

TAMIL NATION

'A sense of
Personal
insecurity'



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Fortnightly

INDIAN INITIATIVE IN THE OFFING?

By a Special Correspondent

A new Indian initiative to end the Sri Lankan conflict is "very much in the cards", according to knowledgeable sources in New Delhi close to the Chandra Shekhar government.

While not wishing to comment on whether a durable political solution to the civil war in Sri Lanka would be the thrust of any Indian initiative, these sources confidently predict what they see as "achiev-

able targets" within the next month or two - an end to the present military conflict, a cessation of hostilities and an interim political adjustment.

India would certainly not like to be seen as interfering in Sri Lankan affairs, they say, nor would it permit extraneous forces to exploit Sri Lankan instability against India's own security concerns, both within the country and in the region. Whatever initiative that New Delhi takes would be within the ambit of a "good offices" role in bringing the conflicting par-

ties together towards a political settlement without infringing the territorial integrity of the island nation.

Political observers in New Delhi with whom I spoke are however sceptical about the success of any Indian initiative, given the current internal problems that the government is saddled with, and the unresponsive nature of the Premadasa government's attitude towards any Indian "meddling". But they concede at the same time that Time is running out for the Premadasa govern-

ment which is under growing compulsion to come to terms with ground realities, particularly in the North, where the Liberation Tigers have been gaining territorial ascendancy.

They cite Indian Intelligence reports to say that President Premadasa is a man who today suffers under an increasing sense of personal insecurity, surrounded by hawks within his own government and the armed forces. Unlike the previous President Mr. Jayewardene who was an accomplished master of "realpolitik", Mr. Pre-

madasa relies more on his "gut feelings" to solve even intricate issues. Despite his unproductive one and a half year war with the Tigers, he would yet try to work towards an accommodation with the Tamil rebels by keeping India out of the picture. But his hesitancy is explained by the fact that he has been under constant criticism within his own party and among the armed forces for having initiated a dialogue with the Tigers in the first place.

Indian Intelligence reports also say that Opposition leader Mrs. Srimavo Bandaranaike is strongly of the view that unless the Premadasa government shows more flexibility in accepting an Indian role in setting the Tamil issue at the present juncture, it would be paving the way for the ultimate division of the country. Any Indian intervention at a later period of time would almost certainly go against the interests of Sri Lanka, irrespective of whoever or whichever party was in power in Delhi.

Meanwhile, there is continuous speculation in Delhi that former Indian High Commissioner in Colombo Mr. J.N. Dixit, who played a crucial role in Sri Lanka before and after the Rajiv Gandhi-Jayewardene Accord of July 1987 might be moved from Islamabad to take over as Foreign Secretary, before the new External Affairs Minister Mr. V.C. Shukla visits Colombo towards end January.

POLITICAL THEATRE IN JAFFNA



On with the play! Come bombs and shells and death and destruction, Jaffna still finds the time for political theatre. The scene depicts a Sri Lankan soldier holding in leash two "head shakers" - "Thalai addis" in Tamil - masked men from other groups who are employed to identify Tiger suspects. In the background is a painting of Thileepan, the Tiger political leader who fasted to death. (Photograph, originally in colour, by GREG Grigard for The Independent, London).

Two Hindu Temples Bombed!

An Amman temple at Nanaattan in the Mannar district in the North was destroyed by aerial bombing on 7th December around 9.30 a.m. Temple worshippers who were gathered in large numbers at the entrance to the temple scattered in different directions at the sight of the bomber plane.

On the same day another small Sivan temple at Puliampokkanai junction in the Kilinochchi district was also bombed. Bombing of Hindu temples in isolated Tamil areas has now become a regular feature.

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 participating in the effort to change those material conditions of existence which continue to oppress and discriminate against the Tamils of Eelam. The Tamil Nation is rooted in the growing togetherness of the Tamil people and it seeks to participate in the effort to strengthen that togetherness. The TAMIL NATION seeks to focus attention on the unjust relationship between nations without a state and nations that have attained state-hood. And, the TAMIL NATION exists to debate and campaign for the radical changes necessary, both amongst the Tamil people and outside, if the struggle of the Tamils of Eelam for national self determination is to be won.

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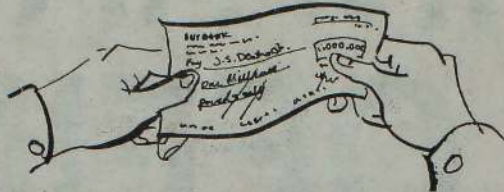
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Briefs

V.C. Shukla for Colombo



Chinese Premier's visit

Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng will pay a 3-day official visit to Sri Lanka beginning December 17. He is to be accompanied by a 40-member delegation including Minister of Foreign Affairs Qian Aichen, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs Xu Dunxin, Chairman of the State Commission of restructuring the economy Chen Jinhua, and the Vice-Minister, Ministry of Public Security Tao Siju.

Welikade for sale!

The Welikade jail, an infamous landmark in Colombo, where 53 Tamil political prisoners were put to death within its walls in July 1983 may come up for sale soon. The Ministry of Justice is toying with the idea of raking in about 800 million rupees through its sale and building another "high security prison" on cheaper land in the Nawala area.

Ranjan chides Mohamed

Sri Lankan Defence Minister denied in Colombo that ten Israeli experts were in Sri Lanka. He castigated Parliament Speaker Mohamed, to whom the statement was attributed, as having talked out of turn and conveying something totally incorrect.

BJP man & photos of Pirabhakaran

In calling for a CBI probe into militant activities in Tamil Nadu, BJP spokesman Jana Krishnamurthy told the *Indian Express*: "In the rural parts of Tamil Nadu local supporters of the LTTE were systematically building up the image of LTTE supremo V. Prabhakaran. His photos could be seen in many households".

Actor Vijayakanth to name his son!



Well-known Tamil Nadu cinema actor Vijayakanth who was blessed with a son, told Pressmen in Madurai that he would like to name his son after Tiger leader Pirabhakaran who has brought pride to the Tamil race.

Quisling group gunmen held

Two pistol-waving Tamil gunmen from the Eastern province belonging to one of the Quisling groups were arrested by the police with the help of the public when they attempted to rob a Tamil-owned pawn broker's shop in Armour Street, Colombo, on 5th December.

Referendum put off for August 22, 1991

President Premadasa ordered a further postponement of the Referendum on the merger of the Northeast province to August 22, next year. The Referendum originally fixed for December 31, 1988, was later put off for January 19 next year.

JVP leader in South India?

Colombo newspaper quoting police officials says that the new leader of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) Somawansa Amarasinghe has escaped to South India. It says that Mr. Amarasinghe who is one of the most wanted men in Sri Lanka, had got two smugglers to ferry him by boat to India from the west coast town of Negombo. The report also adds that Mr. Amarasinghe's wife had flown to India on a false passport a few weeks before the JVP leader fled. There was also speculation that some other unidentified JVP men had too fled to India.

Food supplies to North blocked

Following the fall of the Mankulam army camp, supplies of food, medicines and fuel to the North were completely blocked by the government. The Jaffna hospital which continued to function even after a bomb attack in the vicinity has been badly hit by an acute shortage of essential drugs. The People's Front of Liberation Tigers (PFLT) had made an appeal to all Tamils to help in sending food items and medicines, particularly to those Tamils in southern Eelam who are facing tremendous hardships. According to reports in Tamil Nadu, some local organisations including doctors, have been responding to the call and helping in ferrying stocks of medicine to the north.

The Tamil Nation welcomes reader responses and reader participation.

Views expressed in the journal are not necessarily those of the Editor, the Editorial Advisory Board or the Publishers. Material received for publication is subject to abridgement and editing where found necessary.



MEDIA MEDLEY

RAJ CHONKAR reports from Rameswaram

THE INDEPENDENT, Bombay, Dec. 6, 1990.

BOREDOM & MUSCLE POWER

TELO - PLOTE - ENDLF - EPRLF MILITANTS IN REFUGEE CAMPS

Although the influx of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees into this southern coastal temple town has plummeted from about 2,000 per day to a mere 200 per week, the ramifications here and at neighbouring Mandapam, which houses 8,000 refugees including 800 militants, are many.

Officials conceded an upsurge in crime. Townspeople have complained of an upsurge in commodity prices combined with a downtrend in the number of arriving tourists. Auto drivers talk of a shortage of diesel. And villagers confirm the transit of Sri Lankan Tamil militants.

Smuggling is rampant — the main item being diesel to sustain the Sri Lankan Tamil militants in their war against the island nation's armed forces. Priced at Rs. 6 per litre, it sells in Sri Lanka for a whopping Rs. 50. And many local fishermen from the town's 25,000 strong fishing community have found that transporting this commodity from Tamil Nadu to Sri Lanka is far more lucrative.

Crime, both in Mandapam and Rameswaram, has registered an increase and the perpetrators are identified as bored Sri Lankan Tamil youth who live at the Mandapam refugee camp on a dole and who are allowed to wander outside the camp.

Though the YMCA conducts training courses in various trades, none of the militant youth avail of this.

Although reports that these militant refugees were also engaged in the smuggling of drugs could not be definitely confirmed, townspeople claim that it is true.

Eighteen-year-old Jagan from Sri Lanka's Vavuniya town joined the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) when he was 15, and was trained as a rebel by the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF). Since then he has lived a life of continuous violence which gave him a sense of commitment and excitement. He has been in India for the last three months and is thoroughly bored.

"I fled from Sri Lanka out of fear of the LTTE," Jagan said. "But if the LTTE comes forward for negotiations, I will join them."

He is proficient in the use of the AK-47, known in British intelligence circles as the 'widow maker', having trained with the IPKF for one year.

He is not sure about his return to Sri Lanka, but is closely monitoring the situation through newspaper accounts.

Officials at the Mandapam refugee camp, which is the only other camp besides the one at Kottapattu near Tiruchirappalli, which houses militants, refer any inter-group rivalry between the various militant groups housed there to group leaders whose word with the younger militants is the law. But this is only because the police make sure that each group is at loggerheads with the others.

The reason for keeping militant groups at war with each other in the camps is because it makes it easier for them to

identify any trouble makers — rival group cadres are only too willing to inform on any illegal activity that cadres of other factions indulge in.

Townspeople have also accused the police of forcibly taking from refugees any worthwhile articles that they bring with them from Sri Lanka.

Officials in charge of refugee rehabilitation of course deny this charge but many of the refugees have insisted that they lost articles like luxury soaps and video recorders to officials who come to check their belongings they bring with them.

Tamil Nadu allows refugees to convert Sri Lankan currency into Indian rupees up to five thousand. More than this is not allowed and a Sri Lankan militant says that money above this amount is confiscated by the officials.

The mid-morning scene at the Mandapam refugee camp is one of bustling activity as refugees trudge into the camp bearing on their heads loads of firewood which they collect from the forest area adjacent to the town. But further in, set in the back of the camp amidst tight police security are the range of dwellings which house the militants from the TELO, ENDLF and PLOTE.

Each range has scrawled on their whitewashed walls the names of the group to which the cadres housed within belong. There is absolutely no intermingling at the social level between youths of these groups. In fact they stare at each other suspiciously but generally keep to themselves.

None of these militants work, nor do they indulge in any of the recreational activities that have been arranged for them by the YMCA. They are sullen.

Thirty-year-old Santakumar from Sri Lanka's Kankesanthurai town was trained by a master from the Eelam Peoples' Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) and has not participated in the fighting as he is from the political wing of that group.

Although he hates the LTTE, which is why he fled to India, he also fears them.

