

TAMIL NATION

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LTTE Attack Army Camps in Mannar

Two army camps in Mannar district - at Silavatturai and at Kokkupadaian - are reported to be under heavy LTTE attack as we go to Press. The destructive home-made "Pasilan 2000" mortars are being used according to military sources in Colombo. These mortars were earlier used successfully by the Tigers in the overrunning of the Dutch Fort camp in Jaffna and the Mankulam camp.

It is feared that the Government might be resorting to blanket aerial bombing in the entire areas surrounding the camps leading to large civilian casualties, following an indefinite curfew which has been clamped not only in the Mannar district but in Kilinochchi as well.

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GOVT. DANGLING A PENINSULAR DEAL?

On this page in our last issue we posed the question: After Ranjan What? Will Sri Lanka see Wisdom? Now we do perceive some wisdom percolating into the corridors of power in Colombo, but from what we gather, it would seem the kind of wisdom that would make Confucius blush!

We understand that a game-plan has been proposed, whereby the Government would - (Now hold your breath!) - concede power to the Tigers within the Jaffna peninsula, as a quid pro quo to buying peace in the rest of the northeast. The "power" that would thus be conferred on the Tigers does not envisage any constitutional device either, but would be a loose administrative arrangement through which the Tigers would be free to levy taxes, run an administration, and oversee the law and order problem, but under a minimal overall control of the central authority in Colombo. The whole thing smacks of a suggested political deal. While dangling the prospects of a future little Tamil Eelam confined to the peninsula, the wise guys who thought up this hare-brained scheme are also probably patting themselves on their backs that should such a mini-Tamil Eelam emerge it could quickly be strangled at birth, and the problem of "Tamil separatism" solved once, and for all time.

A tacit Admission

By projecting this here, we do not want our readers to run to the conclusion that it represents some significant development. We do not even know whether the LTTE has been sounded on such a proposal or even whether President Premadasa has given it his imprimatur. But if a body of Sinhala opinion representing persons close to the Establishment are of the mind that Jaffna should be written off, that is a piece of distilled wisdom that deserves some exposure, despite the motives that prompted such a proposition. It would represent a tacit admission that there is some part of the dreaded future Tamil Eelam in which Government writ can-

not hope to run any more, an assessment that has been long shared by several Western observers. "Colombo will not be able to re-establish direct rule in the north", said Lord Avebury speaking in the House of Lords in Britain recently. Representatives of several Western diplomatic missions in Colombo have privately articulated the same view.

VIEW POINT

That little bit of realised wisdom apart, one cannot ignore the monumental folly in imagining that a problem of such dimensions between two peoples, which had remained unsolved for several decades, and in the course of which lakhs of Tamils continue to make immeasurable sacrifices, in terms of human lives, wealth and property, could be solved by the simple expedient of recognising a ground situation which is already there, de facto. Is Jaffna a piece of real estate devoid of human beings and owned by the Sri Lanka government, to be transferred to the Tigers under a codicil, and to be accepted by them because they are so enamoured of getting government authority?

But there is more to it here than meets the eye. It is not Jaffna that needs looking after, but Sri Lanka. The world is being bamboozled into believing that the Colombo government still holds the whip hand in its war against the Tamils. This picture is being projected through the daily propaganda outpourings of military and governmental spokesmen in Colombo and faithfully passed on to viewers, listeners and readers in Sri Lanka, India and elsewhere, both by the official electronic media as well as sections of the independent Press. But a dispassionate look at the ground situation in the North and East will reveal how contrary to reality this picture is. Firstly, with the departure of the IPKF and the puppet

groups, the Colombo government had virtually lost the better part of the North for good. They had only the freedom of the air, but as for land they held precious little, except the few pockets in which they had the army camps, even these began to fall, one by one, - Kokkavil, Dutch Fort in Jaffna and Mankulam. If they are able to hold on to Palaly air base

and camp, it is because of the unequal advantage of air power. There is a miserable, besieged army presence in Elephant Pass, which amounts to zero in military terms. Repeated attempts by the Sri Lankan army, backed by bombers and helicopters to do a repeat of the 1987 Vadamarachchi operation and do a push from Palaly have failed. The Sinhala forces are yet at the frontiers of Tamil territory in Vavuniya.

IS A STATE OF ANARCHY ROUND THE CORNER?

Currently, there is a determined attempt to use the expendable lives of the Tamil mercenaries belonging to the PLOTE to make some headway beyond Vavuniya. Claims are being made of 2km. advances and 6km. breakthroughs, but since we have been hearing the same claims for the past two months, one might as well write it on water. Even the PLOTE checkpoint at Thandikulam, one mile north of Vavuniya army camp was deserted following an LTTE attack. More than fifty Sinhala soldiers were killed and a similar number injured, on the Government's own admission in Mannar within the past few weeks. So where is the whip hand?

In the East, because of the mixed ethnic presence and the increasing number of Muslim

Home Guards" being inducted as terrorist groups, the Sri Lankan army is able to show its presence in the urban areas, during daylight, leaving Tiger guerrillas in control of the nights and the rural outposts and the jungles. For how long can an established government go on trying either to recover its own territory or in trying to hold it? Particularly a government that is almost totally dependent on foreign aid. Nearly one year ago, particularly every aid-giving country had cautioned the Sri Lankan government - a virtual ultimatum couched in diplomatic terms - that unless the Human Rights record is set right within a year, this year's aid would be cut off. Can one imagine a Sri Lanka which has no use for its begging bowl? And how can Human Rights violations cease when there is an ongoing war in the north and east and brutalised society in the south and the west? The JVP, a friend from Colombo says, might have been temporarily marginalised, but that is not going to be the end of the story. There has been a steady infiltration of JVP cadres into various public undertakings,

and the campaign to suppress is not something which anybody can be proud of in any way.... Every war leaves behind its historic excrement in the form of the alienated soldiers, who deprived of their hold on reality disintegrate and crumble.... What we have experienced may well be only the tip of the iceberg. It is up to the three services to assess the amount of damage in human terms which or wars have brought about and launch the process of rehabilitation of men who out of no fault of theirs have been thrown into a vortex alien to them."

Well, that is the prospect for President Premadasa and Sri Lanka. With the Ranjan Wijeratne killing, the bubble of the so-called intensive security blanket in Colombo has burst. Now, as we go to Press, we learn that the District Court building in Mt. Lavinia, a near suburb of Colombo, has been set ablaze by unidentified armed men. The fire completely destroyed the record room which held many hundreds of files, including the one relating to a defamation case in which Minister for Education Lalith Athulathmudali had sued a prominent SLFP

member. Surely not the work of the Tigers? It is very obvious that anarchy is round the corner, and it won't be the Tamils in the north and east who would have to pay for it that time but the Tamils in Colombo; not to forget Indian business interests as well.

Army deserters

In such a depressing scenario, the Tamils of the north and east might well be the beneficiaries. In the absence of the political will on the part of the Sri Lankan rulers to concede the right of self-determination to the Tamils, the solution might well have to emerge through a bloody conflagration engulfing the entire Sinhala society. That would be very, very tragic, but it appears there is no other way.

S. Sivanayagam

TAMIL NATION

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

Sri Aurobindo

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

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'NEW HARDSHIPS, MIXED FEELINGS'

Midnight knocks, quit notices, refusal of accommodation... these are fear-filled days for a majority of Sri Lankan Tamils living outside the Government-run refugee camps in Tamil Nadu. Here, some experiences.

A young Sri Lankan Tamil couple, displaced from Bahrain by the recent Persian Gulf crisis, seek refuge in Madras unable to go back to Sri Lanka. A landlady agrees to rent them a small apartment but when the couple goes to take possession of it a few days later, she becomes hostile and refuses to let it out. No amount of explaining by the two will convince her that they are in no way connected with the Sri Lankan Tamil militant movement. "That is what you say now. But after you move in, the flat will become a den of the Tigers (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam)," she snaps. Ironically, the couple is now living in a small rented house in a home for the aged at Shastri Nagar in the city.

On December 16, 1990, the police enter the flat of K. Sachithanathan, former consultant to the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations and now a Sri Lankan Tamil refugee in Madras, when he is not at home and ask his wife for his photograph.

In the fourth week of January 1991, plainclothesmen question a Sri Lankan Tamil and her daughter and search their house in Besant Nagar, Madras, to check "whether there are any Tigers" there. This unnerves the mother and daughter so much that they keep asking other refugees whether they will be deported.

These are fear-filled days for the majority of about one lakh Sri Lankan Tamils living outside the Government run refugee camps in Tamil Nadu. They expect anything to happen - midnight calls from policemen, quit notices from houseowners, lodging houses refusing accommodation and so on (While these 1,00,000 are categorised as noncamp refugees since they do not depend on Government doles for sustenance but subsist with the help of remittances from relatives abroad, there are another 1,23,000 living in 243 Government-run camps in the State).

The non-camp refugees are angry with the Congress (I) and the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) for they believe this is an unnecessary fallout from the relentless campaign of the parties against the alleged activities of the LTTE in the State. They are annoyed that this political propaganda aimed at the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) has made them suspect in the eyes of the local people.

Take the case of M.K. Eelaventhana general secretary of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Front and a publicist for the cause of the island's Tamils.

Frontline

report by
T.S. SUBRAMANIAM
on non-camp refugees
in Tamil Nadu



M.K. Eelaventhana :
Police watch outside
his home for 3
months now.

A team of police officers took him away from his house in Madras on December 14, 1990 to the Police Commissioner's office. There they photographed his face from different angles, took his fingerprints and questioned him about his political sympathies, his family members, passports and refugee certificates. Also brought to the Police Commissioner's office were some 80 refugees - the oldest was 78-year-old Namasivayam, attorney-at-law, and the youngest, a 17-year-old student Eelaventhana and the older lot were released at 3.30 p.m. but the younger men were sent to the special camps for militants.

When Eelaventhana returned home, he was shocked to find policemen posted in his compound. They are there round the clock. "They continue their 24-hour vigil to this day. The houseowner, who lives in the same compound, is not pleased," Eelaventhana said. The landlord gave him an ultimatum to either "vacate the house or get the police to leave."

"Why should the police guard you?" the landlord asked him.

"This is an unnecessary irritation. The houseowner is unable to receive his visitors for they too are questioned by policemen," Eelaventhana remarked. "What sin have we committed to deserve this treatment? We are a lawabiding people, we are pro-India at heart. The kind of safety we had earlier here is totally lacking in the present atmosphere. We want to get back to the island. But what is the political device that has been worked out? The situation in Sri Lanka is worsening every day. Our continued presence here is an embarrassment to India it tells on our self-respect V.C. Shukla (former External Affairs Minister) says we should get back with safety and security. We agree with him," he said.

Another refugee, M. Tharmalingam, (names changed at the interviewed persons request) felt equally unwanted.

"It is unfortunate that the term Sri Lankan Tamil refugee seems to stink for everybody here," he regretted. He looked downcast and narrated how another refugee and his daughter were harassed at the Bombay airport as they were to board a flight to Canada. The father was taking the girl to be married in Canada, where two of his sons were settled. But the officials at the airport told them that their passports and visas were forged and they could not travel by that flight.

"The father explained to the officials that the Canadian High Commission in New Delhi had issued the papers and showed them the necessary evidence. After two hours of argument, they let the two go. The man wrote to say that when they reached Canada, the officers there looked at the documents, smiled at them and said "Welcome to Canada" What a contrast!" said Tharmalingam.

He narrated his own experience soon after the Tamil Nadu Government had issued a notification dated June 26, 1990, directing Sri Lankan Tamils without valid documents "to furnish all information relating to their names, addresses, occupations etc., to the nearest police station within seven days from the publication of this notice." It warned them that failure to do so would entail penal action. The notification also demanded that persons who had rented the houses to the Tamils should provide information about them to the nearest police station.

"I went to the Shastri Nagar police station in Madras. There was a long queue of Sri Lankan Tamils - school children, old men and women, all waiting. They had come in response to the notification," recalled Tharmalingam. "I left the queue and went inside the station to see what was happening. I found that each person's fingerprint was being taken for all ten fingers."

