

Tamil
TIMES



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This will be the last time, little father. Plate 36 from Miserrere et Guerre. Georges Rouault, 1927.
From "Art Against War" by D J R Braesner Seymour Chwast Steven Heller



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கிரமமான, நம்பிக்கையான சேவை.

★ கொழும்புக்கு அர்ப்பணம் மிகுந்த உன்னத சேவை. (16 தினங்கள்) ★ தேயிலைப்
பெட்டிகளிலிருந்து, முழு அளவிலான தனிப்பட்ட பொருள்கள் வரை. ★ கார், மற்றும்
20 அடி, 40 அடி முழு வர்த்தக சரக்குகளுக்கு விசேட கட்டணம். ★ மின்சார உற்பத்தி
யந்திரம், யந்திர வகைகள், உபகரணங்கள். ★ சலவை யந்திரம், குளிர் சாதனப் பெட்டி
போன்ற வீட்டுப்பாவனை மின்சார உபகரணங்களுக்கு வரிவிலக்கு.

உங்கள் பொருள்களுக்கு இலங்கையர் பலரும் விரும்பும் முதல்தர துரித விடுவியு வசதிகள் அளிக்கப்படுகின்றன.

● உலகளாவிய விமான பொதி சேவைக்கு எங்களை நாடுங்கள். ●

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right to say it."*

-Voltaire

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Breakthrough in Mass Grave Probe

Forensic experts found what they believe to be skeletal remains on 16 June during the first ever excavations of a suspected mass grave in the northern Sri Lankan peninsula of Jaffna. The finding of part of a human knee, along with fragments of clothing that appeared to be part of blue trousers, after three hours of painstaking digging occurred at about 4.30 p.m. on the first day of excavation at Chemmani in Jaffna. Observers commented that the detection was a major breakthrough in what is developing into a tedious and prolonged investigation.

On 18 June, weeping relatives identified two skeletons exhumed from the mass gravesite as that of two men. According to police sources, the skeletons of the two men, one with hands tied with rope, were identified by family members and an employer as those of Rasiyah Satishkumar, 22, and Mahendran Babu, 28, who "disappeared" in 1996 in the northern Jaffna peninsula. "The victims who worked as mechanics were identified from the remains of their clothing. One of them also had stains from chewing betel leaves," a senior policeman in Jaffna told reporters.

One of the skeletons was bound and blindfolded and there were scraps of material still attached to both bodies. Another was reportedly identified by his wife from his tobacco-stained teeth.

"One of the skeletons had its hands tied with a nylon rope. There were remains of black trousers and one of the victims had a vest," K Kesavan, a lawyer who was present at the exhumation, told the press by telephone from Jaffna town. He said acting Jaffna Magistrate Manikavasagam Illancheliyan had stopped the exhumation after the skeletons were found to enable forensic experts to file their reports to his court. Until the forensic reports are submitted

there will be no further digging. The skeletal and other remains would be kept at a police station and friends and relatives of the "disappeared" have been invited to try to identify them. The Magistrate postponed further exhumation till July 15, to allow forensic experts to submit a report on the skeletal and other remains found.

The internationally monitored excavations began at Chemmani village after the convicted soldier Rajapakse pointed to a site where he said three victims of extra judicial killings were buried three years ago.

The Jaffna Magistrate Manikavasagam Illancheliyan ordered the excavations after soldier Somaratne Rajapakse, a convict in a rape and murder case told in open court that he knew 10 grave sites in the area. Hundreds of heavily armed police and soldiers guarded a low-lying swampy land at Chemmani as the magistrate asked the convict to show a grave where he believed victims of security forces were buried.

"I know of 10 places where people have been definitely buried and some more graves in several other places which I can show to the authorities," Rajapakse told the court when he was flown to Jaffna under tight security to help in investigations. The soldier repeated in court here that he was innocent of the crime but said four of his superior officers were responsible for killing civilians. "I only buried the bodies given to me," he said. "I did not know the identities of the victims."

Rajapakse said that he was enlisted in the Army and was serving at Ariyalai. He alleged that some senior military officials arrested and killed Tamil persons and ordered the soldiers to bury the bodies. He named some senior officials for alleged murdering of some Tamil persons. "I decided to reveal the truth because I was convicted for a murder that I was not

involved in. The killers are at home, we the innocents are in the prison," he added.

Rajapakse was in the Bogambara Prison till he was flown to Jaffna on a special flight.

A qualified team of forensic scientists from three international human rights groups, Amnesty International, Asia Foundation and Physicians for Human Rights, were present at the site of the mass grave in Chemmani village in the northern Sri Lankan peninsula of Jaffna when the exhumation began on 16 June under tight security provided by hundreds of police and troops. T Sundara lingam, Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka was also present. The forensic scientists team comprised the Professor of Forensic Medicine of Ruhuna University, Chandrasiri Niriella Additional Government Analyst A M J Mendis, and Forensic Soil Scientist Dr K A Nandasena. The forensic scientist doctor William Haglund of Physicians for Human Rights, Ms. Ingrid Massage of Amnesty International and Melissa Connor, Kevin Lee who have been granted 'observer status' by the government were also present.

The pressure upon the Sri Lankan authorities to investigate allegations of extrajudicial killings and "disappearances" carried out by security service personnel gathered momentum following the unexpected outburst in court by former lance corporal Somaratne Rajapakse, following the passing of death sentence after being convicted, along with others, on charges of murder and rape of the teenage Tamil schoolgirl, Krishanthi Kumarasamy, and the murders of her mother, brother and a neighbour. He told the Colombo court last year that the bodies of some 300 "disappeared" persons were buried at Chemmani.

Amnesty International had previously reported that some 600 persons had "disappeared" in Jaffna in 1996 after government troops captured the peninsula driving Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) out of their long-held stronghold.

"We have taken one step in the direction of truth, accountability and redress for the victims," Ingrid Massage of Amnesty International told the press. She said some 540 people had disappeared in Jaffna since late

1995 and that the government was taking a bold step to dig up victims of its own security forces.

In the meantime, another soldier convicted in the Krishanthi rape and murder case, D.M. Jayatillake had told one of the Commissioners of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka that he also knew several sites in Jaffna where the bodies of civilians were disposed of by soldiers. According to omission sources, several bodies were dumped in three wells at Nedunkulam, Thapp-atkaddu junction and Pillaiyar Kovilady. Thereafter those wells were covered by sand using bulldozers, revealed Jayatillake volunteering also to locate the wells where dead bodies were dumped.

In spite of the fact that the Sri Lankan army received a battering to its image by the revelations from the Chemmani mass grave, the government appears to have been given a pat on the back for persisting with the investigations. Visiting international observers who were in the island to be associated with the exhumation of the alleged Chemmani mass grave said they were encouraged by the pace at which the investigation was being conducted and have described as "exceptional" the government's decision to proceed with this investigation despite being in the middle of an armed conflict.

They made these observations at a media conference held on 16 June morning at the Palaly Base, prior to proceeding to the Magistrates Courts and later to Chemmani for the commencement of the exhumation process.

The Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry statement quoted Dr. William Hagland, Forensic anthropologist from Physicians for Human Rights saying he was in the island as an observer and was willing to offer any suggestions, if asked, on the process.

"We are encouraged by the consideration and the pace at which the investigation is progressing. If it is hurried and it is done improperly, another crime, if there was one committed would be perpetuated, because evidence would be destroyed. Families would be denied the potential possibility of having the victims identified. He expressed the hope that through the upcoming months justice

would be done and individuals who might have done these acts would be held accountable, he had said.

"From my point I'd like to see that a historical record is accurately documented so that rumours can be put to rest". He said an important need of the families who have basically been hitherto ignored, is that they are able to find out the whereabouts about people who are missing and have them identified so that they can be returned to them.

"Part of what was being done was to give voice to the victims, so that they can tell their story. A story that has remained silent and hidden with their buried bones", Dr. Hagland had added.

Ingrid Massage, representative of Amnesty International (AI) said they were here to take one step in the direction of truth, justice, accountability and redress for the victims and their relatives who disappeared, most likely in mid 1996. She observed. "Our presence here as observers is to ensure, or try to establish whether the investigations are being done professionally. By that I mean, in accordance with international standards that have been laid down for the investigation of extra judicial killings and transparency, in the sense that all people who have an interest in this case, and I am particularly concerned about the relatives will be kept informed and will have an opportunity to hear the results of the investigations." She said Amnesty International had visited Sri Lanka in 1997 and collected evidence about the disappearances of the time and that they subsequently produced a report on the widespread pattern of disappearances of 1996. She said "we are pleased to see that the government is proceeding with these investigations. Especially for a government which is still in the middle of an armed conflict, it is rather exceptional that the authorities are taking a bold step to actually dig up bodies of victims of human rights violations committed by its own forces during its tenure. We know there are people within the security forces who are not happy with this happening. We also know that there are people in the security forces who are happy that this is happening, who are in favour of establishing a high standard of accountability within the forces." ●

Balasingham's Return to Britain Raise Hopes of Revival of Peace Talks

D B S Jeyaraj

News reports in "The Island" and the Chennai based "Hindu" newspapers about the relocation of LTTE Political advisor Anton Stanilus Balasingham from the Wannai to Britain have now been directly confirmed by Tiger sources themselves. On Sunday 13th the BBC Tamil Service "Thamizhosai" relayed an interview with Anton Rajah, the LTTE spokesperson based in London. Anton Rajah whose real name is Ramachandran said in the interview that Balasingham had arrived in Britain three weeks ago. He also outlined briefly what Balasingham hopes to accomplish within his stay that extend to the year 2000.

Ramachandran alias Anton Rajah said in the interview that Balasingham has been asked to take charge of the Tiger International Secretariat in London by LTTE leader Prabhakaran. He is expected to reorganise it and inject a fresh enthusiasm into the LTTE propaganda machine overseas. Balasingham will be directing and co-ordinating LTTE propaganda in the Western world.

More importantly Balasingham known generally as "Bala Annai" has also been entrusted with the responsibility of reviving the negotiation process with Colombo again. He is expected to interact with various Western Governments and influential Non-Governmental Organizations in this regard and impress upon them the necessity to restart talks between the government and the LTTE within a mutually acceptable framework. A prerequisite from an LTTE perspective would be the participation of a third party to facilitate talks this time.

Thirdly Balasingham, a diabetic patient will utilize his stay in London to procure advanced medical treatment. He had fallen seriously ill after shifting to the Wannai from Jaffna in 1995. The information divulged by Anton Rajah about Anton Balasingham had already been revealed in detail by the "Hindu" and "Island" newspapers.

Nevertheless hearing it directly from the horse's mouth or in this case the Tiger mouth adds a stamp of authoritative confirmation.

It is clear therefore that LTTE supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran has placed a tremendous burden on Balasingham the man described as theoretician of the Tigers. Only in this instance what is required of Balasingham is solid practical action that should provide worthwhile results within a specific time frame. The "Kodee Roopai" question therefore is whether Balasingham can fulfil "Thamby's" expectations and deliver the goods? Incidentally Balasingham, Appiah Annai and Baby Subramaniam are the only three personalities within the LTTE who can still address Prabhakaran by the earlier and more endearing term of affection "Thamby" (Younger Brother). Prabhakaran refers to Balasingham as "Annai" and his spouse Adele as "Akka".

In the first place there are a few matters to be clarified regarding the circumstances of Balasingham's stay in Britain. He and his Australian born wife are both British citizens carrying British passports. Both of them are not known to have been involved in any act of violence. As such it would not be possible legally to charge them directly with any act of terrorism in any international court. The Indian Central Bureau of Investigations had "Muttai" all over its face when it tried to "fix" 26 persons with the charge of terrorism under the dreaded TADA law. The Supreme Court overturned the decision of the lower court in a remarkable judgment.

So Britain despite the enactment of stringent anti-terrorism laws is not likely to take any action against the Balasingham duo. It is also useful to remember that these laws were introduced within the context of the splinter group "Real IRA" attempting to sabotage the famous "Good Friday" agreement entered into by the Sinn Fein. It seems to have met with limited

success. The new legislation was never intended to deal with terrorism in other countries though some provision could be applied in these cases too. What is necessary for this is tangible proof that terrorist activity is being planned and plotted on British soil. It is quite obvious that this type of activity is planned and executed on Sri Lankan soil. Indeed the thrust of the Rajiv Gandhi case against Prabhakaran and Pottu Amman was that the conspiracy was hatched by both in the "Jungles of Jaffna". Incidentally one tends to feel "ticklish" when the Indian media blares forth about the so-called conspiracy to assassinate Sonia Gandhi being plotted in the South African city of Durban.

What should also be realised that notwithstanding stringent anti-terrorism laws. There must be genuine intention and follow up action on the part of Western nations to apply these to the LTTE. Although there is an impression in Sri Lanka that the efforts of our foreign minister have caused a situation where every Western country is all out to penalise the LTTE the reality is somewhat different. Most governments though unhappy about the LTTE presence within their borders do not consider it a problem so "threatening" that harsh action should be taken. Besides it would be very difficult for these governments to obtain proof of illegal Tiger activity even if it desires to take action. Unless and until the Tamil Diaspora itself turns against the LTTE in a big way such scenario does not seem possible at present. The inability of the "Sinhala" polity to implement any meaningful proposal to resolve the crisis can only prolong this situation.

Another factor to be taken note of is that even in countries where at least some action has been taken against the LTTE, such action has not resulted in corresponding less Tiger activity. The only consequence has been that the Tigers have become less overtly visible. In India, despite the seven year-old ban clandestine Tiger activity relating to logistical requirements has continued. In Canada and Switzerland legal action against the erstwhile Tiger chieftains Suresh and Murali has not affected the LTTE. Also despite the most powerful nation in the world designating the LTTE as a terrorist organisation and proscribing it, the Tigers though maintaining a low profile are certainly not inactive in the USA. A major deficiency

on the part of the anti-terrorist laws is that the Tigers do not function under their own name, the LTTE. It has several front organisations. Of course if a Western Government was really determined to take action against the Tigers then it can do so. But most governments only engage in token action against the LTTE that gratifies Sri Lanka instead of pushing really hard.

Against this backdrop it is certainly a very remote possibility that the British government would take any punitive action against Balasingham. As stated earlier there is no "real" terrorist act that he can be charged with unless of course Sri Lanka tries to cook up a charge of conspiracy in the courts against him. Even then the retrospective factor would be in Balasingham's favour. The only charge on which Balasingham can be convicted in a Sri Lankan law court is "section five of the Prevention of Terrorism Act which deems the failure to inform authorities despite having knowledge of terrorism" an offence. In fact most of the unfortunate souls who languished for long periods in jails were ultimately convicted only on that charge. But the reality is that if this PTA provision is diligently applied then the entire Tamil population of the North-Eastern Province, substantial sections of the Muslim population and even quite a number of Sinhala people could become liable to be indicted under this provision. It would be unrealistic therefore to expect any British action against Balasingham at this juncture.

It would also be pertinent to scrutinize the response of Foreign Ministry spokesperson Ravinatha Ariyasinghe to the presence of Balasingham on British soil. His was a cautious "No Comment!" Apart from the fact that the Sri Lankan mission in London in spite of having an intelligence section was caught totally unawares of Balasingham's move to the UK there was another reason for Ravi's reaction too. It would not be in the best interests of Sri Lanka to create an unnecessary and possibly a futile controversy about Balasingham when the ostensible purpose of his shift to London is allegedly to promote peace. Even if peace moves do not eventually materialise a responsible and democratically elected government can ill afford to take up a pugnacious position against Balasingham. It just cannot be perceived as being standing in the way of

peace.

In that context it is important to note the fact that the LTTE when confronted by news reports of Balasingham's presence in London has not tried to hide it as in the earlier case where reports of a similar nature surfaced about the LTTE Deputy Political leader Karikalan few years ago. Instead the LTTE has chosen to admit it publicly over the most prestigious media institution of the World, the BBC. It has been disclosed openly that he will be in charge of the LTTE international secretariat despite the earlier precedent of the former International Chief Sathasivam Krishnakumar alias Kittu being served with a deportation notice by Britain. Kittu then was treated thus not for his political activity but for his alleged involvement in fund raising and military equipment purchases. Besides he was a Sri Lankan citizen who had obtained his initial visa for medical treatment to affix replacement for his lost leg.

Since Balasingham is a British passport holder the question of deportation will not arise. It may emerge, if ever, only if he commits a dastardly crime on British soil. It is indeed laughable to see puerile attempts to put Balasingham in "hot water" by stating that he will be involved in fund raising particularly of the "pound a day from every expatriate Tamil" variety. Those who make this allegation do not seem to be aware that the fund raising machinery of the LTTE is much more streamlined and efficient to enlist the services of Balasingham. Besides the delicate health of Balasingham will not allow him to do so even if he desires.

One possibility however is that the very physical presence of Balasingham in London will inspire Tamil Britons in particular and the Tamil Diaspora in general to make hefty donations to the cause. Balasingham cannot be made culpable for this. Incidentally Balasingham has never been known to have indulged in fund raising after 1983. Such "mundane" tasks are for the minnows. Also the division of labour within the LTTE structure will not permit him to do so.

There are a couple of trivial things to be cleared up too. The Balasingham duo is certainly not residing in any LTTE office as alleged in some quarters. It would attract attention that is most unwelcome to the Tigers at this

point of time. The Balasinghams have been residing in Britain for quite a while and have certainly accumulated a circle of affluent friends who can accommodate them. Balasingham hailing from Karaveddy has many close relatives in London who would only be too happy to oblige their famous kinsman. More importantly there is a vast array of LTTE supporters and well wishers in the greater London area who will consider it a personal privilege to provide hospitality to the feline couple. It is also quite obvious that the Balasinghams will not stay in one place for a lengthy period because of security considerations.

The other facetious piece of trivia relates to Balasingham being allegedly seen worshipping at a Hindu temple. The purveyors of this illogical fiction do not seem to have understood even the bare fact that Balasingham with his marxist leanings is a confirmed "rationalist". In fact he was an ardent disciple of the legendary Dr. Abraham Kovoor in his younger days at the "Virakesari" and British High Commission (Perhaps Dr. Carlo F may remember). Balasingham's rational beliefs also provided him a meeting point with the Dravidian followers of "Eevera" or "Thanthai Periyaar" when in Tamil Nadu. Even during his stay in the Northern Province from 1989 to 1999 "Bala Annai" was never seen attending a Hindu temple. Also let it not be forgotten that he was born and raised a devout Roman Catholic belonging to the Sacred Heart Church parish. Given the fact that ageing and health had reduced his "rational beliefs" it is more likely that he would have worshipped at Lourdes rather than at London Hindu temple.

Under these circumstances the reality seems to be that Balasingham would reside and even travel about Europe for a while. During which he would galvanise propaganda and resurrect negotiations. It is indeed a Himalayan task given the general deterioration that has set in among the upper LTTE echelons abroad. LTTE supreme Prabhakaran is apparently concerned and disappointed that his overseas branches have not been able to gain much propaganda mileage for the movement. In recent times the expatriate Tigers have not been able to get the negotiation process going despite Prabhakaran having announced in his great heroes day speech that the

"Peace Doors are open".