Like the other militants in the camp, he too hangs around the camp during the day preferring to go into town only after evening. However, he was tightlipped about the firing incident at the camp that occurred between his group and the police.

Police deny that it was inter-group rivalry saying that the entire incident, which is still under investigation, stemmed from a personal feud between two families.

Unlike the other refugees who prefer to take up temporary jobs in the town nearby, the militants rely on muscle power. While the police take great pains to deny that the militants are among the refugees and do not commit any crime, they also say that once the militants leave the camp, they cannot control their actions.

A 20-year-old militant who joined the EPRLF two years ago admits to being bored

inside the camp and therefore looks for some excitement outside. He has no interest in training in any trade and prefers to while away his time hanging out with cadres from his group.

He fled to India after the withdrawal of the IPKF as he felt insecure and feared the mammoth might of the LTTE. He joined the war when he was in class eight and has lived an

exciting life as a rebel since then. Now, time hangs heavy on his hands and resorting to crime is the only excitement he can get in his present life at the camp.

If the government does not take early action, it can lead to a serious situation in Rameswaram where the inhabitants have already had enough of the militants wandering around their island.

Tourism has already declined and if more and more militants take to a life of crime it may, come down further. And since tourism is the only source of income to the residents of Rameswaram, they demand that the state government take action to control and eradicate the movement of the militants on their island.

The LTTE is now a conventional army

Says TARAKI (Sunday Island)

Nine years ago in Jaffna, at a time when the debate between proponents of pure militarism and those of protracted people's war had become quite serious in some intellectual circles which were on the fringes of the armed Tamil groups, one of Prabhakaran's friends, who apparently was eager to show that his friend knew what he was talking about, gave me a handsomely illustrated book on military history.

The book was from one of LTTE's underground libraries. (Prabhakaran is known to spend vast sums of money on acquiring books on war and weapons). It was in that book that I first became acquainted with the work of General Antoine Henri Jomini. He had been a voluminous writer, a lesser known contemporary of the famous Carl Von Clausewitz.

The Mankulam attack and the discussions, on strategy in their recent official publication, which is prepared by some of their experienced soldiers, in Jaffna, reminded one of General Jomini's observations on war.

Propagation

In the beginning the LTTE's role model was Che Guevara. They keenly encouraged the propagation of his ideas and insisted, sometimes adamantly that the concept of evolving a large people's army was wrong in the context of the Tamil movement, at that time.

In the first issue of their 'official paper 'Viduthalai Pulihal' they even decided to carry an article by a Stalinist Sinhala 'revolutionary' who has now become an arch promoter and apologist of premaroika - on the merits and methods of guerilla warfare. But the latest issue of the 'Viduthalai Pulihal' claims that after 15 years of guerrilla war the Tigers have now become a conventional army. "The ambition of our leader Prabhakaran has been to build up a powerful Tamil National Liberation Army. He

wants to strengthen and modernize it as much as he can," the lengthy discussion, accompanied by maps, on the Fort operation is, it is clear, informed by principles and concepts which belong in discourses on conventional warfare. That this extensive discussion is quasi-scientific does not diminish the validity of the transformation that has taken place in the tiger's perception of achieving its goal through military means.

Guerrilla group

The LTTE which began the war in June this year is no more a guerrilla group. It is not only functioning as a conventional force in the north but is also thinking and devising strategy as one.

It would be judicious and prudent, at least at this juncture, to reckon with the fact even if they are in the future marginalized by superior fire power and overwhelming logistical capabilities, they would have acquired the know-how and the necessary experience to raise and effectively use a conventional army.

The era of the Tiger as a guerrilla strategist is drawing to a close. The fall of Mankulam is another indication of it. A keen student of the LTTE's evolution will find that the conceptual tools that he culled from the writings of Ernesto Che Guevara may not be useful now in understanding their thinking. I came upon Jomini may have satisfied the curiosity of a bumbling novice at that time but not the urgent needs of the hit and run tactician.

The strategic planning that seems to have been involved in the siege and assault of the Fort and now in the Mankulam attack has to be assessed. The thinking of the post IPKF Tiger shows a preoccupation with macro-plannign and with eliciting the general principles that govern the over all strategy of the security forces.

Principles

The LTTE, observes that in the north there are three principles that influence the military planning of the generals. The first one is ensuring of supply routes (air, land and sea) to the camps. The second one is having possible and safe lines of withdrawal from camps and detachments, in place. The third one is strengthening camps by relocation and/or addition of troops.

For operating in the north with these three principles governing its actions, until such time when other strategies become possible, the army will have to depend on a certain number of elite troops which have to be moved to different locations according to requirements necessitated by pressures that may unexpectedly develop or to meet preplanned strategic needs.

Contingencies

Priorities that arise from contingencies are seen to determine, in the short term, the distribution of these troops. The perception of these priorities are, in turn determined by the three general principles. The army's operations in Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Jaffna Fort and Mannar are such examples.

The LTTE observes that elite troops strength was allocated to each of these situations to relocate camps by the coast as in the case of Mullaitivu and Fort or to secure supply and withdrawal lines from the coast as in the case of Thallady where constant efforts were made to link it up to the coast by pushing out of Silavaturai and from Puttalam and by setting up a detachment on the Vankalai coast and now by clearing Mannar island Kilinochchi camp was withdrawn into the one of Elephant Pass.

Decisive point

When the pressure on a decisive point is substantial, political

(Continued overleaf)

"SUNSHINE STORIES" AND "FALSE PROPAGANDA" BY GOVT.- MRS. B

Speaking in Parliament on the Mankulam issue, Leader of the Opposition Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike has accused the Colombo government of spreading "senseless sunshine stories" and false propaganda in its war against the Tamils and LTTE in the Northeast. The people have been led to believe that all was well and that the LTTE is on the verge of collapse.

Here is the text of the statement made by her :-

"I believe that I am echoing the sentiments of all members of this House, as well as those of all other patriotic citizens of all races (!), castes, creeds and political beliefs when I say that the news of the tragic deaths in action of over 100 (!) of our young soldiers at Mankulam, has plunged me into the depths of gloom.

"Nothing that we say here can bring back to life those brave patriots who gave their lives for our Motherland, or assuage the grief of those they have left behind.

"All we can do, and what we must do, is to view and examine this tragedy with cold objectivity, to find out how and why it happened, for it is only by doing so that we can seek to ensure that such a debacle will not happen again. If by such an exercise, we can save their brothers in arms from such a debacle in the future, they would not have died in vain.

"I do not presume to be an expert on military matters, nor am I possessed of all the facts and circumstances surrounding this tragedy. While it is for the professionals and the experts, to collate, examine and analyse all the evidence and arrive at their findings, there are certain facts and circumstances relevant to this tragedy that are so evident, that I would be failing in my duty if I did not draw the attention of this house to them.

"This is the third major debacle our army has had to face since the renewed outbreak of hostilities in June this year.

The first two were at Kataparichchan in June and at Kokkavil in July. Kokkavil was a camp with one company, while Mankulam was a camp with about half a battalion of soldiers.

Fighting only the LTTE

"In the pre-Accord period up to July 1987 our forces fought all the separatist groups alone, but, to the best of my recollection, no defended position of our armed forces of the size or strength of either the Kokkavil or the Mankulam camp was over-run or defeated by the enemy.

"How is it then, that both the Kokkavil and Mankulam Camps were over-run when our forces are fighting only the LTTE with the assistance of the PLOT and the EPDP?"

"One reason that readily presents itself is that the LTTE has been vastly strengthened during the so-called "peace talks" with the government that went on for about a year - but this alone could not possibly account for these debacles.

"The bravery, the competence, the discipline, and above all the dedication and patriotism of our forces are beyond question.

"The competence, experience and discipline of our forces too have grown over the years.

"How then did these unprecedented debacles occur at this stage?"

"The question that now cries out for an answer is whether our forces have received the necessary support and leadership from the Government?"

Have they been provided with the necessary arms, ammunition, equipment, provisions and air cover to defend our Motherland and themselves in this terrible conflict?

How could these tragedies have occurred if they had?

From the re-commencement of hostilities last June we have

repeatedly implored the Government to ensure that the forces are properly armed, equipped, provisioned and given the necessary air support.

"We have repeatedly stressed the vital importance of placing all helicopters exclusively at the disposal of the armed forces and begged of you to discontinue the use of helicopters by V.I.P.s for civilian purposes. It is not that we grudge V.I.P.s the use of the



helicopters, but that when one considers the priorities of the day, it is self evident that V.I.P.s must make the "sacrifice" of restricting their travel within our small country to travel by road or other means of civilian transport, without the use of military aircraft except where the use by them of military aircraft serves a military purpose. We make this plea once more, in all earnestness and sincerity.

"The attack on the Mankulam Camp commenced at about 2.00 a.m. on Friday the 23rd and went on continuously till about 1.30 p.m. on Saturday, the 24th when the camp was over-run by the LTTE.

Desperate radio messages

Between 9.30 and 10.00 a.m. on Saturday, the 24th. Several desperate radio messages were sent by the besieged troops at Mankulam begging for air support and for helicopters to evacuate 70 soldiers who had been wounded by them. Their pleas fell on deaf ears.

"No helicopters were sent although 4 of that were being used for non-military civilian

transport were at Nagadeepa, one standing by idly at Katunayake and another at Palaly.

"It is surely a crime of the highest order to spend billions and billions from our poor nation's coffers on defence and the purchase of military aircraft and thereafter to deny the use of such aircraft to save the lives of our young soldiers bleeding for our country's life.

"Another fact that glares on in the face is that the Government has not properly taken stock of or appreciated the gravity of the situation, and the mortal peril in which the country finds itself.

"Senseless sunshine stories"

"This is made evident by the senseless "sunshine stories" that have been regularly churned out by the State media both before and after the Accord. The people have been led to believe that all was well, and that the LTTE is on the verge of collapse.

Even after the debacle of Mankulam, the "Daily News" of Monday, the 26th November, reported it under the headline "Forces kill over 100 terrorists", and also stated "It (an official report) said security forces losses were also heavy but details were not available."

"The impression given to the reader by this report was that our forces had got the better of the encounter.

"It is also pertinent to ask how the number of terrorist deaths but not the number of the deaths of our own troops could be known to our officials!

What purpose does this kind of false propaganda serve?

"Witnesses dead or not available"

In the case in which Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike is challenging the election of Mr. Premadasa to the office of President, Counsel for Mrs. Bandaranaike told the 5-Judge Bench that he had not been able to call the witnesses from Jaffna, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, and Vavuniya districts, because "they are either not available or are dead". Counsel for President Premadasa said that he had already filed a list of 118 witnesses from the Colombo district, and would begin leading their evidence when further hearing is resumed on December 17.

(Continued from page 3)

cal and strategic priorities however crucial they may be sacrificed and the three principles appear to become the final determinants in the decision making of the field command. It is therefore only logical that the LTTE selected the camp at Mankulam junction if their perception of the army's strategies was such. This is why when the baby brigade struck the men of Mankulam withdrew. After nine years, excerpts from another work on General Jomini would, I think, help put Prabhakaran's new thinking and strategies in perspective.

Psychological factors

"Critics like Clausewitz, who doubted the validity of any theory of war failed to distinguish between a theory of systems and a theory of principles. Principles were guides to action, not infallible mathematical calculations. The specific application of principles would vary with the thousand chang-

ing physical and psychological factors that made war a great drama.

