

TAMIL NATION



Govt's 7-day
suspension of
armed offensives
torpedoed

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PREMADASA SURVIVES A NEAR - MUTINY BY ARMY

Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa has managed to survive a threatened mutiny by the armed forces during the first and second weeks of January. While his government announced a seven-day suspension of offensive operations beginning 3rd January - as a sequel to the 72-hour suspension announced earlier - the armed forces began a series of armed provocations in the northeast in defiance of government policy, thus effectively torpedoing the Government announcement.

Mr. Premadasa's authority as Head of State became more eroded when it was known that some leading members of the Buddhist clergy had pledged their uncompromising support to the top brass of the Army. Flout Government Authority if it becomes necessary. We are behind you - is believed to be the signal given to the Army High Command by the top Buddhist hierarchy.

In an unprecedented move, which was obviously intended to cut the ground under the President's feet, the Army's northern commander Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa had a secret rendezvous with the two

and Malwate Chapters, Ven. Palipane Chandananda and Ven. Ramukwelle Sobhita at Tantrimalai on the 8th. Tantrimalai, which was ruins of an ancient Buddhist monastery, is about 56 kilometers north-west of Anuradhapura via Madawachchiya. This meeting was later leaked out to a trusted newspaper correspondent who acts as an unofficial spokesman of the armed forces.

The meeting at which some other senior army officers were present had lasted several hours, and marks a new dangerous phase in the affairs of Sri Lanka, with Buddhist fundamentalism linking up with

TOP BUDDHIST CLERGY BACK THE ARMED FORCES

the Army to undermine civil authority in that country. The fact that the President was compelled to cave in, in the face of this ominous development - despite support for a prolonged suspension of hostilities by parties supporting the government - is an indicator that a worse scenario is in store in Sri Lanka.

Opposition circles in Colombo are reported to be getting perturbed themselves at the sudden ascendancy in the Army's role in decision making. The Air Force which was strengthened by the end of the past year with additional acquisitions of at least four Sia Marchetti attack planes, three American-built Bell 212 helicopters, and five fixed wing transport aircraft has also

joined the Army in flexing muscles both at the LTTE and at the political authority. Meanwhile, President Premadasa has given vent to his fears about the increasing assertiveness of the Army in policy-making, while addressing the Convocation of the Sir John Kotelawala Defence Academy at the Bandaranaike Memorial Hall in Colombo on 14th January.

He also quoted American General Douglas MacArthur who once said: "Let civilian voices argue the merits or demerits of our processes of government... These great national problems are not for your professional participation or military solution...."

In a country like Sri Lanka where fears of army coups had

always been in the consciousness of politicians, (there were even two abortive attempts in the past), President Premadasa's words carry, in the light of recent developments, a greater sense of urgency.

While praising the role of the Army, he also said: "... We all know that the authority of the uniform, access to weapons and knowledge of the arts of command present great temptations. The responsible officer understands that restraint is essential. This is the critical difference between the trained commander and those whose skills have not been disciplined. This is the critical difference between armed forces that are respected and those who are feared."

LTTE to Review its Ceasefire Decision

As we go to Press, Tamil Nation learns that the Liberation Tigers are poised to review their decision to cease fire. This follows the continued aerial attacks by the Sri Lankan Air Force in the north and the mounting civilian casualties.

A communique from the International Secretariat of the LTTE in London dated 23rd January says:

"The Sri Lanka airforce continued its widespread and brutal attack on civilian population centres in the Northern Province. Four bombers, one Avro, one sea plane and three helicopters participated in the aerial bombardment. The Government has declared a curfew in the Kilinochchi, Mannar, Jaffna, Mullaitivu and Vavuniya districts of the Northern Province.

"The indiscriminate and arbitrary aerial bombardments of the civilian population has resulted in many being seriously injured. The Liberation Tigers have engaged themselves in the urgent task of arranging for those who are injured to be taken immediately to the nearest hospital or medical facility for treatment.

"The Leader of Tamil Eelam, Velupillai Pirabakaran has declared his severe condemnation of this aerial bombardment which is in violation of the Geneva Conventions governing armed conflict and is a war crime. In a communication to the International Secretariat of the LTTE in London, he said: "The actions of the Sri Lanka Government are making it impossible for the LTTE to continue to observe its unilateral declaration of a ceasefire, and accordingly the Central Committee of the LTTE is reviewing its decision to cease fire." It is believed that the LTTE may respond to the attack launched by the Sri Lanka Government by withdrawing the unilateral ceasefire declaration and resuming offensive operations against the Sri Lankan armed forces."



Roadside executions of Sinhala rebels by armed forces were a common sight during Govt. war against the JVP

What Amnesty International said

Gross and widespread human rights violations in Sri Lanka have persisted for more than seven years against a background of armed opposition to the government. "Disappearances" and extrajudicial executions in particular have been reported with increased

four years these abuses were concentrated in the northeast of the island, where since the late 1970s Tamil militants have been engaged in an armed struggle to establish a separate Tamil State. Between mid-1987 and early 1990, however, following frequency since mid-1983. For

an escalation of armed opposition in the Sinhala majority areas of southern Sri Lanka (referred to in this report as "the south"), there was a dramatic increase in reports of "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions in the south.

(Sri Lanka Briefing)

TAMIL NATION

THONDAMAN BACKS PEACE INITIATIVE ... but also to isolate the LTTE, he says

"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 participating in the effort to change those material conditions of existence which continue to oppress and discriminate against the Tamils of 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 Tamils of Eelam for national self determination is to be won.

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"Government ought to positively respond to any overtures that may be made to open up a dialogue leading towards the eventual fulfilment of the aspirations of the Tamil people in the Northern and Eastern provinces". President of the Ceylon Workers' Congress and Minister of Tourism and Rural Industrial Development, S. Thondaman has stated so in a letter he addressed to President Premadasa. "Such an approach in my view", he says, "could result in isolating the LTTE which is seeking an armed solution to the problems of the Tamil people in these areas."

A Press release issued by the Ministry states: "The reaction of the Ceylon Workers' Congress to the unilateral declaration of a ceasefire by the LTTE is contained in my letter to you of 3rd January, 1991, which was followed up with a meeting with Your Excellency on the same date.

"Despite the reported violations of the ceasefire by the LTTE it is my belief that such incidents should not preclude the Government from giving serious and favourable consideration to an extension of the moratorium on offensive military operations by the security forces in the Northern and

Eastern provinces, given not only the extraordinary nature of the unilateral declaration of a ceasefire by the LTTE, but also the general sense of relief experienced, by the residents in these two provinces on account of the lull in the armed conflict. "In this background it is also my further submission that the Government ought to positively respond to any overtures that may be made to open up a dialogue leading towards the eventual fulfilment of the aspirations of the Tamil people in the Northern and Eastern provinces." "Such an approach in my view, could result in isolating the LTTE which is seeking an armed solution to the problems of the Tamil people in these areas."



Briefs

Colombo Hospital badly hit

A massive exodus of 281 hospital personnel from January 1, who opted to retire under the incentive retirement scheme, has left the hospital services virtually crippled, at the Colombo General Hospital. Those who availed of the option include specialists, pharmacists, nursing sisters, lab technicians, clerks, labourers and attendants.

Secret Bank Accounts

Sri Lanka has begun to tap the vast market in black money by opening secret bank accounts in Colombo. Any bank will now be free to offer this facility by merely writing to the Monetary Board and obtaining its sanction. Bankers say that they hope to attract many customers from the Indian sub-continent. They point out that before the worsening of violence it was primarily the Indians who patronised the Duty Free Shopping Complex. The government has also opened gold sales outlets at the Katunayake airport.

Shukla to Colombo via Madras

External Affairs Minister of India V.C. Shukla who is visiting Colombo on January 28, will break journey at Madras to meet Chief Minister Karunanidhi, according to a New Delhi report. Mr. Shukla who will spend three days in Colombo, will have two rounds of talks with the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister. But there is no set agenda and the entire gamut of bilateral relations is expected to figure in the talks. Mr. Shukla is reaching Madras on January 27 evening. After his talks in Colombo, he will leave for Hong Kong en route to Beijing.

Cops assault EPDP cadre

A sub-inspector of police and three other police officers of the Narahenpita police station are being charged with causing hurt to a EPDP cadre Ramalingam Subaskaran by assaulting him on September 6 last year. Counsel for the accused told Court that the complainant was a leading member of the EPDP, and the EPDP opposes the policies of the LTTE and supports the government. The police officers have not been identified by the complainant, but were interdicted merely on suspicion.

Case against Ronnie de Mel

The case against the former Lankan Minister of Finance Ronnie de Mel on a charge of misappropriation of foreign currency in his possession has been fixed for trial on May 6, '91 by Colombo's High Court Judge T. Suntheralingam. Mr. de Mel is charged with misappropriating a sum of foreign currency valued at over Rs. 2 million in Colombo between September 1986 and September 1987. A second case against him which is pending involves a sum of more than Rs. 8 million.

Commandos to be recruited

The Sri Lanka government is in the process of recruiting men for the "Commando Regiment" of the regular force of the Army. Interviews were held from the 15th to 18th January at the Army camp at Ganemulla for unmarried males between the ages of 18 and 22. Part of the initial training includes Parachute training in countries overseas. The initial salary would be Rs. 1620/- per month, but after qualifying in special skills, there would be an additional special allowance of Rs. 1500/- plus free food, free accommodation and free medical attention.

International Alert's appeal

A visiting delegate of the London-based Human Rights organisation, INTERNATIONAL ALERT, in Colombo, has called upon the Sri Lanka government and all political parties in the country to take the opportunity provided by the LTTE ceasefire and make a clear and serious offer of regional self-government for the Tamil people within a united Sri Lanka. This could well be done along the lines of federal or similar arrangements prevailing in many countries around the world, without impairing the island's unity, he said.

Govt. incapable, says NSSP

The unilateral declaration of ceasefire by the LTTE has put the Premadasa regime in to a new crisis. However, this alone cannot lead to any solution as this government is totally incapable of giving any solution to the Tamil national problem. In fact the Premadasa regime has openly dismantled even the semblance of a reform package, including provincial councils, inaugurated by the previous UNP regime, says a Press release issued by the Nava Sama Samajist Party (NSSP).

Army chief joins the boasting

Sri Lankan army commander Lt. Gen. Hamilton Wanasinghe has vowed "to eliminate the LTTE and Prabhakaran, if he is still alive, in not more than six months". In an interview with the SUNDAY TIMES, Colombo, Wanasinghe is quoted as saying that the LTTE has exhausted most of its ammunition.

Seeking asylum in Germany

Some 193,000 foreign nationals arrived last year in the Federal Republic of Germany to seek political asylum - an increase of 59.1 per cent over the previous year, according to figures released by the Bonn government. Refugees from Sri Lanka dropped to 4,300 from 7,600 during the previous year (1989). The biggest single group - 35,300 persons - last year came from Romania, compared with only 3,000 a year earlier.

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The longings of an Eelam Tamil couple in New Zealand

Four hundred immigrant families in New Zealand are victims of a forgotten cause.

While tension builds in the Middle East and Germany celebrates its reunification, their families in Sri Lanka are living in hell with little food, no money and endless bombings of their towns and city.

"People in New Zealand don't even know what's happening," despairs 29-year-old Rohan Amirthalingam who escaped Sri Lanka's northern Jaffna peninsula five years ago.

"So much else is going on in the world people forget about us."

He and wife Anushah (23) live in a new Mt Wellington subdivision, but find their modest two-bedroomed home hard to accept when their families are living in bunkers.