The chief drawback suffered by the Tigers abroad is the conspicuous absence of an able, high profile leader. The charisma and ability of Prabakaran is able to attract and administer the movement on native soil. From the LTTE point of view Kumaran Pathmanathan alias KP is executing a wonderful job in acquiring and transporting arms and ammunition to the organisation. But there is woeful inadequacy in overseas propaganda and political work. Kittu had the stature, drive and personality to co-ordinate and direct the overseas Tigers from 1989 to 1992.

Then the gap was filled by Thilagar from 1993 to 96. His performance too was found wanting and was subsequently recalled to the Wannu by Prabakaran. Since 1996 Velummayilum Manoharan an engineer by profession is chief of the overseas LTTE. Though Manoharan on whose "legal" behalf the US ban on the LTTE is being challenged in the US courts is a sincere Tiger his achievements too are negligible. The LTTE has not spread out widely in recent times and confines itself to the mono lingual Tamil Diaspora for the most part of its time. Although the motions of holding International Conferences in English and publishing English journals etc. are dutifully followed the real impact of these is hardly discernible. The LTTE has failed miserably to propagate their cause outside the Tamil milieu in recent times. One reason for this is that both the International and Country chiefs lack media savvy and political mobilisation techniques. They also cannot relate to the English oriented Tamil intelligentsia and professional classes. A Tamil elite non-proficient in English is yet to emerge.

The greatest minus point of Mano and most LTTE country chiefs however is that they were never proper members of the LTTE at any time. They lack interactive experience with their leader and do not possess an insight into his thinking. Also they lack an imaginatively bold and creative approach to problems. This was a quality that Kittu possessed in abundance and Thilagar lacked. What is needed therefore by the overseas LTTE is an overall leader who has the full authority of the LTTE leader behind him. He should be a person who is fully aware of the reali-

ties on ground and also know how Prabakaran's mind works. In that respect Balasingham fits the bill ideally. This writer recalls a conversation with former PLOTE leader Uma Maheswaran in the eighties where the one time chief of the pre-1980 LTTE said that Bala Annai's plus point was that he knew exactly how Prabakaran's mind worked and anticipated it in on many occasions. Or course Uma said this in derogatory terms but nevertheless the point made is worth recollecting.

Another related deficiency on the part of LTTE propaganda abroad is the lack of an authentic, well known personality to spearhead it. This has caused the Tigers to fall back on a motley crew of propagandists like Kumar Ponnambalam of the Tamil Congress, ex-EPRLF member Sathanandan, former Rupavahini Chairman Vasantharajah, TULF MP Pararajasingham etc. While not wishing to assess their performance what must be pointed out is that the propaganda from an LTTE perspective itself becomes "weak" when these personalities are involved. Of course some of these persons sound more "Tigeristic" than Prabakaran himself when it comes to pompous pronouncements. Yet the visible lack of Tiger authenticity leaves much to be desired. Again in that respect Balasingham has the right credentials to lead and direct the propaganda drive. In fact he would be of greater utilitarian value to the LTTE in the West rather than in the jungles of Wannu.

Although there has been no public reference to it by the LTTE it is the considered opinion of this writer that an important item on Balasingham's agenda would be the setting up of an LTTE political wing overseas. Given the impossibility of a Sinn Fein type of LTTE outfit functioning in Sri Lanka this seems the best bet for the Tigers. Prabakaran who dissolved in 1991 the political front set up under his then deputy Mahathaya may have been reluctant to set up a political wing abroad earlier. But now the hard school of experience may have taught him that such a formation is essential even if some of the "morons" overseas do not realise it. But it can be surmised that Prabakaran will not have any qualms about Balasingham setting up such an outfit abroad. Again Balasingham can attract many able Tamils standing aloof of the Tigers to become part of this

political wing. Of course any LTTE supporter overseas entertaining notions about being a minister of a shadow "Eelam" cabinet abroad after a unilateral declaration of independence is likely to have his desire unrequited for a long, long time.

It is also relevant to note the timing and procedure of Balasingham's entry to Britain. Although he went out of Mullaithivu clandestinely on an LTTE ship the circumstances of his ultimate entry to Britain were quite open. While not suggesting any prearranged manoeuvre it becomes necessary to point out that there was little apprehension on the LTTE over adverse action being taken by Britain. This is because Britain will not like to jeopardise any move for peace in the context of the former Minister Liam Fox's moves in Sri Lanka to promote a bipartisan approach. The Labour government's primary concern in South Asia is certainly Kashmir. But it will not be averse to playing a facilitator role in Sri Lankan peace talks if called upon to do so.

So too would a number of European Countries. Even the United States that has banned the LTTE will revoke it and become intermediary if required. The chief reason for this is that as far as the West is concerned the Kumaratunga's war for peace strategy has failed to bring about peace. The collective Western wisdom does not entertain any hope that the Tigers could be marginalised militarily or politically without a Sinhala consensus on a settlement. There is grudging acceptance that there is no wishing away the LTTE. Under these circumstances Western nations would like the government to enter into talks with the dominant Tamil entity, the Tigers. The Tiger hierarchy abroad has on more than one occasion indicated willingness on their part to negotiate. But Western leaders do not attach much credibility to these persons and so have responded lukewarmly.

The main reason being that it has now been more or less established that no LTTE leader abroad can take any important and binding decision in this regard. It is known that only Prabakaran can take such a decision and that his overseas representatives do not have a clue as to what and how their leader thinks. It is in that respect that the advent of Balasingham can help revive the peace process. Having the full author-

(continued on next page)

Political Prospects After PC Elections

D B.S Jeyaraj

The Peoples Alliance led by Chandrika Kumaratunga has registered a victory at the Southern Provincial Council Election. The party obtained 25 initially and then a further 2 bonus seats thus making its tally 27 out of a total strength of 55. The chief opposition United National Party has 21 and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna 7. With this win the PA has nominally made a clean sweep of coming out first in all Provincial Councils in the predominantly Sinhala areas. As reported in these columns earlier the PA has an absolute majority in the North Central Provincial Council; it has cobbled together a fragile lead with Ceylon Workers Congress support in the Uva and Sabaragamuwa Provinces. In the Cen-

tral Province, support by the CWC as well as the Up Country Peoples Front has given it comfortable majority.

But in the Western Province it has not been able to command a majority. It has formed a minority administration there and faces crisis if and when the UNP and JVP decide to act together and pull it down. It faces a similar problem in the Southern Province too where in spite of the PA coming first the overall verdict is a hung Council. The PA is one seat short of a majority. Again it is possible that the PA administration could be toppled if the UNP and JVP forge a common action plan.

The JVP however is currently of the position that it will not have any truck with either the PA "Montagues" or the

UNP "Capulets". A plague on both your houses is the credo for the moment. The JVP will extend support to the PA administrations on an issue by issue basis it has been announced. So temporarily at least the PA administrations in the six Provincial Councils can function without any major hinderance.

Five factors however have emerged quite clearly. Firstly the "Sinhala" vote banks of both the PA and UNP are more or less intact. There has not been much erosion of both at the expense of each other. One reason for this is that there were no major national issues canvassed at these elections. There was for instance no reference worth noting about the resolution of the ethnic problem except for Kumaratunga's routine reference to the merits of her "package". The UNP did not refer to this issue at all.

Secondly it can be discerned that notwithstanding the Sinhala vote banks not suffering much reduction there is a visible decrease of votes for the PA and corresponding increase for the UNP against the backdrop of the 1994 General and Presidential Elections. This is attributed to the swing of the minority community votes from the PA to the UNP. The importance of the minority vote can be seen very clearly in the Upcountry and Colombo areas.

Thirdly it is clear that the JVP is now emerging as the new third force in the Sinhala areas. It has attracted much of the new votes of the youth. Both the traditional Left as well as the Sinhala Right have been superseded by the JVP. If it wanted to the JVP could have formed viable joint administrations with the PA in four provinces. The party has decided against playing the Kingmaker role at least for the time being.

Fourthly there is also a growing component of voters who seem disillusioned with the entire system. Apart from the Southern Province all other Provinces had an unusual number of spoilt votes. Likewise there was a conspicuous drop in the numbers who voted. The exact cause or causes for this trend is yet to be ascertained. But all signals point to a serious crisis for democracy if voters continue to lose respect for the prevailing electoral system.

Fifthly the situation seems quite

(Continued from page 6)

ity of Prabakharan he can function autonomously and take crucial decisions in this regard. This writer would also hazard a guess that Balasingham would have been authorised to suspend if necessary the preconditions of demanding the army to withdraw to pre-war positions. In that context Balasingham will be perceived as an authentic substitute for Prabakharan and will carry much credibility.

In spite of all this genuine enthusiasm displayed for talks there is always the nagging doubt whether Prabakharan is really ready emotionally to give up his dream of Tamil Eelam. The government will no doubt be subjected to a lot of pressure to restart talks with the aid consortium countries in the future. Reinforcing this pressure would be the UNP position that talks be initiated with the LTTE, the efforts of the business community and the exercises of the inter-religious group. Having a point, man like Balasingham available will greatly facilitate preliminary endeavours for talks. Once the modalities are finalised a Tiger delegation is likely to venture out.

It is a moot point whether the do-

mestic compulsions of Kumaratunga will allow her to opt for peace talks when none of her plans on the politico-military front have materialised so far. There will naturally be resistance by the military too. For no one would like to sacrifice the territorial advantages gained at the altar of negotiations. But what must be realised is that a democratic government cannot spurn the offer of a peace negotiation provided of course it is credible. Thus if Balasingham is able to muster international support behind the LTTE for initiating talks then the government will be constrained to accept it. Nevertheless given past experience one cannot see the government making any territorial concession before a tangible settlement is reached.

So Balasingham will be the cynosure of all eyes in the near future. Whatever the intentions it remains to be seen whether Balasingham can convince the Western nations into backing a fresh initiative for peace. Another problem is his health condition. Still the coming months would demonstrate whether this diabetic in his mid sixties can deliver the goods or not? ●

dicey in terms of the prospects of the UNP. Though the fact that the PA came first in all six councils seems at first glance a terrible defeat for the UNP, a closer perusal of the vote differences indicates that the UNP can by no means be written off that simply. There seems to be a widely believed notion that Kumaratunga is more charismatic than Ranil Wickremasinghe and that the latter is not assertive.

As such many feel that Kumaratunga will romp home the winner at the Presidential Stakes. The PC results however raise serious doubts on this count. Judging by the results it looks like Kumaratunga will gain a fragile lead in the Southern areas. She may also enhance that lead in the Presidential elections. But if the Provincial Election results are a yardstick to measure future polls it does seem patently clear that the next Parliament too would be a hung Parliament. Also Kumaratunga herself may not get 50% of the Votes in the Presidential election results in the first count, and consequently may be compelled to face a second count. In any event if the current southern trends continues, whoever wins either in Parliamentary or Presidential polls, neither will obtain an "absolute" victory.

The crucial difference however would be the significant minority vote. If and when a national election is held for Parliament or the Presidency, the people in the Eastern and Northern Provinces will be eligible to vote. In that context the Tamil and Muslim votes may provide decisive effect in influencing the final verdict provided of course the Sinhala vote base is more or less equally divided as at present. Even the minority votes in the Southern areas can be of strategic importance in this regard. Under these circumstances a vital development in coming months would be the conduct of the PA and the UNP on this issue. Both parties who refrained from harping on the ethnic problem during the Provincial Council Elections in the Sinhala areas will be compelled to address the problem more openly before elections. It would be interesting to see how developments along these lines occur.

In the first place a question that needs to be answered first is which election would come next? The Parliament or Presidential Elections? Unless something occurs unexpectedly it seems very

likely that the Preseidential Elections will be held first. There are three reasons for this. When Premadasa won the Presidential Elections in 1988 his majority was very slender. On that basis the Parliamentary elections that followed should have registered a hung Parliament verdict. But because of the impact Premadasa was able to produce by virtue of him being elected President, the UNP obtained a comfortable majority. In 1994 D B Wijetunga held elections to Parliament first making an erroneous calculation. The PA won with a slender lead and Kumaratunga became Prime Minister. Again she was able to use that position to inspire a record voter turn out to get herself elected as President.

As far as the current situation is concerned the PA lead over UNP in Parliamentary stakes is very flimsy. In fact the situation is quite dicey and the UNP may be able to do better and even edge out the PA by a seat or two. Besides the PA does not know as yet who its Prime Ministerial Candidate is going to be. A battle to succeed the ageing Mrs Bandaranaike as Prime Minister at this juncture could result in deep divisions within the party. Facing Parliamentary Elections in such a scenario can only spell disaster for the PA. Therefore the PA would consider it prudent to go in for Presidential Elections first.

The second reason for having the Presidential elections first is that the PA candidate Kumaratunga is perceived as the favourite as opposed to Wickremasinghe of the UNP. The calculation then is that Kumaratunga competes and wins the Presidency. Bolstered by that victory Parliament is dissolved and elections held. The PA victory at the Presidency would help it to win the Parliamentary elections with a viable majority. After her Presidential term is almost over Kumaratunga will seek to restructure the Constitution and do away with the Executive President. She will then become Prime Minister with full powers as in the case of the Westminster model.

The third reason for having the Presidential elections first would be to ensure that the minority parties do not change allegiance. In a Parliamentary election it is in the interests of minority parties like the Ceylon Workers Congress, the Up Country Peoples

Front, the Tamil United Liberation Front, the Eelam Peoples Democratic Party, and the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress to strike out independently instead of contesting as a junior partner with the PA. This autonomy of action may lead to a decline in PA votes as well as create a situation where the parties may arrive at an understanding with the UNP. If Presidential elections are held first then these parties would be compelled to hitch their wagons to the Chandrika star. It is in the parochial interests of these Parties to cling on to the government. After Kumaratunga wins the Presidency again she could "persuade" these parties to stick along with her in the Parliamentary polls too.

Thus it does seem reasonable to conclude that the Presidential Elections are going to be held first. Also Election Year for both the Presidency as well as Parliament is very likely to be the year 2000. Given the narrowness of the Sinhala electorate's verdict in the six Southern Provincial Councils both parties will definitely focus on the ethnic crisis to attract that voter-swing necessary for complete victory. It has to be emphasised again that in 1994 the Kumaratunga phenomenon was able to claim a resounding victory as a result of the minority vote and vice versa the UNP debacle was accentuated also as a result. Chandrika's platform of peace saw her win with ease. But now events have overtaken whatever promise she held out then. As a result the situation is somewhat a reversal of roles.

Though the UNP has remained vague and evasive on the devolution proposal package of the PA, its leader Wickremasinghe is perceived by many Tamils as not being as aggressive on the issue of the ongoing war against the LTTE while Kumaratunga is projected as pursuing the war with a vengeance. While remaining non-committal and evasive on the issue of devolution, the plus point for the UNP is that it has not whipped up a campaign against it. It is this abdication of what has been seen as the traditional role of the opposition that has led to the mushrooming of neo-fascist Sinhala outfits determined to abort a settlement. But though the UNP is to be commended for not ganging up with such groups, the party has certainly not been acting very responsibly either. It has performed bizarre somersaults like stating it stood for sharing

power at the centre instead of the periphery on the one hand and then also calling for asymmetrical power sharing for the North-East. At the same time it has let its objection to crucial elements of the devolution package be known albeit on a low key.

Though not strident in its opposition the UNP's objection to proposals such as changing Sri Lanka from a Unitary State to Union of Regions, on land, policing, obtaining foreign loans etc makes the party's proclamations as to its commitment to devolution quite meaningless. But the paradoxical aspect to the whole thing is that despite very clear indications of the UNP stonewalling on the devolution proposals it has been able to attract Tamil votes more than the PA. The Provincial and Local Authority polls held in the recent past bear testimony to this galling prospect.

The main reason for this is the problems faced by the Tamils owing to the ongoing war. While the North and East bears the brunt of the conflict, Tamils living elsewhere in Colombo and the Up Country have also been subject to much harrassment. The allegation is that the government has displayed a callous disregard for the well being of these people in spite of numerous representations. It is also said that no other government has resorted to the savage method of depriving food and medicine to a beleaguered people to the extent the PA has done. The ongoing war also has uprooted thousands of Tamils and turning them into displaced internal refugees. The government is also accused of promoting structures of Sinhala colonization in predominantly Tamil areas thereby drastically altering the demographic pattern of the traditional Tamil homeland. The total lack of commitment by the PA to either implement the Tamil Official Language provisions or remedy the slow judicial process in dealing with the innocent Tamils arrested under emergency and prevention of terrorism laws are also issues that have turned Tamil opinion against the government. In such a situation the government's frequent pronouncements about merits of its devolution package does not make any impact with the Tamil voter at all.

Besides the government has not made any constructive effort to make its proposals a reality. There is a clearly transparent absence of effort to reach a

bipartisan consensus with the UNP in spite of the British initiative undertaken by Liam Fox. Instead of pursuing a peace option what seems more visible is a determination on its part to teach the LTTE that spurned its peace offer a bitter lesson. The perception that the government is engaged in a war of attrition against the Tamils under the guise of fighting the LTTE appears to be widespread. Sadly the causes for the current round of conflict and constraints faced by Kumaratunga are not remembered. Instead the harsh consequences affecting Tamils are felt deeply. Further compounding these feelings against the Kumaratunga regime is the marked reluctance of the collective Tamil psyche to entertain or articulate any dissenting thought or feeling about the negative role played by the LTTE in this pathetic scenario.

The UNP is cashing in on this Tamil sentiment. Wickremasinghe has been overtly critical of the pursuance of the war. He has stated in Parliament that the government was using food as a weapon of war in restricting supplies to the Wannu. His MP Jayalath Jayewardene is undertaking many humanitarian ventures that find favour with Tamils. Above all Wickremasinghe's trump card is his insistence that a fresh round of negotiations should be initiated with the LTTE. This certainly strikes a responsive chord among a large number of Tamils. Two salient questions are ignored here. First - Is the LTTE really keen to negotiate genuinely within the parameters of a United Sri Lanka? Second - What can the UNP, that opposes even the government's diluted version of its Devolution proposals, offer to the Tamil Tigers? But these issues are overlooked in the desire to bring an immediate end to the war. There can be no doubt that the overwhelming opinion among the Sri Lankan Tamils in particular and the minorities in general is that the war causing great hardship should be suspended. Kumaratunga's offer of a devolution package is merely a "pie in the Sky" proposal that lacks credibility right now.

The fact that such a package if implemented with UNP support could provide a lasting framework to work out a reasonable solution in the long run is forgotten. Instead the short term prospect of peace through talks with the

Tigers as held out by Wickremasinghe is more alluring. "Life is a game of short runs and in the long run we are all dead."