"I realised then that all those who were being fingerprinted had valid passports and refugee identification cards issued by the Tamil Nadu Government," said Tharmalingam, who felt humiliated that the police should take their fingerprints "as if they were criminals." According to him, the notification also amounted to an indirect harassment of the Indian landlord. He felt bitter that the refugee problem had been unnecessarily linked with the activities of the LTTE in the State, in a game of political oneupmanship played by the Congress (I) and the AIADMK against the DMK.

"This is unfortunate because the refugee problem is essentially a humanitarian issue, not political. Giving it a political twist makes us feel unwanted here. There are Tamil refugees scattered in the U.K. the U.S. Germany, France, Denmark, Australia, New Zealand, etc. Once these countries accept a person as a refugee, that person is not harassed in any way. None of these countries, except Switzerland a few years ago, ever threatened to send them back to Sri Lanka. But there is a growing fear among the refugees here, who have in no way upset the law and order situation, that they will be asked to go back. This is particularly so after Sri Lankan Minister Ranjan Wijeratne's statement that the Sri Lankan Government was prepared to take back the refugees and Shukla's visit to Colombo at the end of January. These countries have no obligation to us. We have no historical or cultural links with them. But we have all these with India. Still we feel that India, our motherland, does not want us. You know why? Because the consciousness about human rights, which

(Continued on Page 10)

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SWEDISH PROFESSOR REPORTS ON JAFFNA

**PROFESSOR
PETER SCHALK
of Rodbitsgaten 17
75449, Uppsala Sweden
on Visit to Jaffna
22nd January to
1st February 1991**



Professor Peter Schalk (left) with Eelam Tamil friends at Madras - January 1988.

Having been in Yalppanam, Illam, between January 22 and February 1 and having seen the gigantic work which the International Red Cross is doing in this area, I must express my greatest admiration for the work of the International Red Cross which deserves all support possible by the LTTE (and the government). The inner city of Yalppanam is dominated by signs of the Red Cross on the building of the General Hospital, and on the roads to the North long convoys ornamented by big red crosses are a life line for the suffering Tamil people of the North. Its presence gives some calm and assurance to the Tamil people that they are not abandoned by the world. However more could and should be done by the government which is evidently badly informed by the army about conditions in Yalppanam.

1. To stop immediately the daily indiscriminate bombing of barrel bombs (home made napalm) over the city of Yalppanam and over other densely populated areas, and to stop the indiscriminate shootings from helicopters on civilians. I myself had to take protection in bunkers, behind trees, under bridges and hide in

bushes every day during my visit to the Yalppanam peninsula. Daily there are bombs falling, even in the middle of the night, over the central city of Yalppanam. There is no warning system and therefore you have to reckon with your sudden death. Each morning you can see the transport to the General Hospital of victims of the bombing from the preceding day, the night and the morning. I was told by a doctor that every day 5-10 civilians are killed. (I could not check this statement).

2. To stop the conscious eradication of villages and towns. I witnessed myself the results of the destruction of Valvettiturai on January 20-22. The destruction of the city of Yalppanam is already well known. The LTTE camps there and in many other places which I have seen with my own eyes on the peninsula remained undamaged! The statement by Mr. Wijeratne that "we have evicted the LTTE from Valvettiturai" (Sri Lanka News, p7, 19th January 1991) makes me once more reflect on the trustworthiness of this Hon. Minister. I visited this LTTE camp on the 28th and the "boys" were still there without any injury and the camp was

not even damaged. The destruction of Valvettiturai aimed at the destruction of civil life of this town as an act of retaliation - and the aim was reached. True, the people were warned by leaflets distributed by a helicopter on the 20th at 12.30 to leave the town within 48 hours, but the bombers came already at 15.45 the same day, after only three hours and fifteen minutes! Valvettiturai is the home town of Pirapakaran but his house still stands!

3. To stop the selection by the Lankan army of medicines which are registered in the transport lists. I have a list of medicines "out of stock", which is an euphemistic way of indicating that these medicines have been selected by the army on the transport in order to stop the LTTE from using it. Among these selected medicines you find polio vaccine of which the LTTE hardly can make use.

4. To stop the embargo of petrol, kerosene, sugar, milk, paper, money and electricity. There is a group of people without regular income who now have reached the stage of starvation and who in the night are looting the rice fields before harvest time. The prices have now become so high that only

very few can afford to buy the things mentioned, if at all available and if money is available, the flow of which has been decreased by the government. Pensions have not been paid for months. The nights have to be spent in total darkness in many homes. Reading and studying is impossible. The light from the full moon is regarded as a blessing - except when bombing is going on.

The policy of the army is to try to destabilise the LTTE by an economic embargo and by terror bombing, but this is clearly counter productive. The aim is evidently to strangle slowly the Northern peninsula with the help of military control in the North (Palaly), the West (Kayts) and the South (Elephant Pass). Already now, the normal flow of Tamils to

the South is stopped in Vavuniya which is the border between the two parties. All petty trade which is necessary for survival in Yalppanam is stopped and the normal traffic of trucks is limited to 10 trucks per day out of hundreds waiting in Vavuniya. The next step will be to stop the crossing at Pooneryn and isolate the peninsula from the mainland. But this policy does not create disloyalty among the people to the LTTE.

In many conversations, I found that even elderly people inclusive of women (university teachers, school teachers, librarians, housewives etc) are now prepared to take up arms and fight an armed struggle to the very last moment in life. ("Before I jump into the well, I want to kill at least one Sinhala soldier". "My daughter is welcome to join the female armed cadres of the LTTE"). The Fort in the centre of the town, a symbol of centuries of colonisation and suppression, will be raised and changed into a national sepulchre of Tamil Ilam. As a matter of fact in the consciousness of the people, the island is already divided into two independent states.

To sum up, in Yalppanam is a strong voluntary support for the military actions and the ideology of the LTTE by almost all groups in society. The shared suffering of the people caused by the Sri Lankan army reinforces this solidarity for "the boys" who have taken upon themselves the responsibility not only to lead the protecting armed struggle against the army but also to organise the civil administration.

The indiscriminate aerial bombardment of Tamil population centres, including hospitals and schools, amounts to a gross violation of the law of armed conflict as set out in the Geneva Conventions, and is a war crime.

"The civilian population as such, as well as individual civilians shall not be object of attack.... Indiscriminate attacks are prohibited. Indiscriminate attacks are those which are not directed at a specific military objective (and) those which employ a method or means of combat which cannot be directed at a specific military objective."

- Article 50 (4) of the 1977 Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949.

(Released by the International Federation of Tamils)

Lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu

NO ILLEGAL DETENTIONS, HIGH COURT ORDERS

No Sri Lankan national can be detained without adherence to the procedure prescribed under law, the High Court in Madras has held.

Art. 21 of the Constitution extended the right to life and personal liberty to every person, including foreign nationals. The laws prescribed a procedure to deal with any person entering the country without proper documents or papers. The movement of Sri Lankan nationals could not be restricted in any manner other than the procedure prescribed under the law, a division bench observed on March 13.

"We would have considered making our own order with respect to persons detained in Puzhal camp, had there been no such assurance on behalf of the state that the process of segregation of the three categories of refugees will be completed within a month", the

bench, comprising Justices P.S. Mishra and S. Janarthanan pointed out.

The bench was allowing a habeas corpus petition from Mrs. Pushpalatha of Karan village in Rameswaram, seeking the release of her husband Peter, who was detained in the Puzhal refugee camp without compliance of any procedures prescribed under the law.

The woman alleged that her husband was arrested by "Q" branch on Dec. 12 last year at Rameswaram without any authority of law. No case was registered against him nor was he produced before a magistrate. He had been confined in the Puzhal open jail.

If the authorities found him to be a foreign national, they were duty bound to inform and demand from him an explanation before deciding on his detention, the bench observed. When there was a claim on his behalf that he was a citizen of

India, it was incumbent upon them to ascertain that fact before detaining him. Nothing of the sort had been done. He was just picked-up and put in a camp.

The Puzhal camp was a camp where persons were detained without valid detention orders or custody warrants. Peter was also not served a valid detention order. Hence, he had to be set free, the bench said with a direction to the authorities to give him an opportunity to get the question of his citizenship decided by the appropriate authority. Till then no action could be taken against him, the bench said.

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Other Views
Read
TAMIL NATION**



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BRITISH P.M. ON SRI LANKA

in a letter to
Dafydd Wigley M.P.

Aid subject to Human Rights Performance



Downing Street,
London SW1A 2AA

Thank you for your letter of 14 January enclosing one from Mr S. Maharasingam of the Tamil Action Committee, 73 Green Lane, New Eltham, London SE9 2AW about the ethnic problems in Sri Lanka.

We remain very concerned about human rights in Sri Lanka and continue to make our views known to the government there. We also continue to support the Sri Lankan Government in its efforts to cope with the terrorist threat from the "Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam". We do not share Mr Maharasingam's sympathies with this organisation. I enclose a copy of Mark Lennox-Boyd's letter of 12 November to Members of Parliament which sets out our policy.

You ask for our reaction to the unilateral ceasefire initiated by the LTTE at the beginning

of January. Naturally we welcomed the pause in the fighting which this and the Sri Lankan Government's reciprocal ceasefire appeared to offer. However we much regret that neither ceasefire proved to be very effective or long-lived. We continue to hope that both sides will take whatever opportunities present themselves for putting an end to the bloodshed.

We take great care in determining and implementing our policy on military assistance to Sri Lanka. We provide no such assistance in the form of equipment. A limited quantity of equipment is sold commercially, but every export licence application is examined individually, taking all relevant factors into account. We also provide some training in this country for members of the security



forces of a number of friendly countries, including Sri Lanka. We do not undertake training where we believe those trained might later be involved in what we would regard as unacceptable practices. Our training is designed to instil the discipline and high professional and ethical standards of our own forces. There are no serving members of HM Forces helping to train the military or police in Sri Lanka.

We have seen the allegations in Ostrovsky's book "By Way of Deception" that aid finance was diverted to the purchase of weapons, but have seen no reliable evidence to sustain these assertions. As you will know, we have told the Sri Lankan Government that £3 million in programme aid which we had pledged will only be released subject to a review early this year of all relevant factors, including Sri Lanka's human rights performance.

I am returning the enclosures to your letter, a copy of which has been kept for our files.

Yours Ever,
(Emphases in the letter ours -
Ed. TN)

STOP ALL MILITARY AID TO SRI LANKA, SAY 19 BRITISH MPs

The following MPs - Mr Dafydd Wigley, Mr Tony Lloyd, Mr Ernie Ross, Mr William McKelvey, Mr John McAllion, Mr John Cummings, Mr Pete. L. Pike, Mr Peter Handy and Mr Robert Parry, have given notice of the following motion in the House of Commons. Ten more MPs have signed in support :-

"That this House welcomes the recent ceasefire initiative launched by the Liberation Tigers; further notes the initial

positive response of the Sri Lankan Government to the proposals; hopes that this initiative is followed by immediate dialogue with the participants regarding themselves as equal partners in the dialogue process, so that the bloody conflict of the last decade can be brought to a permanent end; calls on Her Majesty's Government to endorse such a dialogue, in conjunction with the Indian Government; and further calls on Her Majesty's

Government to show its practical support for peace in Sri Lanka by ending all direct and indirect military aid to the Sri Lankan Government; and extends its congratulations to Mr S. Maharasingam and the Tamil Action Committee for the annual fast held on Human Rights Day outside the Department of Overseas Development on 10th December 1990, which highlighted the violence in Sri Lanka and the plight of the Tamil people."

humanitarian concern for displaced and persecuted people. Hon. Prime Minister showed his greatness when 155 Boat people arrived in Canada some time back. We deeply appreciate this action.

We therefore trust that you will also prevail on the Hon. Minister of Immigration and see that no deportations are made to Sri Lanka never ever.

Thank you
Yours Faithfully,

Siva S. Nathan,
Hon Secretary on behalf of the
Senior Tamils Centre.