"The principle of manoeuvring the mass of an army so as to threaten the decisive points in a theatre of war and then to hurl all available forces against a fraction of the enemy force defending those points, is Jomini admitted, very simple. Almost without exception the enemy flanks and supply lines would define the decisive points for attack; an army could not survive without supply and to threaten its base would compel it to fight no matter how unfavourable the circumstances. Jomini stressed that beneath the chaotic changes in modern warfare lay strategic universality.

Historical cases

Most commanders make bad strategic choices because they are misled by common sense (a phrase not used by Jomini but strongly implied by his endless discussions of historical cases.) Attempting to defend territory

"The real danger of indulging in false propaganda lies in the fact that he who indulges in it ends up believing his own falsehoods.

'Fight for survival'

"We implore the government to view the situation realistically, without indulging in false optimism and to keep the people informed of the truth - for it is only then that you can make correct decisions and mobilise the people in the "war effort" and triumph.

"Please take a lesson from the greatest wartime leader of a parliamentary democracy, the late Winston Churchill, who, even after the American naval victory at the battle of Midway, and after Montgomery's victory over Rommel at El Alamein told his people: This is not the end; it is not even the beginning of the end, but it is the end of the beginning.

Mankulam has taught us that we are, tragically, still a long way from victory. This is not a time for tamashas, for vain glorious talk or exhibitions. This is not a time to detract from the military effort by using troops and equipment needed to fight the war and save the lives of our soldiers, to be transporting and escorting politicians about the country. We must give to, and not take from our Armed forces.

"It is time we all realised that the fight with the LTTE is a fight for the survival of our country and that no political or personal fortunes, ambitions, reputations, pride or vanity must be allowed to stand in the way of our march to ultimate victory.

"In short, this is a time for dedication, devotion and sacrifice," she said.



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"INDIA SHOULD KEEP OUT OF LANKAN AFFAIRS"!

A front-page report in the Colombo newspaper - *The Island* - dated 9th December carries the following quoted remarks :-

"India should keep out of the internal affairs of Sri Lanka which is an independent and unitary state. India should not interfere in our matters, and Sri Lanka as a sovereign state should be allowed to find solutions to her problems."

Guess who said this? President Premadasa? You are wrong. Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne? Wrong again. The author of the statement is the one-time military commander of the EPRLF and now leader of the EPDP, Douglas Devananda, who according to the report would be forwarding an "open letter" to Indian Prime Minister Mr. Chandra Shekhar, shortly. Devananda and his cadres are now collaborating with the Sri Lankan forces in a "Tiger-hunt".

IN an interview to the paper from his "heavily guarded Thimbrigasaya residence", he is reported to have said :

"Earlier the political climate was different. The government was not prepared to invite the LTTE for negotiations and therefore "brokers" were necessary for consultations with the Tigers. That was not so today. India had no role to play as what was taking place today was purely an internal problem of Sri Lanka. India was not required in that context.

"Mr. Devananda said that the best possible way India could help Sri Lanka to find a lasting solution to the crisis was by preventing the Tigers from using Indian soil to its advantage. He said that India should not try to impose herself or make use of any group which was conspiring and attacking the democratic government of Sri Lanka. Certain groups like the LTTE want India to intervene with a view to achieving their own sinister ends..."

Since readers of *Tamil Nation* would like to know more about this spokesman for the "democratic Government of Sri Lanka", here is a background: a 2-year old flashback to a Madras report, from the *Indian Express* of December 26, 1988 (along with pictures) Indian readers who are told about the law and order situation in Tamil Nadu would also like to refresh their memories :-

Child rescued from militants in City

A Sri Lanka Tamil child, who was abducted by Tamil militants seeking a ransom of Rs. 7 lakh, was rescued by the City police in a carefully planned operation on Sunday.

Ten-year-old Mathivanan, living with his parents at Kilpauk, was kidnapped by the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) led by Douglas Devananda a month ago, when he went to a shop. He was dumped into a jeep and taken away by the militants.

Mathivanan's father S. Duraisingham, a gemologist settled here, lodged a complaint with Kilpauk police the same day. The ransom demand came later in the day over telephone.

Search went on until Wednesday, when the parents approached Police Commissioner P. Dorai directly seeking more more intense efforts. A plan was set in motion and the child was rescued, drawing the kidnapers into the police net as well.

Narrating the sequence, Mr. Dorai told newsmen - Mathivanan beside him - that the kidnapers had even tortured the child. The captors beat Mathivanan, forced him to eat some tablets and even injected him with drugs and his pleas were recorded on tape. Pins were also driven under his fingernails.

The police made a breakthrough with the help of the Madras Telephones when the ransom calls from a public call office at K.K. Nagar ESI Hospital were traced.

A raid was led by Assistant Commissioners, Hirudayadosh (Intelligence), N. Selvin (Saidapet), Palani (Pulianthope), Muniyandi (Flower Bazaar), Inspector Murugavel, SI Rajendran with a fully armed posse at EPDP's "hide-out" in K.K. Nagar. Mathivanan was rescued and 24 militants besides Douglas

Devananda and Ramesh arrested.

The militants had tried to apply pressure on the child's parents by throwing recorded tapes of his pleas in front of their house and into their car.

The EPDP was formed as a splinter of the ENDLF, now one of the ruling constituents in northeast Lanka. Douglas



Mathivanan



Four abductors nabbed by police: (Left to Right) Murali, Rajan, Douglas Devananda and Ramesh.

AIADMK & LTTE

... To make the matters worse for Karunanidhi, Tamil Nadu Congress-I chief Vazhappadi Ramamurthy has received a threatening letter, allegedly from the LTTE. The letter which looks amateurish, has threatened to eliminate Ramamurthy if he does not stop his anti-LTTE tirade.

Whether it was really sent by the LTTE or not, the letter has come in handy for Ramamurthy to push forward with his campaign for the dismissal of the DMK Government.

He and his colleagues are busy preparing a report on militant activities, focusing on the use of the Tamil Nadu coast by the LTTE for smuggling, among other things, diesel and essential commodities like rice. The report is to be submitted to Sahay during his visit.

Curiously, the Congress-I's ally, the AIADMK, is maintaining absolute silence on the DMK-LTTE nexus. Though Jayalalitha's protracted absence from the city is cited by her partymen as one of the reasons, senior party leaders admit that the AIADMK cannot afford to join the Congress-I in the latter's outright condemnation of the LTTE.

"After all, no regional party in Tamil Nadu can really run down the LTTE or, for that matter, any other Sri Lankan Tamil militant group," says a senior leader.

"Of course, we too are campaigning for the dismissal of Karunanidhi as the law and order situation has broken down. But we will not bring LTTE into the picture as the Congress-I is doing....."

- K.N. Arun in *Sunday Mail*, Madras, Dec. 9 '90

TELO atrocities in the East

TELO cadres are reported to be involved in large-scale killings and terrorism in the Batticaloa district in the East in recent days. On December 6, a contingent of Sinhala troops from the Neelavanai army camp, along with TELO cadres, had intercepted several males including students going for examination in Thuraincelavanai, beat them up mercilessly and burnt them to death by heaping tyres on them. On the 1st December, in another brutality, TELO cadres are reported to have raped an 18-year old girl, Nallathamby Anushya at Araiampathy, killed her and flung her body into a river.

BACKGROUND BRIEFINGS

by Arjuna

Devananda was earlier involved in the shooting incident at Choolaimedu two years ago in which one man died. He was arrested and let on bail, and the case is still pending.

The militants have been held under six sections of IPC, which relate to kidnapping, wrongful confinement, extortion, causing hurt, poisoning, Kilpauk police is investigating.

The Tamil Nation & Sunday Island

Getting a compliment from the wrong side of the fence - particularly when there is an ongoing war to decide where the fence should be erected - is certainly a matter worth recording; and to be shared with our readers.

The *Sunday Island* in Colombo of 25th November 1990, carries the following in its centre page column - *Media Scene* :-

"You can't keep a good man down for long. So S. Sivanayagam, the most effective propagandist of the Eelam cause, is back, this time flying banner of a 'Tamil Nation.' This is the name of the latest tabloid to come out of the Eelam stables. While the jockey is Sivanayagam, former Editor of the 'Saturday Review', Jaffna and the head of the former Madras-based Tamil Information Centre, the owner (or at least one of them) one suspects is N. Satyendra whose reflections get a generous amount of space in the new publication. Satyendra, the son of former Senator S. Nadesan, will be recalled as the man who busted up the Thimpu conference and an expatriate pillar of the Eelam establishment.

Sivanayagam although he has been away from Sri Lanka since 1983 has always been a well-informed commentator on Sri Lankan affairs but in 'Tamil Nation' at least he makes a bad mistake. In two places he says that former UNP Chairman N.G.P. Panditharatne was killed by the JVP. Mr. Panditharatne withdrew from UNP politics long before the gunmen became active. It was UNP Chairman Harsha Abeywardene and General Secretary Nandalal Fernando who were the JVP's victims."

Note by Editor, *Tamil Nation* :

The "bad mistake" was of course corrected in the November 1 issue of *TN* and an apology tendered to Mr. Panditharatne and *TN* readers. While human memory can play tricks even in the mind of a "well-informed commentator on Sri Lankan affairs", particularly when distanced from Colombo happenings for seven long years, a mistake is nevertheless a mistake, and so, wearing sackcloth and ashes, and looking penitent, we say MEA CULPA. (This is one advantage in fighting with the pen, instead of with the gun - you can always give a man back his life!)

We also believe that even though human life has become very cheap in Sri Lanka, in inverse proportion to the cost of living, no man has the right to call a living person dead, or even wish him dead - Mr. Pirabhakaran excepted of course! A sentiment which we are sure Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne would heartily endorse.

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THE JAFFNA YOUTH CONGRESS:

(continued from previous issue)

Muthucumaru's speech therefore struck a responsive chord among the youth present. In his address he did make references without elaborating on them, to the forces of capitalism and the enslavement and exploitation of the working classes, the barriers of social conventions and the oppressive nature of political power. He underlined the need to educate the masses on questions concerning the welfare of the people such as old age pensions, the housing problem, national insurance, and unemployment. He stressed the need to destroy caste prejudices against particular industries and forms of manual work. He appealed to the youth in these words, "It rests with you young men, to take up the great work of educating the people. Carry the light of knowledge to every door. Let the difference between you and the masses be one of character and culture rather than that of dress or speech or habit."

Ten Resolutions

In the final session of the Congress a series of resolutions moved by Handy Perinbanayagam were passed.

(1) That this Congress recognising that it is possible for people of all regions to work for the welfare of the motherland and promote its interests with equal sincerity and earnestness resolves that as far as the Congress is concerned that no distinction be made between or preference shown to anyone of the various religious bodies in the country and that no sectarian issue be ever raised in any general or committee meetings held by the Congress or any propaganda carried by it, and that a clause to this effect be invested in the Constitution.

(2) That a committee be appointed to organise sub-organisations affiliated to the Congress, wherever a number of students can be made to from themselves into such sub-organisations.

(3) That this Congress is of opinion that the caste differences existing at present in the country are an obstacle to the progress of the nation and resolves that the members of the Congress strive as far as possible to remove the curse of untouchability from our midst.

(4) That the members of the Congress bind themselves by a pledge to devote at least three hours in the week to the study of a cultivation of the national literature.

(5) That prize, medal or some other form of inducement be offered by the Congress to anyone who does some original work for the revival of national literature, art or music.

(6) That a committee of five members be appointed by the executive committee to devise ways and means to develop the national literature in the following branches: (a) Science (b) Fiction (c) Social history and biography.

(7) That the Congress take early steps to see that the teaching of Tamil in schools in South Ceylon and Sinhala in schools in North Ceylon be introduced.

