

TAMIL NATION



The point at which the Indian Navy intercepted the M.V. Ahat belonging to the LTTE on 13.1.93 in violation of the freedom of navigation on the high seas.

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Eelam war prolonged by Western aid

"I wish for peace from the bottom of my heart"
says Prabhakaran

As the Sri Lankan army prepares for yet another assault aimed at crushing the Tigers, the LTTE leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, spoke frankly to BBC Tamil Service. Putting the war firmly at Colombo's door, he said the new weapons being used by the Sri Lankan army would be as ineffective as previous implements of war, vaunted by the government forces. He said that the west is indirectly helping this war of ethnic destruction and that the Sri Lankan government is continuing this war with the

help of loans, it gets from the West. The government cannot continue this war if the West stops giving money and arms. It is only after that, the right environment for peace will prevail, he said. His hopes are not high for the Parliamentary Select Committee, believing it will be yet another chance of peace spurned by Sinhala intransigence, offering a proposal that could not be accepted by him, his fighters or his people. In answer to a question whether he was prepared for peace efforts he said that he wished for peace from the bottom of his heart.

Full interview - page 3.

Premadasa misses the point - and the difficult questions

Those who listened in to the BBC's one hour world phone-in programme on 7th March, where president Premadasa answered questions addressed to him by listeners, must be a disappointed lot; not so much with the President's replies, which were vague and repetitive, but with the BBC production itself.

It demands an extremely clever and articulate lawyer to sound convincing, when faced with embarrassing evidence against the government. The President is neither a lawyer, nor is he articulate enough in the English language. But, even with these limitations, is it not an astounding statement by the President to say that his government bombs the north in order to protect its civilians? Imagine protecting civilians by bombing them? Why is he not bombing the east as well? Does he not want to protect the civilians there? The answer to that is, as everyone knows, that he does not want to take the risk of killing Sinhalese civilians in the east.

A listener has passed on to us the following question he had phoned in to the President. His question was: Mr President, despite several separatist movements in India, governments there, never resorted to aerial bombing of those areas which they considered their own territory. But, by bombing the north of your country, are you conceding that it is not part of your territory?

Question Time
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Question disallowed by BBC World Service 7th March, 1993

those areas, which they considered their own territory. But, by bombing the north of your country, are you conceding that it is not part of your territory? Would it not have been lovely to hear what answer the President would have had for that? He couldn't, surely, have said that the Indian governments were not interested in protecting their citizens! That would be the

kind of question that a lively interviewer like Malcolm Muggeridge would have grabbed at. One expected the BBC, with its reputation for a high degree of professionalism, to give listeners a better arranged and more lively one hour, instead of giving room for some inane questions and equally inane replies by the President, who kept on pulling the Parliamentary Select Committee out of his hat at every turn. The Select Committee, as every Sri Lankan observer knows, has come to the end of its tether, and its usefulness has already ended.

The President also failed to realise that it is not for a rebel group like the LTTE to make representations to the Select Committee; is it not for the ruling party which has an obligation to govern the country, to spell out its proposals?

As it turned out, the BBC programme, except in little patches, was a big yawn.



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UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA.

Thirunelveli,
Jaffna,
Sri Lanka.

10th November, 1992.

University Teachers for Human Rights - Jaffna Branch
The following Resolution was passed at the 142nd Meeting of the Council of University of Jaffna held on January 18, 1992:-

"It has been brought to the notice of the Council of University of Jaffna that a Publication titled 'Human Rights in Jaffna' has been put out in the name of the University Teachers for Human Rights - Jaffna Branch.

The Council wishes to inform the public that this publication is neither a publication of the University of Jaffna nor any of its teachers are associated with this publication"

(Prof. A. Thiruarazh)
Vice-Chancellor

Jaffna
University
defines
the odds:
page 5

TAMIL NATION

"Truth and knowledge are an idle gleam if they do not bring power to change the world."

Sri Aurobindo.

Recognising, that to change anything it is necessary to understand that which we seek to change, the TAMIL NATION is concerned not only with providing information but also with furthering an understanding of the issues that confront the Tamil national movement. Recognising that, in the end, we truly understand anything only to the extent that we have been able to change it, the TAMIL NATION is concerned with changing those material conditions of existence which continue to oppress and discriminate against the people of Tamil Eelam. The TAMIL NATION is rooted in the growing togetherness of the Tamil people and it seeks to participate in the effort to strengthen that togetherness. The TAMIL NATION seeks to focus attention on the unjust relationship between nations without a state and nations that have attained state-hood. And, the TAMIL NATION exists to debate and campaign for the radical changes necessary, both amongst the Tamil people and outside, if the struggle of the Tamil people for national self determination is to be won.

The TAMIL NATION is published by Tamil Forum Ltd., a company registered in the United Kingdom, the entirety of whose profits will go to a charitable trust established to help Tamil refugees, to advance education amongst the Tamil people and to alleviate poverty and hardship amongst them.

Views expressed in the paper are not necessarily those of the Publishers. TAMIL NATION welcomes reader responses in the form of letters are articles. Contributions should preferably be brief and typed on one side of the paper only.

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TALKING STRAIGHT

by Arjuna

The Eelam struggle and the role of expatriates

It is believed that today there are at least 500,000 Eelam Tamils, who are living outside their homeland as grafted expatriates, identity-conscious exiles and disoriented refugees scattered over several countries in the world. A post-1977 generation and again a post-1983 generation - they are an uprooted people. It is not a happy thing to be uprooted. What makes it more unhappy is that there are several among them, who no longer look forward - at least at some foreseeable and hopeful future - of finding their roots again; to restore to themselves their sense of belonging to the soil to which only, they rightfully belong. Whether they can see their native milieu again during their lifetime, as some elderly cynics doubt, is not the question. Whether they have the heart and the will to hope for that day, and to help to bring it about, is what really matters. After all, one might die anywhere in the world. But to die without knowing where one belongs - isn't that a sad thing?

As it takes all sorts to make a world, so it is with the Eelam Tamil diaspora. There are gifted, successful professionals, who are giving their best to the country and the society which had adopted them, but yet, actively involved in the struggle for Tamil rights. There are others, who have found safety and security in alien environments but who religiously believe they owe a duty to their unfortunate kith and kin back home, who are reeling under an oppression from which they have managed to escape. There are yet others who are trying valiantly to clutch at their cultural roots, teaching their now western-orientated generation, Tamil music and Bharata Natyam. They have not distanced themselves emotionally from the past, but think they are left with no other choice. One cannot blame them altogether, but that alone is not the answer. Are hothouse plants the same as those rooted in native soil? There are also some who have no time for anything except to look after themselves as best as they can, no time to brood about the past, no inclination to foresee the future, with their hands full with the present. But what makes it most distressing is that down the scale, there is also a minority of men who would neither leave the past alone, nor are reconciled to the present (back home) and are full of forebodings for the future. Among them are high-sounding academics, armchair nitpickers, life-weary philosophers....

To think differently about anything is not a matter to be scoffed at; in fact there have been historical circumstances in the history of many countries, not excluding Ceylon, where, while a majority of people got swept by a hysteria, a minority stood out and held on to the truth. But that comes out of good judgement and sound motivation; which precisely one fears are lacking in some of our expatriates. Not that what they think or say or write can alter one bit, the sweeping tide of history. But that can be a debilitating influence and erode on the single-mindedness of a small nation of people, who have to make a collective effort, if they have to restore their self-dignity and retain their identity as a people. Of what use is it, for example, to keep talking of a multi-racial Sri Lanka in this year of the Lord 1993, when an independent Tamil nation is struggling to be born? Don't they have enough historical sense to realise that a multi-ethnic democracy in Ceylon had flown out of the window, as early as 1956? Of what use is it to enjoy the luxury of using academic hyperboles like Fascism and Militarism in the cloistered comfort of the West, when out there in our own soil, there is a life and death struggle for sheer survival? We ought to know that, as a people, we have in the past produced more scholars and pundits and critics than creative, imaginative and innovative minds. That hangover is still there. One rather suspects that the problem lies in a mind-set that refuses to

accept change, particularly when the changes that have come about in Eelam Tamil life, during the past two decades, have been so sweeping and so revolutionary in character. There is nothing wrong in feeling a haunting nostalgia for the gone away past. But to imagine that one could bring back the past into our lives is sheer stupidity.

Times have changed and are changing rapidly and relentlessly. It is a world-wide phenomenon. Much of the world is in a state of flux. A new world order is today's buzz-word - in more senses than one. Old barriers are giving place to new ones. New borders. New nations. Where are yesterday's Soviet Unions, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakias? New generations are taking over leaderships. New social classes are coming into their own. There was a time when the old Etonians and the Oxbridge-educated ran the British Empire, Doon School types like Sanjay Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi ruled the roost in India, the old Royalists and Thomians of the Goigama caste presided over the Sinhala establishment in Ceylon, the black-coated lawyer class of the Vellalas belonging to the Tamil Congress, the Federal Party and the Tamil United Liberation Front steered Tamil politics. All these have gone with the wind.

In Britain, we have a Conservative Party that has produced a state-educated prime minister pushing for a classless society, in India we have a faceless consensus man, pinning his hopes on economic liberalism to manage an increasingly violence-prone, divisive society. In Sri Lanka, for the first time, there is a president who came in from out of the blue, breaking the stranglehold of caste and wealth and ancestry.

In Tamil Eelam, a new generation is in the process of ushering in a revolution - violent, yes, as is the price we have to pay for all revolutions in history - sweeping away all caste, regional, religious, sex distinctions and prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice open to any human being one's own life.

If we have a violent revolution in Tamil Eelam today, let us not point the finger of guilt at those who are leading it. That would mean blotting out from memory, four and a half decades of oppression and violence, directed at the Tamils. Let us also have the courage to turn that finger of guilt at ourselves, the earlier generation of Tamils who tried to live far too long in our own cocoons of self-security, unwilling to give up any of the encrusted values, incapable of making the slightest sacrifice for the common cause, refusing to accept change and running for safety all the time. On the other hand, for nearly four decades, Sinhala politicians had not only made peaceful changes in the polity impossible but also made peaceful life impossible for the Tamils. As John F Kennedy once said: "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable".

Who then are the guilty ones?

Perhaps we are living too close to history to see it being made. It took the wandering Jewish people 2000 years of anti-semitism and genocide to found a homeland in the desert. The Palestinians are yet groping for one. The Eelam Tamils have no such problem.

Even after 450 years of Western colonialism and four decades of Sinhala exclusive nationalism and state-sponsored colonisation, the homeland is still there. It is only a question of preserving it. And that is all, what the Eelam war is about. There has never been a good war, because any war means destruction, human suffering and temporary loss of human liberties.

But a war, bad as it is, is better than a peace that leads us back to square one - to irretrievable subjugation as a people.

BBC Interview with Tamil leader

"I wish my people to live in peace, freely and with dignity" - Prabhakaran

Q: Can you explain to me today's military and political situation?

Prabhakaran: I cannot say anything in particular about the military and political situation.

As far as the political situation is concerned, a gloomy situation prevails as usual. It doesn't seem that any peace efforts are being made to solve the Tamil problem.

It appears that the government has high hopes of the final report of the Parliamentary Select Committee. But the Tamil people don't believe that the PSC will find a fair solution to the Tamil problem because the main Sinhala parties in the PSC are not prepared to accept the basic demands of the Tamil people.

As far as the army is concerned, we believe it is prepared to launch big attacks. Last year, the Sri Lankan army had many setbacks, as a result of that, the security forces are now trying to modernise their weapons.

The Sri Lankan government is wrong if it thinks it can beat the Tigers by using modern weapons. Overall, there doesn't seem to be any change in the Sri Lankan government's view of the problem.

Q: Due to the blockade it seems that Tamil people in Jaffna are suffering immensely. Under this situation how long will the war continue?

Prabhakaran: The future of the war depends on the Sri Lankan government. It is they who started this war, it is they who are continuing it. It is the government which hopes to find a military solution to the Tamil problem.

Although we have requested several times to end this war and to find a peaceful solution, it appears the Sri Lankan government is not prepared to listen.

Instead, the Sri Lankan government is intensifying the war, while increasing the economic pressure on the people. This war is being waged on the Tamil people.

It is the intention of the Sinhala communalists to inflict suffering on the Tamil people, break their determination, dull their struggle and enslave them.

Indirectly, the west is helping this war of ethnic destruction.

The Sri Lankan government is continuing this war with the help of loans it gets from the west. The government cannot continue

this war if the west stops giving money and arms. It is only after that the right environment for peace will prevail.

Q: The strength of the security forces is 80,000. It's estimated that you have 10,000 fighters. Are you confident you can win this war?

Prabhakaran: Victory in a war does not depend on manpower or weapons. Liberation struggles in the world show this. Haven't the strongest superpowers been defeated in Vietnam and Afghanistan? Firm determination, valour and love for freedom are the factors that decide the victory in a war. Our fighters and people are full of these.

Q: It is believed that the Sri Lankan forces have acquired modern weapons. Can you withstand these?

Prabhakaran: The Sinhalese forces have introduced modern weapons from time to time. The government thinks that it can win whenever the new weapons are used.

The government thought so when it brought Marchetti planes and then tanks. Now too, they're buying new weapons. But it is not the weapons that decide the victory.

Q: From where do you get your arms?

Prabhakaran: We get our arms from the enemy forces. We are fighting them with the arms we took from them.

For example, last year we captured a large number of arms from the enemy.

Last year, we seized 1,172 automatic guns, 102 light weight guns, 450 calibre heavy weight automatic guns, 22 anti-tank guns, 25 rocket launchers, 1622 rockets, 700,000 bullets.

We have captured such large quantities of weapons from the army.

Q: It is impossible now for people to travel from Jaffna. The security forces have not only banned people from travelling through the Kilali Lagoon, but also attacked the boats that go across the lagoon.

People have died crossing the lagoon. The UNHCR is trying to find ways and means of opening the Sanguipiddy route to enable the people to travel. What is your

stand regarding this?

Prabhakaran: Our stand is also that this route should be opened. People should be able to use this route freely without any hindrance from the army.

To do this, army posts and checkpoints should be removed from this route... in order to open this route, the army should move a bit. We insisted on this but the army is not prepared to move even a bit.

The army wants to check everyone who passes through this route. This will endanger the people, especially our supporters and sympathisers.

Since the army is stubborn on this issue, UNHCR's attempts to open this route have failed. Therefore, we have suggested that at least the ban on Kilali Lagoon should be lifted. Surely the UNHCR can put pressure on the Sri Lankan government to do this - on humanitarian grounds?

Q: The Parliamentary Select Committee, which was set up to find ways and means of finding a solution to the Sri Lankan problem is expected to submit a report proposing demerged provincial set up. Will you accept such a federal set up?

Prabhakaran: The pro-government Tamil groups in Colombo themselves have opposed this demerged provincial federal set up.