"Here we are working, we eat three meals a day and my own sisters back home are suffering," says the quietly spoken Anushah.

A bitter civil war between the majority Sinhalese-dominated government and the Tamil separatist guerrillas (Tigers) began in the mid 1980s.

Rohan, a Tamil and Tiger supporter, says thousands of civilians have died in the fighting and whole villages are destroyed.

"We just want to stop the women and children dying - stop the bombings on civilian areas," he says.

"The political situation is complex, but everyone should want to stop innocent people being killed."

To this end the New Zealand Tamil Society has written to Prime Minister Mike Moore asking for the Government to write to the Sri Lankan president urging an early solution to the conflict.

"It is endless war no one will give up. Only international pressure can help the problem," says Rohan.

His Colombo home was burned by rioting mobs in 1983 at the beginning of the conflict. More than 100,000 Tamils were made homeless in the ensuing months, some of whom were accepted into New Zealand.

It took another five years before Anushah, then Rohan's fiancée, made it out.

She left behind five sisters and her parents, with whom she has had only brief contact since.

Letters used to come frequently, but over the past two years, any communication has been difficult.

"I write every two weeks to my family but only get two or three letters a year," says Anushah, who works in a Mt. Wellington supermarket.

"I try to send money every chance I get, but I don't think they always receive it. I know they really need money - the cost of food has gone up 20 times since I left and there isn't any work."

The Amirthalingam family of Mt Wellington have everything they need — food, money and a house. But emigrating to New Zealand from troubled Sri Lanka has left the couple with horrific memories of what their families at home are enduring.

Sarah Stuart reports in the AUCKLAND STAR



Rohan & Anushah - Father, Mother, 5 Sisters back home

The Tamil society has given substantial amounts of money to the Red Cross, the only international organisation to make it into the Tamil-held areas.

But as the fighting gets worse, they too are finding it difficult to distribute the money.

"We just don't know how to help any more," says Rohan.

While survival is the only thought for Tamils in Jaffna. Tamil families in New Zealand are having to cope with depression and loneliness.

"It especially upsets Anushah," says Rohan, "and that hurts me. It affects work - everything."

Anushah knows something of what her family is going

through. She was in Jaffna when the family's home was bombed and they were forced to live in bunkers during the bombing.

"There is no food in the bunkers and it's very hot," she says.

"You can't leave them to get supplies because you might get hit."

An older sister was injured in one raid and Anushah had to carry her to hospital.

"Medical supplies are very low so it's hard to get treatment," says Rohan.

"Even hospitals have been bombed. Schools too. No one can go to school anymore."

Another of Anushah's sisters saw her cousin die from a bomb blast just metres from where

she was standing.

"I want them all to come to New Zealand, but it's difficult," says Anushah.

"We can't get any money to them for the air fare and then they would have to wait for immigration papers anyway."

Photographs, letters written in Tamil and newspaper clippings are scattered around the Amirthalingam's home. The Tamil society distributes any news it can get from Jaffna and computers are used to communicate with Tamils around the world.

"Just hearing that someone you know is safe can help," says Rohan. "If any family in Auckland gets a letter, everyone knows about it."

Hindu shrines, pictures and

books also fill their living room - faith often grows stronger in troubled times.

"We pray a lot, more than ever before," says Rohan. "We know that our families are praying to the same god."

The Amirthalingam live day to day hoping always for a letter or word that their families are safe. Anushah has heard that her uncle has died, but she has no idea how.

"If the war ever ends we will go back to our home, but who knows when and if that will happen," says Rohan.

"For now we just send what money we can and we hope and pray May be if other governments around the world put pressure on Sri Lanka something will be done."

GULF WAR? NO. WAR AGAINST TAMILS BY SRI LANKA GOVERNMENT





India's new Sri Lanka policy is a return to the Rajiv Gandhi government's abrasive approach where our perceived interests were more important than the island's ethnic conflict, says Mohan Ram
- THE INDEPENDENT, Bombay 8 January 1991

'INDIA DOCTRINE' AND ETHNIC CONFLICT IN SRI LANKA

The withdrawal of the India Peace Keeping Force, completed in March last year by the V.P. Singh government marked the end of Rajiv Gandhi's Sri Lanka policy which had more to do with India's perceived strategic interests than with the island's ethnic conflict. The policy was based on a strategy of denial, to preclude interests seen as hostile to Indian from getting a foothold in Sri Lanka through a role in the ethnic conflict. While the Rajiv Gandhi government listed safety of the Tamils and devolution of powers to them as the immediate conditions for completing the IPKF withdrawal and did not keep to the December 31 (1989) deadline, the new government in India carried out the withdrawal to an extended deadline. What Rajiv Gandhi regarded conditions were only concerns of the V.P. Singh government. But with the advent of the Chandrashekar government, it looks a return to Indira Gandhi's 'India doctrine' formulated by Indira Gandhi's government in the wake of Sri Lanka's anti-Tamil flare-up in July 1983. It means the end of the non-assertive Sri Lankan policy of the V.P. Singh government and the resurrection of the abrasive approach that characterised Rajiv Gandhi's.

Amidst a shrill campaign in Tamil Nadu against the DMK government over the activities of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam there—alleged gun-running and drug-peddling and a threat to law and order—external affairs minister V.C. Shukla spelt out India's policy on Sri Lanka on December 9. But the context is important. The Chandrashekar government had mounted pressure on chief minister M. Karunanidhi to crack down on the LTTE in Tamil Nadu even as central forces stepped up surveillance

to deny the LTTE cadre free movement across the Palk Straits. When the Eelam war resumed on June 11, ending 13 months of negotiations between the LTTE and the Premadasa government, India had unambiguously ruled out intervention in Sri Lanka. India's only problem was the new influx of refugees while Sri Lanka's only concern was the use of Tamil Nadu as a base by the LTTE.

The new Indian policy, unveiled by V.C. Shukla is to be based on the following principles.

—India will not be a party to the process of Sri Lanka's political disintegration;

—India will not allow any foreign forces to interfere in Sri Lanka;

—India's armed forces will not be sent again to Sri Lanka; and
—Indian territory will not be used as a base of activities against Sri Lanka.

The first and the fourth are consistent with the five principles of peaceful coexistence (panchsheel) on which India's policy of non-alignment is based. The 1987 India-Sri Lanka agreement on the ethnic conflict are indeed based on them. The third, about India not sending troops to Sri Lanka again has to be seen in the context of India's attempt at demilitarising the ethnic conflict and its withdrawal after Sri Lanka had demanded it. At least, in theory, the IPKF was there on Sri Lanka's invitation. The legal fiction that it functioned under the supreme command of Sri Lanka's president was sustained for some time. But it collapsed when Sri Lanka asked India to pack up and India began making the implementation of the July 1987 agreement omnibus rider.

But the second (India not allowing any foreign forces to interfere in Sri Lanka) flies in the face of panch sheel. It is



MEDIA MEDLEY

rooted in the India doctrine for South Asia spelt out in private in July 1983. When it became known that the J.R. Jayewardene government, fearing its collapse in the wake of the ethnic flare-up had approached some regional powers (including Bangladesh) and some extra-regional powers (including the United Kingdom) for help but had ignored India, New Delhi spelt the doctrine out. Effectively, the doctrine was that in a country in the region where Indian interests were involved, any outside military assistance an internal threat cannot be without India's consent if not participation. It amounted to signalling to extra-regional powers that India was the regional power and they had no role in any country in South Asia without its tacit consent.

It is no secret that India allowed the Tamil groups to use Tamil Nadu as a base and a sanctuary. Chief minister M. Karunanidhi is on record that there were as many as 31 training camps for Tamil militants run by the Indira Gandhi government. Though Sri Lanka had charged this, it had been flatly denied by India. India tried to use the militant groups

to mount pressure on Colombo and in the process gained a role in the conflict. It was to be a mediatory role to begin with. But as it turned out, India became a participant in the conflict, picking up the war against the LTTE where Jayewardene had left off.

From the beginning, India was keen that outside forces should not get a foothold in Sri Lanka through their direct or indirect involvement in the ethnic conflict. So much so that one point, Sri Lanka asked a rhetorical question: whether as a sovereign country, it had the right to obtain arms and other forms of assistance (including expertise in counter insurgency) from whichever quarter it chose. Rajiv Gandhi is on record that had not the IPKF gone in, forces inimical to India would have entered Sri Lanka. Clearly India's interests were strategic to deny external powers a base in Trincomalee, which is among the world's best natural harbours and located strategically in the northern Indian Ocean.

What does V.C. Shukla's reference to 'foreign forces' in Sri Lanka mean? Though the Indian media had reported him as telling the Parliament's consultative committee that India 'would not allow' such interference, it was obviously clarified to Colombo that he had in fact said 'would not like' such interference.

The line between the two is thin. Not allowing and not liking amounts to the same in principle. Who is to decide what constitutes foreign interference? In Afghanistan, the Soviet troops came at the invitation of the government in Kabul. The legitimacy of the regime in Kabul could not have been an issue as long as powers including the United States and even Pakistan had formal relations with it. The IPKF was in

Sri Lanka at the invitation of the government in Colombo and therefore could not have been construed as interference. Not allowing interference by foreign forces in Sri Lanka suggests an India resolve to interdict the forces. Not liking such interference connotes something passive. It is just displeasure. Even so it is a reflection on Sri Lanka's sovereignty because it is not for any other nation to like or dislike something that concerns the island republic. At issue here is the threat to Sri Lanka's unity and integrity and help by foreign forces to hold the entity together. India is committed to the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka. But it does not follow that India should be the country to help Sri Lanka's unity while all 'foreign forces' are per se seen as hostile to Sri Lanka's interests.

Shukla spelt out the Sri Lanka policy at a closed-door meeting and the government might not have felt obliged to clarify or elaborate what trickled out to the media through unofficial channels. But he would do well to make a public statement on it. One cannot help surmising that what he has been attributed to him is virtual reiteration of the India doctrine which one thought had its demise with the IPKF. India's surgical intervention in Maldives two years ago does not belong to the same category as its role in Sri Lanka. In Maldives, India's role had the consent of countries of the region including Pakistan and extra-regional powers including the United States and the Soviet Union because none of them were able to extend help in time. And ironically Sri Lanka was the first country Maldives had approached. So it was not the India doctrine at work in Maldives. But it was at work in Sri Lanka.



January 10, 1991

It is extremely disquieting that the Prime Minister, Mr. Chandra Shekhar even while refraining from an overt suggestion that the Centre is considering the dismissal of the DMK Government in Tamil Nadu, has been throwing broad hints to the effect that should the State Government not "tackle" the law and order problem as a result of the presence of LTTE militants, its continuance in office would be in jeopardy. The Prime Minister's remarks during the last two days in Parliament have reinforced the impression that the campaign that has been built up by the DMK's political rivals and

which has gained momentum since the fall of the V.P. Singh Government, has his tacit support. Thus, in spite of the fact that the State Government has in the last few weeks taken specific steps to reassure the Centre that it is taking action against Sri Lankan militants operating in the State, the Centre prefers to remain unimpressed by the State Government's effort to convince New Delhi. The Prime Minister expressed dissatisfaction with the DMK Government's response but denied that the Centre was contemplating its dismissal. However, the campaign by the Congress(I) and the

DISQUIETING SIGNALS

AIADMK for the DMK's ouster is becoming increasingly shrill. It is not without significance that on the very day that the Prime Minister said in Parliament that the State Government had been advised to take certain steps to deal with the Sri Lankan militants, the Congress(I) made a public demand for "stringent action" against the State Government, including its dismissal if necessary. That the party high command was now endorsing the demand made by its State unit was apparent, and coming as it did after Mr. Chandra Shekhar's oblique hints of disapproval, it does seem that the ground is being prepared to launch an offensive political action against the State Government.