Against this backdrop Kumaratunga's options seem limited. She can present the package in Parliament and pass it by a simple majority. Without UNP support it would not get a two thirds majority and therefore will not become law. The only possible benefit would be that she could expose the UNP in the eyes of some Tamil voters at least. The Tamil and Muslim parties supporting her will then be happy at least. But on the other hand even a gesture like that will not wean votes away from the UNP Tamil vote-base. The adverse consequences of the war will prevent them from voting for her on the basis of a package merely presented to Parliament alone. But by presenting the package she runs the risk of losing Sinhala voters. A tragic fact unfolding now is the accretion of Sinhala hardline support to the PA because of the "successful" way it is prosecuting a war against the Tigers, the adverse effects of which are felt by the Tamil people in general. So presenting the package could detract from her increasing Sinhala base while there may not be corresponding support as expected from the Tamils. So the package being presented in Parliament now will not benefit the PA.

Under these circumstances it seems likely that Kumaratunga will prosecute the war further to gain more and more territory until the Presidential elections without presenting the package beforehand. Even if she does not attract much minority votes she would hope to win with preponderant Sinhala votes. Of course an "unknown factor" is how the armed forces will "influence" votes in the North - East in her favour. If and when she wins the Presidency she may then present the devolution package in Parliament thus hoping to win a new lease of support among minorities. Such a move could help keep the minority parties with her. Then if the PA wins well in the Parliamentary stakes the UNP could be pressurised to support an "Amended" devolution package in Parliament. That then seems to be the most possible scenario after the Provincial Council Elections. But then there is always the LTTE factor to upset the best laid calculations. ●

The Tragedy of Vanni Civilians and Total Militarisation

The following is the text of a report in the Information Bulletin No. 20 released on May 19, 1999 by the University Teachers for Human Rights(Jaffna)

The Vanni has been the focus of war news from Sri Lanka ever since the LTTE importuned a large number of civilians in Jaffna into the Vanni at the end of 1995 and engineered a humanitarian crisis. As the result of effective lobbying no doubt, the UN Secretary General, Mr. Boutros Ghali expressed his concern about the situation there and the Vanni was thrust into international attention. The Government therefore was obliged to be seen as caring for the people there by providing food and medicine, while the LTTE tried all means to mould the civilians and civilian life to service their military needs. The Vanni became thus the last fortress of the Liberation Tigers. The Government on the other hand while verbally espousing concern for the civilians, has been subtly applying pressures to make life difficult for them, forcing scores of thousands to leave the Vanni and move into refugee camps. For example essentials for a farming community such as kerosene, rope, fertiliser and basic medicines for a malarial region and even panadol were either banned or always in short supply. The LTTE for its part always administered supplies sent by the Government keeping its military needs in view and profited from encouraging black-marketeering, artificially aggravating shortages.

On school-children and the young there was always heavy pressure to join the LTTE. The LTTE's military successes at Mullaitivu and Killinochchi and even halting the northward military advance had nothing in them for the civilians. Their children were turned into cheap cannon fodder in a war that was only bringing progressive ruin on the Tamil people. In the so-called cleared, liberated or Government controlled areas, an oppressive and debilitating regime has been imposed on the Tamils on the pretext of security considerations. The Government has evaded world-wide censure only by not having these offending regulations on the statute book. They are imposed covertly, illegally and administratively. By so doing they are made all the more worse by being arbitrary, while making legal redress impractical for the ordinary man.

A graphic illustration of the fate of Vanni folk is the refugee camps in Vavuniya. Confined to these camps the inmates are allowed out for a few hours at a time after obtaining a pass. They cannot leave Vavuniya for another part of the country as the means of obtaining clearance are way beyond them. These once hard-working farmers are now idling in camps, living on meagre government handouts, with no proper schooling for their children, under conditions utterly ruinous to both community and individuals. This has now gone on for close upon three years. The camps being under government control with a police guard, the NGOs are not allowed to intervene directly. At Poonthottam camp with 500 inmates for instance, the thatch roof of their camp was in tatters. A refugee said that he did not bathe for three days as he had been sitting in the rain. To the rest of the country and to the Tamils abroad vocally supporting the LTTE, these people have by now become "out of sight, out of mind".

Where the State is concerned, subjecting Tamils to such a regime has meant rampant corruption and a degradation of state functions and state machinery. It is a worrying comment on the Sri Lankan State that by its inability to address security concerns imaginatively and intelligently, keeping democratic ideals in view, it has been moving in the direction of conjuring up images of apartheid, an arbitrary form of it without legal sanction.

When the Vanni saga began in November 1995 with the UN Secretary General's expression of concern, it passed off as a false alarm after it became widely known that the LTTE had forced the people out of Jaffna. But today the alarm is a very real one and it should not be too late for the people when the world reacts.

Recent Developments

The Army halted its northward advance along the A9 trunk road and changed tactics after losing Killinochchi last September with heavy casualties to an LTTE onslaught using cannon and suicidal waves of fighters. The losses among the LTTE too were heavy at 700 or more killed and compared with the Army's losses of considerably more than 1,000. Both sides were in crisis and the LTTE launched an ambitious and somewhat heavy-handed recruitment drive. But its success was very limited.

Each of the two sides had lost between 2000 and 4000 killed during engagements in the Vanni. In deploying about 4 to 5 thousand cadre for the attack on Killinochchi, the LTTE thinned down its defences at Mankulam, which it had defended for several months, enabling the Army to capture it with ease. Such indications suggest that the present strength of the LTTE is below 10,000.

In the meantime from last December the Army adopted tactics where it had surprise on its side and has by now taken control of considerable territory on either side of the A9 between Vavuniya and Mankulam. By taking over the famed Roman Catholic shrine of Madhu which also functioned as a UNHCR supervised refugee camp and the surrounding agricultural region, a large segment of the Vanni population has been brought under Army control. It is now estimated that about 125,000 civilians in the Vanni have come under Army control and 150,000 to 200,000 live under LTTE control. A number well above 50,000 have gone to India and a smaller number to Jaffna, over the last 3 years.

The recent operations have been conducted with hardly any loss of life. In villages people woke up to find themselves among the Army. Farming villages not under Army control too hope that the Army would move in, in a like manner. The immediate reasons for them are economic and the protection of children. Under Army control they hope to obtain Rs. 1,200 for a bushel of paddy instead of the Rs. 500 the LTTE pays them. Apart from drastic reductions in prices of food and fuel, the cost of hiring a tractor to prepare an acre of land for sowing would drop from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 2,500. Even rope for tying cattle has presently to be purchased in the black market for smuggled goods. Their present disposition is to do with tiredness from what both sides have very unreasonably imposed on them and has nothing to do with any love for the Government.

On the whole the civilians are relieved that the recent military operations passed without causing them much hurt or damage. But there is anxiety about future uncertainties. They were tired of the regime to which the LTTE had subjected them. Food

rations to displaced families though inadequate, became regular after the Army take-over. Necessities such as batteries, milk food and medicines are available at normal cost. But for the refugees who were displaced from Killinochchi, Jaffna and other areas where military operations are taking place, it is going to be rising frustration with oppressive regimentation of a different kind.

These refugees are now without means, living on dry rations. Earlier many of them formed the mainstay of farm labour in the surrounding areas. For example Adampan was a flourishing agricultural area which had its harvest in mid-April. But the refugees from Madhu who used to work in those fields have this time been prevented from going there by the Army because it is still under LTTE control. Apart from them those who ran small shops, were involved in the fish trade, or used to fetch items for sale from the Government controlled area, are now out of work.

Out of sheer desperation many children and even teenage girls started queuing up with plates outside the Army camps at mealtimes. This gave room for rumours placing individuals at risk. When the Army took over Madhu in late March, the civilians had to register for dry rations. The Army made an announcement calling upon "Maaveerar" (Great Heroes - LTTE men and women who died in action) families to register first. Taken in an unguarded moment, several of them went forward and were casually registered without anything being given away. Today the Army is said to be getting much information from persons who once had ties with the LTTE.

Derivation, Hysteria and Social Disintegration

With large sections of the Vanni population coming under Army control, the LTTE took measures to retain some of the

weaker sections under its control. Recruiting among them is easier and their presence ensured relief supplies. Many of the fisherfolk from Jaffna who were displaced to the Vanni during the 1995 Exodus had settled comfortably over the years at Vidatthalthivu and Pappamoddaï on the Mannar mainland coast. Early this year the Army indicated its new strategy by a westward move from A9. Just before the second move towards Madhu in late March, the LTTE asked the refugee fisherfolk in Vidatthalthivu and Pappamoddaï to remove themselves northwards to Kalliady, Illuppaikkadavai, Vellankulam and further north.

The LTTE is thus squeezing them into a smaller area where conditions are difficult. Their earnings have dropped as they now face increased risk and harassment from naval patrols operating out of Karainagar. There is also a problem of water-shortage in their congested new habitations in the villages mentioned above. Along with an inadequate supply, water has to be purchased at Rs. 2/= for a pot. The provision of dry rations to the displaced in several areas is very irregular for a variety of reasons, including a reduction of supply by the Government, the LTTE taking a share and disruption of administrative arrangements. The people have heard the Government claiming over the radio that they are being given rations monthly. But in the Adampan/Parappankandal area for example, rations have been given only once since the beginning of this year.

Vast numbers of people in the area north of Illuppaikkadavai/Kalliady are suffering from repeated bouts of malaria. The proportion is more than 50% according to some observers. This condition can be overcome with proper medical care. For permanent relief from the commoner "Vivax" variety, a commonly used treatment involves a supervised dosage of "Chloroquin" and "Premaquin" taken over a cycle of 8 weeks. These drugs



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too are in short supply. But these people, in addition to not having had proper nutrition for 9 years and having undergone displacement for 4 years, are made to endure malaria on top of their vastly reduced resistance. Almost everyone is physically very weak, having a skeletal appearance.

Shocking Events

Amidst this deprivation there are shocking events, the like of which have not been heard of in this country for more than 150 years. These have followed the new displacement into the Illuppaikkadavai, Vellankulam areas. The parents of a new born babe quarrelled over the father's inability to find the money for purchasing milk food for the infant. Then they, together, killed the baby. In another incident the parents became so desperate without cash, that they poisoned themselves and the children to death.

There have been several cases, two of them well-established, where even in a generally impoverished environment, persons have been killed on lonely jungle tracks for their money. In one incident it was made to appear that the murdered person had hanged himself.

In Jeyapuram, close to Mulankavil, a displaced family originally from Jaffna arrived, desperately hungry and without money. They sought relief by digging up some wild yam, which they did not know was poisonous. The entire family perished.

Medical and educational services are in a state of breakdown. Even in a relatively better off area such as Adampan, there was only one clinic served by an RMP (Registered Medical Practitioner) who was trying to leave. Antibiotics are not available. There is no panadol in hospital, but it is available in the black-market for Rs. 5 a tablet. Due to the absence of refrigeration facilities, infants have not been given their routine vaccine that are given in the rest of the country. It has been suggested that the MOH Mannar could arrange for monthly visits to the area with the vaccines carried in boxes of ice.

An incident which illustrates the attitudes of both the Army and the LTTE took place at Uyilankulam on 17th April. An ICRC convoy carrying food was crossing into the LTTE controlled area. Some policemen at the final checkpoint may have moved forward a little into the "no-man's land" as the convoy passed. The LTTE opened fire and killed three of them. Technicalities aside it was an ungracious gesture, considering that it was government food coming to them. The Army closed the entry point for about 12 days preventing all movement, demanding a guarantee that the LTTE will not do it again. It is understood that agreement was reached.

But recently the ground situation has changed and the LTTE has removed its permanent establishments in the area. Consequently it has become easier for civilians to cross over into the Army controlled area. The LTTE sentries withdraw north and come to their checkpoint near Uyilankulam (i.e. Kattankulam) only at 11.00 AM. Many civilians get to the Army point before then.

The Drive for Militarisation

Amidst this anarchy of crime, starvation, sickness and hopelessness, the LTTE intensified its recruitment drive. There was full-day propaganda blaring through loudspeakers, street dramas and interruption of schools, playing on despondency and hopelessness. The Vanni would become anything but the pride and glory of the Tamil people, the LTTE said when it evacuated wholesale the citizens of Jaffna into the Vanni in November 1995. It used to be the boast of LTTE propaganda that areas under its control were virtually free of crime and discontent. Now in the Vanni the tragic, inhuman reality behind fascist

rhetoric was being laid bare and the LTTE could not care less.

The LTTE had some success in Vidaththalthivu where in the prevailing confusion amidst evacuation and uncertainty, some joined its ranks out of frustration and desperation. But recruitment was not so successful in the Adampan/Parappankandal area because the people were not so despondent and the LTTE had evacuated everything of theirs some weeks ahead in anticipation of the Army moving in.

In a school having classes up to the O Level (Year I) in Mulankavil, a teacher took his whole class of about 20 and joined the LTTE. The children were quickly removed away from the area so as to put off distraught parents.

During April the LTTE moved towards militarisation of the civilian population. All shop keepers, teachers and students were compelled to take compulsory training. The first few days involved physical exercises. In the Mannar mainland area the training was staggered. After Mulankavil and Puthukkudiyiruppu, the training of shop keepers in the Adampan/Parappankandal area began towards the end of April. Training in this area was disrupted by the LTTE pulling out its structures.

The purpose of those who received the first stage of their training in the Mannar area appears to be that of posting them as sentries to inform the LTTE of fresh military advances. This would help the LTTE to direct its artillery. Rumours had been afloat that the compulsory training will be implemented at all levels to include village headmen and AGAs. These new orders were received with widespread resentment. For shop keepers who absented themselves, it meant closure of their shops as punishment. The LTTE verbally told those who resisted that they do not deserve to live in Tamil Eelam and should move out of the Vanni.

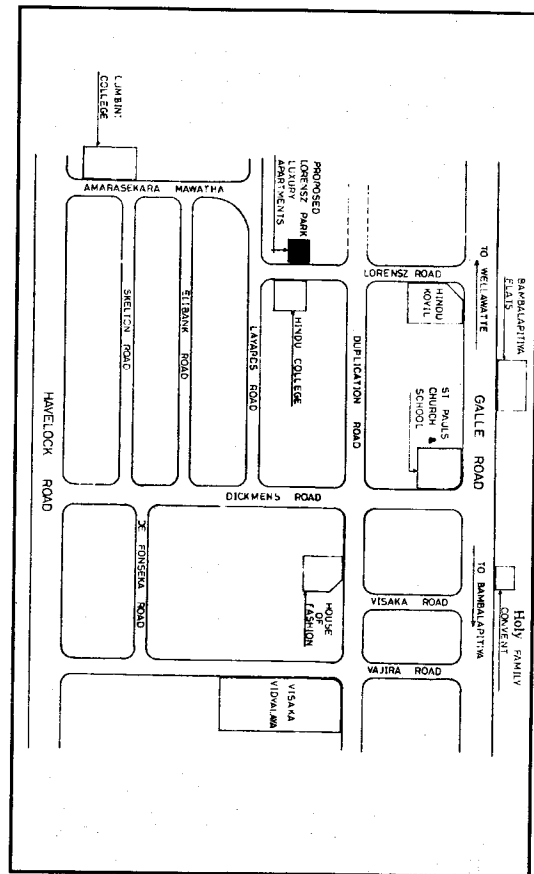
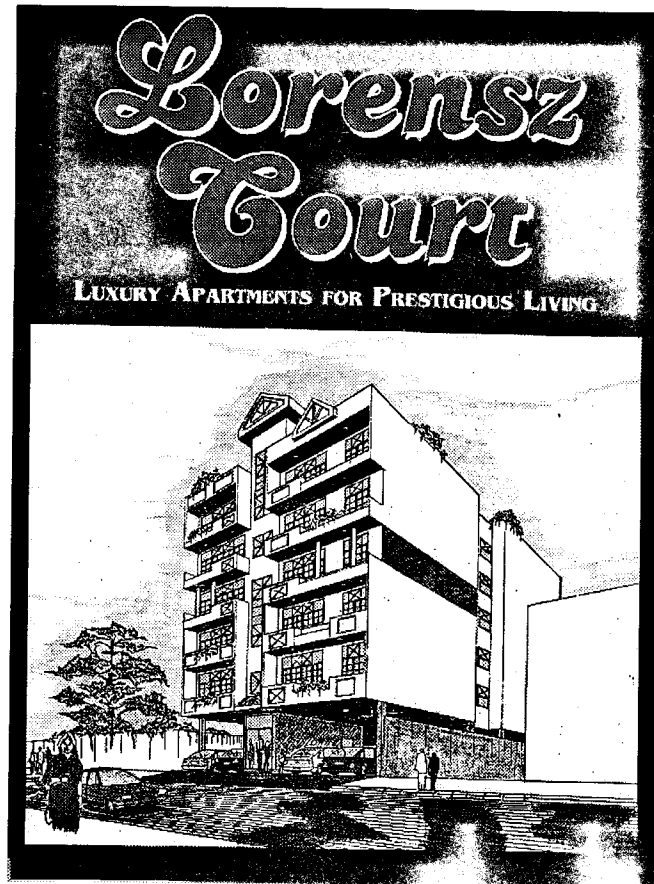
A fisheries society in Vidaththalthivu was told by the LTTE that they must all come for training. One member objected on grounds of personal conviction. The LTTE replied that he must then leave Tamil Eelam. The member said that the LTTE must then give him a letter saying that he was forced to leave, if not, when he returns, he may like the expelled Muslims find it difficult to prove his claims. The situation then becoming unsettled due to Army movements, the LTTE left them alone for the present.

These moves to forcibly induct civilians made them apprehensive of coming under Army control. That the LTTE is anxious is clear. In his May Day speech in Mallavi, Karikalana, a senior leader, said that their Leader Prabhakaran would surely find a strategy to push the Army all the way south to Vavuniya. In Koddadichcholai in the East, a woman leader said that they are proud to observe May Day despite all the difficulties.

Signs of disillusionment within the LTTE have also been evident for some time. When LTTE cadre in the Vanni visit their homes during a break riding a motor cycle or driving a pick-up, it poses an attraction for the children to join up. But the older intimate friends in the village of the visiting cadre are often told, "Don't come into this organisation. What you see from outside is not the reality inside. We too are waiting for a chance to leave".

Because of attempts to induct school children into the LTTE's military machine, parents are reluctant to send their children to school and school attendance had dropped to an estimated 20%.

Except for trying to move the refugees and their equipment out, the LTTE's attentions in what was left to them of the Mannar District were half hearted, as the Army had started reconnaissance moves and were expected to bring the entire district under their control. Their more systematic and far-reaching attentions were in North Vanni - the Killinochchi and Mullaitivu areas.



Lorensz Court on Lorensz Road, Bambalapitiya, Colombo 5, Sri Lanka is ideally located in close proximity to leading schools such as Hindu College, Hindu Ladies College, Ramanathan Hindu College, St. Peter's College, Muslim Ladies College, Holy Family Convent, Visaka Vidyalaya, Lumbini College, Bedvior International College etc; also Temples, Churches, Mosques and shopping complexes such as Majestic City, Unity Plaza with easy access to Galle Road, Duplication Road, Havelock Road etc.

