter the large headquarters of the LTTE (PFLT) for my interview after screening I see many hundreds of Liberation Tiger cadres from the military and political wing go about their work busily on the second morning of the government extended ceasefire.

I meet the spectacled fatigue clad General Secretary and top runger in the LTTE and after formal greetings fire my questions leading to the LTTE unilateral ceasefire.

The interview completed I set out on the second phase of my trip.

Palaly, some five miles away, stood under a scorching sun. It's 2.30pm as I approach it. Three things stand out -

towering palmyrah trees wilting in the heat like emaciated old women with no more tears to shed. And abandoned toddy pot's hanging from their branches like the pouches of an old woman's eyes.

The Palaly Army and Air Force base camp is now converted into a fortress with about twenty watch towers around its perimeter. The rich red earth of Palaly that produced large harvests of tobacco, tomatoes, onions, chillies, bananas etc., lay bare, dry and neglected.

The stillness is now and then shattered as Sri Lankan naval crafts shell selected targets on shore. A barrage of heavy fire from the Palaly camp adds to the attack on these targets. About a mile away, once more occupied by the Tigers is the bunker in which seven LTTE women fighters died in an attack by the army's latest 'Delta Force' unit.

The army maintains that 15 were killed. Jaffna's 'Colombo 7', Kurumbasiddy is a cemetery of rubble, razed to the ground. There is not the slightest sign of any civilian life here.

In vantage points Tiger bunkers confront security force bunkers as close as 150 yards from each other. Here one does not know whether it is the ceasefire or the curfew that holds.

With nightfall the brilliant floodlights bathe the Palaly camps outer perimeter. In the distance the faint glow of a few kerosene oil lamps appears. Electricity supplies have been cut off since fighting broke out last June. The possession of batteries is banned. So kerosene oil fetches the staggering amount of Rs. 750 a gallon. Any motor cycle used by civilians has been converted to run on kerosene oil. An organisation called 'ROOTE' (Research Organisation of Tamil Eelam) is reportedly producing compost fertiliser, solar and bio gas energy units, fungicides, crude newsprint, bread made of palmyrah, manioc and wheat flour and several other items.

In the peninsula those who still manage to operate their TVs and radios on batteries can still tune into the LTTE radio and TV transmissions.

Seven miles from Palaly the Tirunelveli University continues lectures for over 400 students. Sixty one Tamil students from the Eastern Province are said to have returned to the campus during the ceasefire. Several students claimed harassment, looting and rape by Muslim Home Guards, uniformed personnel and civilians in Eastern Province villages.

On the way to Jaffna hospital a few miles away there appeared to be signs of people desperately clinging to the normal things of life. Fish, vegetables and groceries were in some evidence but at prices that were incredible. Any

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Towards an Ideological Acceptance of Reality

— Radhika Coomaraswamy —

When we say 'Toward Multiculturalism in Sri Lanka' does it imply that we are not a multicultural society today? That we have to work for a multicultural society somewhere in the future, sometime tomorrow?

To my own mind we have always been a multicultural society — not only in terms of large ethnic monoliths, of Sinhala, Tamil or Muslim but even within those communities — the Ruhuna is distinct to the Kandyan highlands, the east coast Tamil from the Jaffna Tamil, cultural life differs from whether you live in cities or in rural areas, whether you are a member of the elite or whether you are poor. We can justly be proud of that diversity — not only of Theravada Buddhism or Saiva Siddanta, but also of thovil ceremonies, of Mukkuvar folk songs, of George Keyt, of Geoffrey Bawa, of the anonymous craftsmen who have worked on our traditional furniture, jewellery or embroidery — this after all was Ananda Coomaraswamy's vision of our own multiculturalism which he recorded so many years ago: — Where many cultures live side by side in a situation of tolerance and respect; each accorded its distinct space and status.

Reality

So if we have always been multicultural what does this title of the talk imply — it must surely mean, that we have to work toward an ideological acceptance of what many feel is the actual reality. To do this, we have to concentrate on the Gap between people's minds and their social reality; this Gap is of course, the realm of ideology, often like a mirage which attempts to capture truth, but always partially.

This gap between people's minds and reality is therefore what one may call a question of imagination. How did we, in Sri Lanka get here — that we seem to have a multicultural society but do not ideologically accept it as such. I would say it is because of a failure of imagination.

Many of you must have seen the film by the famous Japanese director Akira Kurasawa entitled, *Rashomon*. It is a film about an incident but every participant in the incident gives his own version, expresses his own imagination as to what happened. At the end the viewer is totally confused about the truth, about what actually took place.

And so with multiculturalism and pluralism in Sri Lanka. I was recently reading in detail some material about Buddhist and Hindu revivalism at the

end of the last century, when many of our great leaders were constructing what I would call their version of our national imagination. In many articles by Gombrich, Obeyesekere, Amunugama, Malalagoda etc., it has been clearly shown how the Buddhist revival of the late nineteenth century was essentially comprised of low-country Sinhalese. Now if you live in Galle and Matara, and you just looked left and right and said this is a Sinhalese

(A Talk by Radhika Coomaraswamy given at the State Ministry for Hindu Affairs seminar on Toward Multiculturalism in Sri Lanka, December 16, 1990)

country — you would be right — that would be your reality and you would be faithful to what you actually see. But it means that your imagination has failed to cross Elephant Pass.

If you live in Point Pedro and did the same and proclaimed that this is a Tamil homeland — you would again be right and faithful to your reality but it would mean that your imagination has not gone beyond the peninsula — it may have peaked at Tamil Nadu but not really looked south of the Bentota River. So one of the main reasons we have got to where we are has been the lack of imagination of those who fathered the emotional bases of our ethnic and nationalist movements.

Imagine

In how many different ways can we imagine ourselves? Let us count the ways. Firstly by sub-units such as a village, district or province. When we say someone comes from Balapitiya or Urumpirai we are saying something just as much as if we say he is a Kandyan or she is an East Coast Muslim. We could imagine ourselves by ethnic group or we could imagine ourselves by the island as a whole — there was a time when being Sri Lankan meant something. We can imagine ourselves by the region — many people have a South Asian consciousness; look at the work of theosophists, Krishnamurti, or Ananda Coomaraswamy. We could imagine ourselves, not by territory but by religion, Hindu, Buddhist or Muslim; not by territory but by ideology, Marxist or liberal. We could see ourselves as international, or like Vikram Seth — when asked if he was an Indian, he said why do you want to limit me? I am Cosmic



Dr. Radhika Coomaraswamy

Man, my imagination spans the universe.

But most of us Sri Lankans have not reached that cosmic state — I would say we have not gone beyond our province, our language, our religion — we don't even have a national imagination, let alone a cosmic one. It must, therefore follow from what I said before, that the broader one's imagination, the more diverse and multicultural your experience. So when we say toward a multicultural society, one is basically saying toward broadening our imagination and our vision to accept pluralism, tolerance and difference.

Why would anyone resist such a movement? Why is this not self-evident? To answer that we have to go back to the nineteenth century. Since the enlightenment and right upto World War II, there have been grand attempts to unify and homogenise the world by the west. In the field of science, the search for universal principles and Newtonian Physics; in the field of philosophy the search for universal ethics/morality, such as in the works of Kant and Hegel; and in the field of politics, the search for the grand universal theories of history and political action — Marx, J.S. Mill etc. This then led to the development of a modern, uniform, universal culture — but with metropolitan centres of the West taking the lead role. So therefore this search for universals was also seen as a process of westernisation; of accepting European ideas and practices as something universal and common to all mankind.

Homogenisation

Against this current of European 'homogenisation' arose the great nationalist movements which refused to accept this so-called universal treatment and which demanded that their uniqueness be recognised. The Universal cannot mean western, our lives, our experiences are important even if they are limited to the particular worlds; they must be given separate but equal status.

In the tussle between these movements in the nineteenth century, the

latter - i.e. Nationalism, won. Today the primary organising principle of our political universe is the modern nation-state. The nation-state is the basis of international law and the fountain-head of all local developments - the SOVEREIGN as we know her, or Motherland. It is the source of all power - political and economic and it is the only category which has a recognised international personality. So every group with any kind of territory, facing forms of discrimination or lack of privilege naturally wants to assert the right to self-determination to gain access and control of a nation-state.

Though we take it for granted, the nation-state was not always the organising principle of political life. Before colonialism - dynastic empires (i.e. ruling houses of kings) or religious empires were more often the organising principles. But with the concept of nation-state, territory and democratic sovereignty were merged together and the era of mass movements began and the movements for nationalism merged with the movements for democracy in nineteenth century Europe.

Nationalism

I said earlier that nationalism in the nineteenth century was a reaction against the Anglo-French desire to homogenise the world under this stewardship. It was at that time an assertion of multiculturalism and multi-ethnicity at the international level. First an assertion for a multi-ethnic Europe, the struggle for which continues in many parts of Europe and today the demand for a multi-ethnic, multicultural 'world consciousness' as part of the struggle against colonialism.

But ironically once all these people received their nation-states, after years of struggle, the post-independence leaders began to replay what colonial powers had done from the metropolitan centres. Within their territories they began to 'homogenise', by imposing majority languages and religion and they began to centralise power both in politics and bureaucracy.

Benedict Anderson's famous book 'Imagined Communities' analyses this in detail - How when you control a nation-state you control communications and you control education. Those two are the essential bases of the formation of an individual's ideology. By controlling these you pass on your imagined construction of the nation to your people.

Here in Sri Lanka - education has two streams, Media has two streams. There is no common river of knowledge. It is therefore not unusual that you had two totally different nationalist imaginations, two completely separate nationalist constructions - one Sinhalese and one Tamil - very different and mutually exclusive. But one

controlled state power, especially after 1970 and the other was always in opposition. So the reaction - the refusal to be integrated into someone else's imagination of what Sri Lanka is, having your own version of what your identity and role in the society should be.

So today after years of bloodshed we are finally trying to reconstruct our national imagination (100 years too late) so that it can accommodate all the diverse experience. So we speak of bilingualism, multi-ethnicity and multiculturalism. To reconstruct visions is more difficult than to construct them; because we have to unlearn so many things but the effort has begun and one can only wish it success, since success is by no means a foregone conclusion. We have to impose multicultural consciousness not only on the majority community but also on the recalcitrant and defensive minorities in our country.

Reconstructing

In reconstructing our national imagination it is important to incorporate the diverse experience of our people. But multiculturalism and multi-everything will lead to anarchy, unless we also cultivate the essential bases of SHARED VALUES, values upon which multiculturalism can be based. These shared values must in the end relate to basic human values and human rights and to free and open democratic process. Without these cushions or safety-valves in the system, multiculturalism will not lead us anywhere. If someone asserts that killing someone else is part of his culture and therefore he should not suffer criminal prosecution, multiculturalism would be a dangerous word. So I reiterate that multiculturalism can be a noble and important goal only if it is built on the foundation of shared democratic values and a collective democratic process.

Let me say a word about the difference between multi-ethnicity and multiculturalism. Multi-ethnicity is to reorganise our national world, realising that there are strong and independent ethnic groups in our country which have over time, due to bad policies and lapses of imagination, become ethnic blocks. For democracy to work, these blocks must now be allowed political expression and in areas where they are concentrated some measure of autonomy must be given to run their affairs. There is no turning away from that.