There are several reasons why the motivation for the campaign against the State Government's handling of the

issue seems suspect. To begin with, the premise that the Tamil Nadu case is in the league of Assam or Punjab is a fallacious one and does serious injustice to political analysis. On what basis or reckoning can it be said that "anti-national" tendencies are surfacing in Tamil Nadu as in Punjab or Assam? Even granting that there are LTTE and other Sri Lankan militants freely wandering about the State, and even the possibility as the Prime Minister said, of links between the LTTE and the ULFA, how would that render either the State Government, or the people of the State anti-national in the manner of those asking for Khalistan or a separate nation of Assam? To describe the happenings in Tamil Nadu as the surfacing of anti-national tendencies is to distort the meaning of the word

"anti-national" and to devalue the significance of its application else-where in India. What might be happening in Tamil Nadu in the fact that gun-wielding militants are entering the State is the introduction of a higher security risk element, a greater probability of anti-social activity and a threat to the peace in the State but none of these would qualify for pushing Tamil Nadu into the "anti-national" brigade.

Secondly, the argument that anti-national tendencies exist presupposes the presence of a group or movement in the State asking for secession or separation. Even if it were to be said that the presence of Sri Lankan militants is harmful to the law and order situation here, that is all there is to it especially since the focus of the activity of these militants is the problem in Sri

(continued next page)

DISQUIETING SIGNALS

(continued)

Lanka and not Tamil Nadu. The surprising ease with which the charge of "anti-national" is being flung at the DMK Government and the disregard for the need to document scrupulously such a serious allegation casts doubts on the democratic inclinations of the Centre and the political parties supporting it. The Chief Minister, Mr. Karunanidhi has tried to keep the confrontational edge out of his tone when talking to New Delhi. In the last two months,

when he has visited the capital, he has made an effort to convince the Prime Minister that his Government is taking steps to tackle the law and order problem created by the presence of the militants. The State Government has also taken steps such as intensifying patrolling of the coast while the naval presence in the coastal waters has also been increased.

For the Congress(I) to strike the pose of moral indignation and outrage on the question of

the presence of Sri Lankan militants in Tamil Nadu would appear somewhat of a contradiction given that the flow of militants into Tamil Nadu was not because of the present State Government. The trickle of refugees and militants started in 1983 after the ethnic conflict in the island escalated. A Congress(I) Government was in power in New Delhi while the AIADMK was ruling in Madras. The problem might have been accentuated by the present State Government's turning a blind eye to the law and order implications of the continued presence and activity of the Sri Lankan militants here but the DMK Government certainly did not bring them in. Thus,

while it is imperative that the State Government cracks down on the use of Tamil Nadu soil as a base for the operations of the Sri Lankan militants, it should not be defensive about the fact that there are refugees here from the island, whose presence here is a legacy of the Government of India's post-1983 approach to Sri Lanka.

The Chandra Shekhar administration must not allow the political interests of its supporting parties, the Congress(I) and the AIADMK, to push it into a confrontational course towards a democratically elected State Government whose term expires only in 1994. It would be an assault on

the principle of healthy Centre-State relations for the Centre to succumb to political temptations and to build up a case that there is a breakdown of the constitutional machinery in the State. New Delhi has every right to work in coordination with Tamil Nadu to ensure that militant activity does not threaten the stability of the State. But if the Chandra Shekhar Government's professions that it is a respecter of the sound political norms laid out in the Constitution are to retain credibility, then it is most important that it desists from its present trend of tossing menacing pronouncements at the State Government.

'PREMADASA DITHERS AS TIGERS, HOLD OUT THE OLIVE BRANCH'

Ashwani Talwar reporting to the TIMES OF INDIA - 6 January 1991

The Sri Lanka government Tamil rebels war is not entirely being fought in the jungles of the North-East. Much of it has got to do with scoring propaganda points against each other, and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) won another one by unilaterally declaring a cease-fire beginning with the new year.

The development seemed to be too sudden for the government, then busy preparing for major celebrations to mark President Ranasinghe Premadasa's second year in office. It hesitated in coming out with an official statement. Nearly two days after the international Red Cross delivered the LTTE statement - and only a few hours before the unilateral ceasefire was to come into effect - the presidential secretariat issued one. It said that the government needed at least three more days to assess the offer.

There had been several feuds during the last few months that the Tamil Tigers wanted to talk again with government. Despite government denials, rumours persisted that the Sri Lankan High Commission in London and the Tiger leaders were maintaining secret contacts. More recently a novelist-cum-ex-militant, R. Arulpragasam, has been in Colombo talking to government officials and diplomats. He said he had brought back a message from the Tiger leadership in Jaffna: "They would respond - 'positively' - if, the government offered a cease-fire and backed it with substantial devolution of

powers to a merged North-Eastern Provincial Council.

The government denied getting any message from the intermediary. But there was no getting away from it when the militants declared a cease-fire themselves without waiting for a government offer. The LTTE statement made sure that the ball was now in the government's court.

The LTTE said: "Under the pretext of a war the Sri Lankan government is committing a great crime of genocide against our people. In particular, the Tamil people of the Eastern province are suffering enormously." The ceasefire was motivated, the militants said, "by the urgency of bringing the pathetic life of the people to the attention of the world."

Faced with such emotion-charged propaganda, Sri Lanka, watched closely by the rest of the world, particularly donor countries could not afford to summarily reject the offer.

Given the history of past ceasefire negotiations, the offer could not be grabbed in a hurry. After talking with the government for about 14 months, the Tamil Tigers had earlier broken the truce all of a sudden on June 11. Several police stations in the East were attacked, policemen taken hostages and then executed. Opponents of Mr. Ranasinghe Premadasa had felt that the Tigers were given too long a rope by the government which confined its own troops to the barracks and allowed them to run their



MEDIA MEDLEY

writ in the North-East. The Tigers had made good use of the period of peace in preparing for what later came to be called "Eelam War II".

The government has now been warned that it should not allow history to repeat itself. Keen that he should not get all the flak if anything goes wrong the president has asked for reactions from all other political parties on the LTTE ceasefire offer. Almost all parties have urged the government to proceed with caution.

Some of the preconditions for talks would be difficult to impose. A six-party alliance of the opposition led by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) of Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike has urged for "a declaration against the possession and use of the arms by any group or persons other than those authorised by the law and the constitution." In simpler language this would perhaps read: "The Tigers should first disarm themselves." The LTTE which

has hinted at a "National Reconciliation Treaty" under which the militants would give up arms only over a three-year period, are not likely to oblige. The government too is likely to insist on it in the beginning itself only if they do not want to go ahead with the cease-fire.

Other parties have also mentioned this and similar conditions aimed at ensuring that the LTTE," does not interpret the cease-fire to its own advantage." The People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) has suggested that the LTTE should participate in the ongoing All-Party Conference (APC) deliberations between Tamil and Muslim groups to decide on the issue of a permanent merger of the North-Eastern province. The LTTE has however in the past shunned the pro-government militants groups like PLOTE. But Tamil and Muslim leaders taking part in the APC talks admit in private that no solution which emerges from their negotiations could be implemented without the LTTE's cooperation.

One line of thinking against a truce is that the Tigers want it only because they feel "cornered". The militants have lost hundreds of their cadres in the six-month old war and are now facing Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) claims that LTTE bunkers have flooded recently. They have suffered losses in Mankulam, Jaffna and the East and their food and fuel stocks are running low. "It is the strategy of the LTTE that it could strengthen itself in case

the government accepts the cease-fire," says EPDP Secretary-General, Mr. Douglas Devananda.

It is difficult to verify whether the Tamil Tigers are really in such desperate state. But the army fighting them too does not seem to be getting anywhere. The major portion of North Sri Lanka remains under some sort of militant control. The armed forces managed a morale boosting victory by liberating Jaffna fort, but decided it would not be possible, or worth the trouble, to hold on to it. It secured a few square kilometres on the periphery of Jaffna peninsula in other operation, but the new defence positions around the Palaly military base continue attacks. The army lost Kokkavil and Mankulam bases in the North. A high-ranking officer died only a few days before the cease fire in landmine explosion in the East.

This is enough for a guerrilla force to give the impression that it has the upper hand. Some political sources insist that the army is not keen to have a cease-fire right now. Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne, the Minister of State for Defence, had vowed to annihilate the LTTE after they broke the cease-fire in June and did not seem very enthusiastic in the beginning at least in accepting another truce. Contacted after the informal unilateral cease-fire had come into effect, the Defence Secretary, Mr. Cyril Ranatunga, made clear that the armed forces would have been "very happy" to continue fighting.

'Why should the Tigers offer a unilateral ceasefire when they are in an advantageous position militarily?'

ROHAN GUNASEKERA

Sunday Island 6 January 1991

Once again it is the LTTE which has taken the initiative, putting the ball back into the government's court with its unilateral ceasefire offer. The cautious reaction and widespread doubts about how genuine the offer is can be traced to what many see as the LTTE's deep credibility gap, the group's past record, particularly its resumption of hos-

tilities last June, has created. The most common question is whether the Tigers can be relied upon or whether their offer is a ploy.

Many reasons are being attributed to what seems to be the LTTE's sudden change of heart, although the conditions they've laid down give the immediate impression that the ceasefire will not work. Inter-

nally the Tigers are said to be getting isolated from the Jaffna people by their "reign of terror" in the peninsula.

Says Karavai Kandasamy of the DPLF: "The people suffer-

ing a lot and public opinion has turned against the Tigers." After the ceasefire was declared people have apparently begun to move around more freely in the peninsula.

No guerrilla group can function well without popular support and the Tigers obviously would not like to lose their logistic base. The possibility of being sidelined politically by the political solution getting evolved by the Tamil-Muslim consensus that has just emerged from the APC, may be another factor the Tigers considered in timing their ceasefire. If the LTTE wants to talk again and the government has to listen then this exercise by the anti-LTTE group will be irrelevant.

Overseas, the Tigers may want to regain any sympathy last by their decision to resume

(continued page 8)

A SINHALA VIEW!