The senior minister in Premadasa's government, Mr S Thondaman, has rejected this proposal.

In a letter recently written to me, Mr Thondaman has said that this is a conspiracy to split the Tamil homeland.

How can we accept a plan that will split our homeland?

Q: Suppose they put forward a north east merged federal set up? Will you accept such a proposal?

Prabhakaran: If a proposal for a federal set up which recognises our geographic homeland is put forward, we are prepared to examine it.

Federalism exists in many forms.

It has different dimensions. If a federal set up proposal which gives autonomy and satisfies the expectations of the Tamil people is put forward, we are prepared to consider it.

Q: What is your stand regarding the Muslims?

Prabhakaran: We have to approach their problem, bearing in mind that they are people with their own identity and culture.

While their identity and land rights are preserved, we believe their social, political and economic life will best be served by their living together with Tamils.

The Sinhala communalists and the selfish Muslim politicians are trying to widen differences and create enmity between the Tamil and Muslim people.

The Muslims should not become victims of this conspiracy.

Q: Why did you expel the Muslims from Jaffna?

Prabhakaran: When communal riots broke out in 1990 in the Amparai district and large numbers of Tamils were killed, there was a danger of these riots spreading to Jaffna.

At that time, we requested the Muslims to leave Jaffna for their own safety. But, if the war ends and peace returns, we will allow them to come back to Jaffna.

Q: You are opposing the settlement of the Sinhalese people in the north and east. Tamils can go and live in any part of the country. Don't Sinhalese people have the same right?

Prabhakaran: We do not oppose Sinhalese people settling in Tamil areas.

We oppose only planned Sinhala settlements in Tamil areas where Tamil people are driven away from their villages and Sinhalese are settled there.

The intention of these planned settlements is to split the Tamil homeland. We oppose only the planned settlements.

Q: What do you think about the stern action taken by India against you?

Prabhakaran: India is adopting a stern attitude towards us because of a wrong and exaggerated fear regarding the Tamil liberation struggle.

India fears that our freedom struggle will encourage separatism in Tamil Nadu and become an inspiring force for national struggles.

Due to this unnecessary exaggerated fear, the Indian government has, in the past ten years, interfered in many ways in our struggle.

It is determined to destroy our movement which is waging a liberation struggle.

India has misunderstood our struggle and its unreasonable actions against our legitimate struggle has affected us seriously.

The conditions of our people have worsened.

Because of India's hostile approach, the Sri Lankan government was encouraged and is intensifying its genocide without mercy.

Q: There are speculations that there are differences within the LTTE. Is it true?

Prabhakaran: This is not true.

There are no differences in the movement.

There are some changes.

The responsibilities of some senior members have been changed.

This has been misunderstood and hence there are speculations.

Q: What was the reason for Kittu's journey to Jaffna?

Prabhakaran: Kittu undertook the journey to Jaffna with a peace proposal from western countries. He tried to come here to discuss this peace proposal with us.

The Quakers have confirmed the intention of his journey.

Q: What are your feelings regarding Kittu's death?

Prabhakaran: I cannot describe the deep sorrow in words.

Kittu was a great commander - a capable fighter.

His death is a great loss, not only to our movement, but also to our land.

Q: Are you hopeful that there will be a peaceful solution to this long drawn out problem?

Prabhakaran: To find a peaceful solution to this problem there should be a fundamental change in the attitude and approach of the Sinhala government.

If such a change does occur, I believe there will be a peaceful solution to this problem.

Q: Mr Prabhakaran, are you really prepared for peace efforts? What are your conditions for such peace talks?

Prabhakaran: I wish for peace from the bottom of my heart. I want my people to live in peace, freely and with dignity.

We have not put any conditions for peace.

It is the Sinhala government that has put conditions on peace and peace talks.

G O L L I A R D

Take up arms in the war of words

CP Golliard urges Tamils to put pen to paper to dispel Sri Lankan propaganda lies about harmony in the garden of Eden

The *Time* (International edition) magazine of 13th July, 1992 carried the following letter written by one Kirthie Abyesekera of North York, Canada.

"You say Sri Lanka's 'ethnic' war is an 'insurrection of the Hindu Tamils against the Buddhist Sinhalese'. While in the past the conflict involved many Hindu Tamil factions, it is now largely a fight between an armed terrorist group - the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam - and the democratically elected Sri Lankan government.

"The Western perception of the Sri Lankan conflict turns a blind eye to the fact that several thousand Hindus live harmoniously among the Sinhalese Buddhists in seven of the country's nine provinces. Hindu Tamils hold top government positions in the police, the armed services, the judiciary and the foreign service. Among the country's leading businessmen and professionals, such as doctors, lawyers and journalists, are many more thousands of Hindu Tamils. They are also in abundance in many other spheres of human activity, including athletics".

If I am not wrong, this Kirthie Abeyesekera was a journalist in the Lake House group of newspapers, who established his name in court

reporting and crime beat. In fact, he was a teacher of mine, when I learnt journalism at the Polytechnic of Wellawatte, more than two decades ago. He emigrated to Canada in the mid 1970s.

The above mentioned letter projects the image of Sri Lanka in the 1950s and 1960s and certainly not the 1990s. However, he got his letter published in *Time*, to the detriment of the Eelam cause. He is a fighter for the Sri Lankan government, who uses the pen as his sole weapon.

How many of us (Tamils in diaspora) dare to take the time and effort to get involved in the Eelam liberation with a pen as the sole weapon? As one who has been involved on this front of the Eelam campaign for the past 15 years or so, I wish to suggest some tips for getting letters published in newspapers and magazines which report about Eelam.

I will cite three reasons for writing letters which project the Tamil point of view:-

1) to correct factual errors and clarify the current status in the editorials and news reports provided by 'house' correspondents; any self-respecting editor would like to see his or her publication free of factual errors.

2) to challenge the inaccurate analogy: for instance, in some

editorials published in the past, it has been suggested that even if Eelam is born as a new nation, it will be a basket-case like Bangladesh. We need to correct this inaccurate analogy, by pointing out that the population of Eelam will be only 3 million, compared to the 100 million plus living in Bangladesh. Furthermore, the literacy rate in Eelam is higher than that in Bangladesh and even India.

3) to compare the status of Eelam and its leaders with the history of other nations and their leaders. For instance, when Prabhakaran and LTTE are inaccurately branded as "terrorists", we should remind the gullibles and ignoramuses that George Washington and Mao Tse Tung were also branded as "terrorists" by their oppressors.

So, how do you write an effective letter, which urges the editor to use it? Some of my tips are as follows:-

1) Be rational in the argument and omit any emotional outburst. Do not insult the intelligence of the editor and refrain from personally attacking the correspondent with whom you wish to disagree.

2) Please limit the letters to an optimal range of 250-300 words (one typed page). If additional information needs inclusion, make the 500-word

limit as the maximum. To use an analogy in boxing, the best boxers never waste their punches. They score knockout victories by effective use of power, speed and timing. Use powerful words like great boxers use strong punches. Only incompetent boxers waste their energy and punches and drag the fight to the end of the 15 rounds.

3) Try to use home-spun analogies and Tamil proverbs to suit the situation.

4) If you have some supporting sources for the Tamil views (such as reports from international newspapers, magazines, books or other reference sources) please cite them. Depending on the space availability, the editors may or may not publish these sources. But, they would value your effort for providing some supporting information.

5) Never mail the same letter

by CP Golliard

Historically, golliards were the medieval poets, who wandered from place to place, engaging in intellectual duels and bawdy bar room fights. The initials C P stands for the place from which this particular golliard comes from - Parithu Thurai/Cotton Port.

theme, but do construct a separate letter from a different angle.

6) Last, but not the least - learn from the masters who excelled in letter writing, such as Mahatma Gandhi, George Bernard Shaw and Graham Greene. They were the "great boxers" who fought for their beliefs using their pens as the sole weapons. They absorbed punches from so many adversaries. But they returned the blows punch for punch and never suffered knock-outs. Though they have departed this world physically, their letters (published in anthologies) are still available for those who are interested in gaining some inspiration.

Golliard's Graffiti

In the October 1992 issue of the *Tamil Times*, there appeared an article entitled, "Alternative Solutions", authored by Prof. Marshall Singer of the University of Pittsburgh.

In it, the learned professor wrote: "My informants tell me that Prabhakaran (the leader of the LTTE) is already out of the country". If this was so, whom did the Bishop of Colombo, Kenneth Fernando and the eight member Christian delegation meet in Jaffna last January?

Golliard would like to advise the American professor that please do not rely on the spurious sources. They will ruin your reputation as an intelligent commentator on South Asian politics.

FROM THE WAR FRONT

Sithankerni,

6th January: Nine civilians were killed and 16 injured in an air attack by the Sri Lankan Airforce at Sithankerni. Over 25 houses were also destroyed by the bombing.

Pullumalai,

10th January:

Six Sri Lankan soldiers were killed and three others injured in an LTTE ambush near Pullumalai in the Amparai District.

Athavatuwewa,

18th January:

A large force of LTTE attacked an army patrol at Athavatuwewa, killing 14 Sri Lankan soldiers and injuring five others.

Veli Oya

19th January

A Tiger raiding party killed seven security personnel in Veli Oya.

Sri Lankan military sources admit that they cannot contain LTTE attacks in Mullaitivu District as they are overstretched in hostile territory.

Eravil,

21st January:

Over 50 Tamil civilians were taken into custody by the Special Task Force (STF) in Eravil.

In late January, another 20 people were arrested in Mandur by the STF and local people say that all these people seem to have "disappeared".

Vavuniya

25th January:

The LTTE killed four soldiers in Vavuniya in a midnight attack.

Kuchaveli,

30th January:

In a dawn attack on the Kuchaveli police station, north of Trincomalee, the LTTE

killed a constable and injured five others.

Mathagal,

23rd February:

The Sri Lankan armed forces launched a massive assault from land, air and sea in the Mathagal area.

The operation follows the declaration of a curfew in the Jaffna peninsula.

Over 500 civilians from Pandatheruppu, Moolai and Sithaukerni were displaced as a result of this army action.

Kilali

25th February:

The Sea Tigers attacked and destroyed a Sri Lankan naval speed boat operating in the Jaffna lagoon in the Kilali area.

The entire crew were killed in the operation.

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Undaunted by bombs shells, curfews and arrests, life goes on for students and staff

Jaffna University defies the odds

"We are keeping the Jaffna University from closing in spite of all the problems we have," says the university's registrar.

The teachers and the students are giving their fullest co-operation to keep the University open, notwithstanding the sudden curfews clamped from time to time, shelling and aerial bombings.

However, when the Assistant Treasurer, Mr. V Kanthamoorthy travelled from Colombo to purchase some essential items for the university, he was arrested and detained for 42 days.

He was released only yesterday.

"If the defence services had realised the situation and the problems in Jaffna University, he would not have undergone this predicament: the registrar of Jaffna University Mr. Parmeswaran stated with regret at an interview with a *Virakesari* reporter.

The Jaffna University Workers' Trade Union was determined to take industrial action protesting against the unlawful arrest and detention of an official who was on official duties.

However, realising the prevailing situation in the north and recognising the errors made by the Jaffna

Government Agent, Mr. Manicavasagar, and the University Grants Commission, they decided to withhold Trade Union action.

When asked about the present situation at Jaffna University, he said: "Although there are innumerable obstacles and difficulties the University has continued to function since October 1990.

Realising that education is fundamental to our basic national wealth, the staff and the students carry out their responsibilities towards achieving this objective.

The University continues to function despite the shell attacks and the aerial bombings. There

is no public transport due to the scarcity of petrol and diesel.

However, staff and students use bicycles to reach the university from distant places for lectures.

Laboratory tests are carried out although there is no electricity. Generators provide the power for these tests.

In spite of great dangers, officials have to travel to Colombo to purchase essential items for the university.

The defence services look upon them with suspicion and arrest them.

This grave situation should not be allowed to continue.

Courtesy *Virakesari*, 14 January, 1993

Defectors arrested

116 ex soldiers of the Sri Lankan Army who had deserted their army posts and were living incognito in the south were arrested by the joint operation of police and the army. Seven of them are said to be high ranking officials.

A senior officer stated that the arrested defectors had been sent to their former army posts for the purpose of an inquiry into their cause for desertion.

PLOTE member killed in Mannar

In a confrontation that took place recently between the PLOTE and the Tiger militants at Paddithoddam in the Mannar District, one PLOTE member Raji has been killed.

It is learned that the fight between the two factions occurred when the PLOTE militants went in search of the Tigers to attack them.

Tact, timing and surveillance keeps travellers alive on the hazardous trip across the lagoon

Kilali route still open despite army ban

The use of the only available route for crossing the lagoon from the peninsular to the mainland - the Kilali route through murky water and mud - has been prohibited for civilian travel by the Sri Lankan Army for reasons known only to themselves. But, amidst untold hardships and misery, thousands of civilians have managed to undertake the journey "with their lives in one hand and their belongings in the other." They had to cross over to the mainland only for economic reasons.

Most of the citizens of the Jaffna Peninsula depend on external sources of income for their living. Their income is derived from teaching, business ventures, employment and other sources, almost all of them from the mainland to the south. Therefore, for their mere existence, they have to venture out and cannot afford to confine themselves to the meagre sources of income within the peninsula. These are the main reasons that urge them to go over to the mainland by crossing the dangerous and

nearly fatal route through Kilali, the route that connects the peninsula to the mainland through the shallow sea.

They do this with courage and dexterity by avoiding the crossfire between the army and the Tigers, and other dangers. A lot of tact, timing, surveillance and speculation are needed for undertaking this type of a journey which involves risk of life. The Tamil man is not lacking in them.

Due to the continuing war conditions, the Tamils are virtually made prisoners in their own homeland, unable to go about to places as they wish.

For instance, they are prevented from travelling between the Jaffna Peninsula and the mainland and areas like Kilinochi, Vavuniya, Mannar and the south. They are also stopped from moving between Pallimunai in the Mannar Island and Vidathalthivu and other areas in the mainland. Why should the ordinary Tamil civilian be destined to this cruel fate?

Strangling the north

Nine hundred and five children died needlessly because of medical shortages in Sri Lanka's war-torn northern districts, between May and November last year, according to a survey published in January.

The children were among 14,416 people admitted to hospitals suffering from malaria and diarrhoea. Jaffna's Health Department has condemned the long delays by the Colombo government in sending medical supplies and says only a fraction of what is really needed goes north.

Jaffna health authorities cannot now contain diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and leprosy in the absence of organised programmes by the National Health Department. The upward trend in maternal and infant deaths is due to poor nutrition, the report

says. Another survey carried out in Jaffna recently indicates that almost 60 per cent of children are 20 per cent below average weight and that over five per cent are seriously malnourished.