(8) That the executive committee of this Congress be asked to take such steps as to make the sessions of the Congress to be held in April 1925 representative of all races (principally Sinhalese and Tamils) creeds and interests.

(9) That a publication committee of three be formed to print and publish leaflets in order to explain to the masses the objects of the Congress movement and educate them in habits of temperance and co-operation.

(10) That the Congress resolves that the members as far as possible patronise local trade and industries, and in particular that they should eschew foreign soap, scents toilet powder, liquor and cigarettes.²²

All Island outlook

It is evident from the above resolutions that the Students' Congress from its very inception adopted a radical line on social reforms and set before its members a programme for national resurgence. It is worthy of note that nowhere in these resolutions is there any indication that they were concerned with a purely Tamil revival. On the contrary the word 'national' is repeatedly used keeping in mind an all-island perspective. The hope was that the Students' Congress would grow into an All-Ceylon Students' Congress. It happened that the Students' Congress being active in Jaffna among the Tamil people the resolutions translated into practice amounted to a revival of the Tamil language and literature. One day out of the three days of the annual sessions was set apart exclusively for a programme in Tamil.

Sinhala & Tamil

The resolution that Sinhala be taught to Tamil students and that Tamil be taught to Sinhalese students indicates again their commitment to national unity. In the context of the communalism, mutual suspicion and animosity that was creating a widening gulf and gradually tearing apart the Sinhalese and Tamil political leaders of the time, the Students' Congress set before itself the ideal of unity of all races and creeds.

Above sectarianism

The first resolution excludes religious sectarianism. The 1920s marked the emergence of a period of Hindu-Christian rivalry in Jaffna that lasted for nearly two decades. The columns of the *Hindu Organ* and the *Morning Star* testify to a growing spirit of animosity and rivalry especially over the opening of new schools and the patronage exercised over existing schools. The young men of Jaffna were determined not to succumb to the sectarianism of either the Hindus or the Christians. The Students' Congress was acutely conscious of the divisive forces at work, and gave high priority to this problem. The Students' Congress having originated and having derived its inspiration from the environs of Jaffna College, a leading Christian institution, the Congress was at times labelled as under Christian influence. J.V. Chelliah, Vice Principal of Jaffna College and a leading layman of the South India United Church, had been elected President of the Congress. The leaders of the Congress were therefore anxious to dispel any doubts about the secular nature of the organisation. Several well known Hindu leaders did participate in the prog-

ramme of the Congress. The well known Hindu savant Shivapathasundram was invited to preside at and deliver the presidential address at the 1930 sessions in order to demonstrate to Hindu extremists the secular nature of the Congress.

Situation in India

The resolutions at the first Congress tend to give the impression that politics had been relegated to the background. There was indeed no resolution on self-government. This was to be expected. In India the struggle for full self-government was beginning to take shape only in the 1920s. In Ceylon there was hardly any demand or voices raised in favour of self-government. At this time political thinking did not go beyond patchwork changes in the prevailing political structure like throwing open the upper echelons of the public service to Ceylonese, setting up of a University and increased representation in the Legislative Council. Even the suffrage was limited to the English educated middle class. The aspirations and aims of these young men were profoundly influenced by the situation in India. But in India itself the Indian National Congress resolved in favour of full independence only in 1930.

Youth radicalism

While there was a vague aspiration for self-government not clearly articulated at this time but which was to mature into the demand for full self-government at the 1931 sessions of the Students' Congress, the inaugural sessions concerned itself with the immediately realisable practical tasks of social reform and revival of the national languages. The radicalism of the Students' Congress at this time lay in its attitude to caste. When the resolution on the removal of untouchability was moved V. Muthucumaru challenged everybody present to eat or drink in the homes of the so-called depressed castes. The President in the chair was familiar with some of the preliminary gestures made by some of the young men present who had at Vaddukoddai visited the homes of the school employees from those castes and had taken short-teats and tea in their homes in deliberate defiance of caste taboos. The chairman J.V. Chelliah called upon Handy Perinbanayagam to answer the question raised. When Handy affirmed that he and his friends had tea in these homes Muthucumaru was astonished and admitted that till that moment he had not known that there were such radicals in Jaffna. Interrupting the discussion S. Shivapragasam, well known humorist of those days wanted to know whether it was tea that Handy and his friends had had or whether it was Jaffna's famous palmyrah toddy!²³

Gandhian influence

The very fact that the students and youth of Jaffna had organised themselves into a Congress was itself a radical venture in those times. In conservative Jaffna obedience and respect for elders was one of those unwritten laws that was strictly adhered to. In this regard

caste-oriented feudalistic society the Students' Congress was able to commit its members to the removal of "the curse of untouchability." This indicated the radical course that the Congress had set before itself. It also bore evidence to the extent to which Gandhism had captivated the minds of the youth of Jaffna.

Press reactions

The Students' Congress received favourable press comment both in Jaffna and Colombo. The *Ceylon Daily News* referred to it as "a promising development in student life" when the students of the North met in Congress and "gave expression to their determination to set the world aright." The paper warned against an "over-indulgence in political froth" but recalled the example of the Oxford and Cambridge Union Societies and their role in shaping future prime ministers in England and said, "If then politics is not too evil a subject for our rulers to toy with in their student days, it cannot do much harm to those who are supposed to be under training to shoulder the responsibilities of government in this country." *The Daily News* commended the address made by Mr. J.V. Chelliah especially his call to the youth to strike out on their own and not to follow slavishly in the path marked out for them by their elders.²⁴

Jaffna's weeklies

Jaffna's weeklies *The Morning Star*, the *Hindu Organ* and *The Ceylon Patriot* gave coverage in their respective papers to the sessions of the Congress and welcomed the efforts made by the youth. But *The Morning Star* and the *Hindu Organ* struck a note of caution. The *Hindu Organ* had warned even before the sessions had commenced that the youth should not attempt too much. "We are confident that they are lacking neither in enthusiasm nor in sincerity but what we wish to point out is that at the beginning a too ambitious programme is likely to dissipate their energies..." *The Hindu Organ* added, "It would be a fine testimony to their spirit of service if they could get some elderly men to be associated with them in this work. The race is to the young no doubt but the prize is always offered by the old."²⁵

"The Swarajya"

The Morning Star commented on the danger in rejecting all things foreign for the simple reason that they are foreign. "A true nationalist", *The Morning Star* editorial comment said, "will not rest content with the achievements of his ancestors... (and) harp on the glories of the past". It deprecated the speeches made by the Tamil scholars at the sessions who "chanted ad nauseam" the praises of the ancient writers and said nothing about what should be done by the present generation to make its contribution."²⁶

It is interesting to note that the Indian paper "The Swarajya" carried a comment on the formation of the Students' Congress in Jaffna. In the light of what has already been stated here the paper appears to have

got a distorted picture of what the Congress' aims and aspirations were. It commented, "The Students were mainly Tamils. Though the speakers of the day were in the right key, we confess that the stress laid on Tamil culture makes us somewhat apprehensive. Certainly no nation can grow away from its roots. But the practical question in Ceylon politics is the growing divergence among the two races and an intensive study of the culture of only a single race may deepen the currents of distrust and disunion."²⁷ *The Swarajya* comment was based on a report from a Colombo contemporary. It is worth noting that right from its beginnings the Students' Congress was being misunderstood as a movement that espoused the cause of the Tamils which in fact it was not. Distorted interpretations of the Students' Congress later renamed the Youth Congress. Jaffna were to become commonplace especially after the boycott of 1931. *The Swarajya* had correctly diagnosed the disease in Ceylon's body politic as that of the growing divergence among the two races but had failed to note that the Students' Congress was the emerging movement in the North that was to challenge that divergence, a commitment to which many of its leaders remained faithful to the last.

Indian visitors

1925 to 1931 marks the period of growth of the Students' Congress. The Congress performed a vital role in politically educating the youth and in moulding public opinion, in Jaffna. Its aspirations were fervently nationalistic drawing its inspiration from the Indian National movement. Within the brief span of six years the Students' Congress had become a force to be reckoned with as demonstrated by the boycott of 1931. In this period a galaxy of personalities had either graced the annual sessions of the Congress, or addressed the youth. These included the foremost Indian leaders of the time such as Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Others who came from India included Satyamurthi, Kalyanasundaranar, and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya. The Sinhalese speakers at Congress sessions included several of the future political leaders of the country. A youth organisation that was able to get such eminent men to appear on its platform naturally commanded respect, and at times evoked the envy of older men.

The annual sessions became increasingly popular with attendance increasing from about three hundred at the inaugural sessions to about one thousand participants when the congress reached its peak period of activity in 1931. Most of the youth from Jaffna's leading schools came within the ambit of the Congress' influence. The annual sessions held for a period of three days became the central event in the life of the Congress and was much looked forward to in Jaffna.

Second Sessions

The second sessions of the Students' Congress was held at the Vaitilingam Madam at Keerimalai from the 27th to 29th April 1925. Keerimalai which was Jaffna's famous holi-

VISITS OF INDIAN LEADERS

day resort became the meeting place for several subsequent sessions. The young men would settle down here for three days during their holiday season to discuss and debate the momentous issues of the times. Something of a holiday atmosphere and hilarious fellowship prevailed. But beneath the apparent light-heartedness of youth there was a seriousness of purpose. The three days were divided into five or six sessions. The first session would include the welcome address by one of the leading members of the Congress. It became a singular honour for whoever was elected to deliver the address, an event he never forgot in his lifetime. The welcome address was not a mere formality. It ran into ten or twelve pages, was often printed and it outlined the tasks facing the Congress in the coming year. The secretaries' report was then presented. This was followed by the presidential address delivered by a distinguished personality of the times.

Proceedings in Tamil

The traditional vote of thanks to the president concluded the first sessions. The second to fifth sessions were devoted to lectures and discussions on economic and social questions, the revival of the national literature, art and music, education and politics. The political session was often, one but the last session, followed by the final sessions at which resolutions were moved. The election of office-bearers came on the first day. The second day was largely devoted to national literature and culture and the proceedings were entirely in Tamil with noted Tamil scholars participating. In between sessions and late in the evenings there was musical entertainment. Informal discussions having a bearing on the subjects discussed, of course took place during the intervals.

National resurgence

The overall objective of the annual sessions was to educate and make politically conscious the youth of Jaffna. The dominant theme was national resurgence in the economic, social, cultural, educational and political life of the country. The ideal of a united nation was repeatedly stressed. The revival of the Tamil language and literature was given the utmost importance.

The second annual sessions opened with the welcome address delivered by S.J. Gunasegaram; P. de S. Kularatne was then formally proposed to the chair by C. Subramaniam. It was reported that Kularatne kept the visionary youth spellbound with his speech for more than an hour. He underlined the three aims of the Congress (1) To revive the national art, literature and music (2) To make Ceylon economically independent, and (3) To train the young for national service in particular²⁸ and to work for the realisation of the ideal of a United Ceylonese Nation. These three aims and virtually become the creed of the congress and any participant at these sessions had to subscribe to these aims. Kularatne was at this time held in high regard by the people of Jaffna because of his commitment to an all-island nationalism. As the *Hindu Organ* put it he was welcome as "the first England returned

Ceylonese to defy public opinion and prove in the teeth of opposition that it is not clothes that make the man but man that makes the clothes"²⁹

Life Style in Jaffna

Kularatne appeared to have been impressed by the life style of the people of Jaffna. He expressed the view that one of the greatest contributions that Jaffna can give to (our) brothers of the South is the very simple mode of living of the Jaffna Tamil. It is worth noting that some earlier E.C. Dewick a one time missionary in India writing on "Some impressions of Jaffna" said, "It was a joy to find some people not wearing trousers and willing to sit on the floor in decent oriental fashion for meals... In some ways, I found myself more at home in Jaffna than anywhere else in Ceylon; it was more like 'old times' in India." He continued, "My impressions of Jaffna include that of an unusually large body of young men who are taking a keen interest in the problems of the world and in the future of their country."³⁰ This simplicity of life-style and adaptability to the native traditions of Jaffna and love of country remained characteristic of the Youth Congress generation of men, which an elitist English education and 'middle class' jobs never blurred.