Continuing the story of the Jaffna Youth Congress - Part 4

SATYAMURTI'S VISIT

As it is very often happened in his travels in India Gandhiji was confronted in Colombo and in Jaffna by Christian missionaries asking him to clarify his attitude to the Christian faith. At a meeting with the missionaries in Jaffna Gandhiji in Desai's words "reiterated his impatience with the missionary or the Mussulman who thinks of getting hold of the untouchable for the sake of increasing his flock, and said like the Dewan of Mysore he would ask them all to strive to make the untouchables better Hindus if they could." He emphasised that the purpose of men of all faiths should be to become better people by contact with one another, and that if that happened the world would be a much better place to live in. Gandhiji said "I plead for the broadest toleration, and I am working to that end. I do not expect the India of my dreams to develop one religion, that is, to be wholly Hindu, or wholly Christian, or wholly Mussulman, but I want it to be wholly tolerant, with its religious working side by side with one another."⁶⁵

'Storm in a tea-cup'

Gandhiji had referred to the Hindu-Christian differences as a "storm in a tea-cup" and had offered his good services for bringing together the two sections. The effect of his visit had been useful to some extent in easing the rivalry that had emerged in Jaffna. The Morning Star commented, "One of the good results of the Mahatma's visit has been that Hindus and Christians who were estranged before have worked together in honouring the Mahatma."⁶⁶

The Hindu Organ on the eve of the visit of Gandhiji had stressed the Hindu significance of his visit but after he had arrived emphasised the universality of his message. Commenting editorially on his visit the Hindu Organ said, "The 26th of this month (November 1927) would be regarded as a red-letter day in the annals of Jaffna. It was on this day that Mahatma Gandhi set his blessed foot on the soil of the land of Yalpadi. There is a long established tradition enshrined in the Buddhist historical literature, both Tamil and Sinhala that Lord Buddha during his life-time visited this land and preached the Dharma to the two Naga Kings when they fought for the possession of the gem-set throne set up here by Indra. After the lapse of twenty-five centuries this very same land has been vouchsafed the humble privilege to welcome another immortal son of Bharatha Kanda and to hear the same message of Love and Truth which in the days of yore Lord Buddha delivered to the Naga Kings."⁶⁷

Departure by Talaimannar

Mahatma Gandhi left for India via Talaimannar. Shortly before his departure he sent the following message to the Joint Secretaries of the Reception Committee in Jaffna. "The message that I can leave for Jaffna as for the whole of Ceylon is: let it not be 'out of sight out of mind'. Let the descriptions I have given you of

the starving millions haunt you and keep you in touch with them and in so doing keep you also simple and living pure free from drink and untouchability, if not for your own sakes, at least for theirs."⁶⁸

Moulding public opinion

The fourth annual sessions of the Students' Congress was held at the Vaithilingam Madam, Keerimalai in April 1928. Over a thousand young people attended this session from both within and outside the peninsula. This was evidence of the popularity of the Congress among the youth. It had now become an organisation that had to be taken into account in the public life of Jaffna. Though it had not yet asserted itself politically as an organisation, the Congress was beginning to play an important part in moulding public opinion. It had to be taken seriously by the men of the older generation. An organisation that had with such spectacular success brought Gandhiji to Ceylon, and whose program in Jaffna was practically in its hands could not but command respect. The leaders of the Congress now begin to assert their position and express their views without inhibitions.



'Gandhis' visit - a red-letter day in the annals of Jaffna'

- HINDU ORGAN

Swami Vipulananda known for his religious zeal, scholarship, and his commitment to the cause of nationalism and educational development presided. Speakers included Sri S. Satyamurti, Deputy Leader of the Swarajist party in Madras, and noted Sinhalese personalities such as G.K.W. Perera who had been Principal of the Nalanda Vidyalaya, and A.E. Goonesinha the Labour leader. In addition lectures were delivered by R. Sri Pathmanathan and A. Canagarathnam. The lecturers dealt with a wide range of subjects covering social, economic and political questions.

The Students' Congress continued to have contact with Gandhiji and other Indian leaders. Satyamurti was a big draw both for his eloquence and the content of his speeches. Mahatma Gandhi's message wishing the Congress success came on the eve of the sessions. The message was as follows: "I wish the Students' Congress all success. I hope that the students will not forget the starving millions of the parent country, and the most effective manner in which they can help is to identify themselves with them by adopting Khadi."

S. Nadesan then a law student set the tone for the radical stance adopted at this Congress sessions. As Chairman of the Reception Committee he delivered a welcome address that dealt with the major political

issues of the time. The greater part of his speech dealt with the evidence led before the Donoughmore Commission. In November 1927 the Special Commission under the Chairmanship of the Earl of Donoughmore had arrived in Ceylon with the following terms of reference:

"To visit Ceylon and report on the working of the existing Constitution and on any difficulties of administration which may have arisen in connection with it; to consider any proposals for the revision of the Constitution that may be put forward, and to report what, if any, amendments of the Order in Council now in force should be made."

Donoughmore Commission

The report of the Donoughmore Commission was presented to the British Parliament in July 1928. The Students' Congress later rejected the main recommendations of the Commission. At this time in April 1928 when the fourth annual sessions were being held Nadesan commented on the nature of the evidence that had been led before the Commission. He characterised it as a sordid period in the history of this country when the sleeping

long subjection the greater was the need to work for and achieve Home Rule.

He referred to communal representation as a quack's remedy an evil that ought not to be recognised. He said that contrary to bringing the various communities any the closer communal antipathy was growing and that there were now more divisions than ever before. In this respect the welcome address appeared to have anticipated the now well-known comments that the Donoughmore Report made in rejecting communal representation in this country.

Communal Representation

"In surveying the situation in Ceylon" said the report of the Donoughmore Commission, "we have come unhesitatingly to the conclusion that communal representation is, as it were, a canker on the body politic, eating deeper and deeper into the vital energies of the people, breeding self-interest, suspicion and animosity, poisoning the new growth of political consciousness and effectively preventing the development of a national or corporate spirit." The report further said, "there can be hope of binding together the

years of experience in self-government would teach them that the strength of the nation required that every community in the country needed to be developed to maximum efficiency for the state as a whole to have maximum power. He ventured to express the hope that then parochialism would cease and that people would think of the nation first. Self-government he said was the only remedy for their ills.

Swami Vipulananda

The welcome address was followed by the Presidential address by Swami Vipulananda. In a comprehensive speech befitting a man of his standing he stressed the all-important role of the Students' Congress in moulding intelligent public opinion. He dealt briefly with the social, political, educational and economic problems that the people of this country faced and called on the youth to discuss and study these problems which affected the life of the nation. He referred to the significance of Mahatma Gandhi's visit and said that the saintly Indian leader had by his life shown the way of translating right thought into right action. He stressed Gandhiji's message calling on all communities, Hindus, Christians, Muslims and Buddhists who though professing different religions could join hands and work for a common cause. Swami Vipulananda gave first and foremost importance to education.

Welcoming the plans for the setting up of a University of Ceylon he said that the establishment of such a University would quicken national life. He expressed the hope that the oriental section of the future University of Ceylon should recognise the importance of Tamil Studies. He advocated the inclusion of Indian history in the school curriculum. He looked forward to the University performing a vital role in training the future citizens of Ceylon in civic and political responsibility.

Call for change in outlook

The radicalism of the Swami found expression in his call for economic independence. Responsible government without economic progress, he said, would only be the shadow without the substance. The banking and commerce of the country was completely in the hands of outsiders. A large part of the country's wealth was in the hands of outsiders, who had no permanent interest in the welfare of the country. The European exploiter, he described, was more often than not a bird of passage. He deplored the widely prevalent habit of waiting for the government to do 'nation-building' work and attributed this to the slave mentality resulting from age-long subjection to foreign rule. He called upon the youth to work for a change in outlook and said that the people should work out their own salvation.

He drew attention to the appalling poverty and shocking illiteracy prevailing in the country. He indicated that fifty per cent of the school-going population were not attending school and that the facilities

dogs of reaction were being awakened from their slumber. He referred to how communities, creeds and castes were up in arms against one another and were proclaiming to the world not only their own selfish and parochial aims and desires but also the alleged unfitness of the country for self-government. He said that every patriot must be ashamed of what happened. Respectable public men went before the Special Commission and said that their respective castes, creeds and communities would perish if their rights were not safeguarded by special representation in the Legislative Council.

Scathing criticism

Nadesan ventured to make a scathing criticism of the older men whom he characterised as self-seekers who created a vicious atmosphere with ill-digested and ignorant schemes of reform. Councillors and would be councillors in Nadesan's view grew frantically religious and proclaimed that a few more seats in Council would help them do strengthen and propagate their respective religions. He asserted that if age produced such irresponsibility the sooner such leaders left the stage the better and if such men of great intellect would not free themselves from the slave mentality brought about by such

diverse elements of the population in a realisation of their common kingship and an acknowledgement of common obligations to the country of which they are all citizens so long as the system of communal representation with all citizens so long as the system of communal representation with all its disintegrating influences, remains a distinctive feature of the constitution."

In the context of what he had said Nadesan recalled the tour of Gandhiji and referred to it as having given a tremendous impetus to the aims and ideals for which the Congress stood and stressed that if there was any time when the country needed to hear such a man it was the present time. At such a time, said the speaker, the catholic message of Mahatma Gandhi was most opportune. Gandhiji's words full of authority and power went far towards preventing a more shameful exhibition of narrow mindedness and lack of political insight.

In attempting to meet the argument that the Sinhalese majority is likely to dominate and further their own position at the expense of the other races under conditions of self-government, Nadesan said that after long years of subjection to foreign rule the chances were that the majority community at the beginning of self-government would use power for narrow and selfish ends; but some

(continued next page)

TO JAFFNA: 1928

required were inadequate. Most of the taxes in the country were indirect taxes. Swami Vipulananda made pointed reference to the fact that food stuffs most of which had to be imported were taxed and the super rich and the abjectly poor were all compelled to pay the same tax.

Duplication of Schools

Both Nadesan and Swami Vipulananda had occasion to comment on the prevailing bitterness Hindus and Christians over the management of schools. Nadesan said that the Hindus by virtue of their greater needs should get more grant-in-aid from the government than the Christians. He said it was the duty of the Christians to assist the Hindus to realise their legitimate aspirations and that the Hindu leaders should avoid scrupulously all suspicion of religious animosity. He had also deplored the manner in which the children of minority Tamils were discriminated against especially in Hindu schools.

Swami Vipulananda questioned why there should be a duplication of schools in certain areas while there were immense areas in the country without any educational facilities and where Hindu or Christian enterprise could and should direct its attention. He pointed out that in Colombo alone ten thousand students did not have educational facilities. He said that the Ceylon Tamils could do a large amount of useful educational work in the districts where the children of Tamil labourers were growing up in ignorance and were being trained to a life of serfdom and slave labour of their fathers. He stressed the role of the American and European missionaries in the sphere of positive knowledge. The wealthy nations of the West he said, could send to the East missionaries who would devote their lives to the advancement of science. Their motto should be, 'Education for education's sake' and they should forswear all endeavour at proselytising. Their self-sacrificing labours would then find a readier appreciation and the present bitterness would cease. Swami Vipulananda appealed to the Hindus to be tolerant and said that even if the Christians persisted in propagating their religion by their stereotyped methods it was still open to the Hindus to be tolerant and patient and do what work they needed to do with less noise and greater friendliness to all.

Old men and young men

He concluded his speech with an appeal on what became the main theme of the 1928 sessions of the Student's Congress—communal amity. The various religionists and communities must realise their common duty towards the country and sink unnecessary differences. The Tamils and the Sinhalese in particular should realise their common culture and identity of interest and work for the progress of their common motherland.

Both the welcome address by Nadesan and the Presidential address by Swami Vipulananda at the 1928 sessions in some

ways marked a departure from the earlier sessions. They dealt with specific issues that troubled the country and to which the youth were now turning their attention. There were clear signs at this session that the old leadership was being regarded as self-centred if not incompetent.

The Daily News in an editorial comment underlined this message of youth. It said, "anybody who has followed the evidence given before the Special Commission will at once admit that if the future of the country is left at the mercy of its old men was characterised as 'pitchdark pessimism', infused with an inability to trust themselves or their fellows and a reluctance to surrender positions they were unfit to hold. In such a situation the Daily News said the youth might look upon it as a challenge to fight for its proper place. Commending the Student's Congress for attempting to do this it said that no place was better fitted for this grand demonstration of the spirit of youth than the North which has been particularly afflicted by the incubus of old age, were two or three superannuated 'leaders' issue their fiat and the rest bow in mute obedience to it."