The court comprises separate 2 and 3 Bed Roomed Air Conditioned units with lifts, granite flooring for living and dining areas, Spanish tiles for bedrooms and common area. In the bathrooms, tiles and sanitary ware are from Italy. Exterior doors and windows are of powder coated aluminium frames with tinted glass.

A few of these apartments costing Rs 4.9 M for 3 bedroomed and Rs 4.2 M for 2 bedroomed ones are still available on easy payment plans.

For further particulars please contact in **Colombo** Mr. C.S.S. Haran, 152/8 Prince Street, Colombo 11. Tel: 00941 472238, 00941 472239. Fax: 00941 472347.

In **London** Mr. K. Sivanesan, Flat A, Barons Court House, Barons Court Road, London W14 9DS. Tel/Fax: 0171 386 0924.

North Vanni: Towards Total Militarisation

Although the Army was pushed back about 3 miles north from Killinochchi town last September, it took control of the Oddusuddan sector in December and is now within 14 miles of Mullaitivu town. This also entailed enormous displacement northward. For many it meant loss of livelihood and great difficulty in getting rations. Farmers who fled from their homes and fields in the area around Oddusuddan got into very desperate straits. One family for example sowed on rented land in Murippu and the crops were destroyed by floods. Closer to the Army controlled area, there is occasional shelling by the Army, such as in Tharmapurari, where several displaced schools are also situated. Those travelling out of the eastern sector have to pass through Vattakachchi, which is subject to shelling to Murikandy and then to Uyilankulam near Mannar. They are advised not to travel alone in case of shell injury.

A traveller met a seven year old girl pushing a bicycle and her father walking behind. He had no strength having starved the previous day. For these once prosperous people, even a cup of plain tea has become a luxury. Although education is in disarray, some schools have done unexpectedly well due to displaced teachers from Jaffna, with one student in Mullaitivu scoring 4 As at the A Levels.

Amidst this anarchy and hardship which would only increase with time, the LTTE has launched an ambitious programme of militarisation. We describe below the first stage.

Schools

Anbu, the LTTE leader in charge of schools, has ordered that all school children from year 9 (13 years) and above must as the first step undergo 3 weeks of physical training for 1 hour a day during school hours. This training is conducted by LTTE cadre or by young teachers who have been given a month's training by the LTTE.

This will be followed by the second step which comprises 2 weeks of weapons training. First they would be given three types of guns - M 16, AK 47 & G 3 - along-with grenades, and would be taught how to dismantle and reassemble them, and as to how many bullets each gun could fire and their killing range. Next they would be trained how to take up positions, and move under cover from one position to another.

The same training procedure has to be followed by the teachers paralely, but after school hours. The lady teachers have been ordered to stitch T-shirts and slacks for purposes of training.

Having heard rumours about compulsory training, most parents kept their children away from school when schools reopened in April. But children were continued to be sent to tutories which are doing roaring business. The LTTE then approached staff of tutories and told them that should school absenteeism continue at this rate, the tutories would be closed. The tutory staff then told the students that they should not come there unless they are attending school. This put the parents and their children in a quandary. But the LTTE's next move made it impossible to avoid training by staying away from school.

The People's Militia & Compulsory Training

Having begun with schools the LTTE drew up a scheme for a universal people's militia. The LTTE summoned a meeting of village headmen (GSs), a part of the government administration, who were to be the linchpins of the People's Militia. Each GS normally has about 150-300 families under him. The GSs were told that they would be responsible for compliance with the regulations, were given forms for each family, and were

asked to return with he completed forms. Each head of the family has to fill in details about members, their age, sources and amount f income, cases of serious illness and so on. The people from 15 upwards were to be placed in 3 categories: 1 - 15 to 35 years, 2- 35 to 45 years, and 3 - 45 years and above.

The 1st and 2nd categories will be compulsorily trained in the village camps being organised. Those in the 3rd must go for training unless they can establish that they are seriously ill. Even if they are granted exemption, they must be present in the grounds while the others are training.

The people will be allowed to collect their relief rations sent by the Government only upon the GS certifying that the person underwent training. Thus those 15 and above who stay away from school will get caught to the Militia. There is again a discrepancy between those training in schools and those meant to be trained in the Militia. The former would also include 13-14 year olds. Local observers suggest that this group would be used as reserves. Orders have already been issued and Militia training is expected to commence during the course of May.

The Co-operatives

The co-operative shops are the bodies distributing government rations. As an allied move, the LTTE called up meetings of co-op administrators in different areas under its control. They were told that the co-ops would from now on function directly under LTTE overview. Rations, they added, should be given only to those coming with certification from the GS. At one meeting a co-op administrator complained that because the LTTE diverts part of the rations coming in for their own use, the co-ops run out of food to give those coming later in the line who are entitled. The LTTE spokesman responded that it is the fault of the co-ops. He added, "If you tell us the number you serve, we will leave that amount and take the rest".

In the Mullaitivu area, co-op administrators protested that if they carried out the orders given by the LTTE, they would get into trouble with their superiors outside the Vanni. The LTTE spokesman replied, "If you will not work as we want, you can handover everything to us and go".

The Leader

According to the new rules introduced by the LTTE, no one from the organisation is allowed to leave the LTTE even after the completion of the mandatory 7 years. When this rule was introduced some months ago, those attaining the age of 35 were permitted to get married, after which they would remain in the organisation but perform non-combat duties. Those who had left the organisation but were in the Vanni were ordered to report back and deserters too were rounded up. The number so brought back is said to be about 2000. There is said to be no shortage of weapons. A section of those reintroduced have been addressed by the Leader, Mr. V. Prabhakaran.

About the first week of May the Leader addressed a secret conference of all area leaders of the Propaganda Wing. He was hard on them for their low effectiveness. This he said had resulted in an appallingly low level of recruitment. To shame them, he delivered an emotional eulogy on the achievements of the Military Wing, with references to Killinochchi, Mullaitivu, the SL Army's aborted northward advance on A9 and the achievements of its suicide cadre. He gave them a time frame in which to take steps to boost recruitment. The Leader further ordered them to conduct daily pocket meetings in every village. The lack of variety in propaganda material too came up for discussion. While the LTTE controlled Jaffna, in addition to the Eelanatham daily, the Viduthalaippuligal (Liberation Tigers) came out monthly. At present the Eelanatham continues to be

published daily, but the second is irregular. The Leader asked them to regularise Viduthalaippuligal, and to put out additional leaflets.

Some of the measures mentioned above are being implemented and for the others orders have been given. Delays and modifications may be occasioned by constraints and public resentment. These are high handed and even fascist measures to impose on a helpless, starving, sickly, frightened and an almost hysterical population, brought to this point by their liberators by methodically blocking all saner alternatives. Whatever the personal merits of the Leader, his charisma and endurance, his manner of struggle, as we have always said, is a mockery of liberation, and renders the Tamils objects of contempt. A heavier responsibility rests with those sections of the Tamil elite who flattered his vanity, without whose services this tragedy could not have been prolonged for so long.

Take one example: The Leader has moved far towards using the food sent by the Sri Lankan Government for the displaced as wages for military service in warring against the same government, on the grounds that it is a genocidal government. He knows that human rights concern from around the world, and rightly so, would never allow the government, whatever its inclinations, to completely stop the food supply and starve the people. It is moreover a concern he never allowed his own people.

Most Tamils have doubts about his cause, those directly affected such as the victims of the Jaffna Exodus are often angry, and one day the survivors of the Vanni ordeal too will be angry. Yet the Tamils' historical experience of the Sri Lankan state and the regular humiliations they face, constantly reinforce a gut feeling of sympathy for his cause. It is of course most often the self-indulgent feeling of those at a safe distance from his organisation. To understand this and move some way towards eradicating such gut feeling, we also need to confront and come to terms with attitudes and practices of the State and of the Southern elite, that contribute to it.

Civilians and the Security Regime

Earlier we referred to Tamils coming out of the Vanni who are confined to refugee camps in subhuman conditions. There are now about 14,000 such refugees in Vavuniya. This measure has no legal sanction. It is hard to make a list of such unlawful measures. Being unlawful, they are often individual and arbitrary innovations increasingly going out of control. To take a common sort of example, an old man had come out of the Vanni and was in Vavuniya trying to get a pass to travel to Trincomalee and join his daughter. Instead of going to a refugee camp where the procedure to come out is arduous, he submitted his application and boarded himself at the Hindu Youth Council for Rs. 30 a day. 52 days later a Tamil police officer passing by saw him and inquired. The old man who had practically exhausted his money was living on bread and plain tea, asked the police officer to buy some for him.

After further inquiries, the officer checked and found that the old man's application had not even been faxed to the Trincomalee police to check on his daughter, and took steps to dispatch him there. In such matters Tamil civilians have no rights and the Police are not bound by any obligation to perform their self-imposed duty expeditiously. In the meantime, after 52 days, the old man had begun to starve.

In another instance a displaced elderly man on a wheel chair with an ailment wanted to go from Vavuniya to Colombo to consult a specialist. The Police wanted a letter from the DMO, Vavuniya, stating that consultation for the ailment was unobtainable in Vavuniya. It was in clear breach of a person's right

to travel within his own country and to consult a doctor of his choice. Moreover this case and that above relate to persons who are clearly neither terrorists nor suicide bombers.

Getting permission to travel out of the North has been made a tedious process. In Mannar town which serves a large area, it means hanging about for several whole days at the pass office to see the police officer, even paying a bribe through an agent, and much paper work. Those who plan systems do not even know if they work, and make the public suffer instead. For example, for a person coming from the LTTE area to travel abroad or to Colombo, someone in the cleared (Army controlled) area has to stand guarantee. Someone in Mannar town for example has to surrender the local Army identity card and is given a temporary pass to remain in Mannar - not valid for travelling out of town. The person going abroad upon completing arrangements in Colombo has to send the guarantee by fax, copies of the visa and ticket. These are then produced to the Police who in turn ask the Colombo Airport by fax if the traveller has left. A lady who stood guarantee for an old lady going to India submitted the fax and went and hung around at the pass office to get back her Army identity card (which again has no legal recognition). At length she learnt that the Colombo Airport never responds to such queries from the local police.

The illegality of the whole range of practices, including compulsory registration in Colombo - in practice for Tamils only - and the need to carry the registration form around are underpinned by one singular fact: When an Inspector General of Police and the Attorney General were asked about registration and the need to carry the form in Colombo, the responded that these were not necessary. But it goes on. There is a particularly interesting absurdity. Sections of the security forces run rackets to smuggle persons from the North into Colombo in their vehicles for about Rs. 20,000 per head. There have been cases of smuggled persons being apprehended by the Police in Colombo and then let off, because there are no legal grounds for prosecution. The most the Police can do is to detain the person on grounds of suspicion under the PTA and have the detention order extended from time to time by Magistrates, knowing well that there is no use. The bulk of the Tamil detainees belong to this category. Being made to work in this moribund regime has a strong corrupting influence on security officials.

The system drives the policeman to ask not what law this person is in breach of, but rather how much he can pay? These practices have spawned host of shady lawyers and agents, claiming to be able to bribe police officials and even magistrates. It brings about the degradation of the whole system of law, and of the State itself.

With the Government bereft of any political strategy to integrate the Tamils into the national fabric, these security regulations become more and more oppressive and arbitrary with every bomb that goes off in Colombo. They may be bearable for a few months. But continued indefinitely with no end in sight they become in effect a system of apartheid under the name of security, but without a legal framework.

Countering an Impending Tragedy

A very perilous situation now confronts us in the Vanni that could carry the tide of events in several unexpected directions. Like every fascist movement the LTTE will run the course of destroying itself. It is also characteristic of them that in their final inferno they try to take large numbers of their own people down with them.

Thanks to the Government's procrastination, the UNP's opportunism and the volatility of the Southern political scene,

a political solution to the ethnic problem once more looks distant. This created desperately in the ordinary Tamil mind, that if the LTTE is finished, they would be cheated once again. In many unseen ways the failure to have a political solution in place generates the dynamism to prolong the conflict. Had the Government's "Peace Package" been a fact of life today, we would have faced a far less daunting situation in the Vanni. There would have been hope for the people, and hence more resistance to the LTTE's impositions. Indeed there is resistance even today.

It is imperative that we face up to, in advance, the limitations of the Sri Lankan Forces. When operations were started in Jaffna during 1995, without any provocation from below the Air Force bombed a refugee concentration in Navaly killing 120 civilians in July and again in Nagar Kovil killing about 40 civilians in September. In the Vanni today, the LTTE, unlike in Jaffna in 1995, is doing everything possible to blur the distinction between combatants and non-combatants. A couple of aerial attacks like the ones above in Jaffna, and total mobilisation is bound to be seen as legitimate, with the people feeling that they were with their backs to the wall.

The experience in 1995 (as recorded in our Special Report No. 6, The Jaffna Exodus) could give us ideas for the protection of civilians. There is a compelling case for enabling International NGOs to go into the LTTE controlled areas and organise safety zones for the civilians. If the Government Forces are enjoined to conduct themselves with restraint, it may well turn out that large numbers of LTTE cadre, many of whom are fighting for the lack of an alternative, would surrender when the opportunity arises.

Most of the displaced persons in the Vanni would have come out into the Government controlled area by now, if not for Government restrictions. Those who come out have been confined to camps in sub-human conditions, while there is land in Vavuniya for them to live independently in temporary abodes. This is part of the mindset of a state machinery that has lent complicity to displacing Tamils and Muslims in Trincomalee urban limits, settling Sinhalese in their place and regularising the new occupation [see for example Special Report No. 8]. The present plight of Tamil refugees also has much to do with state ideology rather than with legitimate security concerns.

Urgency demands that the immediate concern should be directed towards the civilians in the conflict zone. International agencies should be enabled to go into the area with such quantities of food and medicine as are deemed adequate. This will not save the LTTE which is in the process of destroying itself. But it would do much to protect the people and keep them away from the LTTE.

The political solution too can no longer be delayed. From the time of the B-C pact of 1957 it has been our experience that delay and defensive pleading eroded credibility and caused governments to renege on their commitments. The country itself has continued to remain an intellectual and economic backwater, dominated by paranoid and increasingly security conscious ruling interests, thus unable to realise its potential. Indeed a mental framework dependent on interests which cannot countenance the truth, leads inevitably to intellectual degradation. The 1980s and particularly the Southern insurgency, amply revealed that the Tamil militancy was to a considerable extent a pretext for the repressive laws and military machine these ruling interests called into existence. The country needs a new vision, not a repackaging of discredited notions. What the President has been saying in public, goes a considerable way in that direction.

A demand for federal status for, broadly speaking, the North-

East, with far-reaching provisions for autonomy, would be irresistible in the modern world. There should be a concerted attempt by all concerned to bring this about. This alone would help the Tamils to find their feet and for the State to dismantle this system of creeping apartheid that is increasingly enveloping the lives of Tamils. Eventually there should be a demilitarised North East, with no more than a token presence of the national army.

As for the Tamil diaspora, it is these issues, and especially the protection of civilians in imminent danger, towards which they should direct their considerable lobbying powers. The Tigers and the destructive power they wielded were indeed for the most part the creation of an ideologically driven state that was pushing the Tamil people to live at the end of their nerves. It was for them a regime of violence with impunity - both mob violence and state violence. Lands they had farmed for several decades, and their own homes, often enough ceased to belong to them, having been snatched away overnight by gazette notifications hatched in secret.

But propping up the Tigers in their present form would only further the decimation of the Tamil community. And it can be done only at the expense of children of families in the Vanni, who are groping for survival amidst starvation, fear and disease. A struggle that ultimately leaves Tamil children and teenage girls holding empty plates, queuing outside Sri Lankan Army camps at mealtimes, is no liberation struggle.

The nature of the Tigers and where they would carry the Tamil people have been well understood for many years. But thanks to the opportunism of many, this has been obfuscated and the suffering of the Tamil people prolonged. The following was written by Dr. Rajani Thiranagama, the 10th anniversary of whose murder falls this year, in the context of the Indian Army's advance into Jaffna in October 1987:

"They continued to lure the army, just to run away, letting the people face the result. It was cruellest of all when they told the people that another 500 to 1000 must die for them to have a viable international publicity campaign. This was not an isolated instance or statement of a group without contact with the leadership. It was pronounced at many places and in many forms. When the people were starving, wandering around like dogs for rice, the Tigers issued leaflets asking the people to boycott Indian distributed food. When the children were dying with diseases, they threatened those who cared for them, ordering them not to issue Indian drugs. Did they offer alternatives, so that we could eat Tiger food and give our children Tiger drugs?..." (The Broken Palmyra p 359).

* *The University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna) was formed in 1988 at the University of Jaffna as part of a national organisation, University Teachers for Human Rights. Its public activities as a constituent part of university life came to a standstill following the murder of Dr Rajani Thiranagama, a key founding member, on 21 September 1989. During the course of 1990 the others who identified openly with the UTHR(J) were forced to leave Jaffna. It continues to function as an organisation upholding the founding spirit of the UTHR(J) with its original aims: To challenge the external and internal terror engulfing the Tamil community as whole through making the perpetrators accountable, and to create space for humanising the social and political spheres relating to the life of our community. The UTHR(J) is not at present functioning in the University of Jaffna in the manner it did in its early life for reasons well understood.*

An Appeal for Assistance for Displaced Persons All Ceylon Hindu Congress

All Ceylon Hindu Congress (ACHC) is a federation of several Hindu Organisations in Sri Lanka. To alleviate the suffering of the people in the North and East of the country, ACHC has decided to maintain the following homes for the destitute people:

1. **VICTORY HOME, KILLINOCHCHI**, which has about 30 mentally affected young women and girls who have either lost their husbands or parents due to the ongoing strife in the Vanni district. The maintenance cost is Rs. 30,000 (\$430) per person per year and that of the home is Rs. 75,000 (\$1,070) per month. *A Swiss based welfare organisation has offered to finance the cost of maintaining this home.*
2. **YOGAR SWAMIGAL THIRUVADI NILAYAM**, which has 54 elderly persons who have lost their kith and kin during the ongoing ethnic strife. These persons, in their old age were left destitute and were taken into this home and are being looked after. The maintenance cost is Rs. 22,500 (\$320) per person per year and that of the home is Rs. 100,000 (\$1,400) per month.
3. **INIYA VAALVU ILLAM, MULLAITIVU** has about 17 children who have lost their vision due to the ongoing strife in the Vanni district and there are already another 30 children who are on the waiting list. The maintenance cost is Rs. 30,000 (\$430) per person per year and that of the home is Rs. 125,000 (\$1,800) per month.
4. **HOSTEL AT RATMALANA HINDU COLLEGE, COLOMBO** has at present 40 children who haven't got the financial means to pursue their education as they have either lost either parents or the breadwinner of the family is being expanded to accommodate 100 children. The maintenance cost is Rs. 16,800 (\$240) per person per year and that of the home is Rs. 140,000 (\$2,000) per month.