Youth ideals

The topics on which addresses were delivered, the persons invited to speak and the programme in general set the tone and pattern of the Students' Congress proceedings in the coming years. The subjects taken up for discussion give an insight into the ideals that propelled the youth of this time. As already mentioned there wasn't a coherent ideology. But there is no doubt that the youth were seeking to find an intellectual basis for a programme of action that would lead to a regeneration of their national life and freedom from foreign domination in the economic, social and cultural life of the country.

Swami Vipulananda

V. Muthucumarar spoke on "Food Production and Unemployment" at the session concerned with economic issues. He advocated the colonisation of the Vanni and called upon the youth to take to agriculture. V. Thillainathan delivered a talk on "Our Industrial Needs". The afternoon sessions on the second day were devoted to a discussion on the revival of national literature. Swami Vipulananda led the discussion which was in Tamil. T.P. Masilamany addressed the gathering on "Journalism in Tamil" and K. Aiyathurai spoke on "What the State can do for Tamil". Other participants at the discussion included Navaneetha Krishna Bharathi and V. Muthucumarar. In the course of his comments Swami Vipulananda emphasised the need to have the national language as the medium of instruction in schools. He had also touched on the caste problem and said that he could speak with authority from the Vedas and Shastras when he said that Hinduism never does countenance untouchability.³¹

The final sessions of the Congress on the third day was devoted to political and educational matters. A.M.K. Cumaraswamy spoke on "Sinhalese-Tamil Unity" while A. Cumaraswamy gave a lecture on "Higher Education". The resolutions passed at this session included abolition of untouchability, the desirability of the Tamils and the Sinhalese learning each other's language and culture and a call on nationals to adopt the national costume. The office-bearers elected at the second annual sessions were M.Sithampanathan and C.Subramaniam, joint secretaries, V.Thillainathan, treasurer and fifteen other members were elected to the executive committee.

A Sinhalese President

P.de S. Kularatne became the first Sinhalese to be elected President of the Students' Congress thereby emphasising the fact that the Students' Congress was expected to grow into an all-island movement and not merely remain a movement of the youth of Jaffna. The Students' Congress had succeeded in obtaining the participation of personalities who did command respect in the eyes of the public. The *Hindu Organ* on the eve of the sessions made flattering comments on the choice of speakers as promising national and social workers qualified to pronounce opinions on economic matters. V. Muthucumarar was regarded as a young man of some vision and tenacity of purpose and A.M.K. Cumaraswamy as one who had identified himself with world movements of young men. With reference to Swami Vipulananda the editorial said, "He points to us the ideal before us. He is the embodiment of plain living and high thinking. He is the messenger of the East building on the old and yet new. From him our young men will not only drive instruction but even inspiration."

Hindu Organ comments

Commenting on the general theme of the Congress at its annual sessions the *Hindu Organ* said, "We have every reason to hope that it is going to produce a great awakening among the young men of our country. The youth are looking out for fields of action. They feel themselves circumscribed everywhere. Still they must act. Youth cannot be suppressed. It must express itself. The Students' Congress is thus an inevitable result of a desire for self-expression on the part of our young men and it should be the duty of our leaders to extend their help and sympathy to the movement, so that the young men might feel that they are in a freer atmosphere to unburden their hearts"³² The Students' Congress at this time in the early years of its history was without doubt thriving on the euphoria of praise and encouragement especially from the older men. Criticism and bitter opposition came a little later as the members began to translate into action some of the lofty ideals they stood for.

Third Sessions

The third annual sessions due to be held in April 1926 was postponed on account of an outbreak of cholera in the Jaffna

Peninsula. The sessions were later held in Keerimalai at the Vaithilingam Madam under the Presidentship of Dr. Isaac Thambiah in December 1926.³³ S. Kulandran delivered the welcome address. Dr. Isaac Thambiah had made a resounding call to the youth to come forward and take their share in the life of the nation. Kulandran in his welcome address drew attention to the attitude of the people of Jaffna to politics. He said that the Tamils of Jaffna had been so far indifferent as to who ruled them and how they were ruled, basing their attitude on a humorous saying that floats among the people that it is of little consequence whether Rama rules or Ravana rules. They were slow to take any risks by poking their heads into the risky field of politics guided by the cowardly saying which has come down from ancient times, 'Be the first to appear at a feast and the last to appear at a muster.'³⁴

Sinhala-Tamil unity

The main addresses at the political sessions were by J.V.Chelliah on "Youth today and its political responsibility" and by M.S. Eliathamby on "Ceylon a United Nation". The Tamil Conference was held on the second day with Pandit K.C. Nathan presiding. S. Natesapillai spoke on "New ways to Literature", K. Thambiah delivered a talk on "Some ideals of Student Life". M.S. Eliathamby spoke on "Swadeshi in Ceylon". The sessions on the third day were devoted to an Economic and Social Conference. Several themes such as the "Economic Future of Ceylon"; "The place of Khaddar in Indian National Policy" and "Some Social Ideals for the Ceylon of Today", were discussed. Sinhalese-Tamil Unity figured prominently in the resolutions passed at the final sessions. This had by now become entrenched as a cardinal principle of the Students' Congress and was significant in the context of the growing rift between older Tamil political leaders and their Sinhalese counterparts over the tricky issue of representation in the legislative council.

Press criticism

This time the annual sessions did evoke press comment that was not altogether favourable. The *Ceylon Patriot* while encouraging and supporting the Congress however said that "the mere holding of the annual sessions without any solid work being done in the intervening periods will not be of much use" and called upon the youth to formulate a well-considered programme at each session which should be carried into effect by a representative committee functioning till the next session.³⁵ While the speeches that were made at the annual sessions were becoming more and more radical apparently not much work of a practical nature had been done in between session. The *Hindu Organ* commenting on the sessions of the Jaffna Students' Congress as well as that of the Indian National Congress held in December in India pointed out that the history of political agitation during the preceding few years indicated that communal unity was an easy subject to speak on but that it was very difficult to attain. Obviously hinting at the pro-

ceedings of the Students' Congress sessions it said, "neither platform speeches nor outbursts of youthful enthusiasm nor deliberate maligning of respected leaders and associates will help the advocates of unity to realise their ambition."³⁶ In a subsequent issue the *Hindu Organ* in a lengthy editorial criticised very strongly the speech made by J.V. Chelliah at the annual sessions of the Congress. He was accused of giving vent to his personal feelings and that of his co-religionists. His advice to students to take part in politics was characterised as irresponsible. The editor of the *Hindu Organ* laid emphasis on the traditional qualities of obedience and said, "To invite the students to criticise the opinions of their parents and leaders and to sit in judgment over their actions will only tend to the weakening of reverence for age and authority and to the disturbance of the bonds of family and social relationship." A sectarian religious motive was alleged to be behind J.V. Chelliah's speech. This was the period when the Hindu Board of Education was establishing its own schools and bringing existing Hindu Schools under one unified management. It was assumed that the missionaries were using J.V. Chelliah to divert the attention of the Hindu youth from religion to politics.

The missionaries

The *Hindu Organ* denied that there was a Hindu-Christian split and called it a figment of Mr. Chelliah's imagination. The Hindus, it claimed were removing their children from Christian schools so that they may receive their education in Hindu Schools. Mr. Chelliah's criticism of the Legislative Councillors of the Northern Province was construed as an attack on them because they had helped to remove the obstacles that the missionaries were believed to have created, to the progress of Hindu Education. The *Hindu Organ* asserted, "One thing they (the legislative councillors) refused to do, that is, they refused to help the missionaries to obtain public money for institutions that were established for proselytising purposes."³⁷

Footnotes :

22. *Ceylon Patriot*, 21 January 1925. See also *Hindu Organ*, 15 January 1925.
23. SHP Reminiscences.
24. *Ceylon Daily News*, 1 January 1925.
25. *Hindu Organ*, 25 December 1924.
26. *Morning Star*, 17 January 1925.
27. Reported in the *Morning Star*, 10 January 1925.
28. *Morning Star*, 2 May 1925.
29. *Hindu Organ*, 27 April 1925.
30. E.C. Dewick, "Some Impressions of Jaffna" *Jaffna College Miscellany* September 1924.
31. *Morning Star*, 30 May 1925.
32. *Hindu Organ*, 27 April 1925.
33. *Ceylon Patriot*, 29 December 1926.
34. Interview with Bishop Kulandran.
35. *Ceylon Patriot*, 12 January 1927.
36. *Hindu Organ*, 6 January 1927.
37. *Ibid.*, 6 January 1927.

(Next Issue :
Gandhi's visit to
Jaffna)

Mankulam and Aftermath

MANKULAM, A STRATEGIC LOSS, MINISTER ADMITS

'In War there are Reverses and Victories' - Ranjan W.

While trying to evade the truth about army casualties in the recent Mankulam attack by the Tigers, Minister Ranjan Wijeratne virtually admitted that the loss of the camp was a military reverse for the Government. He was answering probing questions by the Press at his weekly Press briefing held at the Kotte Parliamentary complex on November 28.

Mankulam was a strategic location, he said, because of the two important roads at that junction, one leading to Mullaitivu, the other to Elephant Pass. It was held for its strategic aspect.

According to *The Island* report, this was the Minister's version :

There were two companies of security personnel comprising 299 men (*Reminds us of the prices of Bata shoes, does it not?* - Ed. TN) and 11 officers based at the Mankulam camp at the time it came under attack. After two days of heavy fighting with the Tigers, 273 army men who had survived (*which means only 26 soldiers were killed during the two days of heavy fighting; so why didn't they fight on?* - Ed. TN) had decided to leave the camp on November 24. They had been pursued by the LTTE and in the ensuing gun battle the troops had shot dead six Tigers (*A case of the pursued killing the pursuers!* - Ed. TN) They had then broken up into three groups and advanced along separate routes (*A remarkable feat - of advancing while retreating!* - Ed. TN). One group was earlier located and picked up by a helicopter and brought to Vavuniya (*How many can a helicopter pick up, Mr. Minister?* - Ed. TN) The other two groups had now been traced and radio contact with them had been established. Mr. Wijeratne said that he was withholding the information relating to the number of troops forming the other two groups (*naturally!* - Ed. TN), their locations and the direction they were moving in, due to security reasons (*Of course, of course* - Ed. TN). If such information was revealed through publication in the Press, the LTTE could pursue the army personnel still in the Mankulam jungles (*The implication being that the Tigers would stop the pursuit until they read it in The Island!*). The radio at the Mankulam army camp was silent as the antenna had been attacked. There was no radio contact earlier as a result, he added. The Minister noted that the attack on the Mankulam camp had commenced on November 22 and continued until the following day. The Tigers had used every conceivable type of weapon including RPGs, mortars, heavy machine guns and bombs for the "prestigious take-over" of the camp. The troops had fought back valiantly. There had been heavy casualties on the LTTE side.... (*blah, blah, blah*).

Questions & Answers

Q: 'Today's *Island* newspaper has given figures of the army personnel who had reached safety. Is that correct?