Following a massacre of civilians in Jaffna lagoon at Kilali in early January, transport to the peninsula was disrupted for several weeks leading to rises in food and fuel prices. A kilo of sugar costs Rupees 40 and a bottle of kerosene rose to Rs 220. Paddy rice production has declined because of growing drought and reports say many families do not have even one meal a day.

In a letter to President Premadasa in mid-January, Jaffna's Anglican Bishop, Rev. D. Ambalavanar, said people were destitute and were denied help and called for the lifting of a ban on the use of the Kilali crossing.

Ministry of Rehabilitation reports maintain that 3,200 tons of food aid were sent to Jaffna by ship on 19th January, and that a further

shipment of 3,050 tons is scheduled. But confidence has been shattered after the discovery in December that over 50 per cent of food sent to the north has "disappeared". A CID investigation team which has questioned 50 people, says important people are involved and arrests are imminent. Other sources say quantities of food consignments to the north are spirited away in mid-sea implying naval involvement. Hundreds of lorries carrying food to the north were held at Medawachchiya, south of Vavuniya after the Army refused to accept Ministry-approved bank receipts for vehicle registration certificates. In the current military stalemate such delays can be as deadly as bombs and more cost-effective.

The Army launched a massive new three-pronged assault on northern districts in late January. The civilian population faces another round of food shortages, death and destruction.

Starving the east

As Maha, the major harvest season approaches, Batticaloa's Army Commander, Brigadier Rohan Guneratne, has told farmers they need army permits to bring in their rice crops, as a new crackdown begins, to starve out Tiger units west of the lagoon.

The military has ordered the closure of 12 Co-operative stores

supplying dry rations to refugees in Batticaloa District in mid-January, until army-approved family identity cards are obtained by refugees.

In future, dry rations will be issued only to family card holders and army officers say they are on high alert to prevent food stock falling into Tiger hands.

Brigadier Guneratne also told local officials that areas north of Mannunai have been "cleaned" and that refugees in 12 camps could return to their villages in safety. The much-feared Special Task

Force (STF), however, surrounded Kaluthavalai village in this area and arrested eight people on 17 January.

Another 30 Tamils were arrested in the same village three days later. Local officials say 70,000 of the district's 220,000 population are refugees with 96 per cent of the 7,310 people in camps from areas north of Mannunai.

NGOs say unofficial estimates are almost double government figures. Over 33,000 houses in the district have been destroyed.

Quote and Unquote

"It has to be recognised and appreciated on both sides of the ocean - Sri Lanka and India - that anyone can be a militant, but it requires a greater courage to be a moderate."

- Ex-Indian High Commissioner NN Jha's obiter dictum in Colombo on the eve of his retirement.

Of course, Mr Jha is quite right. Anyone, that is anyone, can sacrifice his own life for the common cause (it's so easy). But it requires greater courage to try to save one's own miserable skin.

News Watch

Army in Vantharumoolai offensive

The Army launched new military operations in Vantharumoolai, north of Batticaloa on 13th January.

Reports say troops met little opposition.

Over 50 Tamils were taken into custody on 21st January by the STF in Eruvil.

In late January, another 20 people were arrested in Mandur and local people say they have "disappeared".

Peace Committee meets Danish delegation

Batticaloa's Peace Committee met a visiting Danish government delegation on 21st January providing a list of 4,368 disappearances in the district and urging international pressure to protect Tamil civilians.

It told the delegation that large scale disappearances continued throughout the north east and there was no political will to solve the ethnic question.

Asylum deaths

Five Sinhalese asylum seekers died from suffocation, travelling in a sealed compartment of a vat which crossed the Austrian border from Hungary in late January, police sources say.

Detained Tamils

The Human Rights Task Force (HRTF) has given a list of Tamils from the north east held in the Colombo Magazine and Kalutara prisons to the Batticaloa Citizens Committee.

According to the HRTF, 604 Tamils at the Kalutara prison and 828 at Magazine prison were detained between 1988 and 1992. Those at Kalutara were arrested after 1990. These figures do not include, according to human rights activists, those arrested after the assassination of Naval Chief Clancy Fernando.

Many more Tamils are held in army camps, police stations and other detention centres. Reports received by TIC suggest that almost all the Tamils held in detention have not been charged or brought before a court.

Refugees head for Colombo

The continuing war in the north east has led to an influx of Tamils into Colombo who are in refugee camps or in the dwellings of relatives and friends.

The four refugee camps alone at Manikka Vinayagar Kovil, Saraswathy Hall, Kali Kovil, Mutual and Vivekananda Hall hold a total of 981 families.

Batticaloa awaits gift ambulances

Batticaloa: Although 15 ambulances were gifted by the UNHCR for use in the north and east, Batticaloa district has none while Amparai district has six.

Several reports of harassment of

Tamils and violence against Tamils by the Muslim Homeguards at Valaichchenai have been recorded in this district.

Sinhalese move in to Tamil homes

Batticaloa: About 50 Sinhala families who fled the Kalkudah army camp vicinity in 1991 have now been resettled in the houses deserted by the Tamils.

More army bans on essential items

The army has imposed a restriction on transport of essential food and other items to Tamil villages in Trincomalee District, where the government says civil administration has been restored.

The ban is effective in Kaddaiparichchan, Senaiyur, Sampur, Koonitivu, Illakanthai, Veeramanagar, Pattalipuram, Palaikudiiruppu and Menkaman in Muthur.

Transport is allowed only four days a week.

Each person may take only three kilos of rice, half a kilo of flour and a half kilo sugar.

On Sundays each person may take milkfood and half a litre of kerosene.

Villagers ordered out of homes
The Special Task Force (STF) ordered Tamils in Muthalaikan-nemedu, Batticaloa District, to vacate the village in December.

Over 100 families have taken refuge in the Mandur Ramakrishnan Mission School.

Armoured vehicles destroy paddy fields

Mannar: Over half of 100 acres of paddy fields have been destroyed by the use of armoured vehicles.

Some 54 acres have been laid waste in the Puthukamam, Kathankulam, and Muthalaikuthy areas.

Buses arriving into town from outer Mannar areas only make their return trips on the following day. The commuters have to waste a full day and night in vain, in Mannar town.

Sri Lanka's gloomy trade figures

Colombo: Sri Lanka's trade deficit continued to rise last year despite progress in the export sector, the latest Central Bank figures revealed.

During the first seven months of 1992, the island's trade deficit has increased by 28 per cent compared with corresponding figures for last year, the central bank pointed out in its bulletin.

Total export earnings during 1992 January-July period stood at 1,238.5 million US dollars while expenditure for imports in the same period was 1,836.5 million US dollars, the bank said. Expenditure on the import of consumer and intermediate goods increased by 12.6 per cent.

This development took place amid a 29 per cent increase (in rupee terms) of earnings from exports of industrial items during the period.

When will the Sinhalese learn to respect the aspirations of the Tamils?

asks Meesalaiyan

Anybody will observe a seemingly dramatic change in the attitude among the Sinhalese educated classes, politicians and monks, towards the Tamils. The educated classes want the state aided colonisation to cease, leader of the SLFP, Mrs. Srimavo Bandaranayake - I do not know what has made her open her eyes - is willing to grant separate Federal states to North and East and the chief spokesman of the UNP, Mr ACS Hameed has expressed his party's support for this proposal. Politicians should not be trusted.

Mrs. Bandaranayake is a politician. Therefore, it is certain that she will disown her proposals at any time. Her last wish is to die as an executive president of Sri Lanka and to achieve this, she will even walk on a tightrope, though sick and advanced in age. It is futile to expect such leaders to settle the ethnic problem.

It is well known, that the seven Tamil Parties based in Colombo are not the true representatives of the Tamils of the north-east. Many of these parties supported the government and encouraged it to annihilate the Tamils of the north-east by aerial bombing, artillery shelling and frequent attacks by sea and land.

The government, not satisfied with these dastardly acts, has imposed an economic embargo. Very fundamental and most vital necessities for existence have been deprived of by this government.

Electricity has been cut off, medicine supplies restricted, transport services - both private and state aided - have been suspended, fuel supplies banned, and postal facilities provided only once in two months. Oh God! These cruel people have banned the supply of boxes of matches too?

The poor man's transport - push bicycle and spares - too have been banned. The JOC has included writing paper too in the banned list. How do these people expect the school children, schools, university and other government institutions to function? Surely, paper is not a requirement for the manufacture of explosives?

When these and many other atrocities are being committed by the government, the Tamil parties based in Colombo, remain spectators.

They failed to raise these matters either in Parliament or outside and they failed to wipe out the agony and sufferings of the residents of the north-east.

The government, having the votes of the Tamils in mind, passed on their responsibilities to the JOC and the nefarious actions of the armed forces are condoned by the government and it is swallowing all the cooked up reports of the forces.

While writing this, I heard the thundering noise of two planes, flying over my cadjan hut and I had to run to an open space with my ailing wife.

I heard the noise of two bomb explosions and blind firing of gren-

ades and guns at Chavakachcheri. Later I heard that three school going children were killed and their house reduced to the ground.

A girl and her two brothers were the unfortunate victims of this exercise.

Is it possible to imagine the pathetic plight of the parents of these children? What a horrible act! Human beings are treated worse than animals.

Dear Hamilton - you take it from me - you, along with the two pilots who were engaged with your approval in this dirty exercise, have been reserved three places in Hell. What is in store for you all there, can't be described in words.

Whatever is said and done, my sympathies are with you. You are aware that killing three children and resorting to such activities, are not

going to solve the ethnic problem. I am indeed sorry to state that you will have to pay for all the inhuman atrocities, brutalities and other acts of barbarism committed by your forces on ordinary people residing in the North-East.

May I please remind you, in 1958, the late Mr SWRD Bandaranayake delayed to declare a state of emergency to put down the riots that were taking place and the Tamils were the victims of assault, arson and what not. In fact, Mr. Bandaranayake wanted the Tamils to get a thorough beating by the Sinhalese mob.

He was shot down like a mad dog in his own mansion by a hero.

This is what is called retribution. No race can rule another without consent.

Courtesy Hot Spring

Gossipium planks help Tamil Eelam's kattamaram fishermen

The Tamil Eelam Economic Development Organization, TEEDOR, has found the use of Gossipium planks better suited for construction of Kattamarams (rafts) used by fishermen for fishing purposes.

The TEEDOR has in a press note said, that the experiments carried out with Gossipium planks have proved that these planks are more durable in water than Alvesian planks. They absorb much less water and easily

float on water.

Fishing with Kattamarams has been a traditional occupation of the Tamils in Eelam.

Alvesian planks had been brought from the Sinhalese areas for the construction of these Kattamarams all these days. But now these Alvesian planks cannot be brought.

Gossipium trees are available in the Tamil Eelam territory. They are found in plenty in the Vanni areas.

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THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

Bush fires parting shot over India's "significant abuses"

Washington - The Bush administration, shortly before quitting office, released a report which criticised India's human rights record listing "significant abuses" in various parts of the country especially in Punjab and Kashmir.

In its annual report to the US Congress on Tuesday, the State Department said many of the human rights abuses in 1992 were the product of violent ethnic, religious,

caste, communal and secessionist activities and the government's reaction to them.

"As in past years, the main problems continue to include police, parliamentary and army excesses against civilians, particularly in Punjab, Assam and Kashmir, in response to attacks by militants," it added.

It highlighted political killing, kidnapping and extortion by militants in Punjab and Kashmir and extra-

judicial actions (beatings, extortion, torture, rape and fake "encounter" killings) by police against detainees throughout India, incommunicado detention for prolonged periods without charge under national security legislation.

It also recorded the administration's failure to prosecute police and security forces implicated in abuse of detainees, widespread intercaste, religious and communal violence, inadequate implementation of laws

protecting women's rights, infrequent prosecution of "dowry deaths" and widespread exploitation of indentured, bonded and child labour.

The report, with a 16 page chapter on India, appears to have been compiled largely on the basis of reports in the Indian media and the country's human rights groups. It also records similar human rights abuses in many of other countries. Courtesy Indian Express 23rd January

British human rights activists face life in Indian prison over conspiracy charge

Two Britons face life imprisonment in India after being charged with sedition, rioting with deadly weapons and criminal conspiracy.

David Ward and Stephen Hillman, who were charged two weeks ago, were held for a year after entering Nagaland, a north eastern region of India which has been all but closed to foreigners since 1947.

They deny all charges and say their only crime was to enter Nagaland without a special permit.

Politicians and human rights groups are calling for the speedy release of Mr Ward and Mr Hillman following John Major's recent state visit to India where he raised their case.

The British prime minister had previously written to Mr Ward's family saying that he understood the concern surrounding their imprisonment.

Simon Hughes, MP for Southwark and Bermondsey, is calling on Mr Major to state what further action he plans.

Naga-Vigil, a UK based human rights group which is campaigning for the men's release, claims that more than 100,000 Nagas have lost their lives in the struggle for independence.

About 150,000 Indian security forces patrol the area and, according to Amnesty International, allegations of rape, torture and murder by the troops are frequent.

The two men deny the Indian Government's claim that they were in Nagaland to promote insurgency and that when they were arrested in a convoy of Naga vehicles they shot at security forces. They say that they were recording human rights abuses for Naga-Vigil.

Both claim the reason for detention was not originally made clear to them and that they were initially denied access to lawyers.

In a letter to Mr Major last week, Liberal Democrat Mr Hughes said the two Britons were imprisoned on January 30, 1993, under the National Security Act (1980) "after they had been coerced into signing confessions".

Their case will be heard on March 3rd.

Prisoners Abroad is concerned at the length of their imprisonment and their treatment. It said: "An Indian official has confirmed that both Ward and Hillman were unarmed."

"They were beaten, held in leg irons, blindfolded and have both lost a great deal of weight."

Doctors wishing to see them were denied access.

A Foreign Office spokesman said: "Whether they had taken any part in the Naga campaign seems most unlikely."

"We would like to see the men home as soon as possible".

Courtesy The Independent UK

BJP is no alternative to Congress says VP

Singh demands dismissals in Maharashtra and Gujarat over failure to quell violence

Janata Dal leader and former Prime Minister VP Singh has said that the BJP could not provide an alternative to the Congress because of its rabid communal stand. He said both the Hindutva of the BJP and the secularism of the Congress were two sides of the same

Talking to newsmen here on Wednesday, Mr Singh said that his party had demanded the dismissal of the Maharashtra and Gujarat governments because of their failure to contain the communal disturbances.

He said that various scandals and corrupt practices indulged in by the rich and the powerful were eating into the vitals of the economy and there was a correlation between

corruption and the debt-trap.

"What we see in the country today is that the tax paid by the poor which goes to Delhi is taken away by corruption. The money should be utilised for the welfare of the poor but it is being misappropriated through embezzlement by the rich", he said.

He said that political authorities at the Centre had compromised on the question of arresting the growth of black money and corruption.

He said the government should not compromise on four major things. Firstly, there should be electoral reforms and state funding of election. Nobody should get elected because of his clout. All political parties recognised by the Election Commission should be provided with funds during election so that honesty and integrity would become the byword of politics in the country.