ACHC is now functioning as a NGO and has undertaken the responsibility of maintaining three homes other than "Victory Home", Killinochchi at a monthly cost of Rs. 365,000 (\$5,200). The Council has found local sponsors for seven months for the existing 40 students in the hostel at Ratmalana Hindu College.

ACHC appeals to Sri Lankan expatriates to assist the deserving students by sponsoring them on an ongoing basis. Sponsors are required for the remaining five months for the existing 40 students and to meet the Council's modest intention to accommodate another 20 students.

Please send your **remittances in favour of "All Ceylon Hindu Congress"** and indicate in your covering letter as to which of the above mentioned projects should your contribution be utilised.

President :
V.Kailasapillai

Hony. General Secretary :
Kandiah Neelakandan

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Pakistan on the Eve of a New Millennium

(The text of the speech by Najam Sethi - Editor, The Friday Times, Pakistan - at the India International Centre in New Delhi on 30 April 1999 which landed him in trouble with Pakistan's Navaz Sharif's regime and led to his arrest)

I am honoured to be here among such a distinguished gathering of Indian policy makers, scholars, senior journalists, analysts and keen Pakistan watchers. I will keep my lecture short so that we can spend time on questions and answers and benefit from a n informal dialogue at the end of the lecture. I assume that most people here today are broadly familiar with political developments in Pakistan.

At the start, I should like to inform you that the gist of this lecture has been made at various Pakistani forums already. Indeed, the part relating to Pakistan was published almost word for word in my newspaper as an editorial some months ago. So it should not come as a surprise to my Pakistani compatriots here and at home. I do not practice double-standards, as will be evident in due course. I am deeply and passionately concerned about what is going on in my country and I am not afraid of speaking the truth at any forum in my quest for posing the problem.

Pakistan's socio-political environment is in the throes of a severe multi-dimensional crisis. I refer to six major crises which confront Pakistan on the eve of the new millenium:

- (1) the crisis of identity and ideology;
- (2) the crisis of law, constitution and political system;
- (3) the crisis of economy;
- (4) the crisis of foreign policy;
- (5) the crisis of civil society; and
- (6) the crisis of national security.

These crises haven't suddenly emerged out of the blue. I have been talking and writing about the inexorable germination and development of these crises for many years. Now they are all upon Pakistan simultaneously, with greater or lesser intensity.

1. The crisis of identity and ideology refers to the fact that after fifty years, Pakistanis are still unable to collectively agree upon who we are as a nation, where we belong, what we be-

lieve in and where we want to go. In terms of our identity and our demands, are we Pakistanis first and then Punjabis, Sindhis, Baloch, Pathan or Mohajirs or vice versa? Do we belong - in the sense of our future bearings and anchors - do we belong to South Asia or do we belong to the Middle-East?

In terms of ideology, are we Muslims in a moderate Muslim state or Muslims in an orthodox Islamic state? In other words, are we supposed to be like Saudi Arabia or Iran - which are orthodox Islamic states - or are we supposed to be like Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Algeria etc. which are supposed to be liberal Muslim states? And if none of these fits the bill, what then? Whose version and vision of Islam do we follow? The Quran and Sunnah, say some people. Well, if the Quaid i Azam and Allama Iqbal both had their own interpretations of how the Quran and Sunnah were to be applied in the real life of a modern state like Pakistan, the problem has been compounded by the myriad interpretations of their interpretations of an Islamic state.

And the problem doesn't end there. The Jamaat i Islami, the Sipah i Sahaba, the Jamiat i Ulema i Islam and countless other Islamic parties and Islamic sects all have their so-called exclusive Islamic axes to grind. So there is no agreement, no consensus on this issue. Indeed, there is so much tension, violence and confusion associated with this issue that it has begun to hurt Pakistan considerably. It has assumed the form of an identity and ideological crisis.

2. The crisis of law, constitution and political system refers to the fact that

(a) There is not one set of laws in Pakistan but two - the Anglo-Saxon tradition which we inherited from the past and the Islamic tradition which we have foisted in recent times. Most Pakistanis are trained and experienced in the former but some Pakistanis hanker for the latter. The two traditions co-exist in an environment of fear, corruption and hypocrisy. Increasingly, they seem

to be at serious odds with each other, as for example on the question of how to treat interest rates in a modern capitalist economy, what status to grant to universal human and fundamental rights, how to treat women and minorities; etc.

(b) The crisis is also reflected in the nature and extent to which the constitution has been mangled by democrats and dictators, lawyers and judges, all alike. The reference here is to several highly controversial constitutional amendments, past and pending; but it is also to highly contentious, even suspect, decisions by the courts acting as handmaidens to the executive; and to the motivations and actions of certain judges in pursuit of personal ambition, pecuniary gains or political advancement. Indeed, many lawmakers do not obey the law and some of our judges are perceived in contemptuous terms by the public.

(c) The crisis is manifest, above all, in the rapid public disenchantment with the political system of so-called democracy. Democracy is supposed to be about the supremacy of the law and constitution, about the necessity of checks and balances between the different organs of the state, about the on-going accountability of public office holders, and so on. But it has degenerated into a system based exclusively on elections which return deaf and dumb public representatives to rubber stamp parliaments. So we have the form of democracy but not its essence or content. We have the rituals of democracy but not its soul. I don't know what this system is, but it is certainly not democracy.

3. The crisis of economy refers to the fact that -

(a) Pakistan is well and truly bankrupt - indeed if the international community had not bailed out Pakistan recently, the country would have succumbed to financial default.

(b) Worse, we appear to have no means left by which to lift ourselves up by our own bootstraps without a massive convulsion in state and society. This is manifest in our total dependence on foreign assistance. Indeed, the crisis of economy is so severe that it has begun to impinge on our sovereignty as an independent state and is eroding our traditional construction of national security. The economic crisis is reflected in a crisis of growth, a crisis of distribution, a crisis of production and a crisis of finance. It is threat-

ening massive and violent dislocations in state and society.

4. The crisis of foreign policy is now coming home to roost. We are not only friendless in the region in which we live, we are being blackballed and blackmailed by the international community to which we are indebted up to our ears. If foreign policy is supposed to be rooted in and geared to domestic objectives and concerns, we have reversed the order of things. Our foreign policy seems to have a life of its own. It dictates our domestic policies rather than the other way round. This is why there is no long term consistency or strength in it. One day, we say that Kashmir is the "core issue without whose prior settlement none of the other contentious issues with India can be resolved". The next day, we say that progress on the other issues can be made without a settlement of the Kashmir issue. One day we say that Kashmir is a multilateral issue, the next day we emphasise the urgency of bilateral dialogue with India. One day, we are quick to recognise the Taliban government in Kabul and exhort the other nations of the world to follow suit; the next day we give our blessings to the

idea of a broad-based, multi-ethnic, multi-religious "consensus" government in Kabul. One day Iran is our historic and strategic friend, the next day we stand accused by Iran of unmentionable actions. One day, Central Asia is billed as the promised land. The next day, it is arrayed against us in hostile terms. One day, the United States is our Godfather. The next day it is the ugly American.

The worst has now come to pass. For fifty years we worried about the threat on our eastern borders with India. Today we are anxious about our western front with Iran and Afghanistan.

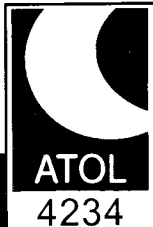
5. The crisis of civil society is demonstrated in many ways. In increasingly low turnouts for elections. In continuing deterioration of law and order. In rising sectarianism, ethnicity and regionalism. In the breakdown of civil utilities and amenities. In the erosion of the administrative system. In violence and armed conflict. In mass criminalisation and alienation of the people. In a rising graph of mental disorders, suicides, drug abuse, rape, kidnappings and outright terrorism. The rise of criminal and religious mafias, kabza groups, extra-judicial killings

etc. testify to the breakdown of social connections and civil compacts between the Pakistani state and the Pakistani people.

6. These crises have all culminated into a severe crisis of national security. Pakistan's political system, its political leadership, its structure of law and constitution, its administrative framework, its economic stagnation, its ideological hypocrisy and its friendless foreign policy are no longer tenable. They have all contributed to a comprehensive erosion of National Security. If the tide is not reversed quickly, it will engulf Pakistan in its wake. Indeed, the argument that Pakistan is a "failing state" made by some people is based on perceptions of this multi-dimensional crisis.

So, if Pakistanis know what the hell is going on, and if Pakistanis know where the hell they are going, the question remains: how the hell do Pakistanis get out of this hell? This question has two parts. First, what sort of agendas are required to be implemented to get out of this hell? Second, who will implement such agendas?

The answer to the first question is simple enough. Or at least it is simple



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enough for me. I ask my fellow Pakistanis to look at each of the crises referred to above and then I demand that the factors which have led to the crisis should be swiftly addressed. Let us take each of the crises and remark on how to resolve the crisis:

(a) **Crisis of ideology:** In my view, there is only one modern day ideology over whose application there can be no bitter or divisive controversy and which will be acceptable to all Pakistanis, irrespective of caste, creed, gender, region, ethnicity, etc. And that is the ideology of economic growth, the ideology of full employment, the ideology of distributive justice and social welfare. I say Pakistan should make this ideology the ideology of the state and thereby bury all false consciousness and false ideologies.

(b) **Crisis of Law, Constitution and Political System:** I say Pakistan must revamp the political system and revise the Constitution so that the political system and the constitution are made to serve the people below instead of the corrupt elites above.

(c) **Crisis of Economy:** I say that the Pakistani state should honour its international contracts; enforce its domestic loan repayments; tax the rich; dispossess the corrupt; live within its means; vitalise its human resources; export the value of its scientific talents; establish and enforce a genuine private-public partnership in which the private sector produces efficiently and the public sector regulates effectively.

(d) **Crisis of civil society:** I say enforce the rule of law; disarm society; disband militias; decentralise decision-making and power; establish accountability; protect minorities and women; create social nets for the disadvantaged, poor and destitute; provide decentralised and quick justice.

(e) **Crisis of Foreign Policy:** I say make friends not monsters or enemies; bury cold-war hatchets; renounce post-cold-war jihads; negotiate terms of trade not territorial ambitions; redefine strategic depth to mean emphasis on internal will rather than external space;

(f) **Crisis of National Security:** I say redefine security to mean not only military defence but also economic vitality, social cohesion and international respect; and I say Pakistan should determine its minimal optimal defence deterrent but shun an arms race.

The answer to the second question - namely, who will pursue and implement this agenda - is difficult only for

one reason: I cannot see even one leader or institution in Pakistan who or which personifies National Power and has the three virtues or elements which are required to get Pakistan out of this mess. These are: vision, courage and integrity. The vision to chart a particular course; the courage to implement it ruthlessly; and the integrity to ensure that it doesn't get derailed. My hope, of course, is that someone or some institution will throw up such leadership in time to come. My fear is that if this doesn't happen soon enough, it may be too late later.

I would now like to turn briefly to one factor that impinges greatly on Pakistan's past, present and future, one which should concern all of you who are assembled here today. That is Pakistan's relationship with India. In one crucial sense, India remains a determining factor vis a vis Pakistan. The Pakistani state has come to be fashioned largely in response to perceived and propagated, real and imagined threats to its national security from India. The mentality and outlook of the Pakistani state is therefore that of a historically besieged state. That is why conceptions of national security, defined in conventional military terms, dominate the Pakistani state's thinking on many issues. Indeed, that is why state outlook dominates government policies. That is why Pakistan's foreign policy runs its domestic policy rather than the other way round. That is why Pakistan's economy is hostage to Pakistan's cold war conceptions of "national security" rather than being an integral part of it. That is why Pakistan is more a state-nation rather than a nation-state. This has had far-reaching implications for the lack of development of a sustainable and stable democratic political culture in Pakistan. Indeed, and more critically, it has directly spawned extra-state institutions espousing Islamic fundamentalism and jihad. And it is these forces which are undermining the compact between the state and people of Pakistan, thereby adversely impacting on political discourse in the country.

Pakistan's obsession with India hurts Pakistan deeply. But the roots of this obsession cannot be shrugged away by India. Indeed, India may be said to be the root cause of Pakistan's insecurity. Apart from pre-partition history, there is the fact of a great injustice done to Pakistan by India over Kashmir and the dismemberment of Pakistan in which India played a critical and lead-

ing role. For precisely this reason, one of the fallouts of this obsession is the decade long low-intensity-conflict in Kashmir.

Another is the tit-for-tat nuclear and missile tests by Pakistan and its refusal to sign a no-first-strike agreement with India which in turn means that Pakistan cannot get a no-war pact from India. In this way, if Pakistan's past is umbilically linked to that of India, its future cannot but be shaped by India's future, as well as have an impact on it. If the rise of fundamentalist Islam threatens Pakistan's body-politic, India cannot expect to escape its negative fallout. If a nuclear arsenal is assembled in Pakistan, India's security cannot be vouchsafed by all the nuclear weapons at its disposal. If Pakistan fails as a nation-state and becomes a rogue regime marked by social anarchy and upheaval, India's army will not be able to contain its disruptive and destabilising impact.

If Pakistan is drawn into an arms race with India, the logic of the situation will fuel the sources of conflict between the two countries rather than provide security to either country. Of course, this does not mean that India should constantly look over its shoulder while seeking to determine its own national security policies. But it does mean that India cannot ever be a great power or great nation if its own backyard is seething with resentment and turmoil. Indeed, as long as India's quest for great powerdom is based on its strategy of military outreach, it is bound to be thwarted in its ambitions by tit-for-tat Pakistan. Therefore India will be recognised as a great power in the new millennium not on the basis of its numerical military superiority in the region but by the extent to which the countries of South Asia, including Pakistan, are economically inter-dependent on each other and take their lead independent of super powers. A prerequisite for this is that India should make enduring peace with Pakistan on principled and honourable terms and resolve the Kashmir dispute, thereby helping the forces of civil society in Pakistan to fashion a new state which is subservient to the Pakistani nation instead of the other way round.

By way of concluding, I should just like to remind everyone one lesson of modern history: vibrant and stable democracies are less likely to go to war than authoritarian states which live and survive on the basis or threat of war. ●

Dying in the Snow-clad Mountains in a Senseless War

T N Gopalan

At 15,000 feet, death is steely, silent. In Batalik, you can't breathe normally. There is less oxygen there. The air is rarified. The lungs scream for oxygen. At 15,000-ft, you are not normal. You cannot be. The human body is attuned to a certain altitude.

And that's where our soldiers are. Fighting the enemy. Facing the bullets. Dying alone in the snow. Falling to death from the high ridges. No one hears their scream. It's such a lonely death. A tiny piece of metal is all what it takes to die.

They are India's infantry men. The finest in the world. No other soldier has ever fought at these heights. At 15,000 feet, they can't move with ease. In Batalik, there are no tracks. Climb. Climb. Crawl. A soldier carries a week's ration, ammunition, a 5.56mm assault rifle or a mortar or a rocket launcher. He carries over 20 kgs on his back as he pulls himself up on this rugged, cruel terrain the enemy is up there, somewhere hidden. He can see you, can track you down like a rat, can pick you out so effortlessly...and yet these men move, slowly but with determination to fight for the nation. To die for the nation.

That was a poetic tribute to the soldiers dying like moth at the Kargil hill sector along the Indo-Pak border in May-June. The highly patriotic journalist who came out with such a poignant report would not of course, like the rest of his ilk, call for an end to the senseless war.

It is sad, cruel, tragic, what have you, that innocent Indian blood should be spilt like this. But then blood, more and more blood, should continue to flow in the snow till the last infiltrator is driven out of the sacred Indian soil. In order that the rest of the country could hold its head high, the poor soldiers must continue dying. No one even by mistake calls for peace. Such is their callous logic.

And military experts find no early end to the fighting. Such is the terrain, such are the logistics, such is the posi-

tioning of the rival armies, it could take months before the infiltrators are finally cleared out.

Meantime a foolish Pakistan darkly hints at its nuclear muscle, and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif talks of the possibilities of a full-scale conventional war if India does not agree to come forward to defuse the tension along the Line of Control (LOC). Given the fact that an equally chauvinist party is in power on this side of the border, even if only as a care-taker government, a little spark could indeed ignite a mighty conflagration.

Normally the Pak-backed infiltrators do try to cross over into the Indian region at the onset of summer when the snow melts and guns boom, but it is usually a short engagement. Some get in and others die. Then it is all eerie silence yet again. But no, not this time. The highly motivated Mujahideen, many or most of them trained mercenaries, have dug themselves in at heights of 16,000-18,000 ft. on the Indian side of the LOC along an 80-km stretch north of Kargil.

And in the first week of May, they began pounding the strategic highway linking Srinagar and Leh in Ladakh. The Indian army had indeed been caught napping. The BJP for all its aggressive no-nonsense attitude towards a recalcitrant neighbour was terribly embarrassed and did not know where to hide its face.

Indian sources claim that the Pakistani army has been training Afghan and Arab militants along with home-grown varieties like the Lashkar-e-Toiba, Al Badar and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen for the Kargil adventure for quite sometime now. There are as many as 50 such camps in the Gilgit area in the so-called Pak-Occupied Kashmir (POK) alone.

Besides Pakistan army's presence on the Indian side of the LOC was detected through a number ways - the intercepted radio messages between the militants suggest they were using a military frequency spectrum, aerial reconnaissance photographs showed

there were active helipads on both Pakistani and Indian sides of the LOC, radars had been repositioned, infiltrators provided with snow-mobile scooters, enhanced artillery support, weapons, medical supplies and so on. Also the militants have been equipped with medium machine guns, heavy mortars, SAM7 and Stinger missiles to bring down combat aircraft.

The Kargil sector extends to about 150 km with Drass at one end and Batalik at the other and the intrusions are said to cover over 100 km Pakistan's game plan is four-fold, it is argued - to forcibly alter the status of the Line of Control, cut off the strategic Leh-Srinagar national highway, create a new route for infiltration into the valley and get international intervention.

After some initial hesitation, the Indian army started reacting brutally, raining bombs of all kinds on the infiltrators. The Indian Air Force had played a major role in the 1947 Kashmir war and again in 1965 and on both occasions the IAF's bombing campaign had blunted the Pakistan attack.

But in the 90s it stayed out of the decade-long anti-insurgency operations in Kashmir since its use would have been akin to that of a sledge-hammer to kill a fly, to quote a noted commentator. Yet again, after a lull, Kashmir has become an international flash-point and the Indian government is faced with a serious loss of face.

Kargil has been changing hands right since Independence. In 1947 the Pathan tribesmen and Pakistani troops entered Kargil only to be evicted after a bitter battle spread over a year. In 1965 again the Pakistanis were cleared from the Kargil hilltops, but the region was returned to Pakistan under the Tashkent accord. However six years later during the Bangladeshi war, the hills were recaptured and the Pakistanis pushed back deeper.