Looking towards India

The Daily News pointed out that in the North there is a stronger tendency than in the rest of the island to look to India. Their study of the Indian problem shows the youth of Jaffna the deplorable consequences of distrust and jealousy between on community and another. And the young men of Jaffna have sufficient imagination to apply the moral to this country." Expressing total agreement with the stand taken by the Students' Congress on self-government the Daily News said, "it was a Tamil organisation which put forward one of the most consistent cases for self-government before the Special Commission. The same attitude is shown at the Students' Conference at Keerimalai. The attitude is the only one compatible with reason. Self-government presupposes faith in one's own people. Since every people is made up of classes and communities, self-government demands a common basis of trust among all communities... It is this consciousness that inspires the youth of Ceylon with courage to shoulder the responsibility of the future. They are prepared to trust each other and work together. That is the lesson they are teaching their elders."

Sri Satyamurti who was the guest speaker from India spoke on "Communalism our great danger". He was well-known for his eloquence and his political acumen. Addressing the sessions on the second day, he dealt at length on Nationalism, Internationalism and Communalism. He accused the Englishmen of growing frantically philosophic when other peoples' affairs were concerned pointing to the narrowness of nationalism and holding aloft internationalism to the Indians and Ceylonese. In the speaker's view internationalism was no doubt ideal. But one needed to be strong oneself in order to more effectively help others.

Nationalism and the will to be masters in their own country, he said, was an essential first step to internationalism. The danger of communalism, he said, was like poison to an individual. Communalism narrow and utterly selfish and circumscribed its very nature was the contradiction of nationalism. The speaker categorised those who advocated the path of communalism both in India and Ceylon as people who were either the shameless tools of the people in power or belonged to the species who always looked eagerly for the approving nod from high places whence sprang honours and decorations.

Satyamurti's call to youth

Speaking with deep conviction from his Indian experience Sri Satyamurti called on the youth of Jaffna to reject the path of communalism with its poisoning effect on politics and to learn from the experience of India. He traced in detail the slow introduction of communal representation into the Legislative Council of India by the British masters and remarked that they had succeeded in great measure in their game of dividing the people of India. In making a spirited plea for unity he said with reference to Ceylon that whatever fear existed among the minority communities in Ceylon regarding domination by the majority was misplaced. There was nothing in the history of this ancient land, said the speaker, to justify such fears. He posed the question quite relevant at that time as to why people should be ready to be ruled by an alien race and be afraid of rule by their brothers who were children of the same country.

silenced by the political opportunism or poltroonery of ambitious and selfish elders. He expressed the hope that in the long run no man in the country would be afraid to long to be free in his own country and to demand that the sons and daughters of the soil shall be masters of her finances, the dispensers of justice and be responsible to keep law and order; that unhampered by restrictions of any kind they shall mine her own ores, develop her resources and harness and conserve for her own good all commercial and trade advantages accruing from her geographical position; that in fact Ceylonese shall be in their land what all self-respecting people are in theirs, masters and not slaves. Satyamurti participated in the session on education as well. Speaking on the subject of "National Education" he said that he regarded education as second only to Swaraj and considered the prevalent system to be totally unsatisfactory producing as it did pale imitations of Englishmen.

Sinhala speakers

From Jaffna Satyamurti went to Colombo and addressed a large gathering at a meeting under the auspices of the Centra. Y.M.B.A. Borella, on the subject of "Free Ceylon". D.B. Jayatileke presided at this meeting.

Other addresses delivered at the fourth annual sessions of the Students' Congress at Keerimalai were as follows: G.K. W. Perera spoke on "Education for Self-government". A.E. Goonesinha addressed the gathering on his favourite subject "Emancipation of Labour." A. Canagarat-

and compulsory education all over the country and the elimination of religious and caste prejudices.

Panchayat system

Mr. G.K.W. Perera in his speech had mentioned that the government had given responsibility to the wrong kind of people, namely the mudaliyars and the headmen who really abused their powers. This abuse provided the government with an argument as to the unfitness of the people for self-government. He also pointed out that another autocrat was the Government Agent who restricted the powers of the Village Committees.

Mr. Sri Pathmanathan recalled that when Britain could hardly boast of self-governing institutions India breathed freely in the pure atmosphere of her panchayat system what was the very essence and fibre of representative government.

Attack on the leadership

A.E. Goonesinha dealing with the subject that had hitherto not figured prominently in the sessions of the Students' Congress said that in Ceylon the labour did not still enjoy the most elementary rights conceded to him in all civilized countries. There was he said, no labour legislation in this country and not a single bill calculated to better the conditions of the workmen had been introduced in the Legislative Council. Where the elders had failed to do their duty he called upon the youth to be the pioneers of a new democracy.

Basking in the glory and success of Mahatma Gandhi's visit and imbued with a spirit of self-confidence the fourth annual sessions of the Student's Congress had ventured into the hitherto forbidden territory of attack on the existing political leadership without mentioning them by name, yet making the objects of their criticism quite clear. The Congress was in effect formulating a programme for self-government, patterned on that of the Indian National movement. The Congress was not yet action-oriented. The emphasis was still on lectures, discussions and the moulding of public opinion. The lectures were of a high order and dealt with a large number of public questions.

'It was a Tamil organisation which put forward one of the most consistent cases for self-government'

— Daily News, Colombo, 1928.

Satyamurti emphasised in his address the long and intimate connection between India and Ceylon. He touched on the conditions of Indian labourers in Ceylon and said that the much despised Indian labourers had done one great thing and that was to remind Ceylonese, who were almost forgetful, of their age-long connection with Bharatha Matha the land of their origin where was treasured their religious heritage. He thanked the Congress for giving him an opportunity to come in contact with the enthusiastic and patriotic youth of the country and expressed admiration for the courageous manner in which the youth of Jaffna refused to be gagged or

nam spoke on "Our Economic and Social problems", while T.N. Subbiah spoke on "Western Industrialism, its causes and its cure" "Mr. R. Sri Pathmanathan made some comments on the addresses.

At the Tamil conference Satyamurti was the chief speaker. He spoke on "Tamil our national heritage", while M.S. Eliyathamby addressed the session on "The Tamil Renaissance."

George E. de Silva M.M.C. Kandy who had been invited to address the Congress on "Ceylon's Political Future" was not able to be present but had sent a message which was read out in which he had urged the creation of facilities for free

FOOT NOTES

65. Ibid., p. 30.
66. *Morning Star*, 2 December 1927.
67. *Hindu Organ*, 24th November 1927.
68. *Ceylon Patriot*, 7 December 1927.
69. *Hindu Organ*, 26 April 1928.
70. *Ceylon Daily News*, 19 April 1928.
71. Ceylon - Report of the Special Commission on the Constitution July 1928 London.
72. *Ceylon Daily News*, 19 April 1928.
73. Ceylon - Report of the Special Commission on the Constitution July 1928, p. 39.
74. *Ceylon Daily News*, 20 April 1928.
75. Ibid., 19 April 1928.
76. Ibid., 21 April 1928.
77. Ibid., 23 April 1928.

THE BATTLE FOR THE EAST

Mervyn de Silva, the editor of the "Lanka Guardian" describes the East (in the issue dated 15th August) as being red in a graphic reference to the blood bath that the Eastern flank of the Tamil Homeland has been subjected to since June this year.

But, even to the most casual observer it ought to be plain that the war now being fought between the Sri Lankan Army and the Tamil Liberation Forces is a war to wrest permanent control of this Eastern flank of the Tamil homeland.

Whereas the densely populated Jaffna Peninsula, the arid Vanni region and the equally dry Manner region have been reluctantly conceded to be integral parts of the Tamil Homeland, the fertile East with its long coastline, its life-giving rivers and the natural harbour at Trincomalee has always been looked upon by successive Sinhala dominated Governments as a region to be brought under its dominance notwithstanding the East's overwhelming Tamil presence.

Beginning with the state-aided colonisation schemes of the first Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake, every Government has persisted with this objective in mind.

The bloody massacres which are now a daily occurrence in the East have to be regarded only as the culmination of a 40 year old policy designed to convert the East into a Sinhala region. Having successfully carved out specific areas in the East (Seruwela, Amparai etc) to reflect Sinhala dominance through its policy of settling Sinhala peasants, the Government is now engaged in what has to be viewed as the final

phase of its policy of Sinhaling the East by driving the Tamils out of the region.

The main effect of the policy has been to triple the proportion of Sinhalese as a percentage of the Eastern region while reducing the Tamil-Speaking groups to about 74% of the population from 91% at independence.

The policy which was the brain child of D.S. Senanayake was designed to change the demography of the East in such a manner that the traditional Tamil Homeland was gradually converted into a Sinhala region through the settlement of a large number of landless peasants from the Sinhala south.

The logic was simple and straight forward. A heavy concentration of Tamils in the Northeast meant that despite their overall minority status they (the Tamils) would continue to have a voice in the island's political arena notwithstanding the unitary nature of its political constitution. This would enable the Tamils to effectively use the minimal protection provided under the constitution to block any act perceived to be prejudicial to their interests, thus undermining the political will of the majority Sinhalese. The only way to overcome this situation was to dilute the Tamil presence through planned settlements of Sinhalese in the regions in which the Tamils were the dominant population. The Sinhala dominated Government could not think of a better area to dilute than one where the Muslims though Tamil speaking regarded themselves to be an entity distinct from the Tamils. Furthermore, the region itself possessed great potential (like the natural harbour at

Trincomalee) which could be effectively used for the advancement of the Sinhala people.

Senanayake's "Vision"

This simple logic was well appreciated by Mahalinga Guneratne, a latter day Sinhala nationalist who had this to say about Mr. Don Stephen Senanayake, (the island's first Prime Minister) in his book "For A Sovereign State."

"Senanayake was, however, the visionary who also had a mission. His mission in life was to consolidate and fortify the country of his birth as one nation and one state."

Ana Pararajasingham

It was hardly surprising therefore that Senanayake, who held such a narrow view should look upon the existence of a geographically distinct Tamil Homeland (in the Northeast of the island) occupied by a people with a distinct history, language and culture to be the greatest obstacle to the creation of the homogenous nation that he envisaged.

State-sponsored colonisation schemes thus became the remedy of the island's first Prime Minister to what he considered to be the "disease" of the existence of the Tamil Homeland.

Tamil politicians, fully aware of the Government's covert and overt actions in pursuing this policy have, since the 1950's, consistently sought to oppose them. It would not be an understatement to say that the Federal Party/TULF which

represented the Tamils over a period of thirty years considered the Government's colonisation policies to be totally detrimental to the preservation of the political and cultural identity of the Tamils.

Despite Tamil opposition successive Sri Lankan Governments have pursued this policy of Sinhaling the region while exploiting the Tamil-Muslim differences to its advantage.

The Jayawardene Government's (1977 to 1988) role in these colonisation schemes has been documented in some detail by the aforesaid Mahalinga Guneratne, who as a senior official of the Mahavali Development Board was directly involved in the settle-

ment of thousands of Sinhala men and women in the East and whose admiration for D.S. Senanayake and his rabidly communalist cousin R.G. Senanayake is given full expression in his book "For A Sovereign State."

Writing in the Sri Lanka Sunday Times of 26th January 1990, Guneratne discloses that:

"The keenest minds in the Mahavali (involved in the Mahavali Development Scheme commissioned by the Jayawardene Government), some of whom are holding top international positions, were the architects of this (settlement) plan. My role was that of an executor... we conceived and implemented a plan which we thought would secure the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka for a long time. We moved a large group of 45,000 land-hungry (Sinhala) peasants into the Bat-

icaloa and Polonaruwa Districts of the Madhuru Oya delta."