Secondly, he said, the political leaders should be accountable to the people and they should have a sense of responsibility. Mr Madhav Rao Scindia had resigned owning moral responsibility in the recent plane crash and it showed accountability to the people. He said if public opinion was mobilised towards this end it would have a positive effect.

Thirdly, he demanded that people should have access to government files in our country too, except the classified files.

Fourthly, he said that decentralisation of power was the only way to ensure the participation of the people in the process of decision making.

Mr Singh said that the main reason for the economic crisis was due to the negligence of the agriculture sector which he said had become the biggest industry in the country. About 70 per cent of the people in

the country were dependent on agriculture but no capital investment was taking place in this sector. Instead there was flow of capital from the sector and withdrawal of subsidies. "Because of this, the prices of fertiliser and other inputs needed for agriculture development had gone up. This was mainly due to the reason that the country had no national agriculture policy though we had formulated an industrial policy way back in 1956, he said.

Mr Singh, while speaking at a public meeting, said that because of the bungling by the BJP and the Narasimha Rao government in handling the Ayodhya issue, the problems of unemployment and poverty had receded to the background.

He said that the main question before the nation was what sort of a country we should have.

India interfered to distract from home problems

order to enforce its hegemony in south east Asia and to divert the people's attention from domestic problems, India has been interfering in the struggle for Tamil Eelam from the inception by various indirect means.

The Indian government which could not stifle the struggle for Tamil Eelam, in spite of its interference in various indirect methods, had landed in Tamil Eelam in the guise of a peace keeping force.

The Indian government, which does not like the intensified struggle for Tamil Eelam and its recognition now internationally, has once again tried to stifle the struggle for Tamil Eelam by killing the leaders and thwarting international mediation.

In this connection, in 1987, the Sri Lankan president, Mr JR Jeyawardena and the Indian prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, by establishing a secret agreement had forced down the Tamil peoples throat an agreement which they had not wanted and had killed thousands of our people and destroyed property worth

hundreds of millions.

At this stage the Indian government and the Indian army who had by giving hopes of peace talks and had planned and treacherously murdered Lt Colonel Johny, had increased their list of treacherous murders.

The Indian government and Indian army had mistakenly believed that the strength of the Tamil people in their passive acceptance of authority.

We not only condemn the disorganisation of the peace plan, which had been prepared by the sole representation of the Tamil people with the help of the international community, and the murder of the freedom fighters including Colonel Kittu, but also request that such forces which challenge world peace should be expelled from the world forums including the UNO.

The Tamil people had by this peace plan demonstrated that while they are not against peace, they are not prepared to live without their rights.

The Renaissance Society University of Jaffna.

Ramadas "prepared" as Centre debates PMK ban

The Union Home Minister, Mr SB Chavan, said in Madras that he had discussed the question of banning the PMK with Ms. Jayalalitha and threw a hint that the matter was being examined at the Central level.

Reacting to this, Dr S Ramadas, founder-leader of the PMK, challenged the Centre to ban his party, saying: "We are prepared to face any consequence and it is not our history to retreat".

The party created a political storm demanding a new constitution incorporating the right to self-determination, at its three day conference on Tamils right to life, held in September last.

Dr Ramadas said that the Union Government was deliberately suppressing facts on the circumstances under which Kittu and some others died.

Referring to violence let loose on Tamils by a section in Bombay, he said that a large number of people from other states were also living in Madras and the PMK was watching the situation.

Two years harassment forces widow's return from India

Gnanapragasam Mary Joseph, a refugee says that Indian officials were adopting various methods to force refugees to return to Sri Lanka.

She spent two years living at the Tirumurthy Nagar refugee camp in the Coimbatore District in Tamil Nadu.

According to her, Indian officers assaulted her and a number of others and attempted to force them into a bus.

After refusing to get into the bus, refugees were continually harassed by camp officials and their rations were delayed.

The refugees in the camp agreed to return, unable to bear the harassment.

Mary's son, G Gnanaseelan was arrested by Coimbatore police and held for three months.

Her husband was killed in shelling by the Sri Lankan army in 1986.

STOP PRESS...

The two British human rights activists held in India, David Ward and Stephen Hillman, have just been released.

Ramavaram Thottam - MGR's residence

When Mr MG

Ramachandran was enjoying a meal in the company of some of his ministers including Mr Ponniyan, Dr Hande and Mr Pulamaipiththan at his residence Kittu walked in. The then chief minister interrupted his meal to talk with him in private.

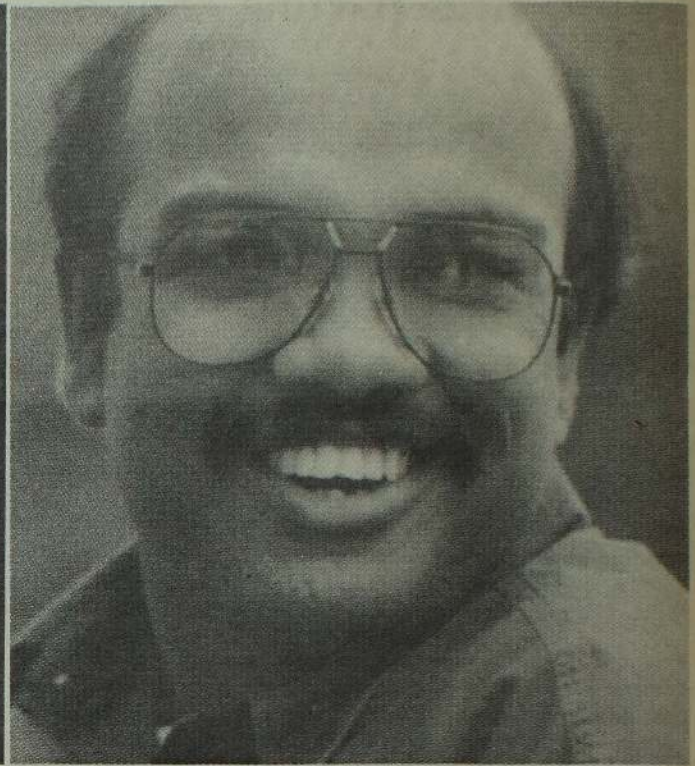
MGR returned to the table and said: "look at the determination on his face even after losing part of his lower limb. These are the warriors; we are nothing." (*Naam Ellam*

Summa

Extract from Indian magazine 'INL'



Late chief minister of Tamil Nadu, MG Ramachandran



Late LTTE Colonel S Krishnakumar (Kittu)

Kittu:

a tribute from
a Tamil mother

For the past two months, the name of Sathasivam Krishnakumar has been heard in every zone and clime where Tamils live.

The second son of Mr and Mrs Sathasivam, Kittu was born on 2nd January, 1960. From his teenage years he was aware of the sad predicament of the Tamils. After his GCE A level, though he could have gone for higher studies, for he had the ability, his longing for the freedom of the Tamil people egged him on to join the Liberation Tigers. From 1976, he put himself heart and soul into the LTTE movement. By 1979, he was a fully fledged Tiger.

As commander of Jaffna between the years 1985 and 1986 he, by his own part in getting rid of the Sri Lankan Police Force in Jaffna and the creation of the semi-liberated zones, carved for himself a niche in the history of Tamil Eelam.

A modest, unassuming character,

within whom burned the quenchless fire of Tamil liberation, Kittu was the epitome of valour and daring, as was seen when, in March 1987, even after losing his leg in a grenade explosion, his first action on leaping out of his vehicle was to empty the entire contents of his pistol at the fleeing miscreants. Since his arrival in London, he kindled his passion for Tamil liberation - the ideal for which he lived and gave up his life - in the hearts of many thousands of youth and even in the not so young people.

Kittu had the ability to convey the desire for liberating his people and placing them in their proper status in their homeland to all who met him.

In a short space of being with him you felt and realised he did not know what fear was. Accepting challenge was natural to him.

He had the strength and personality to take up whatever had to be done, learn about it and

execute it properly.

His words inspired courage, confidence and determination and, though he was only for a short period the guardian and guiding force of the Jaffna people, they regard him as a very capable commander and one of their truest sons.

Like the military leaders we read of in history, Kittu not only proved his valour on the battlefield, but also in peaceful activities. He shouldered the responsibility of the London branch of the LTTE and brought it to shape and working order within a very short time.

Journalists, statesmen, politicians, heads of establishments and leaders of foreign delegations felt that, at last, here was someone they could talk to, discuss and hear what he had to say about the LTTE and the Tamil problem. He was held in respect by almost all and sundry.

His eyes had a penetrating look

which seemed to see right through you and, when he spoke, he did so with authority and those who heard him felt that what he said was genuine. In him the militant, the social, the political traits of a leader seemed to be welded in the correct mix.

He changed in no small way the image that the LTTE was only a military group. He worked hard to bring the Tamil problem before the world's nations; to promote peace and to work out a peaceful solution to the conflict; to present to every dignitary he met the urgency of the Tamil cause and to provide supplies - food and medical - which were urgently needed in the war torn north east of Sri Lanka.

He was a living example to show that the Tigers are not just a military group, but could plan and execute peacetime, political and rehabilitation activities too.

Most war leaders are classed as ruthless and Kittu too was branded thus by some.

In moments of urgency, urgent, maybe severe methods, are necessary. As the axiom goes: "All is fair in love and war." Even righteous punishment seems ruthless. Aren't the bombing and shelling of civilian Tamils barbaric and ruthless? The three days of Kittu's anxiety at sea ended on 16th January, 1993. It is like the dove of peace being shot down on its way to find a just solution.

The Tamils regard the beginning of January as an auspicious time and it was at

this time that Kittu and the other nine Tamils were forced to lay down their precious lives in the interests of their people in true Tiger style - die rather than surrender!

What an untimely death! What an irreparable loss of life!

In later years, those who stand on the beaches of India and Sri Lanka would hear in the lapping of the waves the refrain: "Kittu, freedom, Eelam, courage"; in the gentle breeze skimming the shimmering water they'd hear the lament: "What fell treachery! What have you achieved, you traitors?" Every drop of blood they shed, every bit of bone and flesh sacrificed on the waters of the Indian Ocean, like the dragon's teeth in the Greek story, will bring to birth thousands, more brave, more determined and more courageous to fight for Tamil freedom.

Those who plotted and executed Kittu's death will find it backfired for, like the Hydra, when one head is cut, many other will rise vigorously to take its place.

To the countless thousands who mourn Krishnakumar's death, I say: "Take heart and be comforted. He sacrificed his life for what he cared most - his land and his people. His death will not be in vain."

"We have lost a splendid soldier and strategist, an able ambassador of the Tamils and a true and trusted warrior."

"We are one with you in honouring and mourning the passing away of a valiant son of Eelam soil."

Colombo: Not the only enemy of Eelam

A separate sovereign state of Tamil Eelam is the only solution to the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka. For forty long years, SJV Chelvanayagam tried his best to come to an honourable settlement with the Sinhalese. They spurned his advances, tore up agreements and embarked on a programme of genocide on Tamils in Sri Lanka. The genocide still continues. After all the suffering the Eelam Tamils have gone through, it is folly to talk of unity and integrity of Sri Lanka.

Let all sensible and honest people who are dedicated to the ideas of a sovereign separate state of Eelam concentrate on fundamental issues associated with the setting up of a separate state of Eelam.

A wise farmer, intent on raising new crops first destroys all weeds in the garden. Likewise, the first urgent task confronting the Eelam Tamils is to identify and eradicate their enemies.

The wise old owl Mao said: "Know your enemies and your friends."

The Sinhala government of Sri Lanka in the south and the Brahmin government of India in the north have categorically spoken against the setting up of a separate state of Tamil Eelam. In the ultimate analysis, their views will be found to rest on poisonous racial prejudice, mindless thirst for power and boundless greed for exploitation. Their stand is immoral and we have to ignore them. We must treat them as enemies and conduct our own affairs to overcome the obstructions.

In the latter half of the 19th Century an interesting and instructive biological experiment was carried out in Indore, India. A plant was raised in ideal natural

conditions. Then it was enclosed in a casing. Deadly pests were introduced into the casing. Strangely, the pests did not attack the plant. The reason was that there was no internal weakness where external attack could be directed. There is a deep lesson in this experiment for Eelam Tamils. In double quick time we must root out the weeds in our midst. This in itself is the first attack we mount against Sri Lanka and India who are intent on nipping out Tamil Eelam in the bud.

In recent times there is ample evidence that with the help of Sri Lanka and India, Tamil quislings are setting up offices in Colombo to sabotage the creation of a separate state of Tamil Eelam.

From time to time, Sri Lankan and Indian mass media give prominence to these quisling groups, who masquerade as peddlers of peaceful solutions.

Anyone with intelligence should understand that there is no room for a peaceful solution to the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka. All possible solutions have been thrashed out thread bare without success.

There is no need to get hot and bothered about violent methods. This course is unavoidable given the sad and sorry past. A wound can be easily cured by simple means at the outset. But once it turns septic and gangrenous, amputation is the only remedy.

Don't forget the French Revolution, the American, Russian and Chinese Revolutions were all bloody affairs, because they were allowed to fester. You sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. There is no use shedding crocodile tears.

The political hacks of Sri Lanka, India and Tamil Eelam will certainly shed tears. It is their stock in trade.

Killing in offence is terrorism. Killing in defence is heroism. It is high time the world in general and the Indian Brahmins and Sri Lankan Sinhalese learnt this fine difference.

The political leadership of the quislings rests squarely on the shoulders of the TULF. The story of the TULF is a long and tedious one.

No one can deny that it was the TULF under the leadership of SJV

Chelvanayagam that took the Eelam Tamils to the mountain top and showed the promised land of freedom.

With the passing away of SJV Chelvanayagam and the coming to power of Amirthalingam, the Eelam Tamils moved from sunshine to the shadows. The Eelam Tamils did not fail Amirthalingam. They gave him a glorious victory in 1977.

But, at the hour of triumph, Amirthalingam deserted the Eelam Tamils. He went back on the promise of setting up a constituent council to draft a constitution for autonomy and entered into secret political negotiation with the "old fox" JR Jayawardane. In the end, Jayawardane brought confusion into the ranks of the Tamils, isolated the politicians from the youth and packed them all to India.

In India, the TULF politicians, living in comfort, aided and abetted the Indian Intelligence Agencies who had wormed their way into the ranks of the Tamil Eelam Militants and set them up at each other's throats and allowed them full freedom to decimate their rank and file. Hundreds of Eelam Tamil youths were killed in cold blood on Indian soil and not one case was filed or investigated. Even the case files with the police were hushed up. Why is India crying hoarse over the killing of Padmanabha and his colleagues?

After hectic behind the curtain moves, the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord was signed in 1987. Fate intervened and the Accord fizzled out. IPKF went on a "tiger" hunt. All the while the TULF and Tamil Eelam Militant quislings, behind Indian protective wings, were marking time, waiting for an opportunity to steal the limelight.