But having campaigned vigorously for pluralism and devolution, I am also very aware of some of the dangers in a society organised around ethnic blocks. What happens to groups and individuals within these blocks if they decide to assert their rights; Shad Bano a Muslim woman confronting the Muslim ethnic block in India deman-

ding maintenance and support after a divorce? How do we react even in retrospect to Mr. Suntheralingam's fast at Mavittapuram? His argument that ethnic self-regulation is more important than central government directives on caste discrimination. It is at times such as these that one looks again for the visit of the cosmic man - who surely must show us an international humanitarian spirit grounded in diverse forms of human experience.

Triumph

Multi-ethnicity is therefore a political triumph of group identity. It is better than political domination by one ethnic monolith; but at the same time we must be vigilant that years of fighting for democratic rights are not lost for those who live and work as individual members of these groups. Fundamental rights applies to them and cannot be forsaken for group identity. If we do that, we will subvert the very basis of the shared values of a democracy polity.

Multiculturalism, unlike multi-ethnicity, does not have all these political problems. Nor is it confined and categorised by ethnic monoliths; it takes account of the diversity of all forms from within and from without. It is fluid, changing though rooted in social practice throughout the years. There have been many attempts to define culture by many social scientists but the essence of culture - when it is unorganised or unpoliticised, is that it is the creative expression of people. Culture is therefore inherently democratic and diverse until it is organised and politicised. Multiculturalism is therefore a celebration of both democracy and diversity; it is a way of appreciating the creative works of others, while maintaining the distinct identity of your own. If it is interpreted in that light, as an artist would, not as a politician, as a vision which sees creativity in the other regardless of who the other is - then multiculturalism may indeed be a vehicle through which we, Sri Lankans rediscover our humanism.

I would like to end by reverting to what I said in the beginning. Throughout modern history there have always been two contradictory movements - the pull toward universal, standardised, international, cosmopolitan culture, with its centre in western capitals, on the one hand, and the push toward diversity, regionalism, particularly on the other. It is important that we do not give either the push or the pull complete dominance.

To become totally universal, standardised and international is to lose roots, to devalue important diverse and particular experiences. To become totally particular, withdrawn and self-centred, is to become blinkered to

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People & Politics

★ BUILDING UP THE WAR MACHINE

A RECENT item in a Sri Lanka newspaper reported that the island's State Minister for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne was 'slowly but surely building up the Sri lankan armed forces into a formidable war machine'. By the end of the year the Army would consist of four divisions each with three brigades of three battalions. In addition there would be an independent brigade with two special forces regiments, two signals regiments plus support services making up a total of 100,000 in uniform. Together with the Air Force and the Navy, the island's armed forces would total 120,000 by the end of this year.

The armed forces are also to be provided with more and better equipment costing millions of dollars. The armoured corps would get the Chinese made T85 light tank and the YS531 infantry fighting vehicle. These are tracked vehicles, equipped with machine guns and cannon, and are amphibious. They are said to be 'equally good in the soft sands of Jaffna, the jungles of Wanni or when crossing lagoons and rivers'.

Besides additional Bell helicopters and Sia Marchetti attack aircraft, the Air Force is to get Chinese made Y12 transport planes and one squadron of Nanchang A5M fighter bombers. The A5M fighter bomber is said to be a dedicated ground attack aircraft with a secondary capability as an interceptor and is widely used by Pakistan. The A5M plane is described as a supersonic all-weather combat aircraft with a greater bomb load of two tons of rockets, bombs and 23 mm cannon. It also has an armoured cockpit and fuselage which 'can withstand the "five zero" bullets from the Browning heavy machine guns of the LTTE'. It can carry 1,000 pound armour-piercing delayed action bombs which can explode inside underground bunkers.

The Sri Lanka Navy is getting more South Korean and Chinese made patrol boats to supplement their Israeli Dvoras and the British made Cougars.

★ A MULTI-ETHNIC ARMY, SRI LANKA STYLE

IN ADDITION to beefing up the armed forces with men and material, it is reported that ideas have been floated to remove the 'Pan-Sinhala Character' of the Sri Lankan forces by naming some of the new units after Tamil and Muslim military heroes of the past. Presently all the brigades and regiments of the armed forces carry essen-

tially Sinhala names - Gajabha, Sinha, Vijebha brigades and Gemunu Watch. The suggestion is to name one of the new units after King Elara who ruled the Kingdom of Anuradhapura - if the suggestion is taken up Sri Lanka would have an Elara Brigade soon! Another suggested name is Velusumana brigade after a Tamil general who fought in Dutugemunu's army against King Elara. Still another suggested name is for a Sapumal brigade after the Malayali Prince Sapumal (Sembaha Perumal) who led the Sinhala Army from Kotte to capture Jaffna in the 15 century. Another could be the Sri Wickrema armoured brigade for the Armoured Corps after the Malabar King who defeated the British in 1803 and was the last of the Tamils who fought to preserve the independence of the Sinhala Kingdom of Kandy in 1815.

Not to forget the Muslims of Sri Lanka, the suggestion is to name one new regiment after Pachi Marcar and Cunhale Marcar - two brothers who fought in Sitawake King Rajasinghe's army against the Portuguese - another to be named after Ali Abraham, a Mudaliyar in King Mayadunne's Army.

In this manner the Sri lankan armed forces can become a truly national army with a multi-ethnic identity!

★ EROS (EDF) STAGES A COMEBACK

WITH Mr. Basheer Segudhawood taking oaths as a Member of Parliament before the Speaker on 25 January and being affirmed as an MP of the Eelavar Democratic Front (EDF) - the political wing of the Tamil militant group EROS - the self-imposed political exile of EROS seems to have come to an end. Mr. Segudhawood was one among all the EDF MPs who resigned enblock from parliament after the war broke out between government forces and the LTTE in June last year.

The EDF which, to the surprise of many, won thirteen seats in parliament during last elections and comprised the largest contingent of Tamil MPs was expected to play a crucial role in Tamil politics. However with the then increasing pace of negotiations between the government and the LTTE, the EDF MPs began to adopt a low profile and their performance in parliament became less and less noticeable which was attributed to pressure from the LTTE with which EROS had close and friendly relations. Having taken up the position that the LTTE should remain the only 'armed forces' within the Tamil community,

an enforced disarming of the EROS was carried out.

When the EDF MPs resigned after the war broke out, EROS circles within the island and outside did not fail to let it be known that their MPs were forced to resign. Then when it was announced in Jaffna by the General Secretary of EROS, V. Balakumar, that their group had been formally dissolved and that they had merged with the LTTE, again it was claimed that Mr. Balakumar was forced to make the announcement and that he was being kept under 'house arrest'. It was said that, except for one former MP Mr. Pararajasingham and a few others, all the others refused to be merged with the LTTE and that they wanted to continue with their independent existence. Many of the MPs who had resigned and some of the leading cadres either went underground or went abroad into voluntary exile to escape from reprisals. In the meantime, EROS journals printed from abroad asserted the group's refusal to disband itself as demanded by the LTTE, reiterated its separate and independent existence and commented on the disputes that had arisen between them and the LTTE.

A recent report said that the EROS leadership was seeking the assistance of the International Committee of the Red Cross to get Mr. Balakumar released from house arrest so that he could attend its Central Committee meeting in Colombo. A co-leader of EROS Mr. Raji Shankar had been in Colombo and met several other local leaders of EROS. After a meeting of the Central Committee, it was revealed that the group had decided to return to parliament and negotiations had been taking place with the government as to the procedure to be followed for its re-entry. At a recent press conference in Colombo, two leading members of EROS, Mr. Suthaharan and Mr. Thillainathan, made the announcement of their intention to re-enter parliament. They said that the people who elected them have been undergoing hardships which they no longer could endure and that as representatives of the people they had a duty to do everything in their power for their relief and rehabilitation and therefore had decided to re-enter parliament. The EROS leadership also met the Indian Foreign Minister V.C. Shukla during his recent visit to Colombo along with other Tamil political groups to urge him on the need to press the government to solve the present conflict through negotiations between the LTTE, other Tamil groups and the government.

Presently a constitutional snag is preventing EROS from renominating most of its MPs to re-enter parliament. EROS contested the last elections as representing four independent groups in the Jaffna, Vavuniya, Trincomalee and Batticaloa districts. In the Jaffna

district it won 9 of its 13 seats it won in all four districts. As the law stands at present, the signature of V. Balakumar is required to renominate its MPs for the Jaffna district but he is unable to carry out this task because of his reported detention under house arrest in Jaffna. To overcome this difficulty, the EROS leadership has been negotiating with the government with a view to effecting the necessary legislative changes and the government appears to have given a favourable response.

★ MOTHERS' CAMPAIGN

FEBRUARY 19 is the first anniversary of the death of the well known and popular journalist Richard de Zoysa who was abducted from his mother's home in Colombo by a group of policemen reportedly led by a senior superintendent of police. His dead body with gunshot wounds was recovered on the following day on a beach some miles away. On this day the human rights organisation known as the

Mothers' Front is to hold its first public meeting in Colombo, expected to be attended by thousands of people, to raise the question of the disappearance of tens of thousands of persons during the last three years.

The Mothers' Front has gathered documentary evidence of over 40,000 disappearances in Sri Lanka and the figures and details relating to these cases were recently released at a press conference in Colombo by two Members of Parliament who act as Co-ordinators of the Front. All the cases relate to missing persons from the Sinhalese dominated central and southern parts of the country and do not include the north and east where thousands more disappearances have been reported in the continuing war between government forces and the LTTE.

The cases of disappearances recorded by the Mothers' Front relate to the period 1987 to 1990 during which the Sinhalese dominated parts of the island were rocked by unprecedented

violence unleashed by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) and by an awesome campaign of counter-violence by government forces accompanied by unmitigated brutality. Death squads reportedly associated with the security forces went about the country carrying out executions at will and in large numbers. Piles of burning bodies on roadsides and bodies floating in rivers became a gruesomely familiar sight and thousands of young men simply disappeared.

Official silence and inaction on the question of the missing persons and the government's failure to institute investigations gave rise to the formation of the Mothers' Front which represents the victims of the security forces as well as those of the JVP.

IN BRIEF

★ Because of shortage of wheat flour, the price of bread in the Jaffna peninsula has skyrocketed beyond the reach of the people. The 'inventive Jaffna man' has found an alternative. Bread made of Palmyrah root flour at a cheaper price has come to the market. In the absence of kerosine or electricity, margosa oil (oil extracted from seeds of margosa fruits) is being commonly used to light lamps.

★ Is it true (a) that a house belonging to the family of a Tamil doctor living in the UK was 'taken over' recently; (b) that this house was situated in a large compound in Anaikoddai in the Jaffna peninsula; (c) that this house has been completely demolished; (d) that a large prison complex is being built on this land; (e) that questions are being raised as to who the likely inmates of this prison will be.

Vadamarachi Bombed by Air Force

COLOMBO, Jan. 21.

The Sri Lankan Air Force bombed Vadamarachi peninsula this morning, resulting in at least seven civilians being killed and another 20 injured, an LTTE spokesman, Mr. Lawrence Thilagar, said that the naval boats were also shelling Vadamarachi. He said that leaflets had been dropped over the area yesterday, asking the civilian population to take their belongings and leave the area.