COMMUNICATIONS

Thinking of the Motherland on Mothers' Day Ranee of London writes :-

Once a year at least on Mother's Day (March 8) many people remember all what their mothers have done to them and as a mark of their gratitude for all they have done, send them cards, flowers and pray for them.

Thousands of mothers in the N/E of Sri Lanka have no sons or daughters to think of them - they have been mowed down by the oppressors - instead they silently bemoan the loss of their offsprings. Some have lost their only source of support and strength and are helpless; others have been mentally deranged - because of the brutality they have witnessed before their very eyes and are blissfully unaware of what's happening around them, yet they have none to care for them; still others beat their breasts and tear their hair, not knowing where their beloved children are or whether they are dead or alive and being tortured.

Let those of us who are secure in our homes and those who are fortunate enough to have our mothers with us, spare a thought for the motherless and "children less" mothers and fathers and do what we can, to alleviate their suffering and starvation.

This is also an appropriate day to examine our conscience

and assess what we have done for our Motherland - Thaa Naadu. Have we failed in our duty to our land? Have we been enrapt in our OWN material accruing of wealth and lost sight of the land of our birth? Have we tried to make the plight of our nation, known to world outside the Sri Lankan shores? Has the flame of patriotism which burnt so brightly in the hearts of our forebears been quenched by our own selfishness, apathy and callousness? Do we not hear the cry of our suffering brothers, which call out

"These are days of deepest sorrow
In the season of our life,
These are wild despairing moments
These are hours of mental strife
These are times of stormy anguish
When the tears refuse to fall
But the waiting time my brothers
Is the hardest time of all."

We can bear the heat of conflict
Though the sudden crushing blow
Beating back our gathered forces
For a moment lay us low.

We will rise again beneath it
None the weaker for our fall
But the waiting time, my brothers
Is the hardest time of all!"

May this Mother's Day
renew our commitment to our
Motherland Eelam and help
restore Peace and Honour to
our people.

About the TAMIL NATION

Mr. E.D.U. Kumaran of London SE23 writes :-

Sir,
As an avid reader of your publication, I wish to make a few constructive criticisms, which could improve the format of this good paper.

First, we miss an editorial per issue. When you do favour us with one as in Vol. 1. No. 9 (Dear Mr President) it was a welcome treat. Your views and criticism are all important to T.N.'s success.

Next, far too much space is given to matters, which at this moment of our historical struggle are trivial in importance. In the inset on page 2 of every issue you publish the primary purpose of T.N. and state that its aim among others is "to focus attention on unjust relationship between Nations and to change the material conditions - which oppress and discriminate against the Tamils of Eelam." Since this is the vouchered aim of T.N., I fail to see how 3/4 page of the paper is filled with Arangetrams. When the people back at home are starving, striving to take out an existence amid shelling and bombing, it seems inhuman and apathetic to flaunt how the other half of our Tamils live abroad.

It would be appropriate sir, if you as Editor, could include two pages of prime news in Tamil. Many young men in Europe and in U.K. have come as refugees and very many of these do not have a good command of the English language. They will greatly appreciate the inclusion of a sheet in Tamil.

Finally, Sir, in this busy of ours, it is difficult to read two-page long articles. After sweating reading whole books for examination purposes, only the very affluent, or those who are retired on an extra large pension would have the time and leisure to go through a single ten column reading matter. Articles of shorter length which highlight the current liberation struggle in Eelam will be read more widely and eagerly.

These are just a few of my humble ideas.

Yours faithfully as a Tamils
E.D.U. Kumaran

(Note by Editor: While appreciating Mr. Kumaran's constructive comments, we invite other readers as well to send in their views on the matters raised by Mr. Kumaran)

APPEAL TO LIBERALISE LEGAL IMMIGRATION

The Senior Tamils Centre of Canada (140, Leeward Glenway Apt. 216, Don Mills, Ontario M3C 2Y9 - Tel: 467 - 5830) has sent the following appeal to The Hon Alan Redway M.P. and Federal Minister of Housing Canada :-

"The Board of Directors of the STC wish to draw your attention to the continuing ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and the perilous lives our brethren live in the midst of the aerial bombardment and open violation of human rights.

We therefore urge you to persuade the Hon. Minister of Immigration.

(1) To liberalise legal immigration of family and assisted relatives from Sri Lanka by allowing the sponsored relatives to reach Canada on a Minister's permit and get the paper work done here.

(2) To reduce the period of the undertaking of the sponsor of family class and assisted relatives from the present 5 to 10 years, to just 3 years. This will

to a large extent reduce the flow of illegal immigration and will be in terms of the recommendation made by an all party parliamentary committee in Ottawa in 1985/86.

(3) In view of the inordinate delays in processing the landed immigration papers even after recognising the person as a convention refugee, we suggest that as soon as a refugee claimant is allowed to apply for resident status, his immediate family members be allowed to travel to Canada and the time consuming paper work be done here. Joe Serge an independent immigration Correspondent to Toronto Star has urged the Government to accept this principle as a means of preventing indefinite separation of family and loved ones. An extract of the News paper dated Feb 2nd, 1991 is attached as proof.

(4) Finally we urge that whatever action the Government takes in regard to Tamil Refugees be in keeping with its traditions of Social Justice and

For
Other News
Other Views
Read
TAMIL NATION

Mr V.T. Saravanapavan of P.O. Box 2079, Victorville, California 92393, U.S.A., writes :-

Dear Mr. Sivanayagam,
Congratulations for starting the fortnightly newspaper - Tamil Nation... If you are aggressive enough you can get many subscribers from Canada and U.S.A. where the long-time residents will prefer to read in English. It will be worth a try sending sample copies. In The Island International of 9th January 1991, comments were made about

you and the Tamil Nation. I am sure you would have read it... I subscribe to Tamil Times, Hindu International, the Sinhala propaganda newspaper Sri Lanka News and Island International. I was longing for a weekly newspaper like Saturday Review which you edited at one time from Jaffna. Hope Tamil Nation will become weekly one of these days. Wish you the best and please keep up the good work on behalf of the Tamils. I am enclosing cheque for US\$ 40, being my annual subscription....

'May you become a Weekly'

TAMIL EELAM - A NATION WITHOUT A STATE?

AN INTERNATIONAL TAMIL EELAM RESEARCH CONFERENCE

International Scholars, both Tamil and non Tamil, will participate in a research orientated academic conference which will focus on the issues concerned with the struggle of the people of Tamil Eelam for self determination.

The conference is sponsored by the International Federation of Tamils, and the Department of Government, California State University, Sacramento, California, U.S.A.

VENUE : CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO CAMPUS, SACRAMENTO CALIFORNIA, U.S.A.

DATES : JULY 20TH AND 21ST, 1991

RESEARCH PAPERS ARE INVITED ON EACH OF THE UNDERMENTIONED TOPICS

- the brief explanations to each topic heading are not intended to exclude other matters appropriate to the topic in the context of the theme of the conference
- a paper may cover all or any part of the matters related to a particular topic heading.

1. Colonial and pre-colonial political history of the people of Tamil Eelam

- early growth of the identity and separatness of the people of Tamil Eelam, the linkage and influence of Hinduism, Christianity and Islam as the three major religions, the growth of the Tamil language, the shared economic life rooted in land, existence of Tamil and Sinhala kingdoms, advent of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British, influences of Indian national struggle and Tamil cultural renaissance in South India, the growth of the Sinhala Buddhist identity and its impact on the people of Tamil Eelam.

2. Government sponsored colonisation of Tamil homeland

- the fact of such colonisation, the re drawing of district and provincial boundaries, the resulting demographic changes, whether such colonisation was a deliberate and systematic effort of the Sinhala state to encroach into the Tamil homeland and thereby hasten the assimilative process, and if so, whether this assimilative 'melting pot' approach was workable in the case of the Tamil people and the Sinhala people.

3. Legislative Administrative & Economic discrimination

- disenfranchisement of plantation Tamils, discriminatory policies in respect of employment and allocation of resources for agricultural and industrial development of Tamil Eelam, discrimination in educational opportunities, constraint of development in a third world economy and its effect on the aspirations of the people of Tamil Eelam.

4. Peaceful protest, Sinhala response of genocidal proportions and rise of militancy

- the non-violent protest movements of 1956, 1958, 1961 and 1970 to 1976, the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact of 1957, the Dudley Senanayake - Chelvanayagam Agreement of 1965, the new Republican Constitution of 1972, the Presidential Commission of 1981 - the reasons for the failure of the negotiate process the increasing resort to violence by the Sinhala majority - beginnings of militancy in 1972, connection with standardisation of admissions to University, the relevance of the absence of Tamil participation in the JVP insurrection of 1971, the origins of the Ilaingar Peravai, the Vaddukodai Resolution of 1976 for a separate state as a response to pressure from the early militant movement - widespread and deepening oppression by the State, the enactment of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, extra judicial killings and torture in 1979 and thereafter, violence of 1981, the burning of the Jaffna public library in 1981, the planned attack on the Tamil people in 1983, and whether the attacks on the people of Tamil Eelam were genocidal in intent.

5. Consolidation of the armed struggle and its legitimacy in international law

initial growth of different militant groups, attempts at unity, limited Indian support for militant groups, the ideological uniqueness or otherwise of the armed struggle of the people of Tamil Eelam and whether the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam has emerged as the leaders of the struggle-right of an oppressed people to defend themselves, whether the cumulative actions of successive Sri Lankan governments and their agents amount to genocide in international law, recognition of existence of armed conflict within the meaning of the Geneva Conventions and recognition of the LTTE as combatants in international law.

6. Right to Self Determination of the people of Tamil Eelam

- historical, soci-anthropological and legal approaches - are the people of Tamil Eelam a 'people' within the meaning of that expression in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the application of the principle of self determination in a post colonial world, what does the right of self determination encompass - does it include the right to secede?

7. World Bank, IMF & Tamils for past 40 years

- increasing dependence of Sri Lanka on international aid, whether international aid given to Sri Lanka was denied by the government to the people of Tamil Eelam and furthermore was also channelled to attack them.

8. Economic Viability of Tamil Eelam

- natural resources of Tamil Eelam - fisheries, agricultural products, energy, tourism - the capacity of the people of Tamil Eelam to build a stable and successful economy, the material base for the demand for a separate state.

9. Financial Institutions for Tamil Eelam

- Bank of Tamil Eelam, how it may established (legal framework and functional structure) and in what way it may be directed to serve the needs of the people of Tamil Eelam.

10. Political Model of Tamil Eelam

- future needs of the people of Tamil Eelam, the possible political structures for the independent state of Tamil Eelam, and the relationship of the armed struggle to the evolution of such structures.

11. Negotiations with Sri Lanka

- the Annexure C Parthasarathy Proposals, the Thimpu Talks of 1985, the Indo Sri Lanka Agreement of 1987, the LTTE-Sri Lanka Talks of 1989/90, efforts at international mediation, whether a mediatory process to resolve the conflict through negotiations should be structured around the recognition of the right of self determination of the people of Tamil Eelam, the role of international mediation.

12. International Lobbying

- the need of international lobbying, the limits of such lobbying, the need to counteract the propaganda war carried out by the Sri Lankan Government, and the organisational steps that should be taken to secure international recognition of the right of self determination of the people of Tamil Eelam.