Jayawardane stage managed an election and a Tamil Eelam Chief Minister was produced out of the hat. On his own admission, the man was not provided even

with a table or chair.

Relentless fate again intervened. Jayawardane walked out and Premadasa moved in. From day one, Premadasa put his foot down. IPKF and quislings beat a retreat bag and baggage to India.

Darkness descended on TULF escapades. Varadaraja Perumal, a quasi-politico in the vastness of a Madhya Pradesh jungle castle, with all luxuries provided out of Indian government finances, is still dreaming of a comeback with Indian manoeuvres.

In Sri Lanka, the Tamil Eelam Militant quislings are active, staging a tragic comedy of sorts. Leading the fray is Don Quixote, Douglas Devananda of the EPDP. Douglas was an inmate of the notorious Panagoda Army Camp and had his full share of beating, kicks, spittings and mental humiliations. But he had elected to forget them all and hand in glove with the Sri Lankan Army is trying to promote Sinhala interest in Tamil Eelam.

Not to be outdone in military manoeuvres is Manickam Dasan of PLOT, a self styled general with a rag tag left over of the once formidable PLOT Army, now boosted with returnees from the ill fated coup in the Maldives, ravaging the jungles of Vavuniya in imaginary moves and counter moves. There were days in the Panagoda Army Camp when Manickam Dasan, hanging head downwards from the roof of his cell, was coughing out froth and blood. But times change! About the same fate has overtaken the once invincible army of TELO, split into two with one faction in India and another in Sri Lanka. TELO leaders eke out a miserable existence from crumbs falling from the tables of their masters in India and Sri Lanka.

A rather dubious roll is being played by Rajan, leader of ENDLF, break away group from the PLOT based in India. Alienated from excessive solicitude from Indian government and Intelligence agencies, Rajan is just managing to keep the wolf from the door. In any event he seems not to have fallen into the clutches of the Sinhala vultures.

Under irresistible attraction of cash and kind, small fry like Murali Master are hopping to and fro between Sri Lanka and India enticing away poverty stricken Tamil Eelam youths in India to add to the military power of the Sinhala Army depleted by wholesale desertions.

A sad spectacle indeed of the goings on in the ranks of the quislings. Still the Tamil Eelam patriots must keep their weather eye open to sinister moves by Sri Lanka and India to exploit the situation and build a solid front to foil the struggle of Eelam Tamils.

All quislings must be publicly denounced and socially castigated to prevent their influencing the innocent masses.

The sooner the patriots of Tamil Eelam chalk out a definitive programme to neutralise the activities of quislings, the better the chances for the progress of the patriotic process of setting up a sovereign state of Tamil Eelam.

Lemurian, Bombay

Parallels between Sri Lanka and Bosnia

writes Thomas Abraham

The Indian negotiators once involved in the protracted talks to resolve the Sri Lankan ethnic crisis will feel an immediate sense of empathy with the problems that the two international mediators, Mr Cyrus Vance and Lord David Owen face in their efforts to bring peace to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

There are strong parallels between the issues that India grappled with in Delhi, Madras and Indo-Sri Lanka agreement and the questions that have to be resolved in Geneva, Belgrade and Sarajevo. In both cases, the crux of the problem has been to accommodate the desire of a minority within a state for an independent national identity, with the desire of the majority to keep an existing political structure intact.

In the case of the former Yugoslavia, the the minority Serbs of Bosnia, like the Tamils of Sri Lanka, want an

independent state, and are unwilling to be ruled by the majority Muslims. The Muslims, on the other hand are committed to maintaining the territorial integrity of Bosnia Herzegovina and will not agree to the creation of an independent Serb republic.

The similarity can be taken one step further when one considers that though the Serbs are a minority in Bosnia, they are a majority in neighbouring Serbia. This leaves Bosnia's Muslims with a permanent minority complex that mirrors Sinhalese feelings when confronted with the presence of Tamil Nadu across the Palk Straits.

The solutions that mediators in both cases are trying to reach are similar, and are based on creating a decentralised state with a devolution of power to the minority.

There is a critical gap between the powers that Muslims and the international community feel that the provinces should have, and what the Serbs want. The main dispute is over whether the provinces should have an international legal status. The Serbs

have insisted on this, and have asked for a "state within a state". This would leave them the option of linking up with the Serbs.

The drawing up of the provincial boundaries have also been problematic, and like the Tamils, the Serbs too are asking for a link, or "merger" between two of their provinces.

Mr Vance and Lord Owen have spent the day with the Serbian delegation trying to work out a constitutional compromise. In a throwback to the Sri Lankan negotiations, the Canadian, and Swiss constitutions with their loose federal powers have been brought onto the negotiating table and examined closely for possible ideas.

A major focus of the mediators at present seems to be to keep the talks going and prevent the military situation from worsening. The realisation has crept in that ethno-nationalist conflicts can take years to resolve, and that it is vitally important to keep talks going and simultaneo-

usly resolve the level of violence.

The conflict on the ground will reduce only when the wild, trigger happy forces on both sides feel that they are about to gain something politically from a peace settlement. Keeping the talks alive are therefore a high priority goal.

The final area of similarity with Sri Lanka will be apparent when a peace settlement is finally reached.

Demilitarising the conflict, and disarming the forces on either side will require an international peacekeeping force, the nucleus for which already exists with the UN forces in the former Yugoslavia.

Monitoring a peace agreement between antagonistic groups is a task as complex and fraught with risks as negotiating a peace settlement. As the Indian experience has shown, it is not merely enough to get warring parties to sign a peace agreement it is equally important to have the will to see that it is implemented.

Courtesy The Hindu

The shepherd and the Tiger

*Brahmin dominated
India calls
Prabaharan a
terrorist.
Sinhalese Bishop,
Kenneth Fernando,
says he's a courte-
ous, quick thinking,
soft spoken humane
person.*



Point of View Conflict in Sri Lanka: a role for the international community

writes Ana Pararajasingham

Peter Mares, the producer of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Indian Pacific Program, describes the war of liberation in Sri Lanka as one of the "most brutal", and Deana Hodgkin of the US Magazine *Insight* depicts the same war as "much worse than the worst of the conflicts in Afghanistan, Lebanon, Iran and Iraq, and Indian Cashmere". Hodgkin writes from first hand knowledge having covered all these conflicts in her career as a war correspondent. Unfortunately the war in Sri Lanka has been largely ignored by the international media.

The international media's lack of interest in the happenings in Sri Lanka is attributable to the following:-

Firstly, the media's attention has been largely distracted and dominated by the momentous changes sweeping across Europe as the several nations which had hitherto been part of the Russian-dominated Soviet Union assert their independence, while the nations which had hitherto been part of the Serbian-dominated Yugoslavian Union do likewise.

Secondly, the war in Sri Lanka has been going on now for a

considerable period of time and, as such, has lost its "news value" to a significant extent.

Thirdly, to the Western-orientated international media, the war in Sri Lanka is just another "third-world war" and as such, of little interest to its consumers.

The international media's indifference should not be taken to imply that the international community as a whole is unconcerned about the war in Sri Lanka. On the contrary, there are several indications that influential sections of the international community are in fact quite concerned about the ongoing conflict in Sri Lanka and are becoming increasingly aware of the lack of a political will on the part of the Sri Lankan Government. Hence it is feasible that these concerns could well lead to a concerted effort by the international community to bring about a political resolution through some kind of international intervention at some point in the future. The perceptive comments by a well known Sri Lankan journalist, who writes under the pseudonym of "Kautilya" strongly support such a scenario. In response to the report in *Time* (of 22nd June) entitled "When Countries Come Apart",

which had referred to the conflict in Sri Lanka as one of the "deadliest within the past decade" and had classed it with the conflicts involving the break-up of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, Kautilya had this to say: "...but the important thing to note is that we are in the big league, an item sooner or later, I am afraid on some country's or community's or organisation's agenda. And that would mean a long good bye to national sovereignty". (*The Island* of 12th July, 1992)

Kautilya's warnings seem to have gone unheeded by the government and the opposition. The recent decision by the select committee to de-merge the north east is a clear pointer that the Sri Lankan establishment is not in the least inclined to seek a political end to the conflict but is more inclined to attempt perpetuating Sinhala dominance.

The complete lack of a political will on the part of the Sri Lankan regime and its obvious inability to make any headway militarily is not likely to go unnoticed by the international community. In this context, the joint statement by over 20 NGOs at the 44th session of the UN Sub Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities recognising the conflict as a "national struggle of the Tamil people and its call for negotiations between the 'warring parties'", needs to be viewed as an indication of the growing recognition of the nature of the conflict by the international community. It is also of some considerable significance that signatories to this particular resolution have included the International Commission of Jurists and the American Association of Jurists.

The joint statement by 15 NGOs (with UN consultative status) at the 49th session of the Human Rights Commission in early February this year, clearly shows that the interna-

tionalisation of the Tamil struggle for self determination is in fact gathering momentum.

This particular statement had called upon the UN to accord open recognition to the existence of the Tamil homeland in the north and east of the island, and recognise the Tamil population as a "people" with a right to self determination.

Similarly, the Australian Joint Parliamentary Committees' recommendation that the Australian government joins with the Canadian Government to seek UN/Commonwealth assistance to mediate in the conflict and to verify a complete arms embargo, is of significance.

The speech in the US Congress by Congressman Joseph R Kennedy, referring to the "brutality of the civil war in Sri Lanka" and his call for a political solution to be "facilitated in order to prevent further blood shed" should also be noted in this context.

The confident prediction by a group of geographers attached to the US State Department that Tamil Eelam would become a reality soon, the powerful argument put forward by Asian Week of 10th July 1992 in support of those nations which seek secession with specific reference to the Tamil nation in Sri Lanka, the call by the Canadian Human Rights Mission for direct negotiations between the Government and the LTTE under international mediation and the offer by Sweden and Norway to play such a mediatory role, are all further indications that the International Community is becoming increasingly concerned about the conflict in Sri Lanka.

The desire of several European Governments to repatriate Tamil refugees (who are estimated to number around 250,000) also needs to be considered as a strong incentive for international intervention. The resignation by the Danish Prime Minister, Poul Schluter, on the charge of having misled parliament

on "Tamil refugee policy" shows that the conflict in Sri Lanka has international ramifications as well.

LTTE's Kittu was on a peace mission initiated by European agencies (both government and non government) which were anxious to see an end to the conflict. The purpose of Kittu's ill-fated journey was to communicate this in person to the Tamil leadership in Tamil Eelam. As the highest ranking LTTE member outside Tamil Eelam, Kittu was entrusted with this mission aimed at breaking the deadlock between Colombo and the LTTE.

The major obstacle to a peaceful resolution of the conflict is the Sinhala establishment's determination to retain the present unitary structure and thus perpetuate Sinhala dominance. The international community can help resolve the conflict by persuading the Sri Lankan regime to seek a political end to the conflict. The means employed by the international community to "persuade" the obdurate Sri Lankan Government could well involve the arms embargo (recommended by the Australian parliamentary committee) in addition to an economic and diplomatic offensive. In view of the Sri Lankan regime's total dependence on foreign assistance for its survival, such actions are bound to yield immediate results.

Action by the international community could save thousands of lives - those of civilians in the north east, Sri Lankan soldiers and Tamil freedom fighters. It can help bring an end to the "internal displacement" of over one million people who are now refugees in their own land and also make it safe for those who have fled the country to return home.

Book Review

Vaikunthavasan on Vaikunthavasan

Some people love him, others hate him, but very few can ignore him - including the United Nations general assembly. Krishna Vaikunthavasan, the Tamil campaigner who edited *Peoples Voice* made the headlines in hundreds of other newspapers worldwide. Tamil Co-ordinating Committee, London has published a book by the great man about himself. Sachi Kantha reviews *The Press Speaks: The Life and Times of an Activist*. 100 pages, 1992. £6.00

The author of this compilation Krishna Vaikunthavasan needs no introduction to the Tamils living in Eelam, India and elsewhere in the world. Vaikunthavasan received his quote of "15 minutes of world fame" (credited to American avant-garde artist Andy Warhole) in October, 1978, when he made an unprecedented and uninvited plea on behalf of the Eelam nation at the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

In the introduction to the book, the author states: "Two things are certain in life. One is death, the other criticism." This is Vaikunthavasan's modification of the 18th century quote of Benjamin Franklin that, "in this world nothing can be certain, except death and taxes". Not many, including Uncle Ben, would contest the author's interpretation of what life holds for everyone. Those who thumb through the book are sure to be assured that the author does not mince his words. He had not been disheartened by criticism from friends as well as foes.

While turning the pages, I noticed that the best

compliments about the activities of the author had been paid by one of his pals in the late 1940s, KC Nythianantha, who himself was a Tamil activist of repute. Nythi had noted in 1978, "Vaikuns was a very ebullient and lovable fellow. But we never knew where we stood with him. He was volatile though a great fighter. He was a born head-line maker".

So, the "born head-line maker" traced his political activities and how the Sri Lankan and international press covered them since 1952. Snippets from a couple of the earliest chronological references are as follows:-

"A warrant was issued against the editor of the *People's Voice*, Mr K Vaikunthavasan, whose trial was fixed for yesterday for alleged libel against the Auditor-General, Mr Allen Smith" (*Ceylon Daily News*, 7th October, 1952).

"Tamil K Vaikunthavasan, editor of the Ceylon English-language newspaper *People's Voice*, is arrested on his return to Ceylon from a visit to the Soviet Union." (*New Times*, Moscow, 22nd April, 1953)

The book concluded with reminiscences of Vaikunthavasan, published in the Tamil newspapers originating

from Paris and London in 1992. During the four decades covered in this compilation of news clippings, letters (to the press as well as to and from newsworthy individuals), columns of journalists, book reviews, commentaries and editorials, Vaikunthavasan has moved from Sri Lanka to London via Zambia, with frequent transit stays in India. I also counted more than 40 snapshots of the author (taken with internationally recognized names such as Indira Gandhi, Pope John Paul II, Harold McMillan and Kenneth Kaunda) which made me wonder whether Vaikunthavasan also travelled with a body-guard, who doubled as a photographer!

Since the author "welcomes helpful criticism of this work", I wish to offer one. Though the compilation provided glimpses of the multi-pronged activities engaged by this ebullient activist for four decades, still one is left with the impression that we hardly know who this person Vaikunthavasan is. The popular opinion among the Eelam Tamils is that he is just a "one-man show". The book in review does not tell us where and when he was born. Who are his parents and siblings (if he has any)? Who (the teachers and mentors) instilled in his young



Vaikunthavasan at the scene of his greatest triumph, the United Nations building

mind to use boldness as an effective weapon to espouse his causes? Who were his pals in the school?