Kargil is a Shia Muslim area and the residents have not encouraged the Kashmiri militancy, led as it is by the Sunnis. Pak's attempts to push infiltrators through this sector have generally failed with heavy losses in men and equipment, it has been claimed. Now the Pakistan army is staking it out in Kargil by relentless shelling causing extensive damage to civilians and their properties.

When an alarmed Indian army launched its Operation Flush Out on May 14, the initial plan was to use in-

fantry brigades and surround the militant posts, thereby starving them out. But the operation became time-consuming and costly in terms of manpower.

Interestingly Indians here suffer the same positional disadvantage that the Pakistanis suffer in Siachen, occupying as they do posts which are sitting ducks for the Pakistan troops perched on the heights.

Indian troops have suffered casualties, heavier than normal, apart from the two combat aircraft (MIG21 and 27) and MI 17 helicopter downed, a Canberra reconnaissance aircraft has also been hit, not to speak of the loss of scores of soldiers, the toll increasing by the day.

The number of infiltrators pinning down the mighty Indian army has been variously estimated to be 50 to 500 to a couple of thousands. The extent of their casualties is not known, though the Pak-based fundamentalist outfits, typically, make light of their losses, boasting hundreds are lining up before their training centres every day for the Jihad.

Evidently the Lahore declaration is dead as a dodo. The BJP had originally thought of projecting the famous Vajpayee bus-ride of February this year as a signal achievement, but they have abandoned their plans post-haste for obvious reasons. They had been trumpeting the wisdom of their twin-track approach, combining a tough, no-nonsense attitude as seen in the Pokhran-II tests with a readiness to negotiate with Pakistan, of course from a position of strength. If the Pokhran-II only provoked Pakistan into conducting its own nuclear tests, not to speak of the missile tests which followed, even the Lahore meeting has not mellowed Pak's approach. If reports are to be believed, Sharif should have given the nod to Kargil operations even before the ink was dry on the Lahore declaration.

While Sharif is pursuing his agenda of absolute power in the name of Islamisation of the society, the economy continues to be in the doldrums. No one knows what will happen in the next elections even though Benazir Bhutto stands convicted. In the circumstances the Shariff regime would naturally seek to whip up a national hysteria over Kashmir - such has been the time-tested tactic of the rulers in general, of the third world in particular. The atmosphere in India is also getting vi-

tiated. No one is prepared to stop and think for a moment the enormous costs of holding on to Kashmir.

Given the perverseness of the Pakistani elite and the skewed psyche of the Islamic fundamentalists, there will never be any let-up in the militancy operations, whether the Kashmiris themselves support them or not. On the other hand a mighty state like India is unlikely to give up its hold on Kashmir that easily.

The best case scenario is the acceptance of the existing Line of Control by both the countries, permanent division of Kashmir between the two and perhaps a modicum of autonomy for the region while the worst case scenario could be even a nuclear catastrophe. And it is this terrifying prospect that should give the international community sleepless nights and on which the Pakistan seems to be banking in order to involve the western powers in the tangle. Such is the sabre-rattling on both sides of the border that any remotely moderate voice is shouted down as anti-national. The poor Defence Minister of India George Fernandes has attracted a terrible flak for a couple of his statements - once saying possibly the Pakistan army had been acting without the knowledge of Sharif and even the ISI and another time holding out the prospect of safe passage to the intruders in order to bring an end to the conflict.


On the face of it saying that Sharif might not have had prior knowledge of the Kargil operations is no heinous crime, though it still beats one why Fernandes should have tried to exonerate ISI, known for its direct role in the Kashmir insurgency, is difficult to understand. Again ensuring safe passage to the militants is not a bad idea either,

if that way the costly war could be brought to an end. But almost the entire nation came down like a tonne of bricks on Fernandes and he who usually braves it out had to run for cover. He has since stopped making any comment on the confrontation altogether except for declaring that the war would continue until all the militants are flushed out.

Interestingly though Pakistan denies any role in the intrusion, it offered to send its Foreign Minister for talks with India to "defuse the tensions." However

India threw cold water on the initiative, dragging its feet on the date for the talks and later stressing that any talks would be restricted only to Kargil and not cover the Kashmir question in its entirety. Prime Minister Vajpayee vowed to fight it out till the insurgency is crushed and the last inch of the Indian soil is retrieved. Still the BJP is seriously embarrassed, its image terribly dented. It is worried whether Kargil could mar its poll performance. The Congress has happily latched onto the jingoistic bandwagon and does not miss a single opportunity to haul the government over the coals over its omissions and commissions.

The atmosphere is getting vitiated progressively, and even if all the infiltrators are either eliminated or driven out, it will become incumbent hereafter for the Indian army to hold on to the treacherous terrain whatever the costs. A second Siachen at that, as commentators have pointed out. To hope that sanity would dawn on the two governments now or in the near future could be far-fetched. Instead one should only wish that no nuclear calamity befalls the world consequent on the continuing tensions. ●

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The Shrinking Indian Left

Ramesh Gopalakrishnan

Well, dinosaurs died out probably because they fought among each other.

If the Indian left parties are on their way out of political discourse, it is because of their mutual bickerings as well as their tactics of collaboration with all and sundry, at various points of time which they usually regret after a few years. History has a way of catching up with self-deception and mutual betrayals and this may well be the last time, the Indian left parties can have this luxury.

Imagine, leftists have been running coalition governments in Kerala and West Bengal for decades, and hence, should have managed to become key components in the coalitions which are to be made at the centre of power at New Delhi. However, this is not the case now. Whenever the left co-habited with another party, the latter seems to have benefited from the exercise. Now, the left theoreticians are slowly losing out, in this exercise, to their Sangh Parivar counterparts who have successfully managed to weld together a really motley coalition of intermediate and subaltern forces in Indian polity - the most of them opposed to the ideology of the Sangh Parivar itself! As was in Germany and Italy, the fascists in Indian polity have made most use of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony of the public sphere. The Sangh Parivar is slated to come out on top in the forthcoming elections with the help of those opposed to it.

The Indian left is at a point of no return, given the present scenario: rise of Hindu chauvinism as an officially accepted ideology, the spectre of Hindu national security state, xenophobia in various subtle forms, occasional co-habitation of regional-level forces, parties representing intermediate caste-groupings and the Dalits with Hindu chauvinism, vigilante violence in public sphere, absence of powerful democratic movements except those calling for protection and empowerment of sectional interests, lack of enthusiasm for trade union activity in both organised and unorganised sectors, and most

of all, the non-flow of idealist youth from the middle classes to take the side of the oppressed and perform sacrifices etc.,

Look at the pathetic scene of 82-year-old veteran CPI(M) leader Harkishan Singh Surjeet standing in front of the huge well-designed metallic doors of Veda Nilayam, 36, Poes Garden residence of AIADMK general secretary J Jayalalitha. Of course, it is known that Surjeet leads a spartan life and Jayalalitha is its very anti-thesis. The Marxist veteran last month had written a three-part article advancing the thesis that modern democracy could be seen in the emergence of the Khalsa Panth 300 years ago at Anandpur Sahib where Guru Gobind Singh had called for five Sikhs to assemble, to get ready for martyrdom, to fight and sacrifice the usurpers and the criminalised rulers. Now, Surjeet has come up with the anti-thesis of that gesture. He is a lamb waiting to be slaughtered, having no qualms in loitering in front of the feudal queen that Jayalalitha fashions herself. All for a few parliament seats because the DMK ditched the left parties? No, the reasons are far deeper than this.

It's the degeneration of theory, of thought, of action, of gestures, of revolutionary anecdotes, of memory, of decency, of sacrifice, of life itself. It's a question of shamelessness, of public display of that shamelessness, the public display being the only leveller between what Spartan Gandhism and Surjeet's morning reverie before the iron gates.

The iron curtain of Soviet Union has given to the designer wrought iron gates of Poes Garden and its gun-toting metallic security apparatus.

The oldest communist party in the country, the CPI, fares no better. Tamil Nadu CPI state secretary R Nallakkannu, a veteran of many a battle against feudalism in the Cauvery Delta belt, goes grovelling to Tamil Maanila Congress don G K Moopanar, the richest of landlords in the state, to find out what shall be done to counter the communalist BJP-DMK alliance! His solution: join the AIADMK-Con-

gress front!

The communists, by their strategic and tactical alliances, both on and off the electoral arena, have helped and are helping various contankerous political forces: these include the two Hindi belt chieftains Mulayam Singh and Laloo Prasad, who have thought it better to evolve a politics of deception and buffonery, than to carry forward the mantle of their socialist predecessors Narendra Deva, Rammanohar Lohia, Jayaprakash Narain and Karpoori Thakur. The press conferences before the TV cameras by these two leaders present a pitiable sight, even as the two wallow in their own power games, completely obsessed by themselves. Needless to say, they have given short shrift to everything stated by the socialist stalwarts. Sitting on velvet-cushioned sofas inside halls where secret manoeuvres take place, they issue diktats which are lapped up by the communists. Mulayam Singh, the darling of the leftists, for instance, made a secret trip two weeks ago to Mumbai to meet Bal Thackeray, the chief of that obsessively-neurotic formation called the Shiv Sena. The ideologies do not matter, as one can see, but political deals do, secret or otherwise. Not to speak of other socialist-disciples Chandra Shekhar, who wants to jump into the seat of the Congress prime minister, or George Fernandes, who is stretching himself hard to keep BJP in power.

The idiom of action has been defined no longer in the angry or despondent gestures in the streets, but in the palace coups planned by these leaders. Surjeet had visioned such a palace coup when he tried hard to instal Mrs Sonia Gandhi in the Delhi throne last month. Gone were his decades-long well-meant critiques of the Congress regimes at Delhi and various states; in its place, can be found the "political meetings", which are occasions for barter, intrigue and self-congratulation. Surjeet revelled in these meetings, and out of such revelry came the fact that Marxist veteran and West Bengal chief minister Jyoti Basu's name had indeed been cleared by the CPI(M) politburo for prime ministership during the April political crisis in Delhi.

No, Basu is an enigma, but of the pragmatic kind. He cannot renounce power in West Bengal, if he cannot arrive at the seat of power in Delhi: for

(continued on next page)

(Continued from page 24)

him, a Bengali should get his turn. His 22 year-long uninterrupted rule in West Bengal is not enough for him. In an era where Mandela can step down unchallenged, Castro cannot renounce unchallenged and Basu hangs on to power unchallenged, once again indicating that power is an obsession. Gandhi and Jayaprakash never took office, but the Soviet leaders never demitted the same in contrast to Mandela, who quits, and quits successfully. The Soviet leaders are sent out or they wallow in power till death and herein lies Basu's power quest.

The CPI and CPI(M) can be differentiated only from the BJP, these days. Even then, there are areas of agreement: war-mongering is dangerous business and communists are expected to be out of place there. However, the communists can always lend their voices to the Congress; they don't want India to sign, for instance, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, as it discriminates, they say, between nuclear haves and nuclear have-nots.

The communists cannot perceive why a nuclear have, Soviet Union, became a general have-not, that is Russia. With their consent goes down the drain thousands of crores of undisclosed funds for national security, which would be always imperilled by the real and fictional spectre of Pakistan, whether cricket matches are won or lost. Basu appreciates cricket, asks Pakistan to play in the Eden Gardens, but the bomb: "No, we can't be touchy about it, let's leave it to the Politburo".

The left parties are spatially shrinking: Bombay, the bastion of trade unions, has given way to mafiadom; Delhi, the seat of power, has a new criminal topography; Green Bangalore's public sector units have given way to a new hi-tech silicon desert, closely followed by hot Hyderabad, Madras, or Chennai, continues to be obsessed by Dravidian billboards; the fields of Naxalbari have gone quiet; Telangana is tired of the mindless violence between the police and the People's War Group; and Kerala actually has a court ban on bandhs, once fashioned by the left parties in the state.

And what of the Naxalites and the fractious lot? Their thesis of India being almost a criminal-comprador state has come true, with the arrival of hi-tech imported goods, but the left extremists are nowhere in the picture.

Jayalalitha on Trial In Corruption Cases

T N Gopalan

Normally there is nothing exciting about "framing charges" in a criminal case. If against a politician, well, it does generate some curiosity, but even then it is nothing extraordinary in the Indian context.

What if the politician concerned is someone like Jayalalitha? Certainly of still greater interest. All the same when already at least in three cases charges have been framed against the AIADMK supremo, doing so in one more case should not be of any great moment.

But when on June 10, the prosecution, after a long, arduous battle managed to get a special court frame charges against her and five of her associates, including her confidante Sasikala, in the TANSI land scam, the AIADMK camp was clearly upset and began to apprehensively assess the possible fallout from the court's action.

Under Indian law, framing of charges could be loosely translated into pressing of charges, and it marks the end of all preliminaries and clears the way for the commencement of trial proper.

Now in the case of Jayalalitha, the trial has commenced in three cases in the special courts set up by the Karunanidhi government exclusively to deal with the cases against her and cohorts and thus expedite the trial process.

But it was in the TANSI case that her lawyers fought every inch of the way, filing innumerable interlocutory petitions, numbering more than a hun-

dred, seeking to stall the framing of charges. When they have allowed charges to be framed without much of a fuss in three other cases, why this special attention to the TANSI case alone?

The case relates to the sale of land and buildings belonging to the state-owned Tamil Nadu Small Industries Corporation (TANSI) at well-below-market prices to the Jaya Publications in which Jayalalitha and Sasikala were partners in May 1992 when the former was the Chief Minister of the state. According to the prosecution, the sale of land measuring 3.02 acres with buildings on it, forced down the throat of the TANSI, caused a loss of over US \$80,000 to the state exchequer. Since the case relies essentially on documentary evidence with only a few witnesses to be examined, the trial, once commenced, could be completed in a matter of a few weeks.

If found guilty Jayalalitha could be disqualified from contesting elections for six years thereafter. Any such verdict before the forthcoming Lok Sabha polls could seriously dent her image and damage the AIADMK's prospects. And hence the relentless attempts of her lawyers to stall the trial as long as possible.

Others accused in the case are former minister Mohammed Asif, two IAS officials, and another government official in the Registration department. They have also been accused of colluding together to defraud the government on the registration of the transaction through stamp duty evasion by grossly undervaluing the properties sold.

All of them barring Asif were present in the court when Special Judge Anbazhagan framed the charges. There was a good crowd of Jayalalitha loyalists to lustily cheer their leader and her comrade-in-arms as they arrived at the court premises. Both friends remained calm during the brief proceedings in the court room.

They are, perhaps, battling it out with the landlord armies in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh or planting mines in Telangana. Bottled up and fragmented, they are the asymptotic curves of Indian politics: never to win and suffering extinction at the end of infinity.

Times, indeed, are gloomy for the left. And its "third front" thesis can just end up as an exercise in finger counting. ●

Asif was presumably down with some heart-ailment and was undergoing "treatment" in a private hospital. As per a high court directive, the judge called on the former minister at the hospital in the afternoon and framed the charges there. The relevant provisions require that the judge formally demand to know whether the accused accepts the charges before framing them. Invariably the accused deny they are guilty, but their response is immaterial for the purpose of framing charges. But because of the requirement of the formal query and response, the accused are to be present in court at the time of the framing of charges.

Jayalalitha's counsels made full use of the provision requiring the presence of the accused to stall the framing after the obstacles they had sought to erect in the way of the framing were all cleared painstakingly by the prosecution.

Asif got himself admitted to a hospital, and the lawyers pleaded that he was in no position to comprehend the questions that would be posed to him

by the court and respond accordingly. At one stage they brought him to the court premises in an ambulance, complete with the oxygen mask. When the government doctors who examined him said that he was fit enough to comprehend and respond and the Judge wanted him to be brought into the court hall, his counsel jibed "why not order a coffin too?" The spectre of the Rajan Pillai case (Rajan Pillai, an industrialist who fell from grace, was denied urgent medical attention while in prison before the trial began and he died in New Delhi. That was a couple of years ago. The incident kicked off a furious debate on the alleged callousness of the police and prison authorities) haunting him perhaps, the judge ordered the constitution of a panel of doctors to assess the actual health condition of Asif.

When the panel constituted by the court endorsed the finding of the previous doctors on Asif's health and Jaya's lawyers still objected, the High Court directed that the Judge visit him in the hospital for framing the charges.

As many as a hundred interlocutory

petitions were filed in the case at various stages on various counts delaying the framing of charges.

The interlocutory petitions sought adjournment or dismissal of the case petition on every conceivable pretext. For sheer inventiveness or ingeniousness, it would be difficult to beat Jayalalitha's team of lawyers.

Sasikala demanded translation of all the documents into Tamil, fought all the way to the Supreme Court and succeeded. When everybody else implicated in the 48 cases in the Special Courts demanded an equal treatment, the government had to employ an army of translators at a total cost of Rs.45 lakhs. And then there was a petition saying that the reservation norms had not been followed in the appointment of the translators. That was dismissed.

Yet again Sasikala said that she was suffering from an eye injury she had sustained some years earlier and so demanded more time to peruse the Tamil documents furnished to her.

And finally when special judge P.Anbazhagan ordered the framing of

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charges in February last, on the very day the charges were to be framed, Mohammed Asif managed to obtain a stay from the High Court arguing that Anbazhagan was biased against the accused.

Then the special judge sought to rescue himself from the cases. The drama did not stop there. High Court judge S.S.Subramani who had granted the ex-parte stay went on to make some caustic remarks against Anbazhagan saying that he had called on him and tried to influence him. As the controversy deepened, Justice Subramani was shifted to another bench, and Asif's petition was posted before Justice R.Shanmugam. The latter judge dismissed the petition saying the allegations against special judge Anbazhagan were unfounded and directed that he proceed with the cases before him from May 10 and frame the charges.

It took the prosecution exactly a month since then to overcome the Asif-heart-ailment drama and move towards the framing of charges.

The TANSI saga is not complete though. It actually relates to the sale of three different properties owned by the TANSI and its subsidiaries to three different firms, Jaya Publications, Sasi Enterprises and RR Industries.

Trial is already on in the last mentioned case, and it does not apparently involve any of Jaya's cronies, though some officials close to her do figure in it. And the framing remains to be executed only in the Sasi Enterprises case in which also Jayalalitha and Sasikala are accused. Some interlocutory petitions are pending in that case still.

What will happen now is anybody's guess. On the day the charges were framed in the TANSI case, the prosecution told the media that they hoped the trial could be completed within two months, but adding by way of a rider, "provided the defence co-operates".

But then why should they? Their interest after all lies in prolonging the agony as much as they can. It may not take very long for the 56 witnesses listed, most of them government officials, to be examined or to sift through the documentary evidence furnished. But who knows what aces Jaya's team will have up its sleeves. Their leader Jyothi once told this correspondent that they would not leave any stone

unturned to delay the proceedings. If they do succeed in prolonging the trial too, perhaps no verdict would be forthcoming before the Lok Sabha polls slated for September.