Those interested in presenting papers and/or attending the Conference should contact the following persons :

Profesor J. Balachandra,
Chairman, International
Tamil Eelam Conference,
Department of Electrical
and Electronic Engineering,
California State University, 6000 J Street,
Sacramento, CA 95819, U.S.A.
TEL/FAX : 916 972 9411

Mr. Nadesan Satyendra,
P.O. Box 417, Cambridge CB3 9LZ
United Kingdom.
TEL/FAX : (0223) 355431

Mr. Wakely Paul,
779, Mabie Street, New Milford,
NJ 07646, U.S.A.
TEL/FAX (201) 265 3842

Mr. Ana Pararajasingham,
P.O. Box 215,
Enfield, New South Wales 2136
Australia.
TEL : (02) 626 3726
FAX : (02) 626 5610

ABSTRACTS OF RESEARCH PAPERS SHOULD BE SENT BEFORE 30th APRIL 1991 AND
THE FINAL DRAFT SHOULD BE SUBMITTED BEFORE THE 15th OF JUNE.
ALL RESEARCH MATERIALS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED DIRECTLY TO THE CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN

Concluding the story of the Jaffna Youth Congress as told by Santasilan Kadirgamar

'DREAMS & VISIONS' OF YOUTH

The Jaffna Youth Congress was primarily Jaffna's response to the Gandhian nationalist movement in India. The influence of the national awakening in India was felt most in Jaffna in Ceylon. Products of the several good schools in Jaffna, these young men were highly proficient in the English language, unlike a later generation of youth (in the 1970's) they read widely in English and were well informed about developments in India and the rest of the world. The English press both dailies and weeklies, gave substantial coverage to the struggle taking place in India. In addition Indian newspapers and journals like the Madras Hindu, Maratha, Amritza Bazaar Patrika and Young India provided these awakened young men with food for thought. It was fashionable to read the literature of the Indian National Movement, especially the speeches of its leaders. Immersed in Gandhian thought and values the members of the Youth Congress spoke and acted as though they were part of that larger movement.

In addition to the Gandhian influence there was also the impact of western liberal and democratic values. The American liberal tradition of freedom of thought and expression prevalent in Jaffna and which was encouraged by Principal Bicknell especially in the 1920's and 30's was an important factor that enabled the youth of Jaffna to respond freely to the challenge posed by the Gandhian movement.

Movement of Liberal radicals

These twin influences were at work among Jaffna's English educated youth. Thus there emerged a radical fringe which was of decisive significance in the political and intellectual life of Jaffna in the twenties and thirties. The idealistic and radical impulses generated gave rise to a movement that was nationalist democratic, anti-imperialist and anti-feudal. The Youth Congress was a movement of liberal radicals. When viewed in the context of the then existing attitudes to politics, caste, education, the national language and culture, the Youth Congress is seen to be a movement that was radical and in advance of its times.

Nationalism in Asia in the first half of the twentieth century was primarily a revolt against western imperialism. In the absence of any movement in Ceylon that was clearly anti-imperialist the Youth Congress took upon itself the task of bringing an anti-imperialist consciousness to the people of this country. The Congress' call for "Purna Swaraj" in retrospect and in the light of later developments that led to decolonisation in Ceylon, may appear to be mere empty words. Apart from the boycott the Congress did not take any action to achieve this aim. But by repeatedly putting forward the demand for independence and expressing sympathy with the Indian struggle for freedom an attempt was made to bring Ceylon into line with the growing nationalist movements in Asia. When finally the LSSP emerged as the leading anti-imperialist movement in the country it drew support from the Youth Congress elements in the North. The roots of the LSSP were as much in the Youth Congress in the North as in the Suriya Mal movement in the South. In the late twenties and the early thirties it was the

Youth Congress in Jaffna that was in the forefront of the struggle for national independence.

The Congress was committed to an all-island nationalism or a "Ceylonese Nationalism". It was unfortunate that this was defeated by the emergence of Sinhalese and Tamil communalism. Communalism is a derogatory word in Ceylon's political vocabulary. By communalism is meant here those forces that exclude the interests of one community from or places its interests over and above, the larger interests of the peoples of the entire region at a time when the struggle was primarily against western imperialism. Communalism thereby became a divisive force that helped to strengthen and perpetuate imperialist domination.

Sinhala Chauvinism

The communalism that emerged in Ceylon in the thirties was in addition opportunist, in that the communalists sacrificed principles for sectional or personal gain and advantage. It is necessary to distinguish between the communalism of the thirties and forties with the Sinhala and Tamil nationalisms that emerged in and around 1956. The 1956 upsurge had elements of progressive Sinhala nationalism mixed with strong elements of Sinhala communalism and chauvinism which was frankly opportunist. Tamil communalism that had seen its opportunist period in the thirties and forties was to give way to the emergence of Tamil nationalism after the Sinhala Only Act in 1956, the anti-Tamil riots of 1958 and the Tamil resistance movements climaxing in the Satyagraha of 1961. These nationalisms emerge in the period of decolonisation and are issues of contemporary relevance.

In the 1930's the ideal set before the country by the Youth Congress and nationalists in the South was a free and united Lanka. At this time even after the emergence of the left movement in 1935 inadequate attention was paid to the problem of nationalities. The Youth Congress was fully committed to a Ceylonese nationalism. When 1956 came it brought to the men who once belonged to the Youth Congress more than to anyone else in the country, a sense of defeat and disillusionment.

Pieter Keuneman and Communists

Handy Perinbanayagam looking back to the twenties and the origins of the Youth Congress noted with regret that they had looked forward to "a land teeming with goodwill and blessedness." He added: "Language which is the bone of contention today was peacefully settled by both Sinhalese and Tamils. Before long however bloodshed, premeditated murder and migration were the order of the day. People like Suntharalingam who stood for racial unity are today champions of a separate Tamil Nadu. At the inaugural sessions of the All Ceylon Youth Congress in the Plaza, the late M.S. Eliathamby proclaimed that he for one would prefer Sinhalese rule to British rule. All this was the vision of an idealist yesterday. What of tomorrow? A peaceful Sri Lanka no longer dreaming of fantasies but wanting its present travail to end is the urgent need."¹³⁶

At the height of the language debate in 1956 when it was becoming fashionable for Sinhalese spokesmen to attack the Tamils as reactionary and as opposed to the national struggle for independence it was Pieter Keuneman who on behalf of the Communist party of Ceylon put the record straight in parliament. He said that it was not fair to blame the sins of capitalist and communal leaders on the entire community. He recalled the role that the Jaffna Youth Congress played at the time of the introduction of the Donoughmore Constitution and denied the allegation that was made that the boycott took place because the new constitution granted political power to the Sinhalese. "On the contrary", he said, "they took up the position that this constitution should be opposed and the elections should be boycotted because the constitution did not go far enough because it did not grant freedom to the whole of Ceylon..."

The position taken up by the Jaffna Youth Congress was completely endorsed by progressive Sinhalese opinion in the South. That was before the left parties were started and the All-Ceylon Youth Congress was the representative body of radical and progressive opinion at that time." Mr Keuneman went on to say "that it was the weakness of the movement in the South at that time, its inability of influence the South, and to respond to the boycott of the elections to the first State Council carried out in the North that was responsible to a very great extent for the breakdown of the developing national movement in the North and the sorry period in which communal leaders of the North were able to emerge to prominence."¹³⁷

Jayaprakash Narayan's visit

The Youth Congress was a movement of idealists and visionaries. Delivering the welcome address at the reception to Shri Jayaprakash Narayan as late as 1969, Handy having apologised for the 'impertinence' of linking his name with that of the distinguished visitor said, "We dreamt dreams and saw visions. Our dreams and our visions were focussed on the freedom of our countries and the rich blessings that it would bring to their peoples."¹³⁸

On one occasion Handy referred to the "utopian phase" of the Congress. In a sense the men of the Youth Congress were utopians. They were conscious of the unsatisfactory state of affairs, and were deeply concerned with setting matters right. But they did not have a programme of action or the capacity to realise their aims and objectives. But then there is a strong element of utopianism in Gandhian thought. "The Swaraj of my dreams is the poor man's Swaraj... I shall work for an India, in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people; an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony."¹³⁹

The India of Gandhi's dreams has not been realised after more than sixty years of the Gandhian movement. Influenced by Gandhian ideals and approach to politics the Youth Congress had its limitations. Handy Perinbanayagam speak-

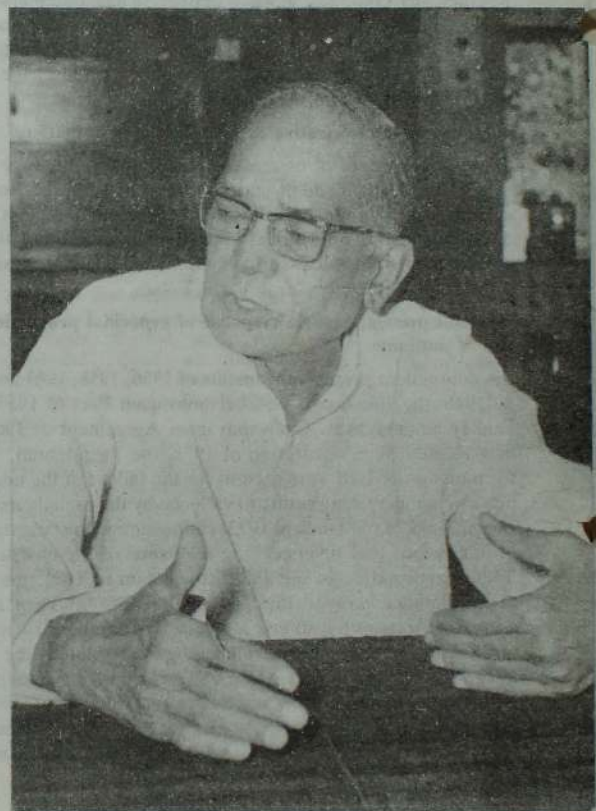
ing at the Gandhiji's 25th Death Anniversary Remembrance meeting said, "Gandhiji was in politics then; so were we in Ceylon. Today India and Ceylon are steeped in politics. But there is a difference between the politics of those times and of today. The politics of those days were aspirational. Visions and dreams loomed large then. Today's politics are factional and pragmatic. They are also grosser and grimmer. The post-independence history of the two countries bears witness to this truth."¹⁴⁰

Contempt for the vote-seekers

The Youth Congress idealists had a contempt for the politics of seeking elections to the legislative assembly and state council. In its choice of presidents the Congress took infinite care to exclude the mere politician. The persons invited to deliver the presidential address were persons rich in intellectual achievements and deeply concerned about cultural values. Having boycotted the elections

ventional sense. Having accepted the Gandhian message the Youth Congress had failed to evolve a Gandhian mass movement. Gandhi, in spite of his idealism had men of action in direct touch with the masses, who organised the masses for action.

The Youth Congress responded to the message by its idealism but lacked the organisational expertise to translate these ideals into a programme of action. In fact the men in the Youth Congress were not cut out for politics in this sense. They were good at holding meetings, engaging intellectual discussions, holding annual sessions and thereby influencing public opinion. They made a remarkable contribution to Jaffna's intelligentsia and shaped the thinking of a whole generation of men. The indelible stamp of the Youth Congress was evident in the men of this generation who had come under its influence. In 1933 the students of Jaffna College paid this tribute to Handy Perinbanayagam. "Already many homes in our country and many walks of life are filled with men



Jayaprakash Narayan :
A Utopian link with Jaffna?

in 1931 the Congress did not have a programme of action other than organising the All Ceylon Youth Congress in Colombo. In Jaffna itself they never thought of organising themselves into a political party. When the anti-boycott movement gained strength the Congress was urged by its supporters to contest the 1934 elections to the four seats in the Peninsula. The Congress did not do so. Instead the Youth Congress members in their individual capacity supported the 'nationalist' as against the 'communist' candidates.

To organise a political party meant an organisation with means and its members devoting a large amount of time to organisational work. The Youth Congress throughout its period of activity did not have a single full time worker. For a brief period the Congress did have an office but they did not build up an organisation to participate in politics in the con-

who have loved you, followed you, honoured you, learned your great language, caught your clear accents and made your pattern to live and to die. Your example is ever a call to the generations to come to live the good life."¹⁴¹

Money power and Elections

Under the Donoughmore Constitution with universal suffrage and elections for any leadership to establish its position, participation in elections had become absolutely essential. New techniques of campaigning like house to house canvassing, money power and liquor had become common place. To Handy and his colleagues this was something repugnant. Nor did they have the material resources. They did not come from families that had an unearned income. Jaffna's English educated elite

'GENERALS' WITHOUT AN ARMY'

were in this respect very different from those in Colombo and elsewhere in the country. There were no families owning land or property on the scale in which it was owned in the South by Ceylonese families. Several men in the Youth Congress were eminently qualified for a spell of education in Britain. There was hardly a parent in Jaffna who could afford this. Those who went to the United Kingdom were almost all Government scholars.