The earliest chronological reference (presented in the Introduction of the book) is to 1937 at Jaffna College where a young Vaikunthavasan queried his teacher Handy Perinpanayagam on the reasons for the existence of "so many religions". By that time, I presume, he would have been around 16 or 17 years.

Did the unsatisfying answer given by the respected Tamil educationist make the troubled young mind turn to the communist ideology?

Whatever the imperfections in this compilation, one cannot doubt the sincerity the author has shown to the causes of the down-trodden Eelam Tamils for almost 45 years. In these days of "creative editing", the author also should

be congratulated for presenting, without deletion, the press reports and editorials which have criticised and ridiculed him for standing up for his beliefs.

As a prominent left wing activist in Sri Lanka, I have no doubt that his activities would have been covered in the files of the CIA and police in Sri Lanka. Also, as an Eelam activist in India, the Intelligence mandarins of India would have tracked and recorded his activities there.

If only Vaikunthavasan can make a daring peer into these files, I have no doubt that he can publish a companion volume to this book with the title, "The Spy Speaks".

Preaching tolerance, teaching tyranny

William McGowan's book *Only Man is Vile: The Tragedy of Sri Lanka* looks at discord on the island where 70 per cent of the population are Buddhists.

That is the title of a review in *The Economist*, London, of a book written by an American journalist: *Only Man is Vile, The Tragedy of Sri Lanka*, by William McGowan, Picador; 382 pages; Farrar, Straus & Giroux; \$25.

The reviewer says: "... Most reporting of Sri Lanka has concentrated on the excesses of the Tamil Tigers - but, as Mr. McGowan points out, it is Sinhalese bigotry that has fed the bloodthirsty cause of Tamil separatism.

His diagnosis of Sri Lanka's tragedy therefore goes beyond colonialism to the nature of Sinhalese culture, with its evasion of accountability and its cruel distinctions of caste.

In particular, he blames the perversion of Buddhism in the land from which Buddha ascended into Nirvana.

"Buddhism is a religion of tolerance; yet to 'protect' it, Buddhist monks urge Sinhalese soldiers to go out and kill.

"No wonder the war continues."

Mike Currie, reviewing the same book in the *South China Morning Post*, Hong Kong says: "Tens of thousands have been tortured and massacred over the past decade in a nation where the religion of the masses is a symbol of peace."

American foreign correspondent William McGowan is convinced that Sri Lanka's leaders and powerful monks were responsible for a betrayal of Buddhism that has plunged the island into a seemingly endless civil war.

Once compared to the Garden of Eden because of its beauty and peaceful people, Sri Lanka is now a cesspit of hate, greed, revenge and corruption, a tangled web of political intrigue.

Mr. McGowan witnessed some of the countless atrocities when he worked in Sri Lanka as a journalist in 1987, visiting the major hot-spots in the Tamil north and the Sinhalese south.

He met both Tamil Tiger and Sinhalese JVC guerillas, politicians, officers of the often brutal Sri Lankan security forces and the discredited Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF).

He also visited both innocent Sinhalese and Tamil families who had suffered at the hands of ter-

rorists.

Essentially, the war centres around the Tamil Tigers' demands for a separate state, Eelam, comprising the northern and eastern provinces, where Tamils are in the majority.

But Mr. McGowan says the Sinhalese politicians and monks lit the fires of discontent as long ago as the 1950s by a series of moves which favoured the Sinhalese Buddhists who make up about 70 per cent of the population and, in doing so, deprived Tamils of their rights.

Fair minded or one sided?

Ana Parajasingham concludes his look at "Critique of Tigers Claims" which appeared in the Sri Lankan government controlled Sunday Observer.

Successful liberation struggles as a rule require a single-minded commitment to the cause and rarely tolerate those who are perceived to have betrayed the cause either through collaboration with the enemy or to have exploited the struggle to advance their own interests.

Thus the "violent oppression" is not simply a reaction to "alternative opinions", but more precisely uncompromising action taken to pursue the cause for which thousands had willingly laid down their lives. The moral argument, which Manikalingam is so anxious to promote, needs to take this into account.

Another reason for internal violence is to be found in the actions taken by the enemy to create internal dissension and the failure of liberation movements to counter these manoeuvres.

Although the ideal response in such circumstances should call for the resolution of the "differences, through dialogue, it is foolish to expect such ideal behaviour in a war situation!

The actions by the South African establishment to exploit the Zulu-Xhosa differences to result in the "black on black" violence in South Africa and the attempt by the Sri Lankan Government to drive a wedge between the Tamils and the Muslims through the engineering of sectarian violence, are examples of such manoeuvres.

Nations engaged in wars (particularly in wars of liberation) have a need to ensure that their forces are mobilised under a single command and have been intolerant of groups which have attempted to pursue their own agenda to the detriment of the common cause!

It is a sad but nevertheless universal reality that this has often led to "internecine" violence.

Examples of this type of actions could in fact be found in most wars of liberation.

The following is one such example:-

In 1948, the Haganah (which had emerged as the Israeli Army) under orders from Ben Gurion (the first Prime Minister of Israel) killed 40 members of the Irgun in an effort to establish its superiority once and for all. The circumstances surrounding these actions were complex but essentially it was in pursuance of a need for the emerging new state of Israel to have one central command. (Details could be found in Arthur Koestler's *Promise and Fulfilment*, first published in 1949.)

And it is precisely for this reason that even nations with well established democratic practices suspend these practices when at war. Great Britain for instance formed a coalition with the opposition to form a national government to fight Nazi Germany in 1939.

"The inability to observe democratic conventions".

Manikalingam's third argument is centred around the LTTE's inability to observe democratic conventions.

In support of this Manikalingam refers to the Palestinian National Council where the Palestinian people in exile are able to conduct debate "in an open and democratic" manner.

While it is true that the Palestinian National Council operates as a forum for the Palestinian exiles to debate the Palestinian issue, the differences between the various factions of the Palestinian liberation movements are not always resolved through this institution but often through violent means.

Secondly, it has been widely acknowledged by most informed observers of the Palestinian conflict that considerable energy is expended in politicking within the National Council to the detriment of the Palestinian cause. Any superficial reading of the Palestinian struggle should show how the Palestinian National Council itself has been manipulated by countries such as Syria time and time again!

The Palestinian National Council is an extremely poor example of the "democratic" aspects of a liberation struggle and clearly shows Manikalingam's weak grasp of the realities behind a liberation war.

Manikalingam's argument for the observance of democratic practices when the nation is at war is clearly impracticable for two reasons:-

Firstly, a nation fighting for its very survival cannot afford the luxury of observing democratic conventions which require considerable energy and effort. Every ounce of energy and effort needs to be focused in countering the enemy and making the enemy realise that the conflict could only be resolved through political means.

Secondly, for democracy to work, the institutions which enable democracy to work (courts, constitutions, parliaments etc.) should already be in place and it is clearly impossible for a state yet to be born to develop these institutions when engaged in war!

Conclusion:-

Manikalingam's arguments quite clearly reflect the so called "moderate" (but in reality the collaborative) approach favoured by the Colombo-based Tamil-quisling groups.

Manikalingam's appeal to the "sympathetic Sinhalese and Muslims" is nothing but a variation of the same approach and his call for an end to the Tiger leadership; no more than a plea to make this collaborative stand palatable to the Colombo establishment.

In this context, Manikalingam's euphemistic use of the phrase "defeated politically and militarily" to denote the ruthless suppression of the JVC-led Sinhala rebellion needs to be noted.

Historically, the collaborative approach had failed time and time again.

The emergence of the Tamil Federal Party was the direct consequence of the Colombo-centred Tamil Congress leadership to pursue its own vested interests to the detriment of those who had elected the party into office - the Tamil masses of the Northeast.

Similarly, the birth of the Tamil militant movement is the direct consequence of the incapability of the middle class based Tamil political parties to restore Tamil rights through the parliamentary process.

Essentially, the collaborative approach calls for the Tamil masses to compromise their demand for self-determination (for which they have paid with their lives) in return for precious little!

Unfortunately for the collaborationists, the LTTE, which has come to symbolise this will and determination of the masses is unlikely to go along with this.

In this context Manikalingam's closing sentence, which reads as follows, clearly reveals the collaborationist stand of the author:

"Thus for the Tamil people's desire for justice to become a political reality, Tigerism must go."

It is, however, a strange remark to be directed at an organisation which has been described by even its opponents as follows:-

By Chanaka Amarantunga in *The Island* of 29th November 1992:

"...the LTTE has demonstrated time and time again the accuracy of the dictum, that a guerilla force that has the support of the people amongst whom it operates can never be defeated by a conventional army."

By Lieutenant General S.C. Sardeshpande, the IPKF divisional Commander in his book *Assignment Jaffna*:

"I have a high regard for the LTTE for its discipline, dedication, determination, motivation and technical expertise."

By Sri Lankan cabinet Minister Thondaman in an interview with Roshan Pieris and reported in the *Sri Lanka Sunday Times* of 23rd March, 1992: "...whether one likes it or not, the Tigers have emerged as freedom fighters. They have not been found wanting in their dedication to their cause or as fighters."

It is, however, quite obvious that the Sinhala establishment finds the collaborative approach quite to its liking, just as it had found that of Mr G.G. Ponnambalam's Tamil Congress to its liking forty four years ago when Ponnambalam chose to collaborate with the D.S. Senanayake Regime by jettisoning the Tamil cause and joining the cabinet.

The Government-owned *Sunday Observer's* choice to run Manikalingam's article over two successive issues (22nd and 29th November 1992) says it all!

Footnotes:-

[1] Political Models for Tamil Eelam; paper by Jayaratnam Wilson, read at the International Tamil Eelam Research Conference held at the California State University, Sacramento, California, July, 1991.

[2] Tamil's right to Self Determination Entitled to International Research; paper by Satchi Ponnambalam, read at the International Tamil Eelam Research Conference held at the California State University, Sacramento, California, July, 1991.

Post Bag

Call to Sri Lankan pensioners

Many Sri Lankan government pensioners read your newspaper. Hence I am writing for their information and benefit.

There are thousands of Tamil Sri Lankan government pensioners who are not being paid their monthly pensions either in Sri Lanka or abroad. Their letters to the director of pensions in Sri Lanka remain unanswered.

Many are aware that the Sri Lankan government manipulates the financial aid that is given to it by various world bodies. The Sinhalese Buddhist government uses this developmental financial aid to buy arms, ammunition and tanks to kill the Tamils of the North East province. It has been reliably learnt that the unpaid pensions have been transferred to the Defence Ministry to buy arms to kill Tamils. Do Tamil pensioners want their unpaid pension money to be used by the Sinhalese government to kill our Tamil brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka?

Recently the UK has lifted the ban on arms sales to Sri Lanka. When the British left Sri Lanka in 1948, they did not care to protect the rights of the minority Tamils. They made the biggest blunder. But at least they should not now sell arms to Sri Lanka. On the contrary, the British are morally obliged to take up the case of the Sri Lankan Tamils in the UN and request other coun-

tries to stop giving aid to Sri Lanka. I would suggest that all concerned write, by registered aid mail, to: Director of Pensions and/or Widows' and Orphans' Pension Office, Dept. of Pensions/W & OP Office, National Mutual Building, 54 Chatham St, Colombo 1, Sri Lanka and request the Director of Pensions to pay the arrears of pensions and also to start paying the monthly pension immediately. Be persistent and do not give up as the money is precious and you do not want the government to buy arms with it. If you do not get a reply within six weeks, then start writing to the Sri Lankan ambassador or Sri Lankan High Commissioner nearest to your place of residence. Those who want the money to be paid abroad should write to the Controller of Exchange, Central Mawatha, PO Box 590, Colombo 1, Sri Lanka. If this fails, I would suggest writing to Hon Mr KT Chitrasiri, Director for Human Rights Commission for the Elimination of Discrimination and Monitoring of Fundamental Rights in Sri Lanka, Human Rights Centre, No. 27 Independence Avenue, Colombo 7, Sri Lanka.

If this fails as well, write in detail to Asia Watch, 485 Fifth Avenue, NY, No. 10017 and to Amnesty International, International Secretariat, 1 Easton St, London WC1X 8DJ, UK.

A Pensioner, California

Yalpanam

The story continues with the arrival in Ceylon of the Chola people.

The Chola emigrants, who set sail from the Pennai river near Madras, came during the night hours into the Jaffna lagoon, and anchored there.

In the morning their ladies, waking up and finding themselves again apparently in a river such as they had left, cried, looking no doubt reproachfully at their respective husbands,

"Why, we're back in the Pennai river again!" The husbands were so pleased at having scored off their wives that they called the place Pennai, in commemoration of the event, and Pannathurai it remains to this day.

The Tamil Kings continued to use the Nallur Palace, built on the site now called Sankily tope, as their headquarters, while outside the fortifications grew the ancient town of Yalpanam.

At Copai there was another Fort, part of whose wall is now included in a house. As the power of the Jaffna Kings increased, so did their splendour. Near the Nallur Palace, and at Copai, large finds of coins have proved beyond doubt that they had their own coinage, stamped with the figures of the King, and a Bull.

Unfortunately, nothing of their Palace remains except a tank, which like a moat, is built round three sides of a central pavilion, whence steps lead down to the water at a shallow place for bathing. The tank is known as the Yamanari, a name said to have been acquired when a King, who had been on a pilgrimage to India, threw into it some of the sacred waters of the Yamana, or Jumna, which he had brought back with him for that purpose.

Facts and fables Part 2

Defeat of Sankily

Again, possibly it is called after the Yavana or Arab Mohammedans, now known as "Moors", who first settled in that locality and who were driven thence by an ingenious device. Tamils killed some pigs and threw them into the Moorish wells, so that the Mohammedans, when they came to draw water, found it all turned into Pork Soup; they therefore shifted their quarters to the eastern end of Jaffna where they still reside. This story bears a likeness, in theory at least, to Lamb's essay on *The Origin of Roast Pork*.

In 1560, during the reign of Sankily, a King whose conduct was as unscrupulous as it was barbarous. Constantino de Braganca, Portuguese Viceroy of India, outraged by Sankily's piracy, decided to conquer Jaffna. On the 22nd of October, 1560, twelve hundred Portuguese disembarked at Pannathurai and presently began to march on Nallur.

The description of the battle, given by the Rev. Father Gnana Prakasam, in his book, *The Kings of Jaffna*, reads like a passage from Prescott's *Capture of Mexico*.

"They were headed by a priest bearing the Banner of Christ, and formed into five divisions, the Viceroy bringing up the rear. The Prince (Sankily's son), who was distinguished by his chank shield bearing the divine Setu in black characters, offered a stout resistance at a narrow passage, but was repulsed with some loss. The next day the invaders continued their advance in the same order. Their way lay through jungle and they had to push back the defenders from wall and

continued page 13

The Parliamentary Select Committee proves Premadasa's political suicide

writes M Thirunavukkaras in the *Eelanatham*

The actions of the Parliamentary Select Committee resemble the saying that both the question and answer are infinite and the same. The members of the Parliamentary Select Committee met in the city of Colombo for about a year under the chairmanship of Mangala Munasinghe, scribbled on the sheets of paper provided, partook of tea and other refreshments, wiped their bands with papers then scribbled on and threw the same into the waste paper basket.

fraud

As usual, this is also another fraud. But here, there is also an interesting and distinct historical importance. In the manner how Peace Negotiations, Agreements, All Party Conferences, Round Table and all ultimately become frauds, so too the actions of the Parliamentary Select Committee also ended up in fraud.