UK MPs' report

Over the years, the Government has graduated from just settling Sinhala peasants in regions occupied by the Tamils into acts of physically driving the Tamils away from whole villages which were then populated by Sinhala settlers. It was, however, an infiltration which did not go unnoticed by the international community. Robert Kilroy Silk MP and Roger Sims MP, who visited Sri Lanka as members of a UK Parliamentary Human Rights Group in 1985 had this to say about the situation in the East.

"We can say, without doubt that the government is driving the Tamils from their homes and does intend to settle Sinhalese People in these areas."

In addition to driving the Tamils away from their homes, the Government, through its notorious Special Task Force has involved itself in provoking Tamil-Muslim clashes while at the same time engaging in battle with the Tamil militants. This situation too was brought to the attention of the international community through Australian Current Affairs television Program shot in Eastern Sri Lanka in 1985. (Four Corners -21st May 1985 ABC TV)

These attempts to set one community against another faced a serious set-back during the Indian occupation of the Tamil Homeland between 1987 and 1990, when the Tamil Guerrillas (the LTTE) were able to secure considerable support from the Muslim community. (continued in page 10)

WHY SHOULD THE TIGERS OFFER UNILATERAL CEASEFIRE....

(continued from page 5)

hostilities in June and deflect any criticism of the group's atrocities and links with the international drugs trade that are increasingly coming into the open. Two months ago the British Government snubbed the Tigers when a Foreign Office reply to LTTE overtures referred to Britain's "dismay" over the Tigers' refusal to continue talks and its decision to resume fighting, and held the group responsible for atrocities in the north-east including massacres of policemen and Muslims and the killing of moderate Tamil leaders. In Denmark the police have moved against Tiger extortionists. Despite these moves there appears to be yet no concrete efforts to cripple the group's networks in Western capitals. None of the group's offices in these cities have been closed. In any case the Tigers' underground international network may now be resilient enough to withstand the pressure of adverse Western governmental and public opinion.

The same is probably true of its logistic support base in Tamil Nadu. With the Tamil Nadu government being an 'unwilling partner' in the present New Delhi - sponsored moves against the Tigers in that state, the rebels may want to give Karunanidhi some breathing space to prevent his dismissal, according to some observers. In all probability New Delhi will move against the Tigers to the extent that the group does not pose a threat to India's own security and remains a tool with which to influence Colombo.

At Thursday's meeting with the President all parties present

except the TULF insisted that the LTTE ceasefire should be accepted only under certain conditions because of its past record of betrayals. Also the security forces want to make sure the Tigers do not use the ceasefire to strengthen their own position. The government is in a delicate position because it has to ensure that whatever moves it makes to seek a peaceful, political settlement to the crisis, the Army's morale is not affected and the forces not placed in a disadvantageous position if the ceasefire does not hold. Otherwise the government may well have a near mutinous situation on its hands, a possibility the Tigers no doubt are well aware of.

"Once bitten twice shy will be the immediate reaction to the LTTE's offer," was how the SLFP's Dharmasiri Senanayake put it. "In this case," he added, "it is not once, but twice bitten, so the government should be thrice shy." It is the LTTE which renewed the war in June last year, he pointed out. It was also the Tigers which went against the July 1987 Peace Accord and attacked the IPKF, he added. Hence the cautious reaction to the ceasefire offer.

The government, not wanting to fall into the same trap, responded with as much cunning as the LTTE. The carefully laid out conditions, especially the declaration against the use of arms that should precede talks, the insistence that the security forces will continue normal operations to ensure their own and the island's security and the demand that the Tigers should free all its prisoners as an initial demonstration

of good faith, all seem reasonable enough, but are not likely to be accepted by the rebels. Overseas Sri Lankan associations welcomed the ceasefire but included similar conditions in their reactions.

The SLFP apparently decided not to attend Thursday's meeting with the President because of what it feels is the lack of credibility on the part of both the government and the LTTE. It resents the secretive manner in which both sides conducted their previous talks and obviously does not want to be discredited by taking part in an effort that could be equally disastrous.

The party welcomes the ceasefire if it is genuine as people both in the north as well as the south are craving for peace, says Senanayake. But, he added, the government should ensure the island's territorial integrity, restore civil administration in the north-east, recognise the right of other minority groups to function in the area and see no unauthorised groups bear arms. The SLFP naturally rejects any federal solution based on the Canadian model which the Tigers have suggested.

Says Senanayake: "The SLFP will go along to the extent that Sri Lanka remains a unitary state. We believe in the devolution of power and the need to treat minorities as special groups to preserve their own cultural identity and recognise the multi-ethnic nature of the country," that he added, the degree of devolution can't be as much as in Canada because Sri Lanka is so much smaller.

In fact even in the case of the anti-LTTE groups who've reached a much reported consensus on devolution among themselves, there appears to be a conceptual disagreement with the government. "The government's position is that Sri Lanka is a unitary state," says DPLF Vice President Karavai Kandasamy. "We say there should be a united Lanka. That is where we differ." But he appears hopeful about President Premadasa's promise to accept any consensus that emerges from their deliberations.

One argument in favour of greater devolution of power to the Tamils is that the more, power is devolved the less need there will be to demand or support separation. The thinking is that by denying the Tamils of what autonomy that could be given, the government and the majority Sinhalese community will actually be indirectly giving credence to the very Eelam demand they are opposed to. According to this argument even the most hard core Sinhalese Buddhist should have no objection to any solution short of Eelam. But there is always the nagging fear that the greater the devolution of power, the more it will become a stepping stone for Eelam. Another worry, held by the SLFP, is that autonomy could be used by interested parties to destabilise the island.

Why should the Tigers offer a unilateral ceasefire when they are in an advantageous position militarily? True, they may not have been able to hold their ground against the security forces' superior firepower in the east, but recent ambushes

show that they have infiltrated the areas from which they were driven out initially. In Jaffna they dominate the peninsula with the forces confined to a handful of bases. The Tigers are also fresh from their successes at Kokavil and Mankulam which were superb demonstrations of the established guerilla principle of achieving local superiority by isolating a small part of the enemy forces, when the rebels themselves lack overall superiority.

Military analysts see the ceasefire as a play for time, like the LTTE's previous rapprochement with the government and suspensions of hostilities, which allowed them to build up their strength to such an extent that when fighting broke out the forces were stretched to the extreme. After the fall of Kokavil and Mankulam and the probing attacks against Elephant Pass there is the underlying impression that the latest move may be accompanied by an implicit threat—the threat of a massive attack against equally vulnerable security forces bases in the north—if rebel conditions are not met. The fall of another military outpost could be disastrous for the government. It could have far reaching political repercussions. The Tigers have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to achieve local superiority in the face of the forces' over all superiority on the battlefield. If the rebels manage to put the Elephant Pass helipad out of action, troops in the camp would be placed in a difficult position. Already the rebels are building bunkers outside camps in the north.

AUSTRALASIAN TAMILS' APPEAL TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The Australian Federation of Tamil Associations has expressed deep disappointment at the Sri Lankan Government's decision to pursue a military solution, and has called on the international community to prevail upon the Sri Lanka government to respond to the LTTE's unilateral declaration of a ceasefire.

A Press release by the Federation dated 12th January states:

We are deeply disappointed by the Sri Lankan Government's decision to pursue a military solution by ending the unilateral and unconditional cease-fire declared and observed by the LTTE from the beginning of this year.

The LTTE's decision to declare such a cease-fire was welcomed by all Tamils and many non Governmental Organisations which included the Catholic Relief Fund of Australia (Press Release dated 1st January 1991) and the British Refugee Council. (Radio Interview-Radio National ABC, 2nd January 1991)

Having sought three days to consider the offer and test the "genuineness" of LTTE's peace initiative (Communique dated 30th December 1990), the Sri Lankan Government announced through its communique dated 3rd January 1991 that it would observe the cease-fire for the next 7 days. It was stated per this communique that a decision would be made at the end of the seven-day period on whether to continue with the war or not.

While offering to "suspend offensive operations against the LTTE", the communique had stated that the "Security Forces will continue with routine patrolling and administrative movements".

During the seven-day period, there were numerous breaches of the cease-fire by the Government in an effort to resume the war. But, to the LTTE's credit it had observed the cease-fire

despite these provocations thus not giving the Government the excuse to end the cease-fire within this period.

In order to further demonstrate its commitment to the cease-fire, the LTTE had offered to release 49 Sri Lankan policemen held prisoners and arrangements were made with the International Red Cross to effect their release.

Mr Krishnakumar Kittu, LTTE's spokesman in the UK and head of the LTTE's International Secretariat had announced that the LTTE's decision was prompted by the horrendous conditions to which the Tamils in the East had been subjected to since June last year. (Interview reported in the Sri Lankan "Sunday Island" Newspaper of 6th January 1991).

Hence, we are disappointed that the Sri Lankan Government has chosen to resume the

war at the end of the seven-day period.

Although, the Sri Lankan Government, from the very beginning, appeared not inclined to reciprocate LTTE's unilateral and unconditional cease-fire, it was hoped that better sense would prevail.

We call upon the International Community to prevail upon the Sri Lankan Government to continue the cease-fire and seek a political solution to the conflict between the Tamil and Sinhala Nations.

This appeal is being made to you on behalf of the following member associations.

Canberra: Canberra Tamil Association, Mr. K. Ravichandra (06-2462128).

Sydney: Eelam Tamil Association, Mr. V. Sureshan (02-8991072).

Melbourne: Ceylon Tamil Association, Victoria,

Mr. R.K. Jeganathan (03-4596189).

Brisbane: Queensland Tamil Association, Dr. E.A. Selvanathan (07-3457645).

Adelaide: Ceylon Tamil Association of South Australia, Rev. S. Sukunanathan (08-2616664).

Perth: Eelam Tamil Association, Dr. M. Sivapalan (09-3877646). Mr. K. Nathan (09-3101656).

New Zealand:

Wellington: Wellington Tamil Association, Mr. G. Nallalingam (64-4-660073).

Auckland: Auckland Tamil Association, Dr. N. Rasalingam (64-9-5288257).

Ana Pararajasingham
Secretary
Australasian Federation of
Tamil Associations
(Fax: 02-6265610/
Tel: 02-6263726)

PROSPECT OF MASSIVE CIVILIAN CASUALTIES IN JAFFNA - THE GUARDIAN

WHO IS RIGHT?

"The government had definite information that the Tigers were selling arms to the (ULFA) militants and Naxalite groups in Andhra Pradesh..."

- Prime Minister of India, Mr. Chandrashekhar in the Rajya Sabha, as reported in the Times of India, New Delhi, January 9, 1991.

"We can eliminate the LTTE in not more than six months... they have exhausted most of their ammunition".

- Sri Lankan Army commander Lt. Gen. Hamilton Wanasinghe in an interview with a Colombo newspaper.

Christopher Morris reporting from Colombo for The Guardian, London, in its issue of January 22, says:-

"Sri Lankan government forces launched a series of air and naval attacks on Tamil Tiger strongholds in the island's northern Jaffna peninsula, the rebels claimed yesterday.

"A rebel spokesman in Paris, Lawrence Thilakar, said he feared the bombing might herald the beginning of a big military assault on the peninsula, almost entirely under rebel control.

"According to the Tigers, at least seven civilians were killed and more than 20 injured when aircraft launched numerous

raids on the Vadamarachchi region, backed by shelling from gunboats.

"The rebel spokesman said he believed the army intended to attack while the eyes of the world were fixed on the war in the Gulf.