Jobs in government service

The men who were later to dominate Jaffna's politics were first generation professional men who had made their wealth in their own lifetime. The vast majority of the youth from about twenty-five schools and colleges in Jaffna were being prepared for a job in the government service either in Ceylon or the Federated Malay States. On the eve of the 1931 annual sessions of the Youth Congress the Hindu Organ posed a relevant question to the Congress. It said, "It is inconsistent for the youth of the country inspired by such ideals of service to seek places in the government service. Such service should be regarded as an insult to their self-respect." It urged the youth to go into independent walks of life such as agriculture or commerce and that it was only then that they could hope to attain "Swaraj". The editor added, "We hope that the Youth Congress will call upon the youth of the land to take a solemn vow that they would eschew government service. If this is not done the declaration that they have consecrated their lives to the service of their motherland will appear to be sounding brass and tinkling cymbal."¹⁴²

C.G. Ponnambalam's emergence

Here was the crux of the matter. The social base on which the Youth Congress was founded and from which it drew its support could go no further than the 'aspirational politics' of the time. Drawing its support from English educated youth whose mental horizons were limited by their social origin and class background, and who for their survival had to look forward to middle-class white collar jobs in government service and the professions like law, medicine and teaching the Youth Congress did not have the capacity to transform itself into a mass movement.

At the time that the radicals in the south were getting organised first through the Youth leagues and the Suriya Mal movement leading to the founding of the LSSP in the early thirties, the Youth Congress was being pushed out of the limelight by the demagogic communalism that had emerged under a leadership that was ready to use all the gimmicks and electioneering tactics that success in politics under the Donoughmore Reforms called for. The boycott and the failure of the Youth Congress thereafter to pose them as a clear alternative paved the way for the success of Mr. Ponnambalam who vigorously campaigned for the lifting of the boycott and flamed the communal cry for years in the name of the Tamil Congress.

By the mid-thirties the Youth Congress members began to go their several ways. Some joined the left movement. Among these were P. Nagalingam, Tharmakulasingham whose premature death robbed the Lanka Sama Samaja Party of an able leader in the North, S. Sittambalam and K. Satchithanandan. T. Duraisingam and others were involved with the Suriya Mal movement in the South and later became consistent supporters of the Communist Party. Handy Perinbanayagam himself admitted later that his political sympathies were leftist and that by and large though without official connection he sympathised with the LSSP¹⁴³. He and several Youth Congress men appeared on the same platform with the left leaders on many occasions.



Dr. N.M. Perera as Chief Guest as the Kokuvil Hindu College Alumni Dinner, 1957. On left is Handy S. Perinbanayagam, the Youth Congress leader of the late twenties and respected educationist. In the centre is Alagu Subramaniam, 'short-story writer in English.'

Peter Keuneman



Having failed to enter the political arena in the conventional way and thereby shape the destinies of the country, the Youth Congress was however not without its successes. Its achievements lay in the cultural and educational fields and in the eradication of social disabilities. The elevation of the Tamil language to a place of honour happened in Jaffna as early as in the twenties. The practice of having lectures and meetings in Tamil on not merely subjects of literary interest but on secular and political matters as well, began with the Youth Congress. The

THE OLD LEFT & LINKS WITH NORTH

The influence of the Youth Congress persisted most through the Northern Province Teachers Association and the All-Ceylon Union of Teachers. Here the one time members of the Youth Congress championed the campaign for Free Education, for a National System of Schools and for Swabasha. Formidable opponents of government's control of teachers, these men did assert that education was the responsibility of the state, though not necessarily a monopoly of the state. They remained committed to the role that education could play in the social advance of the country. They remained a dedicated band of teachers nationalist to the core.

Integrity and Sincerity

But in the political life of the country they were very much like generals without an army. Men like Handy Perinbanayagam were consulted, their advice sought and listened to with patience and respect on several national issues that cropped up in the decades after independence. Time alone can tell whether it was Jaffna's gain or loss that they did not have a following. Dressed in their spotless white national costume, they were seen and heard on every big occasion in Jaffna.

They gave a distinct flavour to public life in Jaffna and brought qualities of integrity and sincerity to several causes to which they gave of their time and talents.

(Concluded)

Footnotes:

134. N. Sabaratnam, "A Maker of Men, the Builder of Kokuvil Hindu" *Homage to a Guru: S. Handy Perinbanayagam*. Edited by S. Sivanayagam and S. Ratnapragasam. Ceylon Printers, Colombo. January 1978. p. 16.
135. K. Kanagaratnam in *S. Handy Perinbanayagam - A Valedictory Tribute*, Edited by S. Sivanayagam and S. Ratnapragasam. Ceylon Printers, Colombo. May 1960.
136. SHP Reminiscences.
137. Pieter Keuneman, House of Representatives, Hansard 14 June 1956.
138. Handy Perinbanayagam. Welcome Address at the Reception to Shri Jayaprakash Narayan in Jaffna, 1969. Typescript.
139. Mahatma Gandhi, Young India 10.9.1931 and 26.3.1931 quoted in *The Message of Mahatma Gandhi*. Edited by U.S. Mohan Rao New Delhi, 1969.
140. Handy Perinbanayagam, Address at the Gandhi's 25th Death Anniversary Meeting op. cit.
141. See K. Nesiah S. Handy Perinbanayagam, *A Valedictory Tribute*, op. cit.
142. Hindu Organ 27 April 1931.
143. Co-operator 1 May 1966 See A Brower's Diary.

FOLKES SOLICITORS EAST. 1918

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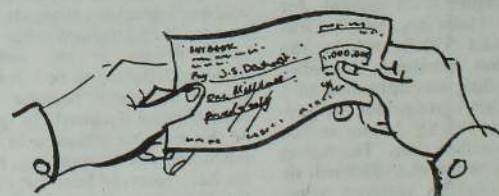
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Sinhala in Jaffna Schools

Above all out of the Youth Congress came a whole generation of eminent teachers, principals, administrators and builders of schools. Their efforts in the mid-decades of this century made it possible for Jaffna to enjoy the pre-eminent position that it occupies in the sphere of education with schools that could be the pride of any nation. These men steered through the smooth transition from English to Tamil as the medium of instruction in the forties and fifties with minimum damage to standards, this having been one of the major reforms that the Youth Congress had advocated all along. Infact in these years Sinhalese was taught in Jaffna schools in the hope that it would help national integration. This was brought to an abrupt end in 1956 by the very same educationists who had introduced it, as part of the resistance to the imposition of Sinhala as the only official language of the country.

The left leaders like N.M.Perera, Philip Gunawardene, Colvin R. de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene were frequent visitors to Jaffna and had close contact with the Youth Congress and subsequently with its one time leaders. Other Youth Congress personalities like A.E. Tamber, S.R.Kanaganayagam and A.M.Brodie and others moved towards the United National Party in the genuine hope that it was a nationalist party, especially when the U.N.P. and the Tamil Congress were pitted against each other in a bitter contest at the 1947 elections.

Looked at in terms of ideology and politics, the Youth Congress by and large, should have merged with the left movement. But the antagonisms between Gandhian idealism and Marxian-socialism were too sharp to enable this to happen. The tensions between the socialists and the Gandhians had developed in India in the mid-thirties. Men like Jayaprakash Narayan did finally quit the Congress under Gandhi's domination only to come back to Gandhism at a later date. The tensions that this antagonism created were real and partly contributed towards the failure of the radical fringe that emerged in Jaffna under the Youth Congress from totally merging with the Marxist left. The left parties however found their most consistent and loyal supporters in Jaffna from one section of the Youth Congress.

HOUSE OF LORDS SHOWS

23rd January 1991

The Lord Bishop of Ripon rose to ask Her Majesty's Government what action they propose to take to help to end hostilities and to restore human rights in Sri Lanka.

The right reverend Prelate said: My Lords, the crisis in the Gulf has obscured events elsewhere in the world, and of those events perhaps few are so tragic as the situation in Sri Lanka. Two violent conflicts have riven the country: the JVP, or People's Freedom Party, uprising and the Sinhala-Tamil conflict. The consequences of these conflicts have been a steady increase in the level of violence, widespread abuse of human rights, including killing, torture, imprisonment without trial, a steady erosion of the democratic process and, most recently, a massive number of refugees in the wake of the war now raging in the north and east of the island.

The JVP uprising primarily affected the south of the island. It was a movement largely of the young rural poor, mostly Sinhala Buddhists, who created anarchy by widespread killing and threats and who for the moment have been put down by an equally violent government response. The number of JVP killed is not known for sure, but the figure of 30,000 is widely quoted. Many were young people whose bodies were thrown into rivers or burnt at the side of the road.

A climate of violence

With the death of the JVP leaders little over a year ago, the south is now relatively quiet. Nevertheless, the underlying causes, especially of rural poverty, still remain and the movement smoulders and is not quenched. A climate of violence has been created by that conflict and the on-going Sinhala-Tamil conflict which has begun to brutalise a formerly civilised people so that killing becomes a commonplace. I had personal experience of this when I visited the island last May. I had lunch with the Tamil member of parliament for Batticaloa, Sam Tambimuttu. He talked about the danger to himself and his family from other Tamil groups and how he had brought his family to Colombo for safety. Three days later he was shot and killed outside the Canadian embassy in Colombo. The killing was attributed to a rival Tamil group. But the government in Sri Lanka is not above such actions. The killing of the journalist Richard de Soysa, which received widespread international publicity, is by many in Sri Lanka laid at the door of the government, and pressure for an inquiry into his death has still not been successful.

The situation in Sri Lanka has deteriorated massively with the resumption of civil war between government forces and the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE). The Sinhala-Tamil conflict is a long-running one. For 35 years Tamils in Sri Lanka have been pressing their demands for the integrity of the Tamil homeland, substantial autonomy for the Tamil region, equal rights for the Tamil language and rights of citizenship. Successive Sinhala governments have agreed to some or all of these principles, but of whatever political complexion they consist they have not implemented them. The will to do so has been lacking.

Weak government the cause

A senior politician in Sri Lanka said to me in 1987 that weak government had been the basic cause of conflict. I have deplored the steady growth of violence, especially by the Tamils, but I have to say I understand the reasons which have driven members of the Tamil community to take that course.

Given the complexities, it is extremely difficult to see what can be done from outside the island. Nevertheless, international scrutiny can affect the situation. There is evidence that the Sri Lankan Government have moderated their bombing campaign because of fear of international opinion. Churches and religious bodies have helped to bring the international gaze to bear on Sri Lanka. I was a member of the

Sri Lanka is an island of great beauty with a people of great ability, hospitality and charm. Those of us who have lived in the island and count Sinhala and Tamils among our close friends are deeply grieved at the tragedies and horrors that they have experienced and continue to experience. We yearn for an end to their sufferings. We shall ourselves do – and press others to do – whatever helps to achieve that end.

atrocities have been committed by both sides. As so often happens, one side blames the other. It is said that so and so started the conflict or that it started when such and such an incident occurred. It is futile to take that path. We must first have a cease-fire and then look at the political problems.

The Question asked by the right reverend Prelate is thoughtfully phrased. The denial of human rights is a function of the state of armed conflict. Hostilities will have to subside before we can hope to improve the human rights situation. In fact the two propositions mentioned in the Question form part of a continuum: as life returns to normal, ordinary social existence will re-establish itself. It is a truism that peace and justice are inseparable. One cannot have the one without the other. If there is peace without justice conflict will arise. If there is justice but no peace, that justice will soon be swept away.

'I understand the reason which have driven members of the Tamil Community to take to that course (of Violence)' – Lord Bishop of Ripon

With the departure of the Indian peace keeping force in March last year, an uneasy lull began which was broken in June when the LTTE recommenced hostilities. Since then, a fierce military conflict has been fought in the north and east of the island. Caught in the middle is the civilian population. The government's policy of bombing towns and villages has resulted in great numbers of families leaving their homes. Currently, the number of refugees in the island is put at about 1 million; that is, one in 15 of the population. In addition, fuel is in short supply, electricity is cut off and there has been much destruction of property, businesses, homes, schools, hospitals and churches.