The Sinhalese created a Parliamentary Select Committee stating that they seek to bring about a solution to the problems of the Tamils.

The Tigers, who are the force and representatives of the Tamils, neither cared about this Committee nor placed any hindrance to it. They viewed it from a distance.

Nobody can state anything against the Tigers and accuse them of disturbing the activities of the Select

Committee. Nor did they ask that a Select Committee be appointed.

lawful rights

The Sinhalese created the Select Committee, met in sessions and pronounced that they were prepared to give the Tamils their lawful rights.

A happening of this nature has an interesting historical significance. Instead of putting the blame on the

The Tigers, who are the force and representatives of the Tamils, neither cared about this Committee nor placed any hindrance to it. They viewed it from a distance.

Tamils that they were not prepared for a peaceful settlement and that the activities of the Select Committee were sabotaged by the Tamils, the Sinhalese have proclaimed to the world that it is they who are objecting to the national status of the Tamils.

This is what actually the Select Committee did.

suicidal action

The establishment of the Select Committee and the decision it took, is a suicidal action as far as the Government is concerned. What happened was what Premadasa did not anticipate. The Select Committee has placed the Government in a position of no alternative.

What Premadasa expected was this: he expected that the Provincial Council recommendations of the Se-

lect Committee would coincide with the crushing of the LTTE by his armed forces so that he could then thrust a "solution" on the Tamils. But in reality, it did not happen that way.

As expected by Premadasa, the Tigers were not defeated and the Select Committee came out with its recommendations for a Provincial

Council solution. Both did not coincide.

In this context their calculations and the conclusions of the Select Committee have become meaningless.

no parliamentary solution

By this action, the Select Committee has achieved one thing. It has created a final solution that there would be no conferences, no parliamentary solution etc, in the future.

The action of the Select Committee has created such a situation that the Government cannot now say that it is going to find a solution to the ethnic conflict and that it is going to convene a conference like the All Party Conference or the Round Table Conference for such a purpose. To the Select Committee, the UNP's solution is Provincial Councils; the

SLFP's solution is also Provincial Councils. Therefore, ultimately the Select Committee solution is Provincial Councils.

This is the net result and outcome of the purpose for which the Select Committee was established. Then how would it be possible for the Government to arrive at a solution better than this solution to engage in

negotiations saying that it is going to arrive at a still better solution.

The Select Committee affair therefore has created for Premadasa a situation that does not give him a political alternative. This, as far as Premadasa is concerned, is political suicide.

• JR Jayewardene sent a battalion under Brigadier Weeratunga and vowed that the terrorists would be wiped out in the north by 31st December, 1979. Such pronouncements and deadlines are being extended to date. But the situation has developed in the opposite direction.

big battalion

The freedom fighters, who were armed only with "kalpattas" in 1979 and were only confined to certain areas in the north are today in the region of a big battalion, armed with

sophisticated weapons and are found in the whole of Tamil Eelam in the north and east.

In 1979, one or two police officers went astride their bicycles in search of fighters but now all three sections of the armed forces go in search of them, with bombers, warships and heavy tanks.

To that extent, the freedom struggle has advanced. In this context, if the government continues to aspire only for a military solution, it only means that the government is acting contrary to the past historical logic.

Therefore, what now remains in the hands of Premadasa is that he can neither arrive at a military nor a political solution.

So, what next? This is the question that is now worrying the heads of political observers in the South.

What next is a complex question in politics. There has arisen definitely a dilemma.

If the rulers in power think that the way will be confined only to the North and East, then they will not worry much about this frustrating question.

Because the government expects that the Tigers would engage in tactical offensives in the South, if military exercises are continued in the North and East then it cannot rest peacefully.

This is a completely new phase in the ethnic conflict in Ceylon.

Courtesy Hot Spring

Yalpanam continued

stockade. When they arrived within sight of Nallur they once more encountered the Tamils, drawn up in two lines before the wall, which was made of stone and clay with strong bastions, mounted with artillery, and some entrenchments occupied by matchlock men. The first line resisted bravely, but it was pushed back with heavy loss on the second, which was protected by the fire from the bastions. This, however, was not effective enough for the enemy (Portuguese), who gained the wall with a great dash, and making a breach in it, poured into the wide street of the city leading to the fortified Palace of the King within. The three pieces of artillery which the Tamils had hidden under palmyra leaves, and fired as they entered, did little harm to the enemy - only eight were killed - who rushed in with greater determination, carrying the guns and driving back the Tamils with much loss.

"The Viceroy, whose charger had been shot under him, fought his way to the vanguard on foot amid a cloud of arrows and bullets. Here the Prince had appeared, assisted by a force of Moors and Badagas, who, under the effects of bhang, fought with reckless fury, while from the adjacent gardens and house-tops arrows were poured on the invaders without cessation... At last the Prince was forced to retire... The invaders were now masters of the City, which the soldiers began to plunder. Among the prisoners were the Prince's wife who afterwards became a Christian, and other ladies of rank.

"As night had drawn in, the Viceroy pulled down some houses and encamped for the night in front of the parade ground facing the Palace, intending to storm it on the morrow.

But, during the night, Sankily slipped away with all his treasures, after setting fire to the Palace, directing the Prince to follow him to the fortress at Copai, with the Queen and other women... Braganca hastily arranged for the occupation of the City and made for Copai, only to find that the King had abandoned that fortress, leaving at its entrance the heads of twelve of his chiefs, whom he had probably beheaded for advising him to make peace with the Portuguese."

Braganca sent 400 men in pursuit of Sankily towards the South, but he escaped, drawing his pursuers after him, further and further from their headquarters, until, on the southern side of Elephant Pass, he turned upon them; but again the Portuguese were too strong for the Tamils and Sankily sued for peace. He was allowed to resume the Government, and so had opportunity to plan an insurrection, which was successful for the time in driving the Portuguese out of Jaffna.

In October, 1591, they returned under Andre Furtado de Mendonca, landed at Columbuturai, and swept all before them, but, even then, constant risings continued, until in 1624 General Oliveira checked further trouble with a heavy hand, banishing the last King to Goa, where he was beheaded, and razing the great Nallur Temple to the ground. The last Princes of Jaffna bequeathed their right to the Kingdom of Jaffna to the King of Portugal in 1623. Whether there was any undue influence exercised in connection with this request is a moot point.

The Portuguese then settled down peaceably in Jaffna, establishing their Government Offices, whose entrance gate alone remains in token of past

glories, on the site of the old Nallur Palace. The first Portuguese place of worship in Jaffna was near the present Roman Catholic Cathedral, and was called the "Chapel of the Cross", because miraculous crosses appeared there, but later it was moved to Nallur and re-christened "Our Lady of Victory", to commemorate the conquest of Jaffna in 1591. When numbers of Portuguese traders settled around Pannathurai, the church was brought near to them and re-built in 1614 close to the site of the present Dutch church in the Fort. The Moors were driven off to the present Moor Street, leaving the neighbourhood entirely for the Portuguese residents, whence it received its yet existing name, Parangithurai.

In 1624, General Oliveira built the Fort, in the same place as the Dutch Fort now stands, round the church, which was then called "Our Lady of Miracles", later still it seems to have been dedicated to St Francis. The Portuguese built churches in various parts of the Peninsula, but the only one not yet entirely ruined, or repaired out of recognition, is at Changanai, where the walls are yet standing and the channel is intact, with a unique vaulted stone roof. The Pillars of the Nave and the West end were pulled down some time ago, as being unsafe. At Vaddukodai, Pandaterruppa, and other places are churches now in use, in the hands of the Missions, but these buildings have been restored and repaired by the Dutch and their subsequent owners until very few of their Portuguese characteristics remain.

From an article published in the Times of Ceylon 3rd August, 1924

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Iyal, Isai, Nadagam

Herts Tamils host charity dinner dance

In the past, cash donations and goods have been sent to orphans and refugees in the north east of Sri Lanka by the generosity and voluntary efforts of the members in addition to their having to maintain the Herts Tamil School, based in Watford, without any external funding since 1985.

In its tenth year, the association has chosen the "Need of the Hour" to step up its effort to meet the humanitarian needs of the suffering Tamils.

The New Year Dinner dance takes place on Sunday, 11th April, at 6.30pm at Claremont High School, Claremont Avenue, Kenton, Harrow. For details and tickets, please contact:-

Logan Rasiah 0923 662811

MP Ganesan 0442 252664

Dr S Sabaratnam 0923 226000

Book on Jesuthas

Sangeetha Sagaram Jesuthas, a book written by Ira Kandeepan on the life and works of Pathmasri KJ Jesuthas, the famous Karnatic musician and cinemaplayback singer from South India, has been published by Manimekalai Publishers on 21st February, 1993 in Madras.

The chief guest for the occasion was Madras Chief Justice B Baskaran.

Among the prominent personalities who attended the ceremony were Lena Thamil Vaanan; poet Vairamuthu; cinema actors

Sivakumar, SV Sekar and actresses Revathy and Kasturi.

Nalli Kuppasamy, RG Santhirasekaran, Muthukumarasamy, president of Tamil Publishers, and Shanmugam spoke on the occasion praising Jesuthas for his valuable contribution to the musical world.

Ira Kandeepan hails from Batticaloa in Sri Lanka.

At this function, Sangeetha Poosham N Raju, who is a renowned exponent of Karnatic music and father of Kandeepan, was honoured by Sri Jesuthas.

Musical evening by MIOT raises funds for Jaffna Hospital

A programme of music and dance was conducted under the auspicious of the East London and Kent branch of the Medical Institute of Tamils at Kelsey Park School, Manor Way on Saturday, 30th January with a view of raising funds for urgently needed drugs and equipment for the Jaffna Hospital.

Mr V Rajayogeswaran (Oral Surgeon Guys Hospital) the chairman of the local branch welcomed the guests. The music programme started with a percussion ensemble comprising violin (Sri Kothandapani), veena (Srimathi Malini Thanapalasingam), Miruthangam (Sri Somasundera Thesigar), Ganjira (Sri Muthu Sivarajah), Ghatam (Sri Bangalore Pirakash), Moharsing (Sri Sithambaranathan).

This was followed by a Bharatha Natyam recital by Selvi Edith Thussara Joseph of Sri Lanka.

Dr Pasupathirajah, the founding president and presently the patron of the association, pointed out the immense service rendered by MIOT since its inauguration two years ago. Donations were channelled to the Jaffna University teaching hospital, Madhu refugee camp and to the Bishop of Batticaloa for the needy there.

Surgical equipment, medical books and journals continue to be sent to Sri Lanka. A high success rate was obtained by doctors coached for PLAB examination by MIOT doctors.

One concluding item was Isai Virunthu by Sri Yogeswaran (vocal), Sri Chandrashekhar (violin), Sri Bhavani Shanker (Miruthangam) and Sri A Srinivasan (Moharsing). Dr N Ratnarajan, the secretary of the association, proposed a vote of thanks.

Uncle Nadodi's column

Prabhakaran finds himself in the spotlight - much to the envy of some world leaders

For a leader of a yet unborn nation, LTTE supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran continues to get the kind of media attention that is the envy of heads of governments.

The Economist, London, in a recent issue (6th-12th March) carries a report by its Sri Lankan correspondent, who had apparently been fortunate in visiting Jaffna and meeting the LTTE leader. He says "The leader of the Tamil Tigers, Velupillai Prabhakaran, does not often give an interview to a journalist. So, why now? During about three hours of talk with Mr Prabhakaran, what emerged was a desire to negotiate once again with the government. He rejected any suggestion that this arose out of weakness. Victory, he insisted, was his for the taking..."

"Even his enemies concede that

Mr Prabhakaran is a formidable leader. Despite the toll of the civil war, he appears to retain the support of the majority of Tamils in the northern and eastern Sri Lanka, the areas which the Tigers claim as the Tamil homeland. He is 37, on the small side, and a bit overweight. With his black hair and moustache and large eyes, he looks a little like the hero who turns up regularly in Tamil films. He dresses in army fatigues, and carries a gun. Around his neck is a black cord, at the end of which is a capsule, presumably containing the cyanide which the Tigers are supposed to swallow rather than be taken prisoner.

"His house - at least the house where he gave the interview - is small and modern, and a bit of a drive from the town of Jaffna. There are maps on the walls, but

no radio or television or books, although Mr Prabhakaran appears well informed about affairs outside Sri Lanka, especially wars, in Afghanistan or in Indochina. Much of the talk was over dinner: noodles and a soft drink. Mr Prabhakaran's portliness does not seem to arise from over eating. He appears to speak only Tamil. Interpreting was done by Anton Balasingham, a much travelled man - he lived for a time in London - who has been the Tigers' principle negotiator in the past.

"Is there anything the Tigers might offer that would encourage the government to open negotiations? The Tigers' demand has been for an independent Tamil state covering a third of the country and holding much of the coastline, a proposal that the government rejects totally. Some politicians in Colombo believe the way to peace is to turn Sri Lanka into a federal state.

"The government is considering the idea, although the majority Sinhalese who have dominated the government and army since independence in 1948, are believed to be against federalism. It would give the Tamils too much

power, some believe. The Tamils would want a high degree of autonomy, particularly over law and order, land and education, all controversial themes. The size of a possible state within a federation is matter for endless argument. Although the Tamils are in the majority in the north, there are sizeable other groups, including Muslims, in the east.

"Mr Prabhakaran talks of the possibility of a 'reasonable' compromise, although it is unclear what compromise he would make. He did say, though: 'If a proposal which gives autonomy and satisfies the expectations of the Tamil people is put

forward, we are prepared to consider it.'

"However, he talks of 'extremists' in the government. President Premadasa, who has always favoured negotiation, might be willing to try it again, but the army, a growing force in Sri Lankan politics, would probably object. If its view prevails, the Tigers will fight on. Mr Prabhakaran said: 'Victory in war does not depend on manpower or weapons. Firm determination, valour and love of freedom are the factors that decide victory. Our fighters and our people are full of these.'

"Sri Lanka's civil war could continue for a while yet."