A: I don't want to either confirm or deny that story. Don't ask me for figures. How is that "*The Island*" knows more than I do? (The Minister produces a copy of yesterday's *Island*).

Q: Who was the Commander at the Mankulam camp?

A: Major Daulagala... Defence Secretary visited Vavuniya yesterday and interviewed the Major on what took place.

Q: How many LTTE cadres had taken part in the attack?

A: It's difficult to give an exact figure. It's around 1800.

Q: So then earlier fears of about 100 security men being killed is not correct?

A: Well it's not that bad as earlier visualised. The Commanding Officer said that 273 men had withdrawn from the camp...

Q: What about the others?

A: They were casualties...

Q: What is the number of troops to be picked up?

A: Why do you ask questions of that nature? I don't want to give numbers and risk lives of others... When such information is published unwittingly, the LTTE picks it up.

Q: So it not correct to say that 100 soldiers had been killed or feared dead?

Defence Secretary Gen. Cyril Ranatunge: We cannot give details. There are tactics involved.

Journalist: We are not asking for tactics, General. The government press release stated that about 100 security personnel are feared dead.

Gen. Ranatunge: There was radio silence. The troops there are battling on the ground. They are not just running away. Naturally there must have been casualties. When they withdrew there were 30 casualties with them and some may have succumbed to their injuries.

Q: The LTTE claims that they had killed 150 security personnel in that attack...

Gen. Ranatunge: The LTTE was surprised at what happened. They thought that they could just throw some bombs and that would be the end of the troops there.

Mr. Wijeratne noted that it was a matter of time before Mankulam was taken back by the security forces. The LTTE had mustered all its cadres from Jaffna and Mannar and from their bases at Thununkai and Meithikakulam in Mullaitivu for the Mankulam attack.

Q: Why do you think they launched the Mankulam attack?

A: I don't know. Maybe to clear troops from the axis.

'Air support not effective'

Q: Didn't you all anticipate an attack on Mankulam camp?

A: There were about 300 personnel there and they were able to manage. Now we will assess the situation further. That's military strategy when one strategy fails, adopt another. In war there are reversals and victories. I can't be pulling the rabbit out of the hat all the time. We will keep the people informed of what's happening.

Q: Do you think it was a mistake to have kept only 300 personnel at Mankulam?

A: After the event it is easy to say that was right and that was wrong. The strategy of the LTTE was to divert our forces. That's what they tried at the Jaffna Fort and in Mannar. We are now used to diversions. We have a new strategy.

Q: At the Mankulam junction of the two roads the Mullaitivu road was not used by the army. Do you think it was worthwhile having the army there with only one road being used?

A: At that time we felt that the LTTE must not be allowed to move freely on the Mullaitivu road.

Q: Has the LTTE removed any weapons from the Mankulam camp?

A: No, the withdrawing troops had taken some away while the others were destroyed.

Q: Wasn't there aerial assistance to the troops during the attack?

A: The weather was very bad. When the President and I went to Jaffna also it was raining. The situation was very bad with low clouds and heavy rains. Air support was not very effective because of that. In Jaffna the President saw first hand the area which had fallen into the hands of the forces. He visited the KKS cement factory, the harbour, Kayts and Nagadeepa. The President addressed the forces. It was a great morale booster for the troops that their Commander-in-Chief came to the frontline.

The Minister said that in the Eastern Province, forces had cleared up to Thiriyaya in Trincomalee district. There were new pockets of LTTE in Batticaloa. They would be dealt with in due course.

Q: Is the curfew in the North continuing?

A: I leave that to the field commanders.

Q: When the President was in Jaffna was he aware of the Mankulam attack?

A: At the tail end of his visit, he was informed.

Q: Were the troops at Mankulam ordered to withdraw?

A: No, we lost radio contact.

Q: You said Trincomalee is under the full control of troops, but there are LTTE attacks still taking place...

A: There are remnants in hiding. Even today we are in combat with the JVP. They are hiding among the civilian population. They can throw a grenade and get away. We are gradually getting at them. In areas like Matara, Hakmana and Akuressa, they are still there. We have to build up confidence among the people. When the JVPers feel that they would be got at, they lose con-

fidence. When I visited the refugee camps in Colombo housing Tamils, I told them that they would not be sent back until their security was ensured and they could live in peace.

The Colombo incident

Q: What was the clash that took place in Colombo?

A: At Husciniya Street? A plot of land was purchased by some Tamil people in a predominantly-Muslim area ostensibly to build a medical clinic for free treatment. You can imagine the psychological nature of thinking of the Muslims and their frame of mind after the Jaffna and Mannar incidents. Some fanatical elements though this was the thin end of the wedge. They spread rumours that the Tamils were trying to establish a Kovil there and whipped up sentiments among the Muslims. In that clash five cars and the building was burnt. Police was aware of the situation. In fact there had been some policemen at the scene and they had fired into the air. Otherwise there would have been many deaths. The situation was brought under control. I told the Police that trouble makers, be they Tamils or Muslims, should be taken in. They had been told to pursue the matter and take in whoever who led that attack.

Q: There are charges that the Police were inactive.

A: If the police had fired at the people, then it would be said that they had killed people

unnecessarily. Police are here to save lives) not to destroy lives. The Tamils should not have barged in there knowing the frame of mind of the Muslims. They should have used their heads and come to us for advice and guidance. We could have resolved the matter amicably. They should have realised the tensions especially among the Tamils and Muslims.

Q: You said "ostensibly to build a medical clinic" Are there any doubts about that?

A: I have not gone into the full details of that. I will go into the police reports to establish the bonafides of that. I will go there myself and size up the situation.

Q: Police have been placed on the alert in the city?

A: We handled a bigger situation when the exodus of Muslims from Mannar took place. We don't want another Ayodhya here. Anybody who comes forward to create trouble would be committing suicide.

Q: Any arrests in connection with the clash in Colombo?

A: I will ask the DIG and tell you next week at the briefing.

Q: Will the Muslims who fled Mannar be resettled?

A: Of course. They will be going back very soon.

Also present at the Press Conference were Industries, Science and Technology Minister, Ranil Wickremesinghe, State Minister for Information, A.J. Ranasinghe, Defence Secretary, Gen. Cyril Ranatunge and Secretary to the State Ministry for Defence, Air Marshall, Walter Fernando.

'The Tigers have a sense of purpose' - THE ISLAND

This last week has been full of Mankulam, a remote and isolated Army camp in Vavuniya from which resisting soldiers had no alternative but to withdraw in the face of a fierce onslaught by the LTTE. It has been without doubt the most wasteful battle of what looks increasingly like a futile war in which both sides are fatalistically locked as predetermined by this nation's collective karma. No estimates of the dead are still available but many are feared killed. Cruel though it might sound it almost looks as if such setbacks are necessary to penetrate the complacency of a metropolitan elite which is having a ball while the country is on fire.

Elsewhere on this page and newspaper two regular writers argue that a basic shift in strategy is necessary on the part of the Sri Lanka Army to meet the LTTE's challenge. There is the danger that the initial euphoria generated by the Army's successes can degenerate into bitterness in the public mind in the face of a long drawn-out war. This the country cannot afford at least for the sake of those brave young men who have died in battle, mak-

ing the supreme sacrifice of lives only recently bloomed.

While the Sri Lanka Army has certainly advanced from the pre-1983 days some hard questions and soul-searching are not out of order. Why did the Army have to suffer setbacks at Muttur, Kakkavil and now Mankulam? Was it a flaw in planning or lack of necessary support to the fighting troops? These questions have to be asked not in a spirit of petty political partisanship or demagogic casuistry but in the interests of the people whose sons are out there fighting.

Our regular commentator on Tamil politics Taraki argues alongside this column that the defence pundits have to take account of the fact that the LTTE is no longer a guerilla force but a conventional army which thinks of itself as a national liberation army. In Tamil political discourse apparently the debate between people's war and conventional warfare has been resolved in favour of the latter. This is logical when we take account of the fact that the LTTE does not favour Marxism of any variety

(Continued next page)

Mankulam and Aftermath

(continued).

and indeed shows some abhorrence for it. In short Che Guevara has been dethroned and Napoleon rides again.

It is therefore necessary that the Sri Lanka Army too adjusts itself to these realities. We cannot advise the Generals but it is necessary that any necessary political or intellectual support should be given to the Army to re-orient its strategies and re-order its operations. The Army must feel a sense of commitment and be motivated by a sense of purpose. However wrong the objectives of the LTTE are they have such a sense of purpose. The Army has during this campaign done the country proud by its bravery but if such performances are to continue they have to receive support at all levels. The men must feel that the country is with them. Does this hold true any more after the fading of the initial euphoria? This is the question the country must face. It is the duty of the Government to put the country on an austere footing, cut down on tamashas and demonstrate to the soldiers that the country is with them in the battle field. Such a message has clearly no chance of getting across if there is a carnival every night and a tamasha at every five-star hotel with some panjandrum in attendance. This carnival must stop.

QUESTION IN PARLIAMENT: 'SOLDIERS ARE THERE TO FIGHT', - MINISTER

SLFP M.P. for Colombo district Nimal Siripala de Silva raised the following adjournment query in Parliament :-

"Since it has been reported that LTTE terrorists having launched an attack on the Mankulam Army Camp, had blasted the camp and decamped with an armoured car and a haul of weapons.

and particularly because in this attack nearly 500 soldiers who were in the Camp had died or are considered missing,

and as reportedly alleged, this camp which had been impregnable and fortified for so long was laid open to attack in the absence of aircraft, which had been deployed on some other mission, has caused a sense of fear, consternation and sorrow in the minds of the people of this country,

and because this tragedy could lead to lowering of the morale among the forces,

making it clear that millions of rupees apportioned under defence expenditure for the

procurement of sophisticated weaponry had been utilized making one to conclude that this was a major victory for the "Tigers", will he (the Minister) inform this House :-

(a) of the reason for the non-availability of support aircraft for the beleaguered troops during the attack on the Mankulam Camp;

(b) why fortifications of isolated camps have not been strengthened in the face of possible LTTE attacks and why no assessment had been made of the attack/defence capability of such camps so as to ensure the safety and security of the soldiers in those camps;

(c) whether suitable retaliatory attacks could not be made to ensure the safety of the camp due to the carelessness and/or wrong decisions of certain persons, and what steps the government will take to ensure that such a catastrophe and disaster of this magnitude will not be permitted to be repeated in the future."

Reply by Minister of Defence

Defence Minister Ranjan Wijeratne in reply said that the commanding officer of the attacked Mankulam camp had retreated with his men "to live to fight another day". At Kokavil, the commanding officer had stuck to his guns and fought until the end. He was killed in that battle. In the LTTE attack on the Kiran army camp, the commanding officer and his men had held on and fought on until reinforcements arrived. These three commanders had acted in three different ways. When under attack it was up to them to decide what to do.

The Minister observed that Mr. Silva had spoken of "safeguarding soldiers". There was no question of safeguarding soldiers as such. They were there to fight and it was not possible to give them an umbrella cover. Air cover and

reinforcements were provided at a time of attack. However, in the Mankulam incident, visibility on the part of the pilots was very poor due to blanket of clouds. That prevented the pilots from extending the required assistance to the ground forces. However after the clouds cleared up they went into action. Only when one was flying one would realise what it was to have a blanket of clouds. Mr. de Silva had spoken of "wrong decisions" and "carelessness". "I am not aware of any such thing. If he knows he must give details so that I could inquire into them."

Mr. de Silva: If there are clouds of that nature, what action will you take to protect the forces under attack?

Mr. Wijeratne: They will have to fight.