In all 48 cases have been filed under the Prevention of Corruption Act against Jaya and her associates in respect of offences allegedly committed between June 1991 and May 1996.

The Special Courts were constituted by the government of Tamil Nadu in April 1997. Ever since the last Lok Sabha elections when she emerged a surprise winner, she would not give Vajpayee a moment of peace - her demand for the dismissal of the Karunanidhi government was obviously aimed at scuttling the special courts. When the BJP developed cold feet, she pressed for the next best option. Through her minion Thambidurai who was a Law Minister she got the Centre transfer the corruption cases against her and her associates to regular courts. Besides, the Centre's counsel argued that the special courts set up by the state government were unconstitutional.

But when she foolishly upset the BJP's apple-cart, the Centre somersaulted and defended the special courts, and the Supreme Court itself upheld their constitutional validity.

Jayalalitha herself figures in six cases:

- Amassing wealth disproportionate to the known sources of her income. Co-accused in the case are Sasikala, her sister-in-law Ilavarasi and disowned foster-son Sudhakaran. Total amount involved Rs.66.65 crores. Trial on in the special court.

- Colur TV scam: Amount involved Rs.10.6 crore relating to the purchase of color TVs for local bodies. Co-accused are Sasikala, former minister T.M.Selvaganapathy plus some senior IAS officials. Trial is on.

- Pleasant Stay Hotels case: Relates to the relaxation of building rules to enable construction of additional floors in a Kodaikanal hill resort. A special legislation was passed in the Assembly for the purpose. Trial is on.

- TANSI land scam: Considered by many as the strongest case against Jayalalitha.

- Coal case: Relates to import of coal. Estimated loss to the government Rs.6.50 crores; charge-sheeted, but

charges still to be framed.

- Then there is also the famous Income-Tax immunity case, relating to the remittance of US dollars 300,000 in December 1991. She would not reveal the identity of the person who had made such a huge payment. She could be prosecuted under the PCA as she was a public servant at the time of the payment and hence could not claim immunity but which she had done. For all the excitement it aroused, even the Central Bureau of Investigation could not make much headway in the case. This and a couple of other cases are still at the First Information Report (FIR) stage. No progress thus far.

Not to speak of the Foreign Exchange violation and Customs Act cases against Sasikala and her nephews Dhinakaran and Bhaskaran. The Enforcement Directorate has slapped a fine of Rs.31 crore against Dhinakaran for transfer of money to shell companies.

The list might be mind-boggling. But Jayalalitha herself seems to remain unfazed in the secure knowledge that she still commands the support of the vast masses of Tamil Nadu and, any way, very few politicians in this country have been convicted for corruption. Karunanidhi's own escape from the long arms of the law even after severe indictment by a Commission of Inquiry is an example worthy of emulation for her. That is what she is angling for when making and unmaking alliances.

Surely the Jaya camp is worried that a "guilty" verdict could be returned before the Lok Sabha polls in the TANSI, though the other cases could drag on some more time to come. However even an adverse verdict may not have any major impact on the electorate by itself.

After all the elections are not for the state Assembly and she does not intend to be in the fray for the Lok Sabha. And so any guilty verdict and resulting disqualification could be nothing more than some set back to her image. But by the time the Assembly elections come, much water will have flown down the Cauvery and, who knows, she might get the Special Court verdict set aside in a superior court.

Also at the moment the Tamil voters may have concerns other than corruption and that is what she should be banking on. ●

BOOK REVIEW**AN EMINENT EDUCATIONIST REMEMBERS**

Corridors of Peace, The Immortal Profession – its Ups and Downs
By N Sabaratnam

Review by Pathmasany Arumugam, M.Ed.

The late Mr N Sabaratnam started as a very popular teacher, became a model Principal who steered the destinies of one of the outstanding schools in Jaffna, namely Jaffna Hindu College, and at the same time who was recognised not only in Sri Lanka but also in countries like England and India. Having been a trade unionist and an eminent educationist he had come into contact with Professors of Education, Ministers of Education, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, and many other outstanding educationists and thinkers like Tagore. As a boy he had seen and listened to Mahatma Gandhi. He mentions that Gandhiji's visit to Jaffna was the No 1 Landmark in his entire life. Swami Vivekananda's thoughts too have influenced him.

Corridors of Peace

In this section he emphasises the oneness of man". He quotes a Sangam Tamil poet who has said Everyman is my kinsman . He therefore points out that this concept should be instilled in the minds of the up and coming generations of children even when they are at school. He places this responsibility on the shoulders of the teachers, for the seeds of peace must be sown in the congenial climate of the nation's schools .

About schools he says, "We must so build our common schools, so that they may keep the doors and windows of not merely the buildings, but also of the hearts and minds of children open to the legacy of what is good in the ancient and the recent past, but also to all modern trends and developments of the East and the West." In addition he stresses the fact that English should be taught at schools, particularly because it is rich in literature, humanities, and scientific and technical knowledge.

He further states, "We need instant modernisation..... a revolution in education. Teachers should discard the classical punditry of the mother tongue. Colloquialism enshrined in the poems of Bharathi, and simple lucid prose

commonly found in standard magazines in the mother tongue are model. Any attempt at nation-building should take into account the common man. If our human race is to live in peace and harmony, then the attitudinal changes recommended by the author should definitely be cultivated in schools."

Ups and Downs

In this section the writer first takes the reader to all the schools he had attended as a student, from the primary classes to the Inter Arts class. He then recounts his experiences as a teacher, a principal and trade unionist.

While tracing his own educational history, he elaborates on the outstanding principals and teachers of that period, and how they influenced their pupils. Just to mention a few - Principal Sivapathasundaram of Victoria College was a strict disciplinarian like Arnold of Rugby in England. Narayana Menon, a teacher of English was a source of inspiration. He was passionately fond of Shakespeare, and was also committed to the Indian Independence struggle. Principal Venkatraman was at Jaffna Hindu College. His classes in Logic were like attending a conference. He encouraged the art of argument. Venkatraman told his students that, though reading makes a full man, he was more interested in making each pupil a ready man through conference. This principal had also pointed out that, wisdom was the much needed corrective to the lopsidedness that increased knowledge promoted. Principal Rev Bicknell of Jaffna College was for Mr Sabaratnam one of the three architects that influenced his life in general. He was a man of kind humility and quiet compassion."

Handy Perinpanayagam who later become Principal of Kokuvil Hindu College was a teacher at Jaffna College when Mr Sabaratnam was a student there. About Handy he says, "If Gandhiji's visit to Jaffna was number one landmark in my entire life, its im-

pact grew gradually from Victoria to Vannarponnai and reached greater heights at Vaddukodai where Handy Perinpanayagam was expounding his gospel of Poorna Swaraj for Ceylon to the general public, while teaching Latin in the classroom . He also says that Handy Perinpanayagam was his pole star. His informal chats outside the classroom were eloquent commentaries on Roman civilisation and culture and allied disciplines.

During this period the Education Department showed a fresh interest in the teaching of English and the administering of intelligence tests. Two men who figured prominently in these activities were H S Perera who became the first Ceylonese Director of Education and K S Aruhandhi who became Acting Director of Education.

When writing about the teaching profession Mr Sabaratnam relates it with reference to his own career and deals with the ups downs experienced by him and others in the profession.

He started his teaching career as a tuition master in Latin and English for students who were appearing for the London Matriculation Examination. His popularity as a teacher of these subjects got him a job in the only private tutoring that was running a London Matric class in those days. He never broke the code of ethics class in those days. He never broke the code of ethics of the teaching profession by charging a fee from his own students at schools when he helped them out of classes.

He points out that learning English or Science or Technology is not enough. Students must have culture. They should therefore learn Shakespeare, Thiruvalluvar, Tolstoy or Dickens or even Plato. He quotes Prof Whitehead who said, "There can be no successful democratic society until general education conveys a philosophic outlook"

Mr Sabaratnam says that he became a teacher by chance. His sister and Principal Muthucumarasamy of Skanda Varodaya College happened to travel together from Malaysia. She had then appealed to the Principal to give her brother a job. He got him interviewed by the Manager of the school, Kandiah Upathiyar. As both, Principal and Manager were satisfied, he was given a teaching job at this school. He had to teach Latin and attend to the extra-mu-

(continued on next page)

The Persistent Curse of Nationalism

Fernando Savater

(Spanish writer and member of the International Parliament of Writers)

I have never been to Kosovo, and everything I know about this territory; and the rest of the former Yugoslavia, I have learnt from articles and books. My experience of nonsense spouted by outsiders about the Basque conflict based on things they've heard makes me wary of criticising Nato's armed response to Milosevic's aggression.

Although I don't condemn out of hand punitive intervention against the sinister Serbian dictator, a couple of worrying reservations occur to me. The first is practical.

Conventional war functions when it seeks to achieve strictly military objectives: to break the siege of Sarajevo or reconquer invaded Kuwait. But it is too

(Continued from page 28)

ral activities at school. He had also to be a resident master, reorganise the boarding and supervise night-studies. The author goes on to recount the trade union activities of his period and in which he was involved. He had visited many countries and attended conferences there. When doing so it was possible for him to see for himself and appreciate the many architectural masterpieces and the cultures about which he had studied in his English and Latin classes.

Mr Sabaratnam had been a well recognised and respected trade unionist, an outstanding Principal, a teacher who was very much sought after, and an eminent educationist. He has not distorted facts and has based all his comments on strong ideals with a philosophic base. I would like to conclude with one of his quotations from Swami Vivekananda, "True education is the training of individuals to will rightly and efficiently." (This book was officially be launched on 5 June at Saraswathy Hall, Colombo 6, Sri Lanka)

crude an instrument to achieve more sophisticated political aims, such as installing effective democracy or establishing ethnic harmony. In these cases military intervention can even be counter-productive, blocking with blood and fire the mechanisms of civil participation that should institutionalise such processes.

Obviously the deported Albanian Kosovars are fleeing Milosevic and not Nato bombardments, but the confusion created by Nato attacks has favoured the genocide of the Serbian army, today in Kosovo and tomorrow in Montenegro or Macedonia.

My second objection refers to the democratic legitimisation of armed intervention. The present instance, lacking UN authorisation (difficult to achieve, given Russia's right of veto), seems more like jihad or Western-style holy war against a human rights violator. I accept the possibility of just wars, but not of holy (or humanitarian!) wars. I would like a more secular and less capricious international legal basis for what should be punished or permitted. I think there should be a global policeman. But a policeman subjected to judges and international laws, not a strongman who invents the rules.

My two objections are fragile because they do not offer a viable alternative to the tragic path being trod. I don't believe, either, that diplomatic efforts could have continued indefinitely, merrily substituting exhausted negotiators with fresh ones; Milosevic had already started using military force, without that stopping him from prattling grumpily away to all and sundry. So I don't feel able to reject absolutely Nato's defensive offensive, nor to approve it as enthusiastically as some around me. Is there nothing else but resigned silence?

One of the fierce lessons of this fin

de siecle is that nothing worsens a person more than convincing them that they belong to a people. There's no need to add "oppressed"; all people are, by definition.

Leaders who decide to convince ordinary; decent folk that they belong to this anthropophagous and transcendental thing, a people, enforce this affiliation; they emphasise to the point of monstrous caricature ambiguous ethnic features (to maximise the excellence of the group's suffering) and stress their human identification against that of their neighbours ("don't you see that they put you down or exploit you?").

Some time ago I heard Albanian Kosovars saying it was impossible to live with Serbs, since they were not Slavs; and now many refugees declare - more understandably - that they will not return to Kosovo until the last Serb has gone, or that the land is theirs because they have occupied it since before the times of Christ.

The magic word, the abracadabra, is "self-determination", but this is understood according to the ironic definition of Enzensberger: the right claimed by part of the inhabitants of a territory to determine who will live in all of it, and how. Feeling part of a people is to achieve the exquisite dignity of being insoluble among the rest or incompatible with two or three chosen adversaries (always the nearest neighbours).

Michael Ignatieff expresses it well in his recent book *Warrior's Honour*, subtitled "Ethnic war and modern consciousness", which should be studied in schools: "Nationalism of ordinary people is a secondary consciousness of political disintegration, a response to the destruction of order and of the coexistence of ethnic groups that it made possible. Nationalism creates communities of fear, groups convinced that they can be secure only if they stick together."

This culture produces Milosevic and company. And to think that there are still confused people who demand a Europe of peoples to confront a Europe of states! To demand a Europe of peoples means giving a green light to the Europe of crimes.

(This article is from a series produced by the International Parliament of Writers.)



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Jaffna Hindu parents seek groom for daughter, 26, UK educated graduate, employed, fair, medium height, no Mars afflictions. Please send horoscope, details. M 1112 c/o Tamil Times.

Professional Tamil Hindu father seeks for his UK qualified intern doctor daughter, 26, groom of professional status. Send horoscope, details. M 1113 c/o Tamil Times.

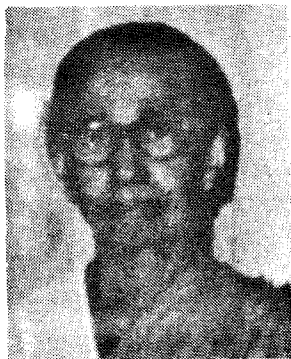
Jaffna Hindu parents seek professional groom for daughter, 24, Canadian computer graduate. Send horoscope, details. M 1114 c/o Tamil Times

Jaffna Hindu sister in USA seeks partner for brother, 34, 5'8", house owner, Canadian citizen in office employment for ten years, professional parents, divorcee within six months six years ago, no encumbrances. Send horoscope, details. M 1115 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Christian parents seek for doctor daughter in UK, partner 41-45. Well educated grooms with good social background in good jobs considered. M 1116 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu, 55, electronic engineer in UK, divorcee with a child seeks his suitable partner. Send details M 1117 c/o Tamil Times.

OBITUARIES

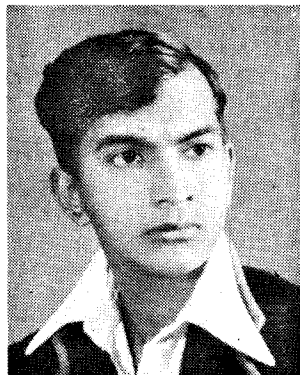


Mrs Leela Ratnam (86) of 27

Wyman Road, Nallore, Jaffna, Sri Lanka; beloved wife of late C.S. Ratnam; loving mother of R.K. Pillai (Bobby) of Australia, Betty, Anna (Jaffna), Rajan (Bambalapitiya), late Papa (Germany); mother-in-law of Chitra (Australia), Kugathasan (Jaffna), Ambi (Bambalapitiya) with four grandchildren and a great grandchild in Australia passed peacefully and suddenly at her residence in Jaffna on 11th April 1999. The funeral took place on 12th April.

The family thank all relatives and friends who attended the funeral, sent messages of sympathy and support during the period of sorrow.

Fondly remembered Perri-amma by Lala family
-1A Spencer Way, Redhill, Surrey RH1 5LF.



Dr Aiyadurai Karunanandan, Retired Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education, University of Peradeniya and later Lecturer and Audio Visual Education Specialist, Jaffna University passed away on 23rd March 1999 at the age of 79.

He leaves behind his wife Thayalnayaki (Kunchu); daughter Mrs Nalayini Gunanayagam (USA), son Balakumar (Canada); daughter-in-law Chitra; grandchildren Meenadchi, Lakshmi, Kamadchi, Kesav and Madhavan.

Dr. Karunanandan was the eldest son of K.Aiyadurai, Proctor S.C. and

Nagapooshany Aiyadurai of Neeraviady, Jaffna; brother of Mrs Pathma Jayaseelan (UK), late Mrs. Leelawathy (Ponnar) Balasingham, Justice Sivanandan (Colombo), Mrs Thilaga Wijeyaratnam (Colombo), late Sivayogavalli (Sivam); brother-in-law of K. Jayaseelan, Mrs Pushpawathy Sivanandan, Mrs Puvaneswary (Pulendra) Sathianathan, Mrs. Parameswary (Chandra) Parameshwaran and Thillairajah (Bas). The members of the family thank all those who attended the funeral, sent messages of sympathy and assisted during the period of bereavement.

IN MEMORIAM



Mrs Kanagambihai Ragnathan passed away on 10th June 1993.

Fondly remembered by husband Ragu, son Sri, daughter-in-law Saku and grandson Vishva. - 173 Mammoth Hall Trail, Scarborough, Ontario N1B 1P8.



In ever loving memory of Mr Sayambunather Vyramuttu Rattinam on the second anniversary of his passing away on 9th July 1997.

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his beloved wife Sellam; loving children Pathmanathan, Ramanathan and Loganathan; daughters-in-law Vasuki, Vijeyaladchumi and Thanalechmi; grandchildren Vijayaluxmi, Thevakumar, Senthoran, Bhavan, Kugan, Ashavidhya and Sathian and great grand daughter Krishni. 3 The Orchard, Wickford, Essex SS12 0HB. Tel: 01268 766624.

IN MEMORIAM Eighth Death Anniversary



In Ever Loving Memory
of

Balasubramaniam Sivagananathan

On the Eighth Anniversary of his passing away on 22nd June 1991.

Remembered with love and affection by his step mother Mrs. Rajaletchumi Balasubramaniam; wife Kamala, brothers Dr. Sivaloganathan, Thirunavukkarasu, Radhakrishnan and Srihtran; sisters Mrs. Gowri Pathmanathan, Mrs. Bhagawathy Mohanadas, Mrs. Mangayarkkarsi Jetheendran and Mrs. Jayanthi Kumaranayagam. - 22 Oakwood Drive, St. Albans, Herts. Tel: 01727 853331.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Jul 3 Feast of St Thomas; South London Tamil Welfare Group (SLTWG) Drop in. Tel: 0181 542 3285.

Jul 4 Feast of St Elizabeth.

Jul 9 Karthigai; Eekathasi.

Jul 10 9.00a.m. Tamil School Sports Association presents Tamil Summer Sports Festival 99 of Cricket (Adult Open, Over 40, Under 16), Children's Events, Netball and Football

(Under 10) at Warren Farm Sports Centre, Windmill Lane, Southall, Middx. Tel: 0181 698 2938; Pirathosam; 6.30 p.m. Prize Day of London Tamil Centre at Wembley High School Hall, East Lane, Wembley. All Welcome.

Jul 11 Feast of St Benedict.

Jul 12 Amavasai.

Jul 13 Feast of St Henry.

Jul 16 Sathurthi; Feast of Our Lady of Carmel.

Jul 17 SLTWG Trip to Walsingham Church. Tel: 0181 542 3285.

Jul 18 Shashti.

Jul 23 Feast of St Bridget.

Jul 24 Shree Ghanapathy Temple Annual Festival commences - Kodi Etham; Eekathasi; SLTWG Women's Front meets Tel: 0181 542 3285.

Jul 25 Pirathosam; Feast of St James.

Jul 27 Full Moon.

Jul 29 Feast of St Martha.