A military spokesman said that curfew had been clamped over Jaffna and Kilinochchi, but did not provide any details of the military operations in progress. Other reliable reports indicate that the Air Force has launched a major air operation to clear LTTE positions in the peninsula, but there has been no offensive on the ground.

The Tigers fear that the Sri Lankan Armed Forces might be getting ready to launch a second Vadamarachi operation, using the preoccupation of the international community with the Gulf War as cover.

Military officials here were unable to confirm or deny that operations were under way in the two neighbouring districts, considered to be the main strongholds of the militants.

A military spokesman, however, said Air Force planes attacked LTTE positions around the Elephant Pass army camp, on the Jaffna-Kilinochchi border for the second day yesterday after the militants fired mortars and small arms at the camp.

In other incidents reported during the last 48 hours, seven militants were killed in separate clashes with the

forces in the north-east, while troops recovered 30 mines in an operation at Morichchikadu in the Wilpattu game sanctuary in north-western Puttalam district, adjacent to Mannar district in the north.

The Sri Lanka Government should not miss the opportunity of finding a negotiated solution to the vexed ethnic problem with the LTTE, declaring a unilateral ceasefire, the Indian High Commissioner, Mr. N.N. Jha said on Sunday.

(The Hindu)

VARSIITY INTAKE INCREASED

The government has decided to increase the overall student in-take into universities from 6500 to 9300 commencing with the 1990-91 batch. An additional Rs. 100 million had been allocated by the government for this purpose and during the years 1992 and 1993 this amount would be enhanced to Rs. 200 million and Rs. 300 million respectively. There will be a 40 per cent increase in the in-take for all university courses in 1990-91, Education and Higher Education Minister, Lalith Athulathmudali announced recently.

He told the weekly Cabinet news conference that in the admission policy there was always a problem between merit and equity.

At present it was on 30 per cent on all-island merit, 65 per cent on district quota and 5 per cent to disadvantaged areas.

That had been operating since 1980 and there had always been a complaint

that people obtaining higher marks were kept out while those in disadvantaged areas were given a place.

It was unfair to deprive those who had not got a place under the old system of their due place under the new set-up as well.

The balancing was being done through increased in-take of students to universities.

The Minister noted that the admission of students from the plantation sector was also being gone into.

It had also been decided to set up nine University colleges in the nine districts by latest, December 31, 1991.

All those colleges would be opened simultaneously, Rs. 35 million had been allocated for that.

It would be a freer system and the programmes of work will be different. Those colleges would be linked to a parent university which would issue the certificates. There will be no difference in the type of certificates issued.

A Surrealist Essay

The 'Self' as Obstacle to Peace in Lanka

G. Ramesh

(Paper presented in a Seminar [October 7-10, 1990] on Obstacles to Peace in Sri Lanka, organised by Minority Rights Group, Swedish Section, Upsala, Sweden).

To philosophise on such a multi-dimensional tragedy will be futile some would say. Nevertheless it is true, thought exists as a discipline, sometimes according to the discursive needs of institutions and at other times as something which undercuts these very needs. This irony of thought is a joke, pure and simple. Hence to philosophise in the face of such a tragedy is also a joke, a cruel one at that.

What if I divide the tragedy as cruelty, brutality or inhumanity on the one hand and retain the sensibility of joking to myself on the other? If I leave it at that, it would only mean that I would be absolved of all responsibility of participation in the tragedy. And since joking is an inevitable part of all culture, including Tamil just as it forms part of the unconscious of a person, I take it that this paper can be read out.

This paper is necessarily meant to be a strategic diversion while thinking on the condition of the Tamils of Lanka. Strategic, because any exercise of this kind has to contend with the militarist self as a phenomenon amongst the Sinhalas and then amongst the Tamils. Diversionary, because apart from offering narratological analyses, it may yet fail in doing its bit in terms of contributing towards the sedimentation of a political solution to the problems which have been faced by the Tamils of Lanka.

Then, is all that being said here only a reality on paper? This is a question that everyone here, including myself, would be tempted to ask. While waiting for your answers, I must steal the magical words of Gabriel Garcia-Marquez, who said eight years ago at Stockholm, that the prize he was about to receive was more for the monstrous reality of Latin America, and not just for its expression in literature of which he is an acknowledged master. Such a reality lives within him he said, while declaring himself as but one cipher more, singled out by fortune.

My own position can be no different.

Rebels and renegades intellectuals and criminals, ideologues and butchers, diplomats and prostitutes, warriors and scoundrels, chauvinists and peddlars, singers and destitutes, deserters and betrayers, all creatures of an unbridled reality, have been part of what I have been exposed about Lanka. Yet these lives have so far been rendered all too human and believable. I have not yet found an imagination which can freeze this monstrous reality in a narrative. If imagination has not helped me exactly, it is because I have also played out the role of a watcher despite my veneer of activism in support of Tamils. This has only meant that I was being then absolved of the responsibility which I have talked of here.

At least now, it must be declared that there are only participants in the tragedy that is Lanka. There are no watchers. There cannot be, period.

Thus no one can approach Lanka in a way similar to the one explicated in *Stalker*, made by the Soviet filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky, no stranger to Sweden. The film talks of a person approaching a strange geographical problem-zone somewhere in Siberia. Something similar to the situation of a journalist, a photographer, a diplomat, an intellectual going to Lanka. The zone is a crisis which needs to be resolved, and the watching starts. A cold objectivity towards their object of analyses is maintained at least till the project is executed. Tarkovsky lets his hero approach the zone everytime after sleep, to ensure that the metaphor of unconscious gets through. As far as the visitor to Lanka is concerned the unconscious slowly comes to the fore and he/she gets fast dissatisfied with his/her narrative profession. Just as in *Stalker*, this is faced by taking recourse to an aesthetics or poetics of the zone. Either the final product, which is quite apart from the professional project, is a novel, written in times far removed from ours. Or it becomes a question of life and death as it did happen to a close friend. In order to give vent to the guilt and resentment about her role as the watcher, a belated realisation of the involvement in the tragedy.

The zone does not ultimately allow the hero of *Stalker* any space. The

perfect modernist that he is, the hero is rejected by it. Once a watcher, the hero is unable to take the position of a storyteller of a bizarre encounter – someone who is willing to acknowledge his role as a participant in several possible ways in the tragedy, of having worked through the logics of various narratives contributing to the tragedy, of living through the metaphors which work their way out through the tragedy to its very finale.

The position, I am urging you to adopt is that of the storyteller in *Roshomon*, one of the films of Japanese veteran Akira Kurosawa, in which a murder is retold as a multitude of possibilities, each outsmarting the other. Here, murder is sought to be made more and more logical, but suddenly a ghost in the form of a medium brings home the fact that murder can be irrational and the phenomenon is everyone's responsibility. That is murder, as a phenomenon, once again brings home the fact that the human subject eternally faces the threat of closure. There are only tales and tales of murders. Death, even as an induced phenomenon, becomes opened up as a battleground for newer and newer interpretations.

Yet, even in *Roshomon*, only a ghost, in the form of a medium, narrates the murder which has taken place. There is no narrative voice, in the form of a mad gypsy, which can be found in Garcia-Marquez 'One Hundred Years of Solitude', or that of the madman in his master William Faulkner's 'Sound and the Fury', or that of the mad other, in the Tamil novel 'Naalai Matrumoru Naale' (Tomorrow is yet another day) by G. Nagarajan.

To put the question in the right tone, let me ask: what would be the language of a madman, say, in Jaffna, or Trincomalee, or Colombo to describe the ongoing madness of war? We simply have no clue. Or let us ask a question more acceptable. How would a person going mad amongst the Tamils view the slow degeneration of a liberation struggle into a seemingly endless spiral of war and its agony? We simply have no clue to his language, either of memory or expectancy, of the past or the future.

We may have an answer in the form of persons in the Jaffna peninsula who had lost their balance of time and space, at least temporarily, in the face of an unexpected offensive by the Indian troops beginning October 1987. With their hopes, however naive, of the Indian good having collapsed, they had no language to fall back upon and simply went mad. The fact it was not confined to the naive must be recorded in the person of yet another close friend who teaches in the University of Jaffna.

I would say that their madness was proportionate to their unconscious be-

beliefs fashioned on the innate goodness of India. Their academic and political education, if any, which may have rubbed their beliefs only on the surface, had not been of much worth here. The madness of the Indian offensive and the atrocities of Indian troops things which were beyond question in India. If it was questioned, 'you must be mad, are you joking?' retorted D. Jayakanthan, the most progressivist, didactic and popular realist writer of late 20th Century Tamil. He went to the extent of declaring in a public meeting at Madras that persons be sent to sexually assault women companions of those in Tamil Nadu who were charging the Indian troops with committing atrocities.

Thus, the two logics, one not being able to question within the rationale of the Indian occupation, and the other, well on its way towards justifying the same, reciprocate each other in several ways. It must be noted here that such logics, which are of course sentimentally opposed to each other, can co-exist, reciprocate and even perpetuate each other. These are the logics of reaction not only in Tamil society but elsewhere, which have killed any possible residue of genuineness in action in resolving what could have existed just a political issue.

I had stated that we simply have no clues as to what a madman would have to say about the logic leading to the present state-of-affairs. This is surely because, during the last few years, all deaths and murders have become too rational. Murder or death, this way or the other, of a militant or a soldier, of a Tamil or a Sinhala, of a dissenter or a moderate, operates as sheer cold logic, set out to make a point, illustrate a strategy, legitimise a language, fulfil the terms of an illusion of an agreement. So much so that it now hardly matters as to which player is making the current move and why. It is simply an unendgame of chess, with the players in need of a new language, a face-saving formula called the draw, or at least an adjournment of a ceasefire, to give relief to the weary pieces made to tumble out of the board into the Palk Straits and elsewhere.

But, is the fascination of the play of death something that easy to resist? Is it the justifiable feeling that someone else is always making sly moves, to jump to the centrestage?

I may be cautioned here, rightly so, of giving much less importance to the logic of repression of a chauvinist majority of Sinhalas and the logic of revolt of a tormented minority of Tamils. I am aware of the fact that this narrative of distinction, having its own space and time, nevertheless has its validity if and only if the logic of revolt has an element of universality, of all minorities, here and elsewhere. In the language of mathematics, it is a necessary and sufficient condition, an

apriori cognitive structure for the narrative of any revolt to assume an universal tone.

From what I had stated, it should not be hard to grasp that even such a logic may exclude the speech of such marginal characters integral to any culture as the madman, the joker, the wanderer etc. Yet, logics of revolt has been and can be sensitive enough to sustain to find one within the other – a plurality of narratives and maintain the ever-tenuous balance between sanity and madness, life and death, realms of private and the public etc, and not compress one into the other or establish clearcut distinctions between them.

For instance, it is necessary to retain and not suppress the inclusive voice of moderation despite the severest of provocations to do so. Moderation tells us when a struggle, which had graduated to the level of force, can degenerate into a fullscale war excluding the very people by whom the struggle was once launched. Moderation tells us when to arrest a revolt when it degenerates into an irredeemable chessgame. Moderation tells us what language must be spoken and what must be avoided in particular contexts. Moderation tells us that the heterogeneity and plurality of the culture, on whose behalf the struggle is launched, are strengths and not weaknesses to be exploited and domesticated.