Aid for the refugees has been supplied by religious and non-government organisation. The British Refugee Council believes that as a result of that aid the situation among the refugees, although desperate, is not disastrous. Among many responses, my own diocese has contributed many thousands of pounds of aid through the Bishop of Colombo. We have received graphic accounts of lorryloads of food and other aid being driven to the north, sometimes having to be left in a church or school because the road beyond is closed. In spite of this aid, the situation in the north and east is appalling, and we have received heartfelt cries for help from those caught in the middle of the battle.

Intent on military solution

Although it was the LTTE who commenced hostilities in June, it seemed that until recently the Sri Lankan Government was intent on a military solution to the conflict. Having succeeded in the south against the JVP, they believed they could do so in the north. The LTTE have offered a ceasefire, and latest reports indicate that the government have now accepted it. In that context it is imperative to preserve the cessation of hostilities between government forces and the LTTE, to create conditions within that space in which refugees may return to their homes, and finally – this is the most important and difficult thing – to work out the political resolution of the conflict.

World Solidarity Forum on Sri Lanka for Justice and Peace – a shared Buddhist-Christian initiative which drew together religious figures, non-government organisations and politicians from some 20 countries. That has resulted in an increased awareness of the situation and the building of a network of links with those in Sri Lanka who are calling for a change of direction.

Japanese aid

In those circumstances, the attitude of governments is crucial. I was in Colombo in May last year when the Prime Minister of Japan visited the island. There was intense interest in his attitude. He made it clear that Japanese aid would be dependent upon the human rights situation in Sri Lanka. The government in Sri Lanka must not be above the rule of law, and aid is one of the few sanctions that can be brought to bear on a government which sets itself above that rule!

The European countries have made a similar declaration. I hope that the noble Lord who is to reply on behalf of the Government will be able to give an assurance that the Government take a firm stance. Will the Government insist that aid is dependent upon the restoration of the rule of law and human rights? Will they refuse to give aid if they are not satisfied that such conditions are met? Such aid does not go to the refugees but to government programmes. We should have no compunction in making clear our abhorrence of events in Sri Lanka, a major responsibility for which must be laid at the door of the Sri Lankan Government.

All possible pressure should be brought to bear on the Sri Lankan Government to pursue a political solution to the Sinhala-Tamil conflict. The Australian Government support a proposal that the Commonwealth Secretariat should be invited to mediate in talks between the Government and the LTTE. Will Her Majesty's Government give the strongest possible support to such an initiative and take a share in insisting that a political and not a military solution is the only way which can give a secure future to both Tamil and Sinhala in Sri Lanka.

Mrs. Bandaranaike in power

Lord McNair: My Lords, I am grateful to the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Ripon for asking the Question on the civil war in Sri Lanka. He speaks with great personal knowledge and breadth of vision. I endorse everything that he said. I should like to add as an aside that I cannot help but feel that in considering the problems of that tragic and beautiful island we should remember our inability to resolve the conflict much nearer home.

In Sri Lanka we see entrenched positions and attitudes, bitter hatred and a sense of the enemy group as excluded from the human community – as dispensable. Those feelings are common to such situations. Analysing the history of the conflict is useful only if the purpose is to examine the essential needs of the protagonists and use that knowledge to persuade them to move away from entrenched positions. As I understand it, the problem in Sri Lanka is that the national, now mainly Sinhalese, government want to maintain a unified state, while the Tamil minority which forms the majority in the north east of the island wants some degree of autonomy but not necessarily a separate state.

While English was the official lingua franca of the island, although perhaps all the communities had a grievance, at least it was a shared grievance. When Mrs. Bandaranaike rose to power on the promise of granting autonomy to the Tamil area and then reneged on that promise, she opened a wound that has festered ever since with differing degrees of inflammation. I believe that it was also she who changed the official language of Sri Lanka from English to Sinhala, making it much more difficult for the Tamils to participate in the national administration. That in turn fuelled the desire for separation.

It must be said that while horrific atrocities were committed by both sides in the years that followed, the national government have taken a very hard-time approach. They have come in for a great deal of criticism which I think is largely justified. I should point out that

200,000 dead & disappeared

In this conflict the total number of dead and disappeared – what in Latin America are called los desaparecidos – can now easily have reached 200,000. It could be more. The refugee problem is immense. Normal life has ceased in many parts of the north east. I have read articles which refer to the law of the jungle. We see only too clearly the escalating spiral of violence. The Sri Lankan Government are buying weapons from China. According to reports in major newspapers, the Tamil Tigers may be funding their arms purchases by smuggling drugs. It is a tragedy in so many ways.

But there are many good things that happen in Sri Lanka. I should like to bring in a note of normality. The Intermediate Technology Development Group does sterling work in Sri Lanka. That is the sort of work that can continue when the political and military situation has established.

I urge the Government to support all initiatives toward peace in the island. I understand that an approach has been made by Norway and that certain Commonwealth countries, at the instigation of Senator Robert Hill of Australia who helped to draw up a substantial and substantive peace proposal, were to have attended a meeting a high level appraisal group. Unfortunately owing to the situation in the Gulf that has been postponed until June. I cannot see why the postponement was necessary.

Will Her Majesty's Government urgently seek to have that meeting brought back to its original date? Other government and international business continue during the present conflict. Surely it remains important to end the bloodshed and suffering in Sri Lanka as soon as possible.

Baroness Masham of Ilton: My Lords, I thank the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Ripon for bringing to the notice of your Lordships tonight the plight of the war-torn country of Sri Lanka. My noble kinsman and I spent a holiday in Sri Lanka just before the problems started in the south. Perhaps it is because I spent the most enjoyable holiday that I have ever had in the beautiful country of Sri Lanka that I want to support this debate tonight. But also it is because

CONCERN OVER SRI LANKA

last Sunday I met an Anglican priest from Sri Lanka who was visiting the local Anglican church. He came with his wife to visit us at our home. He gave me a copy of the report. World Forum on Sri Lanka for Justice and Peace.

Australian peace bid

I found Sri Lanka a magical place, with delightful people. There are kingfishers and brightly coloured parrots flying about. When, as a Roman Catholic I attended mass I felt very much part of the community. We were invited to the parish to see some of the social work that was organised for young people who were getting into trouble. They were taught how to grow vegetables. The girls were taught how to sew and be self-sufficient. We visited some of the village homes. The people whom we met were delightful. Many of them were very poor.

I was dismayed when I heard that such a wonderful place as Sri Lanka was being ravaged by war. With the Gulf war upon us, the very real troubles of Sri Lanka may be forgotten and passed over. I hope that that will not happen. I should like to ask the Minister whether there was going to be an Australian peace initiative and if so what has happened about it.

With our own problems in Northern Ireland, we are very well aware of how difficult these internal situations are. But because Sri Lanka is a Commonwealth country with close ties with Britain I hope that the Commonwealth will be able to help it solve this terrible situation.

Let me bring to your Lordships' notice some of the things which are happening to innocent civilian people. There are over 1 million displaced people, many of them having lost their homes. Some of them are living with relatives or friends, but many are in refugee camps. Food is very short. Sometimes it comes in only one week in three. About 30,000 people died in the early problems in the south, but now the problems are in the north and east of the country.

The ICRC's help

In the report there is an appeal from Jaffna, which is one of the problem areas. It reads:

"The present war is being waged in a country where ordinary people are everywhere helpless, the universities are silent, the politicians are confused and the best the churches would allow themselves to do is to render some humanitarian assistance. The wound continues to fester. There is greater misery compounded by revenge killings. It is a situation that calls for a committed, principled response. The alternative is a progressive disintegration of the country."

As a member of the British Red Cross Society for many years, I should like to tell your Lordships that the ICRC, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the League of the Red Cross are helping with relief services in Sri Lanka. The league, which deals with natural disaster, is helping with the refugees in the north and east. The principles of the Red Cross are basic humanitarian needs. The ICRC and the league are working together to help with these problems. Problems of lack of medical

supplies, food, fuel, fertilisers, money, household provisions and even cooking utensils.

The Red Cross helps with tracing lost people. With so many people dead and 100,000 Tamils having fled to Southern India, this must be a very difficult task. The Red Cross visits detainees. This is one of the valuable tasks undertaken by members of the ICRC in so many troubled parts of the world. This is why the neutrality of the Red Cross emblem is so important, and all countries which have Red Cross or Red Crescent societies have to see that their emblem is used only for the work of the Red Cross.

When I returned from Sri Lanka last year I put down Questions to the Government on the subject of respect for human rights and on what their attitude was. I am happy to say that I received reassurances from the Government of their concern about this matter, and I am quite sure that the Minister will tonight repeat the assurances that were given by his predecessor.

But I want to pay a special tribute tonight to the representative of Her Majesty's Government in Colombo. I want to pay a tribute to David Gladstone, who is our High Commissioner and who has not

embassy, packed their bags and came home to this country. This is the difficulty of seeking reconciliation and I am sure that the right reverend Prelate will support this experience of the difficulties of establishing an understanding between the warring factions.

When the Indian troops withdrew in March last year there was suddenly a flash of hope. The government said to the Tamils, "All right, you can have a government up there in the north east". The Tamils in turn agreed to go legitimate, to cease civil war practices and to seek to have representation in the parliament, with a good deal of devolution in the north-east provincial council. Unfortunately, a small incident happened about that time which set the place alight again. The government army were going to carry out largely civil duties, but as a result of this incident and consequent misunderstanding 600 policemen were rounded up by the Tamils and they disappeared. There followed more violence and yet more conflict. This is an extremely complex situation in which both the Tamil Tigers and the government have responsibility.

World Bank pressure

What is wrong with the situation and how can we help to deal with it? There is a great deal wrong with Sri Lanka and it is difficult to see how we can contribute to a solution of some of the problems. In the case of the Tamils there is very special situation, as the right reverend Prelate indicated: racial, religious and so on. The JVP's leaders have been murdered and they have, temporarily at least, been suppressed, but there is still great underlying reason for dissatisfaction. There is no doubt that there is a loss of faith in the government. There is a feeling that the government are corrupt, and there is no doubt that with the powers of

patronage possessed by the government and politicians it is difficult to change the government. Too many people are on the civil service payroll. Money is frequently wasted on over-manning. There are state industries - after all the state of Sri Lanka is the Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka - and there is no doubt that the nationalised industries and the intervention of government in the economy have not been helpful to economic growth and stability.

So there are a number of things which require to be changed, and perhaps the power of the World Bank, which is now negotiating to give Sri Lanka 1 billion dollars of economic assistance, can bring pressure to bear on the government on the economic front. There is no doubt that the lack of respect and lack of faith in the government so widely felt is a destabilising element in the situation. Again I was happy to note that the EC, when considering its aid budget, has imposed certain terms with regard to human rights, and it is in this area that we can bring pressure to bear.

Strengthening NGOs

Unfortunately, the people who may suffer from a suspension of aid may be the poorest in the community; that is the difficulty. But there is no doubt that aid and assistance from World Bank loans and so on are very important to the economy of Sri Lanka. Apart from anything else, the mere cost of this civil war is bearing heavily on the budget. Therefore economic pressure should be all the more effective. To give support in our aid programme not simply for large economic projects but for the work that is carried out by the NGOs is very important. Perhaps a good deal of our aid might be directed towards strengthening the influence of the NGOs which are courageously working in a very difficult situation.

(To be continued)

'Peace and Justice are inseparable. One cannot have the one without the other.....

- Lord Mc Nair

The Red Cross is appealing for more funds to help with this very needed work. This work in Sri Lanka must be difficult because relief has been hampered as the army puts up barricades. When the war is over there will be much to do in relief and rehabilitation. One has to ask the question: why is there so much disharmony in a world which should be working for the good of each other instead of destroying and hating one another?

I end by saying that very bad monsoons are now hitting Sri Lanka. Snakes come into houses and last week 17 people died from snake bites. I hope that the Minister can give us some good news about some Commonwealth peace initiatives, which I trust will come sooner rather than later.