Jul 31 6.30 p.m. London Tamil Centre Dance Drama 'Kalki's Sivakamiyen Sabatham' presented by Smt Uma Chandradeva at Logan Hall, Bedford Way, London WC1. Tel: 0181 904 5939/ 907 6638; Feast of St Ignatius of Loyola; SLTWG Trip to Isle of Wight Tel: 0181 542 3285.

In Memory of a Dear Friend Thangaranee Nadarajah

Dear Thangaranee, as I pen this letter to you far away at my desk in our Bethesda home in Maryland, U.S.A. I know for sure that, wherever you are, you can feel all these thoughts that arise in my mind. Though you are in a disembodied state right now, yet your real Self, your own essence, your spirit in its mystical way will be able to hear us, feel us and see us as we mourn over your departure from our midst. Life always flows along, seemingly smooth with little ripples now and then, until the sad demise of someone dear and near to you shakes you to the very core of your being. It is then that we think seriously about the ephemeral nature of life and we try to go beyond its superficialities to understand its true meaning, its real purpose and realize the value of a friend who is no longer with us.

As I reflect on my association and friendship with you over the years, my mind goes back to thirty eight years ago when I joined the teaching staff of St. Clare's College in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Always the newness of a different environment can be a little daunting to a newcomer but with your natural warmth and understanding, you made me feel comfortable and welcome. As head of the Tamil section at St. Clare's, you did an excellent job, reaching out to staff and students alike in a pleasant and effective manner. Your contribution to the teaching of Tamil language and literature, your imparting of knowledge to the young and receptive minds, your personal interest in the lives of the youngsters whom you taught, your excellent interaction with the parents of our students, your invaluable help in the administration and the extra-curricular activities of St. Clare's, your constant cheerfulness in the midst of all challenges - all these made you a priceless part of the institution.

It was my privilege to know you not only as a teacher but also as a wife and a mother who performed her wifely and motherly duties in the most exemplary manner. You were blessed with a scholarly husband whose contribution to the Tamil literary world - whether it be in writing books of research and poems or in delivering learned lectures on Tamil heritage and

allied topics or in presiding over international conferences - was recognized by all as admirable. True to the common adage there is always a woman behind a man's greatness, you made everything possible for your husband to attain these great heights. The loving, nurturing and the maternal love that you always showered on your two children, Vatsala and Mahilna, have made them to be the wonderful persons that they are today.

You not only rejoiced in your husband's scholarly glory but you yourself in your own merit were a great Tamil scholar. In fact your common bond in the pursuit of this scholarship brought you together in a loving matrimonial partnership. You freely and most generously shared this deep knowledge of yours with your students, with your rapt audience and with the eager readers of your books and articles. You were not only a scholar of your own language that you dearly loved but you were also equally strong in the usage of English language both in speech and in writing.

These memories of my yesteryears with you reveal to me the charming side of your personality. Your interest in the people whom you met, your spontaneous help to all in times of need, your deep commitment to help our youngsters to find suitable partners in life, your reaching out to everyone you have known in the past and present, your deep sympathy with those in some loss or misfortune, the warmth of your big heart that pulsates to every throb of pain in others - all these made you the great and wonderful lady that you were. Whether it be in reaching out to your own kith and kin or to your friends and acquaintances or to strangers, you showed the same concern and commitment. Service to man, the saints proclaim, is service to God. You indeed were constantly walking on this path of sacredness and love.

In our annual trips to Toronto, Canada, during the last few years, my husband and I had the great fortune of renewing and enjoying our friendship with you. The first time that I saw you in Canada, I was shocked and saddened to see your appearance ravaged by the onset of heart disease. But when you spoke to us, I was happy to see that your pleasant and loving Self remained intact, unaffected by the onslaught of this illness. In spite of the

weakness that was all apparent, you continued to defy the bodily limitations and still steadily walked on this path of selfless service to others. You, dear friend, were an exemplary model of one who had realized the truth of life. I can only echo the words of a great poet by saying, 'Death be not proud, inspite of you Thangaranee lives with us forever'. Dear Thangaranee, as I wind up this letter, I know that the contents of this letter have reached you in some inexplicable mystical way. Knowing that you already have reached a stage beyond pain and pleasure, that you are enjoying the bliss of the Kingdom of our Lord, we need to learn to submerge our sorrow and wish you eternal joy in your Heavenly Home.

Kanagambigai Ranganathan,

Bethesda, M.D., U.S.A.,
April 18, 1999.

Handy Perinpanayagam Birth Centenary Celebrations

The birth centenary of Mr Handy Perinpanayagam, Emeritus Principal of Kokuvil Hindu College was celebrated by the Old Students' Association (UK) on 28th March 99 at Acton Town Hall, London W3. Mr Perinpanayagam was a well known and popular educationalist of his time, His contribution to education in general and Kokuvil Hindu College in particular is legendary. He was an independent thinker and earned by his versatility, a well deserved place among Sri Lanka's intellectuals. He was a well-read man with cultivated tastes and was a dear friend to many. Boundless humanity underlined all his actions. Of all the roles he assumed in a very eventful career, writer, speaker, thinker, leader, builder it is a long list - he was most delightful as a conversationalist. The verdict of history would be that he was a unique person, whose ideas were far ahead of his times, He was certainly a man who was worthy of being honoured and remembered.

The celebrations commenced with the singing of the College song, the lighting of the traditional oil lamp by the Chief Guest, Dr R.Thaya-Paran and the unveiling of the Portrait of Mr Handy Perinpanayagam by Mrs Saraswathy Packiarajah, who served

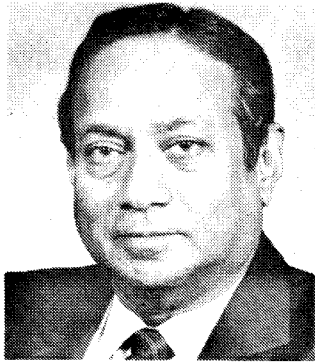
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as a music teacher during his Principalship. This was followed by the welcome speech by the President of the association, Mr S. Kanagasundaram and tributes by Mr S. Sivanayagam, the keynote speaker who had a long standing association with Handy Master, the Guest Speaker Dr Raj Chandran and the Chief Guest Dr R. Thaya-Paran both of whom had been students of Handy Master. Mr Muhundan Parameswaran, a grandson of Handy Master conveyed the thanks of the family.

A cultural show which followed commenced with a Vocal music recital by Smt Renuka Shriananda supported by Selvi Bairavi Ganeshwaran on Violin, Sri Kandiah Ananthanadesan on Miruthangam, Selvi Gaithri Manickavasagar on Thambura and Selvan Ramana Thillainathan on Thabla, which was highly appreciated by the audience. The next item was a Bharatha Natyam recital by the Mudralaya group consisting of Mr Unnikrishnan's students which received a rapturous reception from the audience. The last item was a recital of light songs by the popular 'Chitralya' group, which was well received. The day's events were compered by Mr Sri Rangan of Sunrise Radio. The proceedings ended with a vote of thanks by the Secretary of the O.S.A.

Dr. Ernest A. Champion



Dr. Ernest Ariasingham Champion, age 71, departed this life in his home on April 29th 1999. A native of Sri Lanka, Dr. Champion served for over 25 years at Bowling Green State University, U.S.A, most recently as Professor and Assistant Chairman of the Ethnic Studies Department. He also pioneered the Cultural Diversity program at BGSU, which has been replicated at other institutions of higher learning throughout the U.S.

After a brief stint as an editor for the newspaper, *The Times of Ceylon*, Dr Champion began a distinguished career in academia that spanned five decades and four continents. In 1948 in Jaffna, Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon), he joined the faculty of St. John's College, a boys' school founded in part by his great-grandfather, Rev George Champion. Soon thereafter,

he embarked on a long tenure at Jaffna College, founded in Sri Lanka by the Episcopal Missionaries of the United States of America. There, he will also forever be remembered for great success in coaching the school's cricket and track and field teams. His great love for the sport of cricket led him to form the All-Ceylon Cricket Umpires Association, which still thrives today.

In 1966, Dr. Champion accepted a position at the United Nations-sponsored Milton Margai Teachers' College in Sierra Leone, West Africa. He and his family spent the next four years in Sierra Leone, from where they traveled extensively around the world.

In 1970, Dr. Champion began his long and fond association with BGSU, when Bowling Green and Northwestern Ohio became his adoptive home. He earned a Ph.D. in English at BGSU in 1974, and went on to serve on the faculty and administration until his recent retirement. In 1977, he lured the distinguished African-American writer, James Baldwin, to come to BGSU as writer-in-residence with the Department of Ethnic Studies. Thus began a friendship between the two men that lasted until Baldwin's death. The lasting impression of this literary adventure and their collaboration with the acclaimed writer, Chinua Achebe, was memorialized in a book published by Dr. Champion in 1995 titled 'Mr. Baldwin, I Presume'. He has published and spoken extensively around the world on subjects related to literature and racial equality.

His loving memory will forever reside in the hearts of those who survive him. Living in his light are his beloved wife, Peace Seevamalar, of Perrysburg; daughter, Dr. Rosha McCoy, a pediatrician at the Medical College of Ohio, also of Perrysburg; and son Rohan Champion, Chief Executive of E-Time, Inc., an Internet Software company, of Ottawa Hills. Also surviving are his sisters Daisy, Joyce, and Agnes; son-in-law, Ronald McCoy; daughter-in-law, Nan Champion; and grandchildren, Hunter, Rajiv, Bon, Dan, Dinesh, and Maya. His brothers Sam and Dan preceded him in death.

South East London Tamil Senior Citizens' Welfare Association

The second Annual General Meeting was held on 14.10.98 and the following office-bearers were elected for the ensuing year.

President: Mr C. Velaiyutham, **Vice President:** Mrs J. Shanmuganathan, **Secretary:** Mrs M. Tharmalingam, **Asst Secretary:** Mrs T. Balasubramaniam, **Treasurer:** Mrs M. Thanabalasooriar, **Asst Treasurer:** Mrs P. Sivalingam. **Committee:** Messers S. Ponnudurai, R.J. Gnanapragasam, Mesdames K. Selvaratnam, P. Thuraiappah and T. Markandu.

The membership is open to those over 55

and they meet every Monday and Thursday at St Laurance Church Hall, 37 Bromley Road, Catford. The Executive Committee meet monthly at Voluntary Action, 120 Rushey Green, Lewisham.

The activities of the association are (a) Language classes for Tamil Senior Citizens, Refugees and Asylum Seekers over 30 years of age (b) Information, advice, translation, interpretation, supportive welfare role viz help to members when sick, home visits to assess needs, arrange District Nursing Staff to promote health and fitness of members, (c) Organise guest speakers, conduct traditional lunches, cultural events, fund raising programmes and celebrate important Hindu and Christian festivals.

Clr Mrs S.T. Phoenix, the Lewisham Deputy Mayoress was the Chief Guest at the Tamil New Year celebrations of the association held on 1.5.99 at the Bellingham Community Centre Hall which was filled to capacity. The proceedings commenced with the traditional lighting of the oil lamp and the singing of the association's song in Tamil by its members. The President Mr C. Velaiyutham presented the first copy of the association's well produced Souvenir to the Chief Guest.

The highlights of the evening were the two highly commended dramas in which the senior citizens took part, Bharatha Natyam, Veena Violin and favourite songs recitals which were acclaimed by the audience. The eventful evening was brought to a close with the vote of thanks by the secretary Mrs M. Tharmalingam.

Music Recital by Bhusany Kalyanaraman



We witnessed an excellent carnatic music concert at the Lord Mountbatten Hall of the Bharata Vidya Bhavan on 1st May 1999. The singer was Smt Bhusany Kalyanaraman. While I was absorbed in the music, I forgot for a moment that I was in London and was taken back to Chennai.

The Kachcheri opened with a Kaanada varnam and was followed by Gowlai Hindolam Aboghi, Poorvikalyani and so on. Thodi and Kambogi were rendered more elaborately. The rendering of the ragas brought out her eloquence. The alapana were founded on established pantha. She

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developed the raga, sthayi by sthayi, and richly decorated them with pleasing gamakas and balanced brigas. It was pleasing to listen to the creative aspects (manotharma), the alapana, the niraval and the swaraprastara built around the songs in Thodi and Kambogi. Throughout the kachcheri Bhusany has made it amply clear who her guru was : the carnatic music stalwart the late Thanjavur Kalyanaraman. Another admirable feature about her rendering Of the ragas was that she brought out some of the traditional style.

Towards the second part of the concert, when she sang the short famous songs like Kaatinile, Kuraiyonrum illai, I was pleasantly reminded of a very famous senior musician. The recital concluded with an elegant Thillana which is a composition of her guru and late husband Thanjavur Kalyanaraman.

On the violin Dr. Luxmy Jeyan provided a pleasing accompaniment to the singer. The mirudangam maestro Karaikkudi Krishnamoorthy made the kachcheri very lively and he did not fail to compliment with a short speech. Bangalore Prakash on the ghatam added elegant rhythm.

Shankara Asian Arts deserves to be complimented for bringing such excellent artistes and presenting high quality music and Bharata Natya programmes in London within a short period of less than an year of their existence. We should extend our co-operation to the Director of Shankara Asian Arts to enable her to continue this excellent service of promoting Asian Arts in UK.

N.B.

**Mrs. T. Sivapakiam Navaratnam -
An Appreciation by T. Selvaratnam
F.C.I.T. (Retired Chief Administration Officer,
Malayan Railways)**

It was customary in the early years of this century for the young Ceylon Tamils who had migrated to the then British Malaya for employment to return to Ceylon to seek a bride from their homeland. Sivapakiam Ramalingam was one such bride who married Mr. A. Navaratnam, a Hospital Assistant in the Malayan Medical Service, in 1926.

The sad news that I received about Mrs. Navaratnam's death (known to all of us as Mumma), sent me into a deep rumination of thoughts about the beginning of my connections with the family. I feel that I have been suddenly robbed of something near and dear that I have cherished for about 60 years. It is hard to accept that the light that has lit the life of many souls is now out. The reality is a hard fact but a painful truth.

It was by sheer accident that I got to know the Navaratnam family. One day in the late 1930s, when I was cycling along Shaw Road, Kuala Lumpur, I stopped to watch what was then to me an amazing sight. The walled enclosure on my right

housed the Pudu Gaol and a huge front portion of the wall between two towers was slowly rising upwards to allow a large truck to drive in. I was always under the impression that entry into the gaol was only through a heavy door within this front portion and I stood watching this feature quite dumbfounded for a very young man.

A gentleman, who looked a Tamil, dressed in a white suit emerged from the gaol, crossed the road, and was going towards the large timber house that was right opposite the front portion of the gaol. He saw me leaning against my bicycle and possibly appearing a little lost. A conversation, which was more like an interrogation, followed and I was then invited to the house. A mutual respect soon developed into an informal and strong friendship between myself and the Navaratnam family which included the four children, Ananthavalli, Jeyatheva (Jeyam), Sugunatheva (Suguna) and Vimalatheva (Thamby). Mr. Navaratnam (Pappy) nominated me as Jeyam's mathematics tutor (which did not survive for long!) but he later went on to do a Mathematics degree and became a leading Accountant and computer professional. Suguna started learning art from me which led to architecture and he was also an excellent sportsman representing Ceylon in badminton in the Thomas Cup tournament.

Pappa and Mumma were admirable people and Mumma's warm hospitality, and soft spoken kind words were endearing. They are still warm and fresh in my mind and heart. The many meals that I enjoyed from the virtuous golden hands of Mumma are memories lingering in my grateful mind.

Mumma was a great lady of patience, tolerance and endearment. Her warm hospitality to their many visitors was a praiseworthy quality many housewives would envy. She was a person of versatile talents hardworking enough to find the time to learn Indian Carnatic music with her favourite instrument, the Veena. She gave many public performances in the late thirties including a regular half-hour weekly Veena programme over Radio Malaya. These cultural talents spread to the children with Ananthavalli specialising in vocal and in violin, Jeyam on the Miruthangam, and Suguna on the flute. With the onset of the Second World War, however, all these cultural activities were disrupted.

The Navaratnam home was a well disciplined orderly set-up established for culture and learning, a good example for an ideal living. I must admit that I was so happily attracted to the way of life there that I, unconsciously, adopted some of them to later introduce them into my own life and that of my family. I am therefore grateful and thankful to Pappa and Mumma. I continue to wonder how Mumma found the time to be a dutiful wife, bring up four children and yet partake in all these cultural activities. Their virtuous concepts and qualities made an ideal home worthy of

emulation by many.

Soon after the end of the last War, Jeyam left in early 1946 for Ceylon to continue his studies as there were no universities in Malaya. Pappa retired from the Malayan Medical Service in 1948 and with Mumma and the remaining three children returned to their motherland, Ceylon. At an Investiture held at Queen's House, Colombo in 1949, Pappa was awarded the British Government decoration of the Imperial Service Medal (I.S.M.) for meritorious services while at the Malayan Medical Service. They built a house in Wellawatte, Colombo, and had all the children educated and well placed in life, though due to circumstances beyond their control and the desire to see greener pastures they are in different countries today. After the death of Pappa in 1976, Mumma braved the political turmoil by moving between Colombo and Jaffna but she finally left for Canada in 1989 to join Ananthavalli and family.

She died peacefully in Yellowknife, Canada on 17th December 1998 and was cremated in Edmonton on 22nd December. Now I sit back in deep thought, with tears, in recollecting the past and lamenting over the passing away of the second of the two adorable people in my life. While they have gone, I take solace in the fact that they have passed down the line their virtuous qualities to posterity.

Mumma, God bless her soul, will reach the highest position in heaven - I cannot believe otherwise.

Second International Saiva Conference

The second International Saiva conference convened by The Federation of Saiva (Hindu) Temples, UK will be held on Saturday, 7th August 1999 at the Sri Kanaga Durga Amman Temple, 5 Chapel Road, Ealing, London W13 9AB and on Sunday, 8th August at Highgate Hill Murugan Temple, 200A Archway Road, Highgate, London N6 5BA from 10 am. to 9 pm. on both days. The theme of the conference this time shall be 'to invigorate and fortify the rich heritage of the young generation of Saiva Tamils in the next millennium'.

The participants are expected to be (1) Thavathiru Santhalinga Ramasamy Adigal, Tamil Nadu (2) Thavathiru Sivananthi Adigal, London (3) Swami Premanantha, South Africa (4) Prof. Dr. V. Ratnasabapathy, Tamil Nadu (5) Prof. Dr. Arunai Paalaraavaayan, Tamil Nadu (6) Mrs Suba K. Germany (6) Senchotselvar Aaru Thirumurugan, Sri Lanka (7) Thamilaruvi T. Sivakumar, Sri Lanka (8) Sithantharatnam K. Ganeshalingam, Sri Lanka (9) Thiru S. Krishnan, Singapore (9) Thiru P.S. Patkunarajah, France (10) Thevara Bhooshanam Samy Tandapani, London The conference will conclude on both days with Music, Dance and Drama recitals by young and mature artistes.

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