Thus, the logic of revolt has to be inclusive if it has to be universal and not the other way. It has to respect all minorities, within and without, if it still wants to stake its claim to universality.

I must also mention here that the inclusion I have spoken of is not in the realm of articulation, but in the realm of action, because it is sheer indignity not to let the concerned minorities speak and to insist on speaking on their behalf.

But what is obtained today is not a narrative of inclusions, but a moral geography vis-a-vis the narratives on Lanka. This kind of moral geography has taken over long ago, but has also let itself pass away behind the screen of militant revolt. That is there are different sets of morals working for the North, the East and the South (and possibly one for the plantation areas). This moral geography can also be extended to India (and Tamil Nadu).

As has already been stated, moral geography by exclusions and media, as an apparatus most easily available for all the players in the game, whether they are in Jaffna, Colombo, New Delhi or London, offers itself as the vehicle of this moral geography.

It is one thing to accuse the media, both Lankan and Indian, of lying in the face of truth as evidenced in the countless limitless campaigns against the Tamils, including the present war.

The media certainly aspires to erect opaque narratives – of lies, as some would say. However, it must be noted that just as the cold logic of militancy perpetuates the reciprocity of murders, the media's narratives are sustained. Their sustenance is not because of their veracity or truth content, but due to their everydayness, newswiness, in the face of a history that is mute.

In other words, the media, especially the electronic ones, lie: they are lying and they know it, and they know, that we know, and we know they know that we know, and nothing changes, because of this everydayness involved. Thus media narrative is the history that keeps forgiving, perpetually so.

I have seen this happen time and again. When the Lankan and Indian media went ahead to celebrate the July 1987 agreement between the two governments as a 'solution to the Tamil problem'. Or when Prabhakaran's death and his resurrection were announced in quick succession by them in July 1989. Or later when the Lankan media declared the mystery killing of Rohana Wijeweera in one epiphanic tone of revenge. Or when during the pullout of Indian troops in late 1989 when Chief Minister Varadaraja Perumal obliquely referred to the deaths of scores of Tamils at the hands of Indian troops 'as a sacrifice made by us to win our rights' – something which he would not comment upon during the Indian occupation of Lanka. Or when Rajiv Gandhi wanted to usurp the hero's role by signing an agreement (a unique act not because of its destined failure due to circumstantial reasons, but because of its very indignity of speaking for someone else). Or when he declared in north India after losing the 1989 elections that the new government in Delhi had delayed the pullout of Indian troops and was wasting Indian lives in Lanka, and at the same breath, said at Madras that the new government was not interested in saving Tamils since it was pulling out too fast.

Hence, the very presence of media underscores an impulse to redeem the past, forgive history, in a nostalgic and flippant manner. That is the media is able to present history as the listener would be able to have it according to the prevalent moral geography, creating an epistemology and ethics of its own.

(To be continued)

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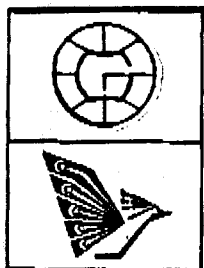
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TIGERS HAND OVER POLICE PRISONER

On Thai Pongal day on 14.1.91 the LTTE handed over a Police Prisoner of War to the head of the ICRC team in Jaffna.

Also the dead body of Police Sergeant Karunaratne (1152) was handed over to the ICRC team head on the same day by the LTTE.

A press note issued by the ICRC team in Jaffna stated that the ICRC team saw 43 Sinhalese policemen who were in the custody of the LTTE from June 1990, on the 10th of January. After seeing these men the ICRC requested the LTTE to release one person from amongst them on humanitarian grounds for medical reasons.

The ICRC note said that the LTTE acceded to the ICRC request and released the prisoner.

It is learnt that the prisoner released by the ICRC is Police Constable Nagaratne

(No. 5434) aged 54 who was attached to the Oddusuddan Police Station at the time of his capture. He is stated to be from Ratnapura

The LTTE also handed over to the ICRC team the dead body of another police prisoner, Police Sergeant Karunaratne (No. 1152) aged 50. It is learnt that Karunaratne died on 9th January as a result of a heart attack.

Police Sergeant Karunaratne was attached to the Mannar Police Station at the time of his capture and is stated to be a native of Hettipola in the Kurunegala District.

It is further learnt that the ICRC team in turn handed over the dead body of the Police Sergeant Karunaratne and the sick constable, Nagaratne, to the Security Personnel of the Government of Sri Lanka.

No Confidence in Commission on 'Disappeared'

The Organisation of Parents and Family Members of the Disappeared, states in a press release that they have little or no confidence in the so called 'Independent Commission' appointed by the government to inquire into the disappearances and killings in the country.

The release states they clamoured for the appointment of an independent commission, to investigate crimes, atrocities and the denial of human rights during the recent past, compris-

ing members from opposition political parties, trade unions and human rights organisations in addition to the members appointed by the government.

'The present commission will only look into future crimes whereas our request was to look into all such crimes in the recent past within a specified period. For these reasons we emphatically say that we have no confidence in the proposed commission of inquiry', it adds.

4000 WEAPON-HOLDERS TO BE PROSECUTED

The government has decided to take legal action against over 4000 persons, including a number of politicians who are still holding onto the weapons issued by the government for their protection during the height of the JVP's scourge of terror and violence.

These persons who also include several Provincial Council members and activists of the ruling United

National Party (UNP) had refused to accede to repeated requests by the government to hand over their weapons, senior Defence officials said.

'We set a deadline (January 25) and on its expiry the police have been instructed to refer all such cases to courts', Plantation Industries Minister and State Minister for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne says.

It is understood that over 4000 arms still remain to be surrendered as repeated pleas by the government to hand them over had apparently been ignored.

As a high-ranking defence official explained, there was no need to hold on to the weapons given during the orgy of 'subversive' violence any longer as normalcy had been restored with the crushing of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP).

All police stations in the country have now been alerted to institute immediate legal action against those retaining these arms, which have now been termed 'illegal'. Moves had already commenced in that direction, the official said.

'We will be dealing with them through legal means as they had failed to comply

with a government request to hand back the arms', Minister Ranjan Wijeratne said. 'There is no need to retain such arms any longer. It is our objective to cut down the use of weapons by civilians to the barest minimum. Emphasis should be laid on a 'gun-free atmosphere', Mr. Wijeratne added.

The system of issuing gun licenses through GAs had also been scrapped by the government and giving arms and ammunition to civilians would be determined by four committees (including a national and provincial one). They would scrutinise all applications for weapons and grant approval for issue only after all four committees had given the green light on a step-by-step basis, authoritative sources said.

1441 Servicemen Killed Since June 1990

Cabinet spokesman Ranjan Wijeratne said on 31 January that 1441 police and security personnel had either been killed or reported missing in action since hostilities broke out between the government and the LTTE on June 11 last year.

In addition to that 1981

personnel were injured during this period but 1,309 had been discharged from hospital. Only 672 of them were still hospitalised.

The Minister added that 270 service personnel had lost their legs and they had been provided with artificial limbs.

ONE DEAD & 90 INJURED IN PRISON VIOLENCE

Riots in the Magazine Prison at Borella left one JVP detenu dead and scores of others hospitalized when prison guards allegedly assaulted them, eye witnesses said.

Legal and Prison Reforms Minister, Tyronne Fernando said he was informed of the prison riots but dismissed the possibility of any communal undertones in the incident. Justice Ministry Secretary when contacted said he had called for a full report on the incident from the Prisons Commissioner.

Prisons Commissioner H.G. Dharmadasa said, a prisoner was assaulted by a jailer and subsequently prison officers baton-charged the prisoners, resulting in one prisoner being killed.

Reporters visited the in-

jured at the General Hospital, Colombo. A victim, Sunil Karunaratne (25, a third year student at Peradeniya who hails from Tangalle) said a new jailer had abused the detainees in filth when he had locked them up at 5.30pm. The very same jailer had repeatedly abused them again the following morning at 6.00am when he opened their cells, Karunaratne added.

Among the detainees, Karunaratne said, was a talkative one by the name of Manawadu who had cautioned this jailer saying, 'after all we are all human, why do you abuse us?'

The jailer who had taken offence is alleged to have struck Manawadu several times, until the other de-

Continued on Page 21



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NEWS ROUND-UP

● **THE AIRFORCE** bombed and destroyed what the security forces claimed as one of the LTTE's arms factories close to Kilinochchi in northern Sri Lanka on 12 January.

● **IN DRAWING** President Premadasa's attention to the acute shortage of food and medicines in the Tamil areas, Vasudeva Nanayakkara MP has stated in a letter that it was the responsibility of the government to feed and provide medical treatment to the people. Conflicts between the interests of the military wing and the obligations of a civilian government are inevitable at times such as the present. If it is assumed or claimed that the LTTE grabs a part of anything sent to the north, is it the government's argument that the people there should not be fed or treated? The government was trying to starve the Tigers by starving the general population, the letter added.

● **THE SRI LANKAN NAVY** on 12 January intercepted nearly 200 Indian fishing craft in the northern seas off the coast of Delft islands and were ordered to turn back.

● **TWO SOLDIERS**, identified as Cpl. Priyantha aged 25 and H.M. Muthubanda were killed and one, A.M. Thiribanda, was seriously injured on 13 January in clashes between government forces and LTTE cadres at Chenkalady in eastern Sri Lanka.

● **THE DEAD BODY** of a youth who was reported to be missing from December 28 was found with injuries in a pit in a jungle in the Meetiyagoda area in south Sri Lanka. The sister of the youth identified the body as that of her brother G.S. Neelkumara aged 21.

● **A SENIOR NEURO SURGEON**, Dr. N. Subramaniam, of the Colombo General Hospital collapsed and died on 13 January after climbing four flights of steps to see a patient. At the time of the incident, there was no lift operator to enable the surgeon to get to his patient. Several employees had left the hospital under the government's early retirement scheme which came into effect recently. Within a month 281 hospital employees took advantage of the scheme badly disrupting the services in the hospital. Dr. Subramaniam was described by his colleagues as a dedicated neuro surgeon who personally and regularly took care of the patients under his care.

● **A SRI LANKA NAVY** 'Dvora' surveillance craft is reported to have captured a boat with 680 gallons of petrol allegedly belonging to the LTTE on 14 January five miles off the Madhagal coast in northern Sri Lanka.

● **TWO LANKAN SOLDIERS** were reportedly drowned while crossing the lagoon in the course of an operation by government forces with air support against alleged LTTE hideouts at Karadiyanaru in eastern Sri Lanka on 13 January. The State Minister for Defence claimed during a press briefing in Colombo on 17 January that 33 LTTE cadres were killed in operations by government forces in Thoppigala in the east.

● **THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT** has assured Sri Lanka that any amount of crude oil at concessionary rates could be made available if oil supplies from the Middle-East were disrupted due to the Gulf crisis. Currently Malaysia is supplying 300,000 tonnes of crude oil to Sri Lanka under an agreement between the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation and Malaysian Petrowas Company.