Speaker M.H. Mohamed: The Minister cannot tell the forces how to protect their camps.

Mr. Wijeratne: We will adopt different strategies...

SUNDAY TIMES Colombo, Political Correspondent on

What went wrong at Mankulam

By Sunday Times political correspondent

We must admit our mistakes, our reverses. We will reverse the reverses was how State Minister for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne described last Saturday's debacle at Mankulam.

The frankness of the Minister was indeed welcome. It was also a welcome change from the excuses trotted out in the years gone by in the face of a setback at the hands of the terrorists.

Minister Wijeratne is a man known not to mince his words. Though his adversaries may not necessarily agree with every word he utters, they accept his word for what it is.

Thus when the Minister says, the Forces have suffered a reversal, it is not only a reversal for the Forces, but also for the country they are fighting to safeguard.

It is in this context that the debacle of Mankulam should be viewed and steps should be taken to remedy the 'mistakes'. Minister Wijeratne has been frank enough to acknowledge.

The Mankulam Army Camp located at a strategic junction to prevent the Tigers access along the Vavuniya - Elephant Pass Road came under attack on the night of Thursday, November 22.

The Tigers attacked the northern, southern and eastern flanks with 3 Pazilan (Baba) 200 mortars. This was launched at about 6.45 p.m. continued till the early hours of Friday morning. And after a short break, due to intensive aerial bombings, the Tigers continued their offensive only later that night.

The terrorists also sought to prevent relief troops been sent into help the besieged soldiers by initiating a dummy attack in Mannar. Further, the location of the Mankulam Camp was such that reinforcements or artillery support could not be provided to the troops in the face of attack. They also

ensured that reinforcements were not made possible by helicopter. This was done by building bunkers in an adjoining jungle patch which could bring effective fire on helicopters landing on the heli-pad.

Tigers initiated the attack by firing "Pazilans" (Mortars) from a distance of 500 yards at the camp which comprised 312 men and officers under the command of Major Daulagala.

By continuing to fire "Pazilans" the terrorists, most of them very young Baby Brigade Tiger cubs with only grenades in hand inched their way forward. By Friday morning the LTTE had captured eight of the army trenches entirely over-running the North and South of the camp. Soldiers under heavy attack - Pazilan mortars make a deafening noise - mounted a counter attack and re-took the South, but the North was still under the Tigers. The confirmed casualty figure stood at 3 dead, 4 missing in action, 37 wounded (6 seriously) and 27 walking-wounded.

By 4 p.m. on Saturday, the 24th Maj. Gen. Denzil Kobekaduwa, the Northern Commander was on radio contact with the Major at Mankulam. He was questioning the Ground Commander when, all of a sudden, radio contact went dead.

This was the time President R. Premadasa was visiting Jaffna in the company of State Minister for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne and learnt of developments at Mankulam.

By this time the beleaguered men at Mankulam, with only some 15,000 rounds of ammunition in their possession decided to move out of the camp. Surprisingly, the men left undetected by the LTTE which could only mean that the aerial bombings had forced them out of the vicinity - for the moment.

Unlike in Kiran, where around one hundred soldiers

held their ground for a week following the Tiger offensive on June 11 at Mankulam under this surprise attack, the soldiers it seemed, were left with no alternative but to go for cover. They did not want another Kokavil to happen to them.

It is estimated that over 1,500 Tigers had participated in the attack, but most of them were from the Baby Brigade who faced the brunt of the Army firing.

For 1500 Tigers to be brought in for the attack, there would necessarily have to be a movement of men from different areas. This has not unnaturally, given rise to speculation as to how such a movement went unnoticed by the intelligence services of the government.

An Officer Commanding troops in the battlefield has to work to a plan. In order for him to do so, the necessary intelligence should be made available to him.

But on this occasion was such intelligence available? According to some reports there had in fact been adequate information that an attack at Mankulam was "imminent" and only 23 weeks ago on company of regulars had been replaced with a volunteer company of the Vijayabahu Infantry Regiment.

Some intelligence that was forthcoming was at the Security Council meeting on Tuesday, three days after the soldiers had abandoned the Mankulam Camp.

That intelligence came from the head of the National Intelligence Bureau, D.I.G. Zernie Wijesuriya.

Mr. Wijesuriya advised the meeting presided over by Minister Wijeratne and the Service Chiefs, of rumours in some sections of the Army, saying that soldiers did not have air support to back them up because of the President's visit to the North.

This allegation was immediately squashed by the

Army Commander pointing out that it was incorrect to say the soldiers were deprived of air support.

The speculation, to which attentions was drawn by Intelligence Chief DIG Zernie Wijesuriya was also expressed by the Opposition Leader Sirima Bandaranaike in Parliament on Thursday, but was immediately squashed by Leader of the House, Ranil Wickremesinghe who said she was trying to throw mud at the President.

On the night of Saturday, the 24th only hours after the troops at Mankulam had de-camped, the LTTE began pounding again. The Air Force had dropped some 36,000 rounds of ammunition for the men who had already left.

There was no response, no return fire to the LTTE. The birds had flown by then, and in the early hours of Sunday morning, the 25th LTTE cadres entered the empty camp.

The soldiers had meanwhile trekked nearly six miles towards Vavuniya the previous afternoon before resting for the night. In military parlance, they harboured for the night. It was raining heavily. There was mud and slush all around.

At around 6 a.m. Sunday the 25th, an LTTE hunting party had come looking for the soldiers and opened fire on them from the rear flank. Officers lost control momentarily, and the men broke into 3 groups.

Those who had compasses followed them others followed high-tension power-lines. A group of 70 men established radio contact just above Puliyankulam but heavy rains and poor visibility incapacitated the chopper pilots dwindled to some 52 and as the weather cleared up, six helicopters went down and brought the 52 plus some 18 others back to safety.

Twelve others who had walked and thick jungle also

turned up at Nelunkulam camp that night. They had eaten some rotis in a house thanked the occupants and left. A few hours later some of the men had been shot by the LTTE, and many believe the occupants had passed on the information.

Monday, the 26th was a no luck day for the forces. Bad weather preventing helicopters to fly. On the 27th some 20 more men of the VIR (Vijayabahu) were picked up the choppers. By Friday 117 of the 312 originally at the Mankulam camp have returned. The official death toll still stands at 32, and the balance 163 still "missing".

Morale at Mankulam was low at the time of attack. The men had not been on leave since June 11 when the LTTE re-commenced their military campaign for a separate state. The food stock at the camp had been rice, dhal and sprats.

A further aspect that is not being looked into by the Government and the measures taken to fortify and protect camps from enemy attack.

According to information available to the Security Forces, the Tiger "Pazilan" mortars have a firing range of 400-500 yards.

Some military analysts are of the view that in such a case, around 1000 yards of the jungle area from the camp should have been cleared to prevent the terrorists being given the advantage of attacking under cover of the jungle.

Others have raised questions as to whether outposts, observation posts and listening post in addition to foot patrolling were in operation in the out perimeters of the camp, because if these measures, were in operation, the soldiers in the camp could have been privy to some sign of an impending attack.

(continued overleaf)

S.A. DAVID

A Tamil Eelam Voice in the U.N.O. (1989) and ஐ.நாவில் என் முதல் முழக்கம் (1990) By Krishna Vaikunthavasam

5.10.78 is a red letter day in the history of Tamil Eelam struggle for freedom. On this day Krishna Vaikunthavasam raised the voice of Tamil Eelam in the highest forum in the world, the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Now after eleven long years Vaikunthavasam takes us behind the scenes in two booklets he has released in Madras.

'A Tamil Voice in the U.N.O.' a booklet in English of 29 pages opens with a brilliant summary of the Tamil Eelam freedom struggle by S. Sivanyagam, formerly editor of Saturday Review and now editor of Tamil Nation. It is indeed a jewel in the crown of this booklet and sets the U.N.O. incident in perfect perspective.

The rest of the book is a factual record of the historic conference: reviews in world press and Vaikunthavasam's efforts to bring the Tamil Eelam freedom struggle to the notice of the world in meetings in European and Asian capitals.

In 'ஐ.நாவில் என் முதல் முழக்கம்' in Tamil, 128 pages, Vaikunthavasam takes a wider view including auto biographical details indicate that the U.N.O. episode was long in the making. Appropriately the story starts in the class rooms and playing fields of Jaffna College under the watchful eyes of Handy Perinpanayagam, doyen of socialist thought and action in Jaffna. Then it moves to a visit to South India at the age of 20 to meet political and intellectual stalwarts; back to Ceylon, Trade Union struggle and editorship of 'Peoples Voice', then to legal studies and enrollment as advance and trips to China and Russia; work in Zambia and retirement in Britain and the U.N.O. incident.

Details of his brush with Indian Security sleuths and the cat and mouse moves is indeed as thrilling as the U.N.O. action.

Reference to Omar Khayyam, Barathy, and Navalar gives a glimpse of Vaikunthavasam's wider interests.

On page 91, Vaikunthavasam makes passing reference to his proposal in 1980 for a Tamil Eelam Government in exile sabotaged by TULF. If this proposal had been accepted and implemented much of the bloodshed and tears in Tamil Eelam could have been averted.

At the back of the books is a powerful portrait sketch of the father by the son Kandeepan. A chip of the old block, Kandeepan is causing ripples in the Ari World in London and moving Royal circles.

Now that Vaikunthavasam has whetted the appetite of his readers he is duty bound to write a full length book recording for posterity his experiences stretching over half a century at centre stage in Trade Union action and Tamil Eelam Political diplomacy in Sri Lanka.

Moderately priced at £ 1.75, \$ 3 or Rs. 10/- and £ 4.95 or Rs.15.00 the two booklets are essential reading in the history of Tamil Eelam freedom struggle.

Tigers in Tamilnadu!

The following report appeared in **The Independent**, Bombay, dated 25 November.

"Two tigers were found inside a building premises of the disused Cement Research Institute at Mudduvattur, about 45 km. from Tiruchirappalli on the Ariyalur Road. The institute and the mini-cement factory attached to it had not been functioning for the past ten years. Two tigers were found inside the dilapidated building. Police officials rushed to the spot and encircled the building. Local forest department officials were also requisitioned to catch the tigers."

A 6-year old girl Nagalakshmi of Uppatti near Melur village in Coonoor is believed to have been killed by a tiger according to a report in **The Hindu** of December 5. She had gone to the Koderi forest along with her grandmother Valliammal to collect firewood.

(continued from page 9)

There does not also appear to be any clear indication whether back up support was arranged for a camp strategically located as Mankulam and if such back up support was a possibility, why that support was not forthcoming. Some reports say a company of men were readied to provide reinforcement but bad weather prevented them being air-lifted. These are inevitable post mortems arising from any debacle of the preparation of the Mankulam incident. There may indeed be excellent reasons why certain actions desirable in hind sight, could not be taken at that time.

Minister Wijeratne, however, is not demoralised in the face of the Mankulam debacle. He is on record as saying "They have gained temporary use of Vavuniya - Elephant Pass Road, but we will take Mankulam back soon."

And it is to map out a future strategy and remedial measures to be taken that the Security Council met on Friday, November 30.

Despite all the strategies that are being worked out the forces are still faced with one major hurdle. That is to hold the territory gained in operations.

This was the problem the forces faced even after the Vadamarachchi operations in 1987, and resulted in the Generals telling the then President J.R.

Jayewardene that they were not in a position to take Jaffna. With that came the Indo-Lanka accord and the bloodshed in the South.

And now, faced with a similar situation steps are being taken to expand the Army.

Minister Wijeratne has said the Army would be enlarged to 100,000 men within the next two years.