Heavenly hopes of peace

There are only two things that are absolutely certain, says the Tibetan sage Sogyal Rinpoche. First, we are all going to die; second, none of us has the slightest idea when or where this is going to happen. Despressing isn't it? "How about afterlife?" someone asked him. "There's no proof there is one, but there is also no proof that there isn't. So, what if you go through life saying there isn't an afterlife and then boom, you die - and you find there is? What are you going to do?" asked the jovial Tibetan

incarnation. It seemed to us that we could stretch the imagination further and consider this idea:-

What would have happened in the afterlife if, say, Rajiv Gandhi, Ranjan Wijeratne, Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa, all of whom unfortunately met with violent deaths, were to encounter each other? Would there be peace talks?

Let's hope so. If marriages can be made in Heaven, why cannot peace emerge from the other place?

People & Events

The days of Indian Nationalism Namasivayam Sabaratnam - A Tribute to a Friend

We met for the first time in the Jaffna Hindu College Staff Room. We came to be close friends. We had like interests and tastes. We loved English literature. Those were the days of Indian Nationalism: Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru and an admiration for everything Gandhian. We were young. To the end of his days Sabaratnam remained a Gandhian, and would not care for any other philosophy. But we were different in one thing. He was deeply religious. I was an atheist. The staff-room was the debating platform for all kinds of abnormal philosophies. However, Sabar never flinched from his faith. His faith in God was real and the Friday evenings he spent at the Nallore Temple gave him confidence in himself and the will to serve humanity.

He was a fine debator, both in Tamil and in English. He was never at a loss for a word. He could keep his audience interested on almost any topic. How easily he could hop from one theme to another, as if no barriers existed. It was his peculiar artistry.

Sabararnam will be remembered as a great teacher. He did not merely teach. He did much more. He took an important part in organising the Teachers Union. We would flock from all parts of the Island and spend a weekend in Colombo for our Executive Committee meetings. That brought all the teachers of the Island together. The teachers must be grateful for all that Sabaratnam and his generation fought to win for them. We even walked the streets of Jaffna in a demonstration, a thing no other teacher anywhere in Sri Lanka attempted to do.

How I happened to attend post-graduate training classes together. Sabaratnam gave a model teaching lesson.

The lady in charge who supervised his performance was so enthused at his model lesson that she could not contain her admiration. She praised him as a great teacher.

He taught English. But the area covered by a teacher of English is not limited to the text books alone.



It is all life itself. As you go on with the literature, you are compelled to handle various aspects of life. That is what makes English special. The English teacher cannot keep his hands dry. Sabar was well known, like other great English teachers, for encroaching into foreign territory.

So many principals have gone before him. Everyone of them has left behind something to remember him by. Sabaratnam was not the type who would call a boy "you wretched fellow" and whack him. But Sabar leaves behind a memory of a kind and eloquent person who would take a soft line to reform a difficult kid.

After he retired, he edited the *Eela Nadu*, a Tamil weekly published in Jaffna. His editorials were models of good journalism. The man at the top means a lot for the success of a paper. Sabaratnam gave tone and eloquence to the *Eela Nadu*, but he could not continue for long. It was too much work for a sick person, and he retired after a few years at the helm.

His admiration for Handy Perinpanayagam was so great that he spent a part of his retirement collecting funds to perpetuate his memory. It is a volume containing selections of Handy's speeches and writings. Sabaratnam's regard for Handy came from his love of the Gandhian way of life.

The best epitaph to Sabar comes from his wife. She writes, "He read, wrote, prayed and sang till the last moment". A.S.K.

House, Madras), Mrs Ratnam Sundharam (Sydney), Mrs Maheswari Emmanuel (KL), Mrs Madranjitham Rasiah (KL), Mrs Thanaluxmi Saravanamuthi (Sydney), Mrs Sothiluxmi Balasingam (Sydney) and Mrs Yogeswara Mahesa (Toronto) died on 20th January, 1993. Cremation took place on 25th January. 11 Kinglsey Road, S. Harrow, UK.

Dr Sinnathurai Sivasubramaniam, (Dean of Agriculture, Eastern University, Batticaloa), husband of Indranee nee Anandappa of TRI, Talawakelle, father of Gitanjali and Moshini, expired. Funeral Kanatte 21st February.

90 Alwis Place, Colombo 13.

Deaths

Mrs Regina M Jayaratnam, at rest with Jesus, dearly beloved wife of late Jayaratnam, much loved mother of Jayamani, Dr Albert, Jayasothy, Dr Rabin, Dr Ananda, loved mother-in-law of Emmanuel, Ranji, Anton Benedict, Swinitha and Kamala, fondly remembered by Grand and Great-Grand children, expired on 24th January, 1993. Burial took place on 27 January at Kanatte, Colombo. 36/2 Peters Lane, Wellawatte, Sri Lanka.

Mrs Theivanayagi Somasundharam, wife of the late Dr C Somasundharam, and sister of late Somamal Rajadurai, Theagarajah (formerly of Palm Grove Guest

Annamma Thambirajah, wife of late Simon Thambirajah, mother of Rajendram (Singapore), late Ratnam George (Jaffna), Rev. Fr. Arasaratnam (Batticaloa), Emmanuel (London), Angela (Canada), Roberts (Ports Authority) expired 17th February.

Funeral 18th February at Pandateruppu, Eelam. 58 Gunananda Mawatha, Colombo 13.

Arul Selvanayagam nee Rasiah (65) wife of KJ Selvanayagam (Erlalai North), mother of Elango, Elanchelan, Vasugi, Elanthirayan (all of UK), sister of Kirupai Rasiah, Puvanayagi, Jogalingam, Devakadacham, Thevapalan, Eswarathavan, Navanayagam and Thavarajah, died 21st January. Burial took place at Manor Park Cemetery. London E7 on 29th January.

51 Beresford Road, London E17 4LN



Mrs Alagammah Sundarampillai (pictured) of Kadduvan, wife of the late S Sundarampillai (Malayan Pensioner), beloved mother of Vimala sister of the late Ratnam (Co-op Inspector), mother-in-law of B Gnanasanmugan (UK) and grandmother of Naresh and Dr Shamini, died on 21st February, 1993. Cremation took place according to Hindu Rites at the South London Crematorium on 27 February 1993. 86 Elmfield Way, Sanderstead, Croydon UK

Marriages

The marriage of E. Paramanathan, son of Mr and Mrs T Elagupillai of Perak, and Santhiravathana, daughter of Mr and Mrs K Ragunathan of Johor, took place on 11 February 1993 at Sri Muthu Mariamman Temple, Jalan Mohamadian, Muar, Malaysia.

Dr Dilip Wilson, son of the late Dr Bennet and Dr Marie Wilson of Ealing, UK, and Miss Gwen Benny, daughter of Mr and Mrs Ignatius Benny of Mangalore, India, were married on 24th January at the Church of Our Lady of Miracles, Milagres, Mangalore, India.

Appreciation

Born 15th October, 1923, in Colombo into a Methodist family, Bennet Sebaratnam Wilson was educated at Royal College and qualified as a doctor in Madras.

He married Marie Lobo of Mangalore in 1959.

Later that year they came to England where Ben obtained his DTCD specialising in chest diseases and also DCH (Child Health).

Their son, Dilip, was born in 1960. In 1969 Ben and family went to work in the Manipay Hospital at Jaffna, Sri Lanka for a year.

Returning to England he founded a medical practice at Feltham and then in Ealing in 1970 where he was joined in the work by his wife.

He was committed to the Christian faith, his family, friends and to his work as a doctor.

He was proud of his family and his home with Marie was a place of welcome for others.

He made time for all, as family, friends, colleagues and patients to testify. His concern for children and the elderly was always evident.



**Bennet Sebaratnam Wilson
1923 - 1993**

His great sense of humour contrasted with his serious disciplined approach to life's duties. He worked hard and enjoyed life.

He was interested in music and literature from both eastern and western cultures.

He loved cricket, playing for the school cricket team in Sri Lanka, Madras University as captain, and Ealing Cricket Club. His other sporting activities included athletics where he excelled in track events.

Ben died in India on 28th January, 1993, three days after the happy occasion of the wedding, in Mangalore, of Dilip to Gwen Benny, a dental surgeon.

C.J.T.

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1500 die in eleven months in Jaffna

One thousand five hundred persons have died due to various diseases during the first eleven months of 1992, according to statistics collected from the Teaching Hospital at Jaffna and the office of the Regional Director of Health services, as stated in a report published in the *Eela Nadu*. According to this report, 1049 of these persons had died in the

Jaffna Teaching Hospital. The others died in the various divisions. Most of the incidence occurred as a result of diseases like Malaria, Intestinal ulcers, Hepatitis, Tuberculosis, Heart diseases and Cancer. Most of these patients had inadequate treatment for want of drugs.

Due to the setting up of Refugee

camps, health hazards have increased and infectious diseases have broken out.

Over 200 children under 12 died of Typhoid or dysentery in the Jaffna district. 400 infants died at birth or were still-born. In the months of October and November alone, infant mortality due to infectious diseases was 75.

Courtesy *Hot Spring*

World's attention turns to Sri Lanka's "disappearances"

Asylum and immigration appeals bill discussed in UK parliament

Brent Community Relations Council condemns the Proposals

The Bill proposes among others to remove the right of appeal from all visitors and many overseas students.

In theory, the Bill, if it becomes law, will affect such visitors and students equally, regardless of their country of origin.

However, in reality nothing could be further from the truth.

Statistics have shown that visitors and students from the New Commonwealth countries are more likely to be refused leave to enter than those from so called Old Commonwealth countries and Japan.

The only recourse available to those who are refused leave to enter is to avail themselves of the appeals procedure where quite a number of these decisions to refuse entry have been overturned.

The loss of these appeals rights therefore is a very serious development which must be opposed by all fair-minded people.

Brent Community Relations Council unreservedly condemns these proposals and calls upon the Government to rethink its proposals on this matter.

This Council is equally concerned by the government's proposal relating to asylum seekers. If the Bill becomes law, an application for asylum will be refused unless a

person can prove to be a refugee and additionally he is at risk if he were to be forcibly returned to the country of his origin where his life or freedom might be in jeopardy.

The bill proposes new procedures for dealing with asylum applications, and it compounds the problems for asylum seekers who come to the UK and lastly it allows the Home Office to deal with applications for asylum more quickly and inflexibly.

These procedures are wholly inadequate and in particular, the time limit imposed on them.

The bill sets up a procedure for appeal against refusal of asylum application.

Those asylum seekers who are detained will have only two days in which to lodge their appeal.

Those who apply for asylum when they have leave to remain for some other purpose can have their leave seriously restricted if their asylum application is turned down.

Additionally people who have travelled through some other country before reaching the UK, will not be able to argue their case for asylum here in the sense that they will be required to go to that country and make the application for asylum there.

Additionally, the bill makes things even more difficult for asylum seekers. There are now visa

requirements for refugees who come from places like Uganda, Turkey and Sri Lanka and much more recently from the former Yugoslavian republics of Bosnia, Slovenia and Croatia.

Further, asylum seekers will also be fingerprinted and their entitlement to housing from the local authorities will be removed.

The Government argues that the aim of the Asylum and Immigration Appeals Bill is to weed out bogus applicants and to cut down the period of time which the appeal procedures take.

But these proposals, far from addressing itself to the genuine problems facing the refugees, which is whether there is a well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality or membership of a particular social group or political opinion, it will only reduce the number of applicants who come to this country regardless of the genuineness of the applications.

For this reason, the proposals fall far short of the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees and this council condemns the proposals and would invite the government to rethink its position again.

Courtesy *Voice*

Between 10 and 18 people still "disappear" every month in Sri Lanka. Almost all vanish while in military custody or during search operations in villages, like 12 year old, Manikkam Siventhiran, who was picked up by the military a year ago; or Arulappu Aloysius, a 17 year old fisherman, arrested on 29 August by soldiers; or Gregory Johnson, a young radio mechanic, taken during an army sweep of his village in September. Not one has been seen again.

The continuing high rate of "disappearances", as well as numerous reports of torture and extra-judicial executions, are to be the subject of close scrutiny when Sri Lanka comes up on the agenda of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva in the next few days. The Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances will be reporting on its second follow-up mission to Sri Lanka in October. To coincide with this focus on Sri Lanka, Amnesty International is issuing a special report today.

It notes that, despite Sri Lankan government promises, safeguards to protect prisoners from torture and "disappearance" have not been implemented.

While the number who "disappear" is undoubtedly down from the worst days of 1990 and 1991, and the government is more willing to acknowledge that violations are occurring, several thousand political

prisoners remain in jail without charge or trial. According to Amnesty, senior military officers have admitted that the army holds prisoners in secret, deliberately denying their existence to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Torture of detainees carried out both by the military and various special task forces, is said to include electric shocks, burning with cigarettes, beatings with barbed-wire and submerging prisoner's heads in water. Delegates on an Amnesty International visit to Sri Lanka reported seeing prisoners in chains, one of them a 73 year old man taken hostage by the army for the surrender of his son. More than 50 people are said to have been killed, and 10 others injured, early in January in the last in a series of attacks by Sri Lanka naval patrols on refugees fleeing across Jaffna lagoon.

Though new internal mechanisms to monitor and investigate reported human rights abuses have been established in the past 18 months, trials of security officers accused of atrocities seldom reach conclusions. The Human Rights Task Force, set up in August 1991, apparently remains virtually powerless. In only one case - the murder of 67 civilians in Kakkadicholai in June 1991 - has the government even acknowledged the responsibility of certain soldiers.

While Sri Lanka heads the list of countries under scrutiny at the 49th session in Geneva, human rights abuses in at least another 20 countries are to be debated over the next few weeks.

Courtesy *The Independent*
11th February, 1993

United Nations warns of domino effect as Germany plans to implement strict new asylum laws

The United Nations refugee agency says it fears strict asylum limits planned by Germany could leave refugees with nowhere to go.

The Bonn office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said substantial improvements are needed to a package of laws restricting Germany's liberal post-World War Two law on political asylum.

Bonn's UNHCR representative,

Walter Kiosser, said: "A domino effect that would lead to the collapse of the international system of asylum must be avoided.

Refugees must continue to have a genuine chance of finding a safe place of refuge".

The UNCHR voiced its misgivings after the German Parliament held a first reading of the asylum reform laws agreed in December by the government and opposition parties.

Critics say the new asylum law would allow the Kohl Government to turn back the vast majority of asylum seekers, meaning that neighbouring states would have to deal with them.

They in turn might bar them.

Under Bonn's existing law, refugees asking for asylum must be allowed in to the country while their applications are processed.

Aerial attacks in Kilinochi area: several civilians dead

It has been reported that severe damage has been caused to the buildings of a school and the co-operative Stores in Kilinochi as a result of aerial bombing on Friday by the Sri Lankan Air Force from super sonic planes purchased recently.

A bomb fell in the premises of St Theresa's Girls School injuring several students.

Three of them who were wounded

seriously were taken to the Vavuniya Hospital with the help of the Red Cross.

Due to another similar bomb attack, the Karachi South multi purpose Co-operative Stores building has been completely damaged and the employees seriously wounded.

Two traders were admitted to the Vavuniya Hospital for emergency treatment.