● **SECURITY SOURCES** claimed that personnel of the Special Task Force on 15 January in the course of a military encounter attacked and destroyed what was described as one of the forward bases of the LTTE at Thirukoil in Amparai in eastern Sri Lanka. In another incident on the previous day the same sources claimed that at least ten 'Tiger cadres' were killed in the course of a round-up operation at Meeyankulam in Batticaloa and a large haul of weapons, explosives and vehicles recovered.

● **THE GOVERNMENT** is to introduce legislation shortly to invalidate all improper alienations of Land Reform Com-

mission's lands made to private individuals from the date the Land Reform Law came into effect in 1972. The Committee which investigated into land alienations had found that lands allotted to many individuals had been undervalued, or based on nepotism or favouritism or in flagrant violation of the criteria laid down by law. A government press release stated that it had been compelled to take this step in view of the alleged fraudulent nature of the large number of sales, transfers leases, exchanges etc. of LRC invested lands.

● **A LARGE GROUP OF REFUGEES** numbering 1261 persons, men, women, young and old, from the northern Jaffna peninsula arrived in Vavuniya on 18 January. From 1 January up to this date over 3000 persons reached Vavuniya from Jaffna, sources from there reported.

● **SECURITY SOURCES** claimed that a leader of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) who is alleged to have had connections with 54 murders was arrested by the Kalatura Central Anti-Subversive Unit on 19 January. The arrested person is identified as H. Srimal de Silva Abeywardene who reportedly operated under several aliases such as Priyantha, Duminda and Sunimal.

● **DUE TO THE GULF WAR**, Air Lanka is to operate all its west-bound flights mostly over Russian air space and departure times also have been changed.

● **SIX ALLEGED LTTE** cadres are reported to have drowned in the Hulandawa Oya river in Moneragala when they attempted to cross the lake in a small boat which capsized during a storm. According to Special Task Force Commandant Lionel Karunasena, the two bodies with cyanide capsules which had already been recovered were those of the LTTE's Amparai District political leader 'Castro' and his bodyguard 'Dennis'. Reportedly six men had attempted to cross the lake from Komari into Moneragala.

● **ELEPHANT PASS ARMY** camp in northern Sri Lanka came under mortar, grenade and machine gun attack by the Tigers on 20 January. Government forces are reported to have repulsed the attack with aerial bombing and strafing and artillery fire against LTTE positions. Meanwhile, the airforce planes bombed and strafed alleged LTTE bases in the Kilinochchi district where an indefinite curfew was imposed.

● **THE SRI LANKAN NAVY** on 20 January intercepted and captured a mechanised boat allegedly belonging to the LTTE with four of its occupants offering little resistance three miles off the coast of Valvettiturai in northern Sri Lanka. The boat was reportedly returning from Koddigar in south India and was carrying a large number of cans of diesel, batteries usable to detonate landmines and a quantity of Indian lubricants bearing the brand name 'Bharat Actuma Super'.

● **SRI LANKA IS SET** to lose an estimated one hundred million rupees a month in foreign remittances from Sri Lankan workers employed in west Asian and Middle-Eastern countries should the Gulf war continue. These Sri Lankan expatriate workers brought in at least an estimated Rs. 1.2 billion rupees annually.

● **THREE MUSLIM PASSENGERS** were shot dead and some others were injured on 22 January when a private bus travelling from Batticaloa to Pollonnaruwa was subjected to gun fire by an unidentified gang at Kandymalai in Kiran in eastern Sri Lanka.

● **TWENTY-SEVEN SINHALA** villagers comprising 15 children, seven women and five men were shot and hacked to death and nine more were seriously injured in a 3.00am attack on 23 January by a gang of several dozen men in the remote village of Bogamuyaya situated four miles off Maha Oya-Pollonnaruwa Road. Security sources accused the Tigers of this massacre. On their way to attack the village, the gang is reported to have fired at two bunkers occupied by army and police personnel in the course of which several soldiers and policemen were injured.

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NEWS ROUND-UP

Continued from Page 19

● **THE GOVERNMENT** has decided to amend the Air Force Act to suspend from service airforce personnel involved in attacks on the public, rape, robbery, house breaking and similar offences without pay until completion of legal processes. Currently those under suspension for such alleged offences were entitled to receive their salaries unlike those belonging to the armed forces and the police.

● **PARENTS AND KINSMEN** of missing persons in the Batticaloa district were sending him about twentyfive letters a day requesting him to assist in finding out the fate of their missing family members; distraught parents and kinsfolk had to be told what befell their children and family members; some people had exploited the misery of distraught parents and collected money to find their lost children; the Batticaloa district was most unfortunate in these times as disappearances were still continuing, Member of Parliament, Mr. Prins Casinader (TULF) said in Parliament on 25 January.

● **SEVENTYFIVE** Tamil speaking Muslims from eastern Sri Lanka were recently inducted to the regular force of the Sri Lankan Army. These new recruits are to be deployed in the east alongside the other forces 'in the war against the LTTE'.

● **A SOLDIER WAS KILLED** and two army personnel including an Army Captain identified as K.M.R.P. Karunatilake and two more policemen were injured when Tigers activated a claymore landmine on 29 January at Kumburumoolai junction on the Valachchenai-Batticaloa Road. The Captain and other personnel were travelling in a jeep from Valaichchenai to Batticaloa when the landmine exploded. Following the incident, fierce gun battles took place in the Batticaloa town between combined police and army units and the Tigers lasting several hours. In separate incidents, a joint army-police patrol came under attack from Tigers in the Chenkaladi area, and the office of the Superintendent of Police, offices of the Deputy Inspector General of Police and the Batticaloa District Judge's bungalow were subjected to machine gun fire. On the same day government sources claimed that an Air Force helicopter strafed a vehicle allegedly with Red Cross markings at Kodikamam in the northern Jaffna peninsula after those in the vehicle fired at the helicopter.

● **THE SRI LANKA AIR FORCE** is continuing its bombing raids in northern areas of Sri Lanka. Three civilians, V. Maheswaran (30) of Mannar, Elaiyathamby Rathinam (6) of Kurubasiddy and Ponnampalam Kamalathevy (27) of Kannathiddy in Jaffna were killed in bombing raids on 25, 26 and 27 January. Lorries carrying relief supplies to the refugee camps in Mannar district came under attack from Air Force helicopter gunships on 21 January. In a bombing raid carried out in Mannar on 27 January, the Roman Catholic School at Andankulam was severely damaged.

● **THE LTTE** in a statement has sought to counter what it described as false propaganda that the Tigers were forcibly collecting two gold sovereigns from Tamils and that they were forcibly taking over their houses. The statement explains that the gold was being collected only from those who could afford and that too on a redeemable basis and for this purpose the people from whom gold is collected are provided with 'redeemable bonds'. As to taking over of houses, they are being done only for the purpose of housing affected refugees. In the present situation when thousands of fighters were engaged in a struggle to keep the Sri Lankan Army at bay, a number of premises are required for their use and to set up offices to provide services to the people. Houses belonging to those who live abroad or to those who leave the area were being taken over only on a temporary basis.

● **TWO PERSONS** one a Buddhist monk resident of a temple in Maradana and the other a Tamil youth from Batticaloa, were arrested with heroin worth five million rupees at the Katunayake International Airport on 27 January. The suspects had arrived on an Air Lanka flight from Madras. The heroin weighing about two kilograms was found tightly packed and concealed in the false bottom of a suitcase belonging to the Buddhist monk. Resulting from the interrogation of the two, the police were reportedly looking for a well known Colombo millionaire businessman engaged in the garment trade who is now evading arrest. The businessman is alleged to be the kingpin behind a lucrative narcotic syndicate that supplied heroin to the local market. The Buddhist monk and the Tamil youth were couriers in the payroll of this businessman. According to police sources, the Buddhist monk who had made several trips abroad before was allegedly involved in other rackets like illegal recruitment for jobs. Under questioning the monk had confessed that the businessman had offered him Rs. 25,000 to bring the heroin into the country and to the Tamil youth another Rs. 10,000.

● **A MINISTERIAL TEAM** comprising the State Minister for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne, Trade and Commerce Minister, A.R. Mansoor and State Minister for Ports and Shipping M.E.H. Mahroof visited several places in Mannar Island on 27 January to assess the security situation. Following this visit, the team expressed the view that it was safe for the Muslims who had previously been forced out of Mannar to now return to their homes. The team had discussions with leading members of the Tamil community in Mannar who had expressed the desire to have their fellow Muslims back.

● **GOVERNMENT SOURCES** claimed that a LTTE high-speed boat carrying a large stock of fuel and medicines was captured with those on board by a Navy Dvora fast-attack craft ten miles off Point Pedro in northern Jaffna on 30 January. The sources alleged that the boat fitted with two powerful outboard motors was coming from south India when it was intercepted by the Navy.

● **PRESIDENT PREMADASA** speaking at a recent public meeting in Colombo said learning all three languages, Sinhala, Tamil and English would nullify the claim for a separate homeland for the 'Tamil speaking people'. If every person knew Tamil there would not exist a different category as 'Tamil speaking people' that would invalidate the argument in favour of a separate homeland for 'Tamil speaking people'. Then all the people in Sri Lanka would be Sinhala-Tamil and English speaking people and there would be no question of a division of the country.

● **THE TIGERS BLEW UP** a bus carrying a contingent of army and police personnel at Thiriyai in the Trincomalee district on 6 February killing at least eight and wounding 28 some of them seriously. The bus, which was travelling towards Trincomalee from Poodowkattuwa via Thiriyai at the time of the incident, was ripped apart by a landmine which was triggered off by remote control.

● **THE TIGERS** attacked an army post in Weli Oya in the Mullaitivu district killing nine soldiers and critically wounding four others on 7 February. No details of casualties in the LTTE side are available.

● **AN EIGHT-MEMBER** government committee appointed to evaluate proposals for private TV channels has given the green light for two channels, a top official said. Two private enterprises, Maharajah Organisation and Tele Shan will now proceed with their plans to operate private channels, subject to code of ethics followed by Rupavahini, Committee Chairman, Mr. K.A.S. Gunasekera has said. A third channel, proposed by the Bright Side Network System from Bermuda is still being closely evaluated by the Committee. This system offers a satellite transmission which will enable local viewers to receive foreign programmes via satellites. The two independent channels which have received the green light will not be allowed to telecast news programmes and will be closely monitored by the government.

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tenues came to the victim's rescue, Karunaratne said.

He said the jailer concerned immediately whistled for the other jailers and about 30 of them arrived with two to three feet long iron rods.

In the meantime the beleaguered victims had rushed to their section and began to shout in fear, Karunaratne said.

The annoyed jailers had then allegedly ordered them to come out of their cell in batches of five. The prisoners Karunaratne said, responding in fear, came out as ordered. Two or three detainees who refused to come out, were dragged out of their cells and beaten.

Joint Oil Search by India & Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has reached an agreement with neighbouring India to launch a joint operation to explore for oil in the Gulf of Mannar, diplomatic and official sources said. However, it was not clear whether the two governments wanted to go ahead with such an operation immediately in view of the ongoing war in the North-East.