David Gladstone's firmness

Lord Taylor of Gryfe: My Lords, like others I should like to express my appreciation of the initiative taken by the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Ripon tonight. There are strong Commonwealth ties between Britain and Sri Lanka, and there is considerable respect for the proceedings of Parliament in Sri Lanka. I am quite sure that many people in that tragic island will feel indebted to the right reverend Prelate for expression his concerns this evening about the future of their country.

The Gulf war tends to occupy all our attention at the moment, but it is interesting to note that this has its repercussions in Sri Lanka. Over 4,000 Sri Lankans were repatriated from Basra, Iraq, in November by the International Organisation for Migration. Over 47,000 have been returned to Colombo from the Gulf since Iraq invaded Kuwait, and there are reported to be a further 50,000 Sri Lankan workers remaining in Kuwait. So the Gulf war has serious repercussions for some of the poorest sections of the community who will be repatriated and for some of the families who depend on the remittances from workers in the Gulf in order to relieve their poverty.

been afraid or intimidated in standing up for human rights. David Gladstone has been threatened. One Member of Parliament in Sri Lanka, taking advantage of the privileged position of a Member of Parliament, went so far as to accuse him of drug trafficking in order to diminish the standing of Her Majesty's Government and their representative. But I am glad to say that David Gladstone has maintained his firm line publicly.

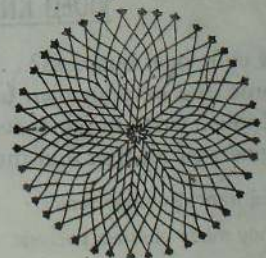
When I was there I was interested in the case of a young man who had just disappeared. I was associated with the religious Society of Friends and still am. They have a Quaker mission engaged in medical work and reconciliation in the island. When one of the workers suddenly disappeared, I went to David Gladstone to ask him to make representations. The Swedish Embassy also made representations, and I stated that I would rise the matter with the Foreign Secretary on my return. Mr. Gladstone was summoned to the Foreign Office in Sri Lanka and was asked, "What is all the trouble you are making about this chap? We will make sure that he is returned". But like so many others who are caught in that conflict, he has never been seen since.

2 Gunmen outside

The problem about a mission of reconciliation is that you have to get the confidence of both sides of the argument. But as soon as you get the confidence of the leaders of the JVP, inevitably you are in conflict with the government and are suspect. The leader of our mission there last Christmas went to church in the morning and on returning from church this young man with his wife and two children who had been in Sri Lanka engaged in reconciliation for four years were advised by neighbours as they approached their home, "You had better not go home because there are two gunmen sitting outside". Whether they were from one political group or from the government, I do not know. But they took refuge immediately in the Swedish

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Continued from Page 2

NEW HARDSHIPS MIXED FEELINGS

is highly developed in the West, is sadly lacking in India," said Tharmalingam.

It was a different sort of traumatic experience for 19-year-old Pararajasingham and his mother, who fled Eravur in Batticaloa district in eastern Sri Lanka when Muslim 'Homeguards' smashed the houses of Tamils there in June last year. Pararajasingham is enrolled in a computer course in Madras. The veil of fear hardly lifted from his mother's face as the two narrated their ordeal.

It was 4 a.m. on December 14, 1990, when policemen knocked on the door of their house in Madras while scores of others stood outside. They took away Pararajasingham, despite his showing his passport and refugee identification card, to the Police Commissioner's office and from there to Vellore, about 160 km from Madras, where a special camp had been set up for militants.

The distraught mother ran from pillar to post, not knowing where her son was detained. She met the Home Secretary, officers of the "Q" branch of the police, the Joint Secretary (Home), the Director of Rehabilitation and so on and told them that her son was in no way connected with the militant movement. All the officials were extremely helpful to her and informed her that her son was being kept in Vellore.

Then began her frequent journeys to Vellore, accompanied by other women whose sons too had been lodged in the same camp. She again did her rounds with the police and civil officials in Madras and Vellore, petitioning them to release her son. Finally her efforts paid off and Pararajasingham was released in the middle of February. But the fear still persists and they refuse to reveal their real names.

The dignified and soft-spoken Sachithanathan, from whose wife the police demanded his photograph, is a sad man today. He said he could not understand "the barrage of criticism directed at the Tamil refugees for their conduct and behaviour in Tamil Nadu."

According to V. Mageswaree, secretary of the Movement for Integration of Refugees and Repatriates, Madras, a "fundamental factor, which is unfortunate but true, is that the Sri Lankan Tamil refugee problem in India is linked inextricably with politics both in India and Sri Lanka." It is also linked with relations between the two Governments and the mental association of militant groups with different political parties in India.

There is another side to the coin. There are many Tamil refugees who feel the Government of India and the Tamil Nadu Government have done a lot for them and they do not hesitate to express their appreciation in unequivocal terms.

The convener of the Organisation for the Protection of Tamils of Eelam from Genocide and Other Human Rights violations (PROTEG), S. C. Chandrasekaran, vehemently denied that the local people's attitude towards the refugees had become hostile.

Chandrasekaran asserted that 90 per cent of the non-camp refugees had no problems. "The house owners panicked a little because of the Government notification. Even this was short-lived. My houseowner did not even ask me if I had registered myself at the police station," he said if the houseowners were reluctant to rent out their premises or lodges refused rooms, it was because these were related to particular incidents in Tamil Nadu, such as the Government notification, a robbery or a shoot-out by the militants.

Hundreds of refugee students had been admitted in schools, polytechnics, medical and engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu. Both the Government of India and the Tamil Nadu Government had done all they could for the refugees who should be grateful for this, he said.

Ex-president of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), M. Sivastithamparam, did not hesitate to express his gratitude to India for providing asylum to the refugees. "We are safe and secure here. We don't have to worry about

STEVE COLL reports to the Washington Post (February 18)

HUNDREDS OF TAMIL YOUTHS DISAPPEAR FROM BATTICALOA

Batticaloa, Sri Lanka - Hundreds of ethnic Tamil youths in this isolated, civil war-torn district of northeastern Sri Lanka have disappeared in recent months after being taken into custody by government security forces, according to a registry compiled by Christian missionaries and civic leaders here.

Relatives of the missing Tamils - exactly 2,009, according to the registry - claim that the youths were taken from refugee camps, movie houses and even hospital beds and then executed by security forces or pro-government "death squads" that roam the region in jeeps and trucks. Relief workers here say they believe some of the youths may have ended up on the piles of burning bodies periodically seen along roadsides here this winter.

2,009 unaccounted

Army and government officials have denied executing any Tamil detainees, but at the same time they are unable to account for the 2,009 missing youths. They say some may have been killed by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Homeland), a violent guerrilla force fighting to create a separate Tamil state in northeastern Sri Lanka.

But the rash of disappearances in this coastal city of 50,000 represents just one aspect of the brutality and terror in Tamil areas of this divided island nation. Since last June, after years of desultory violence and open warfare involving Sri Lanka's ethnic Tamil minority and Sinhalese majority - and radical factions within both - the Sinhalese-dominated government has

been trying to crush the Tamil Tigers once and for all. While the offensive has had little apparent success in breaking the Tigers' power in the region, it has left at least 4,000 dead and up to a million refugees.

The guerrillas, who started the latest round of fighting, have been implicated in machine-gun massacres of unarmed noncombatants and mass executions of policemen captured at remote outposts. The government has been accused of killing dozens of people by dropping gasoline-and rubber-filled "barrel bombs" on civilian areas. Fabricated from oil drums and detonated with dynamite, the barrel bombs explode with horrific effect, spraying burning rubber that sticks to skin....

Sri Lankan officials say they are attempting to root out and finally smash the Tamil Tigers, a tightly disciplined guerrilla force that from 1987 to 1989 fought off more than 70,000 Indian army troops brought in to impose peace on the island. The thousands of disappearances in Batticaloa and other Tamil regions suggest that in attempting to destroy the guerrillas, the government may be following the same bloody strategy it used against the Maoist Peoples Liberation Front - known by its Sinhalese initials as JVP - which bid for power in the south in 1988 and 1989.

Death squads

By unleashing paramilitary death squads in JVP areas, executing an estimated 20,000 young Sinhalese suspects and burning their bodies by roadsides to frighten sympathizers, the government crushed the JVP within two years. The brutal killings have deeply scarred Sri Lanka, however, leaving some to wonder whether the death squads will ever be disbanded.

"What we face now is the attitude that we can get rid of the Tigers by killing everything that might possibly be a Tiger or making them disappear," said the Rev. Harry Miller, a Jesuit priest from New Orleans who has worked in Batticaloa since Sri Lanka won independence in 1948. "This is the worst. It's never been as bad as it has been in the last six months."

American priest

In August, another American priest who had been here more than four decades disappeared while riding a bicycle north of Batticaloa. Miller said he suspects government forces are responsible, but no trace of the priest has been found.

Following months of inquiries by the International Red Cross on behalf of relatives of the missing Tamils, the army has permitted interviews with just 45 detainees. In correspondence with other organizations, the army says it holds only a few dozen Tamils, not the hundreds that Tamil families say were taken into custody. One senior government official who asked not to be identified said he believes that security forces

and death squads in and around Batticaloa were deliberately killing large numbers of young Tamils in an effort to break the Tigers' web of support among Tamil civilians.

But whatever the government strategy, the battle-hardened Tigers remain in control of much of the northeast, running de facto local governments in some areas while ambushing security forces at will from remote jungle camps.

Govt. claim

The government has claimed victory in Sri Lanka's Eastern Province because it holds the cities of Batticaloa and Trincomalee, and it is now attempting to resettle tens of thousands of refugees in nearby areas nominally under its control. But many refugees interviewed recently sounded reluctant to go home, saying they fear both sides in the war. More than a dozen families interviewed at three refugee camps said that while the government is pressing them to return to their villages, their houses have been demolished in the fighting and they have to money to rebuild.

Indeed, the army's hold on the region appears more tenuous than the government claims. Soldiers guard roads from heavily fortified bunkers and only during daylight hours. At night, they said, they hide in the jungle while Tamil guerrillas travel freely.

Helicopters

Helicopters continue to strafe the region, and there are periodic clashes in Batticaloa itself. At the city's only functioning guest house, there is a bullet hole in the dining room window and pock marks on the interior walls. The manager said the damage was the result of random gunfire two weeks ago.

But while it tries to resettle displaced people in the east, the government has been encouraging Tamil villagers in the far north to move out of the area into refugee camps. The tactic appears intended to deprive the Tigers of their civilian base of support around the northern port of Jaffna while the military conducts stepped-up anti-guerrilla operations in the region. The government also has cut off some medicines and all fuels to the area and shut down the road to Jaffna, but at the same time it has permitted food supplies to reach Tamils in the city.

Some Tamils argue that by unleashing death squads and bombing civilian areas, the government may win some battles against the guerrillas but will lose the larger campaign to bring Sri Lanka's Tamil minority back within the government fold. "The impact of that kind of destruction is enormous in terms of the bitterness it creates," said Neelan Tiruchelvam, a Tamil who is director of Sri Lanka's Law and Society association. "You are creating a society that may become totally irreconcilable to the rest of Sri Lanka."

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helicopters and bombers I know of people who came here from Jaffna and even France, celebrated the weddings of their children in Madras and went back because it is difficult to conduct marriages there. We have these advantages here for which we are grateful. Even allowing us to stay here is of great help. But nobody feels happy to be away from home," he added.

According to Sivasithamparam, the main difficulty faced by the refugees was that they did not have jobs providing an income for themselves. Another handicap was that they were not given ration cards as they were not citizens of this country.

Some refugees also said it was their country men who had introduced certain criminal activities in Tamil Nadu which had not witnessed these problems earlier. The fake passport and visa racket was unknown here before the advent of refugees, they noted. Besides, most of those caught trafficking in heroin in the State in the last few years were Sri Lankan Tamils.

But it is largely a sense of despondency which has descended on the non-camp refugees and they wonder whether they have overstayed their welcome in India.