"The government had declared a curfew in the north, and reports say leaflets were dropped before the air raids, warning civilians to leave the area and take their belongings with them. When asked to comment on the rebels' claim, a military official said: "Maybe it is happening. Maybe it isn't. Wait and see".....

"The government abandoned the truce under considerable

pressure from the army, which believes the rebels have been considerably weakened in the past few months. The commander of the Sri Lankan army was vowed to destroy the Tamil Tigers by the middle of the year, which would mean taking Jaffna by force.

"Tamil Tigers control most of the country to the north, where the army is confined to a few isolated bases and has to rely on aerial power to attack many rebel positions. Jaffna is the Tigers' stronghold and was the scene last year of a three-month

rebel siege of the army detachment in Jaffna fort.

"The army withdrew from Jaffna in September, but military commanders admit they will have to return if they are to deliver the military solution they promise.

"The Jaffna peninsula is densely populated and any assault would lead to massive civilian casualties - one reason why Tamil Tigers fear an attack on Jaffna will take place while war in the Middle East occupies world attention.

Drowning sorrows to cost more

The Distilleries Company of Sri Lanka has revised prices of its products. According to its new rates, a bottle of Gal Arrack now costs Rs. 92, Pol Arrack Rs. 113; the prices of VSOA, Old Arrack have been increased by Rs. 18 and Rs. 25.

No pensions for three months

About 18,000 pensioners and widows of the Jaffna district have not received their pensions for over three months.

Ex-Varsity woman takes cyanide

A 30-year old Sinhala female graduate in Chemistry, Malangane Kumari, from Narahenpita, Colombo, was reported to have taken cyanide tablets and died.



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BOOK REVIEWS

Tragedy in Sri Lanka

The Broken Palmyra : By Rajan Hoole, Daya Somasunaram, K. Sritharan and Rajani Thiranagama of University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, Published by the Sri Lanka Studies Institute, 112, Harvard Avenue, Suite 66, Claremont: CA 91711. \$12, (SA)/SL (Sri Lanka)/Rs. 200, £8 (Europe and other countries. Rs. 100.)

The tragic story of the Sri Lankan Tamils is too well known and many books authored by various writers have dealt with the agony, destruction, terror and untold suffering the inhabitants in the northern and eastern parts of the Island nation had undergone at the hands of successive regimes in Sri Lanka.

The book under review presents a horrid account of the human right violations committed by the Sri Lankan Army and the IPKF on the hapless Tamils after giving a historical background of the ethnic strife, origin of Tamil militancy, ascendancy of the LTTE, internecine conflicts between various militant groups, operation liberation and the important aspect, i.e., the psychological impact of the IPKF military action.

The militant movement of the Tamils today stands discredited with no prospect of any solution to the ethnic divide in the foreseeable future. Who is responsible for the present plight of the Sri Lankan Tamils? Did the militant groups claiming to champion their cause play a fair game? To

what extent did the domineering role of the LTTE that crushed its opponents in bloody reprisals bordering on barbarity contribute to the torpedoing of the implementation of the Indo Sri Lankan accord? Who was primarily responsible for making the Tamil refugees an object of revulsion in Tamil Nadu which went all out in supporting their cause? If one were to analyse such questions with an open mind, particularly in the light of the developments that followed the withdrawal of the IPKF and the shortlived honeymoon between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan Government the issues could be viewed in proper perspective.

It is difficult to endorse the view of the authors, one of whom (Dr. Rajani Thiranagama) was a victim of an assassin, that the failure of the Indian Army as largely a consequence of arrogance and stemming from it, a refusal to understand and respect civilian feelings. In the final analysis, say the authors, the ultimate responsibility for what ensued rests with the higher command and more with the political administrators in New Delhi and their representative in Colombo for putting their men in a difficult situation. It was a situation largely of their own making. They also express the view that "the decision to use terror may have been to wrest control over the civilian population and force them to relinquish their sympathy and support for the LTTE. Perhaps due to their failure to win a quick victory and their gross underestimation of the LTTE, the Indian Army found itself fighting a desperate

battle to save face and take Jaffna at all costs. A second possible reason may have been a reaction to the fighting tactics of the LTTE's guerrilla warfare in an urban setting. Civilian population was used for cover. They fought from hospitals, temples and schools. Women and children performed military tasks. These may not have been the norms of war, the dharma the Indian Army expected. If one is to rationalise the behaviour of the jawans at all, it must be in the context of their being psychologically unprepared for this type of battle and as a rage reaction to the way it was fought".

The decision to march the IPKF into the Island nation may be easily characterised as political and outrageous as some present Indian politicians now seek to do but one would have to appreciate the circumstances in which such a step had to be taken. The very politicians who now decry the deployment of the IPKF in Sri Lanka were the ones who orchestrated the campaign for stopping the military on slaughtering of the Sri Lankan Army and saving the Tamil race from being annihilated.

R. Parthasarathy
(Review in *The Hindu*)

Mridanga Sangita Sastram

Mridanga Sangita Sastram : By A.N. Somaskanda Sarma, Mridangam Professor, Ramanathan Academy of Fine Arts, Marothanamandam, Chunnakam, Sri Lanka. Rs. 45.

Like the tabla in Hindustani music, the mridangam is an indispensable accompaniment in South Indian music not only for vocal music but also for instrumental music, dance, harikatha and even for bhajanas. Hence the importance given to it by Tyagaraja in his kriti 'Sogasuga mridanga talamu.' The best method of learn performing on the instrument is, no doubt, to undergo gurukulavasa with a teacher but since the opening of mridangam courses in colleges, textbooks have become an unavoidable necessity.

The author of the book under notice is the holder of a diploma in mridangam from the Tamil Nadu Government Music College at Madras and is now on the staff of the Ramanathan Academy of Fine Arts in Sri Lanka. The book is more detailed than the earlier works on the subject by authors like Mylattoor Swami Iyer and Mangudi Durairaja Iyer and contains fresh lists of talas not commonly known in Tamil Nadu Obviously the Jaffna area has its own tradition of mridangam play and terminology. For example the Dameru Yati is called the Vedamadhya Yati.

After introductory chapters on Carnatic music and musical instruments, the author deals with the mridangam exhaustively and explains how it should be played for different types of compositions and on different occasions like accompanying an orchestra or in a tala vadya ensemble. The Pallavi is given special treatment. The book is written in lucid Tamil and there are occasional usages of Jaffna Tamil words. The interesting manual is rounded off with biographies of eminent mridangam vidwans, past and present.

T.S. Parthasarathy
Reviewed in *The Hindu*

THE BATTLE....

(continued from page 8)

ity. Many of its cadres found sanctuary in Muslim homes and many Muslim lads joined the LTTE.

The emerging Tamil-Muslim unity received a further boost in 1988 when, under the leadership of a very senior LTTE member— Mr Sathasivam Krishnakumar (Kittu), an agreement was signed between the LTTE and the distinctiveness of the Muslims and emphasised the need to defend the common Homeland of the Tamil and Muslim people. Agreement was also secured in respect of the protection of the political rights of the Muslims living in the Tamil Homeland, the special educational needs of the Muslims, their job opportunities and the right to have land distributed to them.

Not to be outdone, the Indian Occupying Forces groomed their own Muslim politicians under the banner of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress and under the leadership of a Mr. Ashroff. The installation of Mr. Ashroff by the Indian Forces took place along with the installation of the EPRLF as its protege in the rest of the Tamil Homeland.

It is therefore not surprising that today the Sri Lankan Government should seek to use the EPRLF and the Muslim Congress both of whom had earned the enmity of the LTTE in its attempts to drive a wedge between the two communities who are of equal number in the East.

The claim by the Sri Lankan government (within weeks of the resumption of its war with the Tamils in June this year) that sixty two Muslims had been massacred by the LTTE was clearly meant to drive such a wedge between the Tamil and Muslim inhabitants of the East. Unfortunately for the Government, this claim was exposed to be a total lie by its own Muslim superintendent of police.

Media damage

The subsequent massacre of Muslims in a mosque in Kathankudy and the Government's immediate accusation of the LTTE of this dastardly act have to be evaluated against this earlier attempt to plant the story of a "massacre" of the sixty two Muslims. The Government and the Sinhala-owned media in the South have been quick to take advantage of the outrage felt by all those within and outside Sri Lanka. In fact, to a great extent the Sri Lankan media has succeeded in presenting the story as a massacre carried out by the LTTE in spite of the obvious illogic in blaming the act on the LTTE. Whilst the LTTE has been ruthless in liquidating those perceived to be its enemies, it is hardly likely to have deliberately sought to antagonise the Muslims at a time it was engaged in battle with the Sri Lankan troops. On the contrary one would have expected the LTTE to consolidate its relationship with the Muslims thereby the defense of the common Homeland much more effective.

Simple logic alone should suggest that the massacre was perpetrated either through the Government's own security guards or those Tamil quisling groups which are now working with the Sri Lankan Government having been left high and dry by the departure of the IPKF.

The Government's attempt to drive a wedge between the Tamil and the (Tamil-speaking)

Muslims following the "Kathankudy Massacre" has been further pursued through methods which the Government had perfected in the course of its brutal suppression of the JVP earlier in the year (as exposed by Amnesty International in its latest report on Sri Lanka). The methods included the use of armed gangs of para military "death squads". In keeping with this practice, armed "Muslim Home Guards" have now been let loose in the East with the sole objective of harassing and massacring Tamils to precipitate retaliatory killings and the beginning of a cycle of violence.

The rise of the sectarian violence that was plotted and spawned by the Sri Lankan Government has helped the Government alienate the Muslim and Tamil populations from each other.

There is however a section of the Muslim population in the East which is able to see through the diabolical machinations of the Sri Lankan Government and which realises that it is the Muslims who would become the losers in the long run.

The view expressed by Dr. Ameer Ali (a Tamil-Speaking Muslim), published in the "Tamil Times" of 15th October 1990 clearly supports this position. Dr. Ali is of the view that the Muslim community is a linguistically divided community in Sri Lanka and its situation analogous to the Urdu Speaking and the Tamil Speaking Muslims of North and South of India. In Dr. Ali's own words this means "... that the Muslims of the North and East (of Sri Lanka) must first come to a settlement with the Tamil Groups... instead to bargain with the Colombo Government for a separate province for the Muslims and to arm the Muslim youth to fight the heavily armed and militarily trained Tamil guerrillas is suicidal... I expect that the Islamic countries especially those in the Middle East will come to their aid is to live in a dreamland."

The "Islamic Card"

It is time the international community which has a role to play in bringing about peace in the island becomes fully aware of the true situation in the East where the Sri Lankan government's strategy has resulted in the following situation.

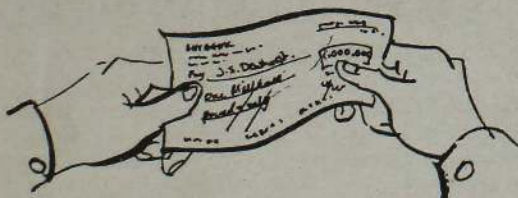
The principal occupants of the East (Tamils and Muslims) who who lived together amicably for years are becoming increasingly alienated.

Tamils are being driven from their homes by the Sri Lankan Army assisted by that section of the Muslim community which has been indoctrinated in sectarian violence.

Sinhalese from the south are being settled in homes and villages abandoned by Tamils fleeing the violence.

By the same token, it is time the international community also becomes aware of the latest effort by the Sri Lankan Government to play the "Islamic card" within the global context by dispatching Mr. Ashroff and two of its own Muslim ministers to Libya to seek arms from Col. Muamer Al-Quaddafi. Nor can the "massacre" of the Muslims at Kathankudy (claimed by the Sri Lankan Government to have been perpetrated by the LTTE), while its Defence Minister Ranjan Wijeyeratne was visiting Islamic countries in the Middle East earlier this year be dismissed as a mere coincidence.