The Indian High Commissioner, Nagendra Nath Jha told a gathering of journalists in Colombo about further talks between India and Sri Lanka on the oil exploration project in the Gulf of Mannar, when Indian Foreign Minister, V.C. Shukla arrives in Sri Lanka tomorrow. The exploration of oil in the Gulf of Mannar commenced in 1967 during the regime of Dudley Senanayake. The work was entrusted to a French company which failed to strike oil. After that Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) sought the help of a Russian State Agency to continue its highly ambitious oil exploration which also proved to be a failure. Later Marathon Petroleum, an American Company too tried its luck but failed to strike oil. Subsequently, a venture group headed by Cities Service Houston and the CPC made a similar attempt failing again.

However, the CPC is certain that it could find oil in

The others were then beaten, bringing the total wounded to 90.

Karunaratne also alleged that a superintendent was present when they were being assaulted. The wounded were dragged to the gate leaving bruises on their backs, he added.

One of the detainees, Sunil pleaded with the superintendent for humane treatment towards them. The victims, piled one on top of the other, were taken in a vehicle to the Prison Hospital. From here, they were referred to the Accident Service and thereafter admitted to wards 52 and 23. Some others are hospitalised in the Prison Hospital itself. Manawadu, died on admission.

the Gulf of Mannar this time with the help of the Oil and Natural Gas Company of India (ONGC). In October, last year, a senior CPC official announced the possibility of the ONGC carrying out a joint venture with the CPC to find oil in block 11 which comprises Palk Bay and the Gulf of Mannar.

Apart from the joint oil exploration project on a production sharing basis with the ONGS meeting the costs of the 'operation', Sri Lanka is to seek the help of India to carry out a full feasibility study on the British built Trincomalee Tank Farm with the ultimate objective of renovating it, sources said.

The Tank Farm was built by the British to store fuel for naval vessels. The facilities were used extensively during the second world war by the Allied forces.

Stressing the immediate need to repair the Tank Farm built by the British in Trincomalee the Indian High Commissioner Jha, further said that a team of 'personnel' from the Indian Oil Corporation is to come here to carry out the feasibility study.

However, India's most senior diplomat in Colombo indicated that the two countries might not rightaway start repairing all the tanks in view of the financial 'problems'. The expenses are to be met by both sides.

SRI LANKA TO SEEK \$450 MILLION FROM IMF

Sri Lanka, expecting a severe beating this year from the Gulf crisis through reduced worker remittances and depressed tea and other exports to the region, is now certain to seek an Enhanced Structural Adjustment facility worth US\$450 million from the International Monetary Fund, informed economic analysts said yesterday.

But, they warned that in return the IMF would prescribe a much more bitter pill than what it had given before. And unlike in the past Sri Lanka would have to first implement any such reforms in order to obtain the enhanced facility.

Under the previously negotiated Structural Adjustment Facility which is a three-year project from 1988 Sri Lanka has obtained a total of US\$187 million in balance of payment support in three tranches in return for reforms.

Under that facility the last tranche worth US\$60 million was drawn last October and the project ends next September.

Among the reforms so far

effected under that scheme were the depreciation of the rupee, cutting of government deficit, trimming of government bureaucracy through administrative reforms like early retirement of excess cadre and the scrapping of subsidies on food, fuel and transport.

The question now is what the new tough conditions would be in the event of Sri Lanka seeking the enhanced facility, which these sources said would be available in six tranches.

Fear in certain circles is that it could even mean curtailment of free university education as in advanced countries.

Meanwhile, it is now officially known that the threat of an escalating Gulf conflict had helped Sri Lanka to have a surplus balance of payment last year after many years. Sources said it was a direct result of Lankan migrant workers in West Asia remitting large sums of money fearing the escalation of hostilities there.

Official sources placed last year's balance of payment surplus at nearly Rs. 200 million.

Scholarships for Undergrad Study in Australia

The Australian High Commission is calling for expressions of interest for undergraduate study in Australia under the Equity and Merit Scholarship scheme.

A press release said these scholarships would be in addition to Australia's current training program for Sri Lanka.

It is expected that approximately 40 scholarships will be available for undergraduate study at Australian universities in 1991 under the scheme.

These scholarships are offered in consultation with the government of Sri Lanka, a release by the Australian High Commission stated.

Scholars will be selected on the basis of academic merit but those from disadvantaged economic back-

grounds will be given special consideration.

The scheme is divided into a merit selection and an equity selection.

Merit selection is based upon highest overall examination results, and equity selection is based upon minimum criteria results plus low family income.

Applicants must be between the ages of 18-28 on 1 January 1992 and have completed their secondary education by that date. Graduates are not eligible for EMSS scholarships.

There are two types of scholarship awarded under the scheme: Applicants should apply for either equity or merit scheme.

Merit Scholarships are awarded on the basis of academic aptitude.

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To be eligible applicants must have a minimum of two 'A' and two 'B' results in GCE Advanced Level or equivalent qualification (minimum aggregate mark 280).

Equity Scholarships are awarded on a competitive basis to students who provide evidence that the applicant or his/her family participate in Janasaviya, food stamp or similar schemes, and satisfy personal and family income levels. Applicants must have a minimum of four 'B' results of 260 aggregate marks in the GCE Advanced Level Examination, or equivalent qualifications. Applicants must provide evidence of participation in Janasaviya,

food stamp or similar schemes, and personal and family income levels.

Expressions of interest must be lodged by mail to be received at the Australian High Commission no later than March 8, 1991, and addressed to:

The Education Officer, Australian High Commission, P.O. Box 742, Colombo 7.

Posted applications should be clearly marked 'EMSS EQUITY' or 'EMSS MERIT' on the top left hand corner of the envelope.

If further information about the EMSS scheme is required please telephone the Education Officer on 698767-9 between the hours of 11.00am to 4.00pm on Monday to Thursday, the release added.

Probe Into NGO Activities

President Ranasinghe Premadasa has appointed a Presidential Commission of Inquiry headed by former Supreme Court Judge, R.S. Wanasundera, to enquire and report on all aspects of the activities of Non-Governmental Organisations (N.G.O.s) functioning in Sri Lanka.

This follows the findings of a committee appointed by the Ministry of Policy Planning and Implementation which reported that about 3,000 NGOs, both local and foreign, are functioning in the country today. It has been reported that no framework has been established for monitoring the activities and funding of NGOs.

Further, it has been reported that some of the funds received by certain NGOs from foreign sources, as well as generated locally, are allegedly being misappropriated and/or used for activities prejudicial to national security, public order and/or economic interests, and detrimental to the maintenance of ethnic, religious and cultural harmony among the people.

The commissioners are expected to inquire and report on the activities and funding of both local and foreign NGOs operating at present. They have been empowered to examine the

provisions of law, if any, which have been promulgated for monitoring and regulating the activities and funding of such organisations. The terms of reference cover inquiring into the institutional arrangements currently in existence for monitoring and regulating NGO activities.

The commission will report whether any of the funds received from foreign sources as well as generated locally have been misappropriated or are being used for activities prejudicial to national security, and the adequacy or otherwise of existing legal provisions.

The commission will also inquire into the misuse of funds for purposes other than the declared objects of each such organisation, and the alleged disproportionate allocation of funds for established overheads at the expense of the publicly declared objectives of such organisations.

The commissioners are expected to submit their report within six months from the date of their appointment.

The other commissioners are:-

● Justice J.F.A. Soza, former Supreme Court Judge and President of the Court of Appeal and presently Chairman of the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute

● Mr. M.N. Junaid, Secretary to the Ministry of Home Affairs and Additional Secretary, Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Home Affairs and a senior officer of the SLAS.

● Dr. K. Velauthapillai, Senior Lecturer in Microbiology at the North Colombo Medical College, Ragama.

● Mr. E. Eramudugolla,

former Senior Deputy Governor of the Central Bank.

● Prof. (Mrs.) Priyani Soysa, Prof. of Paediatrics, University of Colombo.

● Mr. Irwin Weerackody, leading advertising and marketing consultant.

Mr. Wimaladharma Ekanayake, Chief Secretary, Western Province, a senior member of the SLAS, has been appointed secretary to the commission.

51 DETAINEES GIVEN LEAVE TO PROCEED WITH RIGHTS PLEA

The Supreme Court has granted leave to proceed to 51 detainees in their fundamental rights application.

The Bench comprised Justices Tissa Bandaranayake, Mark Fernando and K.M.M.B. Kulatunga.

Forty nine of the detainees are held at the army camp, Boossa, while two others who are undergraduates are at present detained at the Sri Lanka Naval Station, Welisara.

Mr. Shirley M. Fernando who appeared for some of the detainees told court that some of the detainees were earlier kept at the Army Detention Camp, Boossa and then transferred to the

so-called rehabilitation centres. Fernando's information was that no rehabilitation was in fact carried out in these centres.

Counsel submitted to court that if the authorities wished to undertake some genuine rehabilitation, they should endeavour to give a training in animal husbandry and agricultural pursuits as most of these detainees were from rural areas. If such training was given then they could easily be absorbed into their social lifestyles after they were released.

Court fixed the inquiry into the applications for February 26 and 27 and other dates in March 1991.

TAMIL CLASSICS IN JAPANESE SOON

MADRAS, Dec 2.

The people of Japan can soon enjoy reading ancient Tamil works such as Silappathikaram and Kamba Ramayanam - thanks to Dr. Shu Hikosaka, director and head of the Department of Buddhism, Institute of Asian Studies, Japan, who will be translating them into Japanese. He has already translated the Tamil epic Manimekalai into Japanese.

Dr. Hikosaka told presspersons here recently that the Institute of Asian Studies at Madras had started its work on preparing multilingual dictionaries in Tamil, Kannada, Japanese and English. He said that dictionaries would be compiled with each of these languages as the core languages and the meaning given in the other three.

He said it was time Asians realised the superiority of

their culture and literature. Basic resource material was necessary to do comparative studies in Asian literature and the Institutes aimed at compiling such resource material. The Institute at Madras had started teaching Japanese at both the introductory and advanced levels. It would soon start special courses in Japanese literature. There was a lot of similarity between agam poems in Tamil and Manyoshu, anthology of love poems in Japanese. There was similarity between kogiki poems dealing with Japanese emperors and puram poems in Tamil.

Dr. Hisoka, who had obtained his Ph.D. in Madras University for his thesis on 'Buddhism in Tamil Nadu - a new perspective', felt that Podhiamalai in the State would have been a Buddhist literacy centre.

Closing date for completed grid and coupon to be received is 30 March 1991.

Answers and the name of the winner – first all correct entry pulled out of a bag – will be announced in the April 1991 issue.

The winner will receive a prize of £20.00 (Twenty Pounds).

All entries should be sent to: Tamil Times, P.O. Box 121, Sutton, Surrey SM1 3TD, UK.

Across.