PEOPLE EVENTS



Venothini bags Gold Medal and Challenge Trophy

Miss Venothini Indra Kumar stole the limelight at the South Indian Dance Competition day of the "Festival of Brent 1991" held recently, with a brilliant recital of Bharata Natyam.

The annual event organised by the Brent Council was held at the Brent Town Hall, Wembley. The competition was worked out age-wise in different groups ranging from the under 7s to the 18s and over.

9-year old Venothini not only won the Gold Medal in her own age group of 7 to 11 years, but also made the adjudicator confess publicly that the little girl had set such high standards in the early age group that she was finding it difficult to adjudicate in the older age groups. At the end of the day Venothini carried off the prestigious Challenge Trophy for the best

dancer of the South Indian Dance Competitions.

Venothini is the daughter of Sri Lankan Writer, Broadcaster, Film Actor, Dr. Indra Kumar and the famous danseuse Vijayambigai, now domiciled in UK. Venothini has learnt dancing entirely under her mother at Vijayanarthanalaya (Academy of Indian Arts). It is noteworthy that in 1989 when Venothini completed her Bharata Natya Aranjatram at Madras, she was hailed as a "child prodigy" and "genius" by critics including Dr. Balamurali Krishna.

Another student of Vijayambigai, 16 year old Miss Aruntha Amirthalingam, won the Gold Medal in the open age group, thus completing a "double gold" for the school.

Deaths

M. Rajendra. The death occurred in Colombo on 10th March of M. Rajendra, former Secretary to the Ministry of Finance and Secretary to the Treasury. He was 79. Having served as Government Agent of the Eastern Province and the North Central Province, he became Secretary of the Treasury and head of the Public Service in the Dudley Senanayake government and continued in that capacity in the government of Mrs. Srimavo Bandaranaike. After his retirement, he served as Chairman of the Freedom from Hunger Foundation and a member of the Board of Governors of the Marga Institute. Mr. Rajendra was a brother of the late M. Tiruchelvam, Q.C.

Antony St. George, husband of Mangalam nee Aloysius, eldest son of the late Sam. S.D. and Rakini St. George, brother of Joseph, Charles and Victor who predeceased him, and of Dr. John St. George, Sydney, Australia and Dr. Alfred St. George, U.K. proprietor of Autos Ltd., Palm Beach Hotel and Palm Court, Jaffna, passed away on the 28th January in Colombo. Funeral took place on 30th January.

Wedding

Mathivannan-Vathsala: The marriage of Mathivannan, son of Mr. and Mrs. Chelliah and Vathsala, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kandasamy of Adelaide, took place on 26th January, at the Ingleburn Community Hall Centre, Sydney, Australia.

Arumugam Father of Radha Parameswaran (Australia) Indira Balasuntharam (Saudi Arabia), Dr. Chandra Yoganathan (U.S.A.) Anandarajah (U.K.) & Shantha Parameswaran (Canada) expired February 15. Cremation Kanatte February 20. 22, Windsor Avenue, Off Vander-vett Place, Dehiwala.

Vethanayaki Navaratnarajah wife of Navaratnarajah (Formerly of Census & Statistics Dept), mother of Kumarakulasingham (UK) Sarojini Chandran (USA) and Chandrakumar (SL) Cremation Konatte, February 20. 40 St. Lawrence Road, Wellawatte.

P. Kandasamy, former Partner, Lawrie Muthukrishna & Co., Chartered Accountants, husband of Indira, father of Velavan, Chendooran and Dharshi. Funeral Kitwe, Zambia 24 February.

MUSICAL EVENING AT MELBOURNE IN AID OF EELAM REFUGEES

An Evening of Music ("Innisai Malai") provided by the Melbourne "Mellisai Kuzhu" was held on the 9th and 10th February at the Nunawading Arts Centre, Melbourne, Australia, in aid of Eelam Tamil refugees. Held under the auspices of the Dravida Cultural Association, the programme was directed by Joy Mahes.

Since the outbreak of racial hostilities in Sri Lanka, thousands have been left homeless and without any hope. The numbers are mind-boggling. These are the refugees, a term that many of us use without realising the real importance of it - bereft of home, money, basic amenities of life; bereft often of dearest ones, maimed, diseased; open to rape, exploi-

and sound here, remember with the TRO that we too are responsible for our fellow men.

More is needed by the TRO for work in the many refugee camps that have been set up round Sri Lanka (some 352 in Jaffna District alone). Food, medicine, shelter, sanitation is in unbelievable short supply. The work of the TRO is long, varied and hard in their effort



This is the third full-length musical entertainment offered by the Melbourne group for refugee relief work, and the proceeds this time will go the upkeep of orphan children in Tamil Eelam.

Vocalists, most of whom are amateur singers, who took part in the programme were :- Rama Rao, Rangan, Shanthi Nandakumar, Sarat Chandra, Pushpa Premakanthan, Ravi Krishna, Abhirami Loganathan, Joy Mahes, Shirani Suren, Suren, Krishna, Ravindran and Dominic.

Orchestra: Ravi Chandra - Mridangam/Tabla, Ravi Krishna - Dolak, Achchilingam - Tabla, Vigneswaran - Organ, Sakila Rajan - Organ, Mani Anandan - Veena, Suren Drums/Guitar, Joy Mahes Guitar.

The Tamils Rehabilitation Organization (TRO), in a note printed in the programme sheet says :-

When the dogs of war are unleashed for whatever reason, they leave in their wake human suffering that can never ever be completely erased. But as human beings, we have to constantly try, really TRY, to console, comfort and consolidate broken minds and lives as best we can - otherwise there can be no shred of hope for mankind.



tation and abuse. This is the situation of some 700,000 Tamils in Sri Lanka.

To put it briefly, the Tamils Rehabilitation Organization is one of the organizations involved in trying to salvage something of human dignity amongst these people. Let us, as fellow human beings but safe

to supply these in some small measure to the miserable people of our land. Information of the work of TRO is readily available from the organisers of this fund-raising programme or from the Ceylon Tamil Association of Victoria.

Help us to help the TRO to help others.



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Memorial Service for Miss Kelk

A Service of Thanksgiving for the Life and Work of Edith. I. Kelk, former Vice-Principal of Chundikuli Girls' College, Jaffna, was held at the Putney Methodist Church, Gwendolen Avenue, London SW 15, on Sunday 3rd March. Miss Kelk, a dedicated and much-loved teacher, who is remembered with affection and gratitude by hundreds of Chundikuli old girls, served in Jaffna from 1933 to 1959.

Sri Lankan Colonel given jail term

Lieutenant Colonel Shantha Dharmaratne, a former Co-ordinating Officer of the Mul-tivitu district was sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment for failing to carry out orders in June last year when operations against the LTTE were being intensified. Lt. Col. Dharmaratne is the first high-ranker in the army to be sentenced to jail in recent times. He will be serving his term at the infamous Welikade prison where Tamil political detainees were massacred by fellow Sinhalese prisoners in July 1983.

The prison sentence came after a four-member Military Tribunal headed by Brigadier Siri Peris, Commander 22 Brigade, Trincomalee found him guilty of negligence.

An Australian Tamil appeal to the international community :- 'STOP ARBITRARY KILLINGS AND AERIAL BOMBINGS'

The Ceylon Tamil Association (Victoria) incorporated (P.O. Box 103, Glenhuntly 3163, Victoria, Australia) passed the following resolution unanimously at the General Meeting of the Association held on 17th March 1991 :-

Considering

1. the gross, consistent and continuous violation of human rights by the Sri Lankan Government against the Tamil people over the last 42 years.
 2. that the Sri Lankan Government in pursuance of the armed conflict against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, has engaged in indiscriminate aerial bombardment of the Tamil civilian population, arbitrary killing of Tamils and Muslims and forcibly evacuating more than fifty percent of them from their villages and making them refugees in their own Homeland.
 3. the comments made by Prof. Leo Kruper in the Minority Rights Group Report on International Action against Genocide in 1982.
- "... Genocide continues to be an odious scourge on mankind... there are also at the present time many immediate issues related to the 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..."
- and the similar sentiments expressed by Mr. Edward Grace M.P., Chairman, Caucus committee on Foreign Affairs, Trade and Defence in the Australian Federal Parliament on 18th Feb. 1991.

15 soldiers killed in Trinco on the 10th

Fifteen Sri Lankan soldiers were killed, and three others were seriously wounded in two separate confrontations with the Liberation Tigers in Trincomalee district on March 10. In the first incident at Thoppur, a village south of Trincomalee, an army patrol comprising soldiers from the Vijayaba Infantry Regiment and the newly established Guards Battalion was ambushed by the Tigers. In a brief but fierce battle, six VIR personnel and five Guards Battalion soldiers were killed on the spot and two others critically injured. In the other incident at Thiriyayai, four soldiers of the 6th Battalion of the Gemunu Watch were killed and one badly wounded. Arms, ammunition, communication sets and other items in the possession of the soldiers were removed in both incidents.

And Recognising the

1. Tamils of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) as a Nation,
2. Existence of identified Homeland for the Tamils,
3. Right to Self Determination of the Tamil Nation,
4. Right to citizenship and the fundamental rights of all Tamils who look upon the island as their country,
5. Liberation struggle now headed by the Liberation Tigers by Tamil Eelam and

their responsibility to provide security to the Tamil Nation.

Call on the International Community to -

prevail 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.

encompass human rights in their deliberation on providing economic, development or other aid to Sri Lanka and consider the Sri Lankan Government's performance in upholding its international obligation with regard to human rights, initiate a negotiated permanent solution to the conflict satisfying the legitimate aspirations of the Tamil People on the basis of their inalienable Right to Self Determination.

This resolution was passed Unanimously at the Annual General Meeting of the Ceylon Tamil Association (Victoria) Incorporated held on 17th March 1991.

R.K. Jeganathan
President

17.03.1991
Telephone : 61 - 3 - 459 6189
Fax : 61 - 3 - 551 4492

ELTHAM & BLACKHEATH TIMES

Kentish Times, January 17, 1991 (L) 5

NEWS

Death threats against Tamil refugee helper

A FORMER civil servant fighting to give refugees from his war-torn homeland a haven in Britain claims he has been threatened with death.

Sinnappu Maharasingam fled war-torn Sri Lanka in 1962 and since then has been struggling to allow other refugees to settle in Britain.

The former Sri Lankan trade unionist has now won his battle with the British Government to give some refugees a safe haven.

But Mr Maharasingam, now officially a British citizen, claims he is a threatened man.

He says he has already been forced to move his office to the back of his Green Lane, New Eltham house because he fears attacks from political rivals.

He said: "I have already received one letter postmarked in London saying I was going to be killed."

The letter reads: "I pray your family may face a severe and diabolical end."

Mr Maharasingam said: "My family persuaded me to move my office to the back of the house because n... home is open to Tamils coming over here seeking asylum."

Trouble in the Indian Ocean country flared up after the British gave it independence in the 1950s. Mr Maharasingam and his friends in the Tamil Action Committee are campaigning to give haven to the Tamil-speaking people of Sri Lanka.

The country is dominated by

'I fear an attack from political rivals'

Report by Adam Gillham

the Buddhist Sinhalese who he claims treat the Tamils as second-class citizens. Since the 1950s the Tamils have been involved in a bloody fight to set up their own homeland within Sri Lanka.

Mr Maharasingam said: "It is far worse now than it used to be. The planes come and bomb the villages. Friends I have in Sri Lanka never admit they know me because they could face death."

He regularly meets new groups of Tamils coming into Britain and is pleased the Government has allowed them to stay. Originally many Tamils faced almost certain death if they went back to Sri Lanka because in some cases Britain would not extend the visas which allow them to stay in Britain.

Mr Maharasingam said: "We told the Government it did not have to spend any money on them. Tamil families already here would look after them. All we are asking is for refugees to get a good education in Britain. Many have disrupted their college studies to flee to Britain."

"With the right education many of them will be able to return to Sri Lanka once the trouble is resolved and help build a new country."



● Sinnappu Maharasingam, head of the Tamil Action Committee UK, with pictures of victims of the Sri Lankan conflict.