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PEOPLE & EVENTS



London Q.C. of Eelam Tamil ancestry passes away

The death occurred recently of KANDIAH SHANMUGA NATHAN K.S. Nathan Q.C. in London at the age of 60. Born in Ipoh, Malaysia, both his parents came from Karainagar, Ceylon.

THE INDEPENDENT, London, in the course of a long obituary notice, said:

"Nathan came to England in 1959 to study law at London University and upon returning to Malaysia (where he practised at the Malaysian Bar from 1964 to 1969) he met and married Elizabeth Woodwork, an Englishwoman then working for VSO. They returned to England in 1970 where Nathan practised for the Bar.

He had a well-earned reputation for supporting the underdog and many of the cases he took on his professional career

cost him much, not only in time, but in emotion. Nathan was a specialist in Immigration law and was often called from his bed in the small hours to drive to Heathrow Airport in order to give aid and comfort to an immigrant, alone in an alien environment. ... He spent much of his life in this country and had a great admiration for British traditions, not least of which were the rights of the individual as enshrined in common law.

Our correspondent in London adds: "Nathan was a very religious person. He often went to India to visit the temples. He was booked to go to India on the 16th December to visit Tirupathi, Palani and other Hindu temples before death overtook him."



Meeting with Norway's Prime Minister

Photographed with Norway's Prime Minister GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND at a Labour Party Conference in UK is the Executive Director of SAFERWORLD, Bristol, Dr. RAJ THAMOTHERAM. Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland was the keynote international speaker at the conference. Dr. Thamootheram is the son of Mr. C.J. Thamootheram.

Eelam Tamils Suffering & Christmassy Bharata Natyam



Left: "It is hard to dance with the Devil on your - back" (carrying the Cross)

Above: "They left me there on the Cross to die"

Jesus as the "Lord of the Dance" in Creation, Crucifixion and Resurrection! That was the innovative theme in Dance handled by reputed Bharata Natyam dancer, teacher and choreographer VIJAYAMBIGAI INDRA KUMAR at the Christmas evening organised by the West London Tamil School. The music had been composed by the late Tamil Nadu maestro Seerghazi Govindarajan in Poopala Raga and Adi Tala, and sung by his son Dr. Sivachidambaram at Vijayambigai's request.

Other items in the West London Tamil School's Christmas evening included Carols, Games for Children, a magic show and dinner. Over 200 children received presents from Santa Claus.

Delaney Chitra's Arangetram

The Bharata Natya arangetram of 10-year old DELANEY CHITRA MURUGIAH took place at the Acton Town Hall in London recently. Pupil of VIJAYAMBIGAI INDRA KUMAR, at her school, Vijayanarthalaya, Delaney was put through the paces of an adult repertoire by her guru, which made no concessions for her tender age.

Associated with Vijayambigai at Nattuvangam were Sri K. Rajasekharan the mercurial singer from Madras, Sri Karaikudi Krishnamurthy the brilliant maridangist from Madras, Dr. Lakshi Jayan, violinist, (disciple of Lalgudi Jayaraman) and Sri Yarl Seelan, the innovative musician from Jaffna playing the flute.

Mr. Nadesan Satyendra was Guest of Honour, Delaney is the daughter of the popular Ilford Auto Engineer Mr. Murugiah and Mrs. Sornamalar Murugiah who was actively involved in the Tamil Information Centre, London and the Central British Fund for Tamil Refugees Rehabilitation.



Delaney Chitra

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LTTE ASSERTS RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

“Recent developments in Europe and in many other parts of the world, clearly demonstrate that a permanent political solution to conflicts involving smaller nations who have been subsumed into larger states, can be secured only by recognising the right to self-determination of such smaller nations”, says a letter sent to British M.P.’s and several NGOs by the International Secretariat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam based in London.

Here is the text of the Letter:

International Secretariat
54, Tavistock Place
London WC1H 9RG
United Kingdom
22nd January 1991.
Dear Sir/Madam,

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam made a unilateral declaration of ceasefire with effect from midnight of 31st December 1990 (Annexure 1). The ceasefire, with an indefinite time frame, was made with a view to promoting peace and creating conditions of normalcy in Tamil Eelam.

The initial response of the government of Sri Lanka dated the 31st of December 1990 was that ‘it was earnestly examining the statement of the LTTE in all its aspects’ and that the government would require ‘at least three days to assess the genuineness of the declared intentions of the LTTE’ (Annexure 2).

On the 3rd of January 1991, the Sri Lankan government, having taken three days to assess the ‘genuineness’ of the LTTE declaration, and presumably, being satisfied that the declaration was ‘genuine’, issued a communique ‘Welcoming’ the ceasefire declaration (Annexure 3). But, though the government decided ‘to suspend offensive operations’ in the Northern and Eastern provinces for a period of seven days from midnight of the 3rd January 1991, it also appeared to prepare the ground for taking action against members of the LTTE in uniform, by stipulating, as a condition of the ceasefire, that ‘none other than the Sri Lankan Armed Forces, the Police and the Auxiliary Forces will carry weapons or be dressed in uniform’ – a stipulation which was in clear breach of the humanitarian law of armed conflict and furthermore was contrary to the conduct of the Sri Lankan government itself in April 1989 when it engaged in talk with uniformed members of the LTTE in Colombo. The Sri Lankan government further stipulated that the Security Forces ‘will continue to operate as in the past against any person or party indulging in military activity’. The Sri Lankan government also stipulated that the Security Forces, will take action against any person ‘carrying weapons’, and against any person ‘attempting to disrupt communal harmony’. These

stipulations taken cumulatively, evidenced the intention of the Sri Lankan government to use the cover provided by the ‘ceasefire’ to seek to exercise control within the areas held by the LTTE.

The LTTE, by its press release of the 9th of January 1991, (Annexure 4) declared that the stipulations imposed by the Sri Lankan government were ‘unfair and hamper the creation of congenial conditions for the cessation of hostilities’ and further that ‘the Sri Lankan Security Forces had been systematically violating the ceasefire and had been involved in provocative actions’.

The Sri Lankan government responded by its communique of the 11th of January 1991 (Annexure 5), and alleged that the LTTE had violated the conditions of the ceasefire. The Government stated that ‘many instances of the building of bunkers and that a grouping of LTTE cadres have been reported’. The government appeared to regard such actions as violations of the ceasefire. The Government thereupon concluded that ‘the LTTE’s ceasefire had not been dictated by a genuine desire for peace and declared that the temporary suspension of offensive operations which ended on the 10th of January 1991 would not be extended. The truth however was that despite the unilateral ceasefire by the LTTE, it was the Sri Lankan Security Forces which not only attacked LTTE positions and killed LTTE fighters but also attacked Tamil civilians, kidnapping some and killing others. At the same time, regrettably but, perhaps not surprisingly, the Sri Lankan government refused to agree upon a monitoring mechanism for the ceasefire and rejected the offer made by the LTTE to formulate a mutually acceptable framework for a durable and full ceasefire.

The LTTE responded to the Sri Lankan government by the press release dated the 14th of January 1991 (Annexure 6). The LTTE noted with regret ‘that the Sri Lankan government had failed to respond in a positive and constructive manner to the unilateral ceasefire declaration made by the LTTE’. It points out, that the government had ‘rejected the offer made by the LTTE to formulate a mutually acceptable framework for a durable and

full ceasefire’. The LTTE however, reiterated that ‘they will continue to observe the unilateral ceasefire’ and specifically called upon the Sri Lankan government ‘to act in accordance with the humanitarian law of armed conflict and desist from arbitrary killings and aerial bombardment of civilians’. The LTTE further declared that it was ‘ready to enter into unconditional talks with the Sri Lankan government’ but pointed out that ‘clearly, a mutually accepted full ceasefire is a prerequisite to create a congenial climate for such talks’.

The Sri Lankan government has now commenced offensive operations against the LTTE and the people of Tamil Eelam. Under the pretext of war, the Sri Lankan government is engaged in a genocidal attack against the people of Tamil Eelam. In particular the Tamil people in the Eastern Province are suffering untold hardships, without any form of relief or aid. The comments made in 1982 in the Minority Rights Group Report on International Action Against Genocide have today, assumed an urgency and immediacy that cannot be denied:

“... genocide continues to be an odious scourge on mankind... there are also at the present time many immediate issues related to genocide which call for the most urgent action... (such as) the communal massacres in Sri Lanka... some of these genocidal massacres arise out of struggles for greater autonomy, and might be regulated by recognition of the right of self determination... there is a great need for delegations of member states with a strong commitment to human rights, and for non governmental organisations with consultative status, to continue their efforts to recall the UN to its responsibilities for international protection against genocide and consistent violations of human rights. These efforts would include attempt to develop norms for humanitarian intervention, for the exercise of the right of self determination...”

We seek your support and assistance in prevailing upon the Sri Lankan government to respond positively and constructively to the unilateral decision of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam to declare a ceasefire and thereby pave the way for peace talks.

At the same time we appeal to you to participate in an urgent international relief effort to give aid and assistance to the people of the North and East of Sri Lanka, who continue to be subject to indiscriminate attack by the Sri Lankan Security and Para Military Forces. It is a matter of primary importance that such aid should be directly administered by recognised non governmental organisations, because in the past, the Sri Lankan government has failed to use the funds made available to it for the purposes for which such funds were intended

of Human Rights in Sri Lanka and to initiate steps to satisfy the aspirations of the Tamil people within the framework of Human Rights and the Right of Self Determination.”

In this context, we also wish to draw attention to the views expressed by the non governmental organisation, International Educational Development in Geneva in August 1990: “We conclude that in order for the human rights of the Tamil people and others in a similar situation to be realised, the International community must invoke the principle of self-determination as it arises from the persistent non fulfilment of the rights of minorities who have been subsumed into larger states.”

Recent developments in Europe and in many other parts of the world, clearly demonstrate that a permanent

“The Sri Lanka government has failed to use funds for the purposes for which they were intended”

We believe that you will agree that a permanent solution to the conflict will be found only on the basis of recognising our people’s right to self determination. As you are undoubtedly aware, this was also the view expressed by seventeen non-governmental organisations at the August 1990 sessions of the UN Sub Commission on Protection of Minorities, when they declared: “It has become a matter of urgent importance to act on the reports of several Human Rights organisations on the gross and consistent violations

political solution to conflicts involving smaller nations who have been subsumed into larger states, can be secured only by recognising the right to self determination of such smaller nations.

We look forward to your response to the matters that we have raised in this letter.

Thanking you,
Yours faithfully,

Mr. Sathasivam Krishnakumar
KIDDU
Member of Central Committee
Liberation Tigers of
Tamil Eelam
Fax No : 071 278 5666

Karunanidhi re-iterates support for Tamil Eelam



Making it clear that his government supported the Tamil militants’ liberation struggle, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Dr. M. Karunanidhi appealed at the same time to the LTTE to understand the embarrassing situation in which the Government has found itself in dealing with them.

Dr. Karunanidhi was replying in the Madras State Assembly to comments made by Mr. S. Thirunavukkarasu (AIADMK-II) who recalled the open-hearted support given to the Eelam militants by the former Chief Minister Dr. M.G. Ramchandran.

The DMK, Mr. Karunanidhi said, had always supported the cause of Tamil Eelam, and nobody would be happier if the goal of Tamil Eelam is reached.