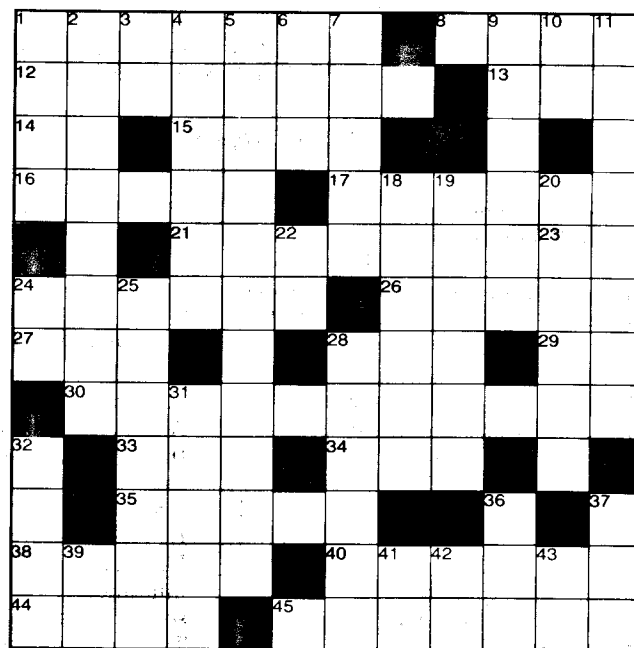
1. A sage of legendary times who enriched the Tamil language (7)
2. German wizard on the tennis court (4)
12. Related to a parent through a religious ceremony (8)
13. In the past or Goa in disarray (3)
14. Editor briefly (2)
15. An earful could fill with sensation (4)
16. American linguistics scholar whose approach was characterized by constant awareness of the links between language and culture (5)
17. Andre-Marie a French child prodigy who became one of the founders of electro-magnetism and electro-dynamics (6)
21. Writing desk with drawers (6)
23. Chemical symbol of an artificially made transuranic radioactive metallic element identified in 1952 in debris from the first hydrogen bomb explosion (2)
24. Dr. Who's TV robots (6)
26. Jaffna's island of wild ponies could be a town in Holland or even a glazed earthenware (5)
27. Zone identification of North Sri Lanka's cultivation systems (3)
28. Disorderly bar (3)
29. Biblically Abraham's place of origin now part of southern Iraq and known for its spectacular royal tombs of c.2600-2000 B.C. (2)
30. An area of great early culture (2600-1700 B.C.) with towns built to grid-like plans provided with granaries, drainage systems, public buildings and other municipal type facilities today generally thought to be of Dravidian origin (5, 6)

33. Caninely inclined contemptible person (3)
34. Prefixed to 'ka' the lasting part of the individual human being or deity is an emperor of great renown whose edicts have been found in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka in India (3)
35. The centre of thought, feeling and emotion (5)
38. Period of time or the fascination exercised by person or activity (5)
40. Armenian volcanic peak believed to be the resting place of Noah's Ark (6)
44. Little ones (4)
45. State of apprehension (7)

Down:

1. Distinct periods in history (4)
2. One of southern India's rivers renders its name to a class of Indian naval ships (8)
3. In the year of the Lord (3)
4. Ancient copyist of manuscripts (6)
5. Amazing work of 3300 verses which for 2000 years have imparted profound wisdom and a code of conduct and translated into most of the major languages of the world (11)
6. If universe is earth, female, dark and absorbing in this concept of Chinese philosophy, 'yang' is heaven, male, light and penetrating (3)
7. Largely primitive aquatic non-flowering photo-synthetic plants (5)
9. Outrage of a bestial nature (4)
10. Chemical symbol of a white lustrous precious metallic element (2)
11. A science often ill-understood by exploitive agrarian development planners and experts with dire consequences to eco-systems worldwide (8)
18. City that encompasses ancient settlements of historic interests and

QUIZ CROSSWORDS – No. 1. Set by: Richards



- temples sanctified by the visits of Saivite saints and Vaishnavite alvars in the 7th and 8th centuries (6)
19. A member of an American community whose prehistoric period is known as the Anasazi culture (6)
20. Replenish a certain kind of supply essential energy generation (6)
22. Expresses the unit of certain currencies (2)
24. Doctor of Divinity (2)
25. Perished violently without lawful trial (7)
28. In Hinduism a manifestation of a heavenly being on earth generally associated with Vishnu (6)

31. Popular events some even deadly at festivals patronised by ancient royals of many lands (5)
32. Disguise or pretence (4)
36. A heavenly body (3)
37. Consumed (3)
39. Greek alphabet closely associated with mathematics (2)
41. 'A drop of falling sun' – remember Sound of Music (2)
42. Chemical symbol of an artificially made radioactive metallic element first obtained in 1945 by bombarding plutonium with neutrons (2)
43. Threshold point for higher education (2)

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vegetable is sold at Rs. 60 a kilogram. Petrol costs over Rs. 500 per bottle, milk foods are Rs. 350 per kilogram, and a small packet of biscuits fetches Rs. 40. Families who formerly resided in the town area are believed to have either come down to Colombo or gone abroad. People seen here are mostly from nearby villages. There is no evidence of the armed services here.

The LTTE presence is extremely prominent. Heavily armed, they seem confidently at ease in this area of control. Medical drugs here have also hit a crisis level. Certain drugs are issued only to the 'in' patients with OPD patients having to depend on the open market for these drugs.

Twenty miles away is Kilinochchi, Colombo's one time granary in the north, now producing just one third of post '83 harvests. Ammonia fetching Rs. 400 in Colombo fetches over Rs. 3000 and even at this price is virtually impossible to obtain.

It's Saturday the 12th at 8.30am, having a breakfast discussion with Kilinochchi's political wing leaders 'Gopi' a short distance from town. Suddenly two Sia Marchetti 'Bombers' come into a dive just 50 metres away. Just one bomb is dropped on a wrong target. And I live to tell the story. Each

time these aircraft are sighted high up on reconnaissance flights everyone rushes into bunkers. Naturally I join them. Fearing the worst I get to town to get back to Colombo. Over 300 people have flooded into town. Suddenly shouting fills the air – 'The bombers are coming'. Men and women, many of them throwing away their purchases, grab their children, keep yelling in panic and rush helter skelter for cover. Seventy five metres ahead of me the first strikes. We run in the opposite direction. Fifty metres away two more bombs crash into moving vehicles and nearby shops.

An ICRC vehicle followed by Tiger vehicles rushes to the scene. An ICRC man (a foreigner) yells something into a walkie talkie. Just then the aircraft start pulling away. The injured are despatched to hospital, shops and vehicles are destroyed. The death toll is taken, nine men, a woman and a girl. A small exodus begins. With several others I persuade a passenger van to take us back to Vavuniya. The cost is incredible, Rs. 1,000.

As we speed on our way we leave behind the wrecked Kokavil and Manakulam security forces camp and a dismal landscape where men, women and children seemed resigned to stay on.

(Courtesy of 'The Island')

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al ceasefire announced by the LTTE could not hold and hostilities have resumed.

'We believe that the political framework created by your Government, on the basis of and following the Indo-Sri Lanka agreement of 1987, provide the broad parameters for a reasonable and enduring settlement, Mr. Shukla said.

Continued from Page 11

acquire an island or peninsula mentality when the whole world is marching past you toward new discoveries, new ideas and new ways of doing things. Multiculturalism implies a halfway house – where the particular cultures of groups are protected but with an awareness and tolerance for the culture of others.

So let us cultivate this halfway house as a means of liberating ourselves from the dark nightmares of the past which have distorted and sullied our national imagination. It cannot answer all our problems, nor is it a substitute for genuine democratic politics; but it will increase our national sensitivity to other experiences, a sensitivity which, because of the dominance of the gun, has turned into cold-blooded callousness in the past few years.

'EELAM WILL SPREAD TO SOUTH INDIA'

— Thondaman

Minister S. Thondaman has warned that the Eelam threat might spread to Tamil Nadu as well, unless urgent steps were taken to settle the ethnic conflict, following the dismissal of the Karunanidhi government in the Southern Indian State.

'If we do not settle this problem of Tamil aspirations, and if the situation in Tamil Nadu worsens, then the DMK which was dismissed last Wednesday and the LTTE could get together and broaden the Eelam to include Tamil Nadu as well', Mr. Thondaman said, pointing out that the Karunanidhi government and the LTTE have been having close links.

'The LTTE will not be fighting the

Sri Lankan government from Kili-nochchi or elsewhere, but from Tamil Nadu itself. The Indian government will also be affected, and we should not contribute to such a situation by our inaction', Mr. Thondaman said.

Mr. Thondaman asserted that any amount of Tamil party meetings at the All Party Conference would not satisfy the aspirations of the Tamil people. He said the Sri Lanka government should aim at solving the problem with the LTTE politically. The Minister said the LTTE, though it was speaking through militancy, is the only proper representative of the northern and eastern Tamils in the country.

'The Tamil United Liberation Front

(TULF), which once was the most representative body of the Tamils, could have helped solve the problems, but during that period the government was dilly-dallying with the TULF and did not treat it properly. The LTTE got the upperhand through this, and now it is powerful', the Minister said.

Mr. Thondaman expressed the view that if the LTTE was not willing for negotiations, then the Government should at least aim at giving full implementation to the Indo Lanka Accord.

He said that the accord would solve the problems of the Tamils to a great extent. Until certain principles in the Accord were given effect to, the Tamils would have grievances and the LTTE would thrive on them.

Asked about the LTTE's declaration of unilateral ceasefire and its violations. Mr. Thondaman said that in the interests of the country, the government should still aim at resolving the crisis through political means.

Mr. Thondaman revealed he had held detailed discussions about the Indian immigrants with Indian External Affairs Minister V.C. Shukla during the Minister's visit to Sri Lanka. Mr. Shukla, he said, had given assurances that the Indian government would help improve the conditions of some half a million Indian immigrants.

Mr. Thondaman said he had told Mr. Shukla that under the Sirima Shastri pact, it was the responsibility of the Indian government to look after the Tamils who chose to stay.

The Sri Lankan government, he said, had neglected these people for over 40 years, and now government development programmes had not been extended to them. He said that he would press the Sri Lanka government to do something constructive about these people before the turn of this century.

16,000 Policemen Lack Basic Training

About 16,000 men in the police force are yet to receive their basic training, Inspector General Ernest Perera told *The Sunday Times*.

These policemen, who were trained at military establishments, constitute the Intensive Operations Trained (IOT) units, most of which are now based in the Eastern Province to protect villagers from rebel attacks.

Earlier in the South the IOT platoons were widely used to combat JVP attacks and to guard vital installations.

The IGP issued a directive to disband the few hundred platoons on May 5 this year.

The men were then to be absorbed into the normal police cadre and given about three months basic training.

Alternate arrangements were made for this purpose as the police college could not accommodate more than its usual intake. However, the platoons were reformed on June 13 when hostilities broke out in the North-East.

Policemen were given military training soon after the security situation in the North-East went out of control in 1983.

Large numbers were recruited to the police force and were given about three month's training by military personnel. They were trained to meet a particular situation. They have to be reoriented to perform normal police work' the inspector general said.

A recent report made by a senior

police officer suggests the use of psychiatrists and sociologists to put the military trained policemen through a programme, so that they could adapt themselves to normal police work.

Discipline and knowledge of these personnel fell far short of the norms in the police force, the report observes.

Commenting on their training, the report concedes it was for a purpose other than community oriented police work. But, it adds, their attitude has been warped by the exposure to a training module not intended or desirable for policemen at the inception of their career.

51 DETAINEES GIVEN LEAVE TO PROCEED WITH RIGHTS PLEA

The Supreme Court has granted leave to proceed to 51 detainees in their fundamental rights application.

The Bench comprised Justices Tissa Bandaranayake, Mark Fernando and K.M.M.B. Kulatunga.

Forty nine of the detainees are held at the army camp, Boossa, while two others who are undergraduates are at present detained at the Sri Lanka Naval Station, Welisara.

Mr. Shirley M. Fernando who appeared for some of the detainees told court that some of the detainees were earlier kept at the Army Detention Camp, Boossa and then transferred to the so-called rehabilitation centres.

Fernando's information was that no rehabilitation was in fact carried out in these centres.

Counsel submitted to court that if the authorities wished to undertake some genuine rehabilitation, they should endeavour to give a training in animal husbandry and agricultural pursuits as most of these detainees were from rural areas. If such training was given then they could easily be absorbed into their social lifestyles after they were released.

Court fixed the inquiry into the applications for February 26 and 27 and other dates in March 1991.

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MATRIMONIAL

Jaffna Hindu parents seek bridegroom for doctor daughter; engineer, doctor, accountant, 31 to 36. M 458 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu seeks partner for fair, attractive sister, 22, following accountancy course. Details, horoscope to M 459 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu brother seeks groom for sister, 28, nursery and veena teacher, doing computer studies; and bride for engineer brother, 32, proceeding to USA for postgraduate studies. Details and horoscope to M 460 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu Tamil seeks groom for sister, 26, fair, attractive, Mars afflicted. Details, horoscope to M 461, c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents and permanent residents Australia seek professionally qualified partner for only daughter, fair, presentable, 35, second-year undergraduate student of Business in Economics and Finance, Australian university. Details with horoscope to M 462 c/o Tamil Times.

WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate the following couple on their recent marriage.

Shanthakumar son of the late Mr. Thambiappah and Mrs. Thambiappah of Siva Bhavanam, Kokuvil West, Sri Lanka and Jayadaya daughter of the late Mr. Tharmaratnam and Mrs. Tharmaratnam of Meesalai South, Sri Lanka on 3.2.91 at 'Berner Trail' Auditorium, 120 Berner Trail, Scarborough, Canada.

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OBITUARIES



Mr. Ponnampalam Mahendran (Vice Principal, Jaffna Hindu College), beloved husband of Packialuxmy; loving father of Ravi Raj (U.K.), Ravi Shankar, Uma & Ravi Ganeshan (Sri Lanka); loving son of the late S. Ponnampalam & Mrs. S. Ponnampalam (U.K.); loving brother/brother-in-law of Mrs. S. Kathirgamathamby & Mr. K. Kathirgamathamby (U.K.), Mrs. V.V. Singham & Mr. V. Singham (Brunei), Mr. & Mrs. P. Nadarajah (U.K.), Dr. & Mrs. P. Kandasamy (U.K.); nephew of Mr. & Mrs. R. Visuwanathan (Ex-Mayor, Jaffna), Mr. & Mrs. R. Manikkavasagar (Attorney at law, Colombo), Mr. & Mrs. R. Thirugnanasampanthar (Jaffna), Mr. & Mrs. S. Ramanathan, Mrs. V. Sathasivam (Jaffna), & Mrs. A. Namasi-vayampillai (Colombo); uncle of Dr. & Dr. (Mrs.) Sureshkumar, K. Sri Ganeshan (U.K.), V. Ganeshan (Australia), K. Luxmy, N. Luxmy, N. Nirkajan, K. Vishahari & Mayuri (U.K.) passed away on 18.11.90 at Vannarponnai, Jaffna. Sadly missed and mourned by his loved ones. May his soul rest in perfect peace. - 4 Stonefield, Lennox Road, London N4 3PG. Tel: 071 281 2102.



Mr. Ponnudurai Sivasooriar, retired Station Master, beloved husband of Gnanampal; loving father of Mahendrarajah (Melbourne, Australia), Jeyendran (Sri Lanka), Mrs. Sivanithy Nagendra, Balendran, Mrs. Selvanithy Thirumoolan (all of U.K.), Kulendran (France); father-in-law of Mrs. Sarva-Usha Mahendrarajah, Mrs. Shanthiny Jeyendran, Nagendra, Mrs. Usha Balendran, Thirumoolan; grandfather of Arshetha, Piragath, Anuja, Geevanath, Rathan and Reshmi expired. Funeral took place on Sunday, 20.1.91, at 9/1 Aiyannar Kovil Road, Udayar Lane, Jaffna - 40 Pasquier Road, London E17 6HB. Tel: 081 523 3608.

IN MEMORIAM

In Treasured Memory of
S. Shanmugasundaram
A.G.A.

Born: 17.01.1926 Died: 09.02.1985

*This day is remembered and quietly kept,
No words are needed;
We will never forget.*

Fondly remembered by wife, daughter and family and all loved ones.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

March 2 6.30pm British Association of Young Musicians presents Karnatic Music Trinity Day Concert to commemorate Thiyagaraja Swamigal, Shyama Sastrigal, & Muthusamy Dhikshetar at Trinity Church Hall, Catford, London SE6.

7.00pm 'Temple Bells', Bharatha Natyam Recital by Prakash Yadagudde at Purcell Room, Royal Festival Hall, London SE1. Tel: 071 921 8800/381 3086.

Mar. 3 3.30pm. Novena at Asian Chaplaincy, 48 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 2HA. Tel: 071 222 2895.

Mar. 9 5.00pm West London Tamil School celebrates Thiyagaraja Day at Wembley High School Hall, East Lane, Wembley, Middx. All welcome.

Mar. 16 6.30pm SCOT presents A Vocal Recital of Carnatic Music by Smt Mathini Sriskandarajah and A Bharatha Natyam Recital by Shamini Rajagopal at Tylers Hall, Kingsbury High School Annexe, Stag Lane, Enclave near Library, Kingsbury, London NW9 9JR. Tel: 081 870 9897/422 8984/904 6472.

Mar. 24 2.30pm Bharatha Natyam by Unnikrishnan at the Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8 6NQ. Admission free.

Mar. 26 7.00pm Sri Yogarswamigal Guru Poojah at Shree Ganapathy Temple, 125/133 Effra Road, Wimbeldon, London SW19.

Mar. 29 Panguni Uthirarn

At the Bhavan Centre, 4A Castletown Road, London W14, 9HQ. Tel: 071 381 3036/4608.

Mar. 9 7.00pm Hindustani Vocal and Sitar by Gouri Bapat & Vijayakumar Yagtap.

Mar 23 5.30pm Discourse on 'The Ramayana & its relevance today' by Mathoor Krishnamurti.

7.00pm Sitar by Shameem Ahmed Khan.

Mar 29 7.45pm & Mar 31 6.30pm Carnatic Vocal by Bombay Sisters, C. Saroja & C. Lalitha with accompanists from India.

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V.N. Navaratnam Dies in Toronto

Mr. V.N. Navaratnam, former Member of Parliament and veteran politician from Chavakachcheri died in Toronto, Canada of a heart failure on the 29th of January 1991. Mr. Navaratnam was practising as a Solicitor in the United Kingdom and in Canada since he left Sri Lanka after the July 83 disturbances.

Mr. Navaratnam had been a Member of Parliament for Chavakachcheri from 1956 to 1983, an unbroken period of 27 years. He had a warm, genial personality and maintained close personal contact with political leaders of all persuasion. He was one of the most popular members of parliament to have represented any constituency in the northern peninsula and continued to command the confidence and affection of Chavakachcheri electorate for over several decades. He had an incisive mind and his contribution in Parliament was of a high order. He was actively engaged in the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and served for many years as a member of the Executive Committee.

He was above all a parliamentarian in the highest tradition. He together with his colleagues Mr. A. Amirthalingam, Mr. M. Sivasithamparam, Mr. R. Sampanthan and Mr. S. Kathiruvellupillai, constituted a formidable debating team equal to that of any political party. He reached the zenith of his parliamentary career during the period 1970 to 1978 when he was effectively the leader of the Federal Party Parliamentary Group.

Mr. Navaratnam was born in Chavakachcheri on June 5, 1929. He had his early education at Drieberg college, and his secondary education at Jaffna Central College. He joined the Law Faculty of the University but



V.N. Navaratnam

did not complete his degree and opted to qualify as an advocate of Supreme Court at the Sri Lanka Law College. At the Law College, he led the debating team, and completed the Advocates final examination with first class honours.

He joined the Sri Lankan Bar in 1954 and had an extensive criminal law practice at the High Courts of Jaffna, Trincomalee and Batticaloa. He had a brief stint as a school teacher at St. Thomas' Prep. School and later at Jaffna. Mr. Navaratnam was incarcerated as a political prisoner by the SLFP Government in 1959 and 1961 in view of the civil disobedience campaign of the then Federal Party.

His death represents an end of an era where the politics of the North and East was dominated by a group of young professionals who believed in constitutional solutions.

Mrs. J.T. Arulanantham An Appreciation

'What doth the lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love, mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?'

When one thinks of Jaffna today one sees confusion, destruction and chaos. But, there was a time when Jaffna was known for its tranquillity, its intellectual landscape and above all for people of great character and ability.

Recently, Mrs. J.T. Arulanantham died in Kent, England in the home of her eldest son, Dr. Pararasan. In the vast scheme of things in the world today and amidst the ruins and destruction in Sri Lanka this event should be of little consequence. However, for generations of students who have gone through St. John's College in Jaffna, it is an event that touches us and moves time and place and brings us back to an era the like of which we will never see again.

Principals' wives, they say like their children should only be seen, and never heard. Their role in life is to make their husbands look bigger than they actually are. In the case of Mrs. J.T., as she was affectionately called, her husband, Rev. J.T. Arulanantham was truly a man of great stature that she found a role for herself and that was as a mother, not only to her own children, but the hundreds of little boys who were brought to St. John's.

Mrs. J.T. always projected an image of a lady who was both genteel and cultured. Her manner of speech and her dealings with other people revealed her strength of character and her deep and abiding faith. She was also a very talented musician who participated annually in the concert of the combined choirs at Christmas in Jaffna. This was an event that attracted a lot of people and her presence there with her violin was almost a fixture.

Remembrance, they say is God's great gift to human kind and those of us who are now scattered all over the globe are truly grateful that there are people and places from our childhood that can occupy a niche in our memories without any terror that appears to have descended upon our people.

It is indeed a tragedy of great proportions that in our single minded devotion to become a people we have destroyed many of the great virtues that we were famous for. Not the least of these was our great love for education and our educational institutes. In thinking of Mrs. J.T. we naturally think of St. John's College, of her husband, Rev. J.T. Arulanantham, their children and the greatness of the institution to which we all belonged.

I am sure there are many like me who do not suffer the violence that has descended on our people, but the pain of witnessing what was very near and dear to us being destroyed is equally great. However, what cannot be destroyed is the legacy of people like Mrs. J.T. who leaves us with memories of a better day.

Professor Ernest A. Champion

Department of Ethnic Studies
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, Ohio 43403

Thanksgiving Service

A service of Thanksgiving in memory of the late Miss Edith Kelk, retired Vice Principal, Chundikuli Girls College, Jaffna will be held on Sunday, 3rd March 1991 at 2.30pm at the Putney Methodist Church, Gwendoline Avenue, London SW15.

Miss Kelk died on 6.2.91 and the funeral took place on 20.2.91 in Harlow, Essex

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