At present the Sri Lankan Army comprises three divisions.

The strength of the Army has increased from 12,000 in 1984 over 40,000 today and it is expected to be 50,000 by year end. That is in addition to a volunteer force of around 30,000 personnel.

While it may be important to expand the Army to meet the present crisis it will also necessarily be of concern to the Government.

It has been the experience in Third World countries that as the Army gets stronger the political authority becomes diluted.

Thereby democracy begins to erode with a powerful military having an increasing say in the management of the country's affairs.

Therefore, the Government will do well to strike a reasonable balance when expanding the Arms to meet the present day contingencies.

EELAM MARTYRS' DAY IN MADRAS



The meeting held at the LLA Building hall, Madras, to pay homage to the Tiger martyrs who gave up their lives. (Report appeared in the previous issue of Tamil Nation)

PIRABHAKARAN'S BIRTHDAY MEETING



Kavignanar Pulamai Piththan and DK leader K. Veeramani at the mike.



Cinema personalities V.C. Kuganathan (extreme left) and T. Rajender on the platform. (Below) A view of the packed hall.



ARUMUGA NAVALAR remembered in Madras

The birth and death anniversaries (both falling in December) of Arumuga Navalar were observed at two meetings in Madras, organised by the Madras Tamil Sangam and the Saiva Sidhantha Perumanam of Myslapore.

For an "outsider's" historical assessment of Arumuga Navalar's contribution and achievement, Tamil Nation gives readers an extract from Professor K.M. De Silva's book "A History of Sri Lanka" (Oxford University Press, 1981) :-

"The Hindu recovery of the nineteenth century was dominated by a single personality, the remarkable Arumuga Navalar, a man of enormous erudition and massive energy who left an indelible mark on the Hinduism of the indigenous Tamils of Sri Lanka. Its strength as well as its flaws flow from his pioneering work, especially from his greatest contribution - the systematic compilation of his critical editions of these texts enable Hinduism in Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka to meet and repel the pressures of Protestant Christianity. Through these texts his influence spread across the Palk Straits to South India as well. He had worked for well over a decade with Christian missionaries, and although never a convert to Christianity, he had helped to translate the Bible into Tamil. From his association with the missionaries he absorbed much of their skill in organisation and in the propagation of their faith, and used these to great effect in the resistance to Christian encroachment. For the first and by no means the last time in the Sri Lanka context the missionaries found that techniques of proselytisation which they had developed could be used with equal facility by their critics and opponents.

Navalar demonstrated the value of schools and education as instruments of religious recovery. In 1849-50, long before the first Buddhist schools were started, he founded the Vannarponnai Saiva Pragasa Vidyalalai. He was intent on establishing Saivite schools in every village, in which education would be imparted in a Hindu environment with the aid of school textbooks specially prepared for the purpose. At the same time he was not unmindful of the value of an English education, and the Saivangala Vidyalalai which he launched in 1872 was later to become the Jaffna Hindu College, the premier Hindu English school in the island.



This emphasis on education, for all its importance, would have been no more than the stock response of a conservative mind to the challenge of a dynamic alien religion, had Navalar's activities not gone well beyond this. He was a protean figure, a man of amazing versatility whose achievement in any one of the fields in which he performed so creatively would have placed him in the first rank among the unusual talents of his time. But he excelled in a number of fields. In 1849 he established a printing press at Vannarponnai and from this there poured forth a succession of tracts and pamphlets expounding Hindu doctrines - and defending them against the strictures of the missionaries - in lucid Tamil prose designed to be understood by the common people. This was a remarkable departure from convention for a man as steeped in the Tamil classics as he was, yet Navalar the pamphleteer and propagandist was also a great figure in modern Tamil literature both in Sri Lanka and in South India.

At the same time he was equally gifted in the art of plat-

form speaking; here he modelled himself on the missionaries with their open-air lectures delivered in simple language. His lectures on Hinduism delivered on Fridays at the assembly hall of the Siva temple at Vannarponnai attracted huge crowds. One other facet of Navalar's achievement deserves mention: his initiative in the formation of secular organisations devoted to the propagation of Hindu ideals - most notably the Saiva Pragasa Sabha, which he established in 1853. He was instrumental also in the formation in 1888 of the Saiva Paripala Sabha which, along with the Hindu College Board of Management, eventually came to control more than 150 schools, both primary and secondary.

If the positive achievements of the Hindu revival of the nineteenth century owed so much to Navalar's influence, so unfortunately did its shortcomings. Navalar was no social reformer; the Hindu revivalist movement strengthened orthodoxy and did little to soften the rigours of the caste system among the Tamils...."

Jeevamany HOOLE, wife of late Rev. Richard Hoole, daughter of late Canon & Mrs. S.S. Somasundaram, mother of Rajan, Mukthan, Jeevan, Jothi, Paul, Tamari & Noel. Somasundaram Lane, Chundikul.

Seevaratnam Tharmalingam: born 25.1.19. Died 22.11.90. Wife of the late T. Tharmalingam, Divl. Supdt. of Post Offices, Ceylon. Died at the home of her youngest daughter Mrs. Nirmala Arumainayagam. She leaves five other children. Pathma Perampalam (Madras), Dr. Sivendran, Pushpa Kanagarajah, Neela Thambiraja (all in the USA), Nethra Krishnarajah (SL), 4, Hewett's Rise, Warsash, Southampton SO3 6JT. Tel: 0489 574489.

Appadurai MASILAMANY (Engineer, R.D.A., Vavuniya). Cremation Araly Road, 24/A Retreat Road, Colombo - 4.

Mary Ananthar nee Joshua: Born November 15, 1914. Died November 17, 1990. The death occurred suddenly in Jaffna where she had gone on a holiday in May of Mrs. Ananthar, an old girl of Chundikul Girls' College, and a long-time teacher at Ladies' College, Colombo, and for sometime thereafter at St. John's College, Nugegoda. She leaves three children - Dr. Ananthavathy Selvadurai (St. Alban's), Anantharajah (Croydon) and Ariarajah (Montreal). 148 Handcroft Road, Croydon, Surrey.

Deaths

Rukmani COOMARASAMY, wife of the V. Coomarasamy (Irrigation Engineer), mother of late Parameswary Durayappah, Pushpavathy Somaskandan, Puvanewary Pathamanathan, Mahendran, Vijendran, Pathmawathy Sockanathan, Sivendran, sister of late GG Ponnambalam, late Mrs. Spencer Rajaratnam and late Fr. Balasundaram. 22/2, Vidane's Road, Chundikul.

Grace Jeyamani Nagalingam: Wife of the late J.P. Nagalingam, mother of Daisy Dharmarajah, Prof. Daniel Joharatham (Canada) and Dulcie Lawrence. Funeral, Manipay, 29 November.

PEOPLE & EVENTS

Marriages

Mahesa - Sivaranjan: Umamahes, Son of Mr & Mrs. S. Mahesa and nephew of Mr. M. Theagarajah, late of Palm Grove, Madras and C.F.T., Colombo, and **Vasanthi**, daughter of Mr & Mrs. V. Sivaranjan, presently of 31A, Rosecroft Road, Southall, Middx. UB1 2XJ, at Highgate Murugan Temple, London N6, on December 2.

Sivagurunathan - Pakyanathan: Balachandran, son of Mrs. Sivagurunathan and the late Mr. S. Sivagurunathan, brother of Mrs. M. Jeyaratnam, and **Asunthia**, daughter of Mr. S. Pakyanathan and the late Mrs. Pakyanathan, at Highgate Murugan Temple, on December 8. 8, Greenway Close, Colindale, London NW9.

Rajaratnam - Sugunarajah: Gladstone Shantakumar, son of Mr & Mrs. Rex Rajaratnam of 47, Claygate Road, Ealing, London W 13, and **Melonie**, daughter of Mrs. Kamala Sugunaraj and the late Rev. N.W.G. Sugunaraj, C.S.I. Presbyter, Uduvil. The bride was till recently a teacher at Uduvil Girls' School. The marriage was solemnized at the Kingston Methodist Church, Ealing on December 8.

Sangaralingam - Markandu: Mithuran, son of Mr. T. Sangaralingam, retd. Principal, Colombo Hindu College, and Mrs. Sangaralingam, presently of 121A, Hambrough Road, Southall, Middx., and **Methura**, daughter of Mrs. A. Markandu, presently of 10 Thomas Clark St., Westmead, Sydney, Australia 2145, and of the late Mrs. S. Markandu, Station Master CGR, at the Murugan Temple, London N6, on December 15.

Obituary



The Tamil Nation deeply regrets the death of **Nirmala Balaratnam nee Sittampalam** on 9 September 1990 in Colombo at the early age of 48. She died of pulmonary hypertension, from which she was ailing for the last two years.

During her young days, even as a student at Holy Family Convent, Bambalapatiya, Nirmala was a left political activist, being a member of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), of which her late father V. Sittampalam was a renowned and illustrious mentor in the late 1930s and 1940s. She left the LSSP in 1964, when that Party at its Annual Delegates Conference resolved to adopt the 'Sinhala Only' language policy. She, thereafter continued for a time in the LSSP (Revolutionary) led by Edmund Samarakkody and Bala Tampoe.

After the 1983 riots, Nirmala moved with her family to her parental home in Tirunelveli, Jaffna. During the dark days of the Sri Lanka army and later the Indian Army occupation and repression in Jaffna in the 1980s, Nirmala was engaged in feminist and human rights movement in Jaffna. She organised the Jaffna Mothers Front and was elected its General Secretary. In directing the activities of the Mothers Front, she electrified the audiences with passionate call for action and galvanised the Jaffna women for popular resistance against military oppression.

Her funeral was very largely attended and was represented by a cross-section of left politicians including Bernard Soysa, Hector Abeyawardene and Osmuna Jayaratne, Women's organisation and human rights groups in Sri Lanka.

Nirmala is the eldest daughter of late V. Sittampalam (Ad-

vocate, Jaffna) and Gemma Sittampalam (Rtd. Teacher, Dehiwela Convent), the wife of S. Balaratnam (Income Tax Consultant), the mother of Sivakumar (Loughborough University) and Sivaganesh, the sister of Vasantha Ponnambalam and Dr. Leela Muthuveloe and the sister-in-law of Satchi Ponnambalam (Judge of the Supreme Court of Belize) and Dr. Dan Muthuveloe (Toddington, England).



Emily Pushpam Arulanatham
Born : 11.12.1904
Died : 15.11.1990

Generations of old boys of St John's College and old girls of Chundikul will remember with affection and nostalgia the ever-smiling face of this mother-figure of Jaffna. She was married to the Rev. J.T. Arulanatham, Principal of St John's from 1940-1957 and who died in 1964.

She will be specially remembered by all those who loved music and singing as she was not only a successful teacher but was also actively involved in the Annual Festival of Carols in Jaffna.

She came to live in England in her 80th year, with her eldest son Dr. Parirasa Arulanatham and wife Shanti. She leaves behind three other children **Kirupamamy Karunanathan** (Bristane), **Vijayan** (formerly of the Sri Lanka Diplomatic Service) and **Dr. Karunyan** (California).

3, St. Johns Church Rd., Folkestone, Kent CT 19 5BQ.

Shanmugam Gnanapragasam: Retd. Senior Asst. Commissioner of Co-op Societies, husband of Jalaluxmi, father of Gnanasooriyar (Colombo), Mohana Varatharajah (Sharjah), Vathan Jeyasingham (Germany), and Arjuna (Canada). Cremated 25.11.90. Brown Road, Jaffna.

TAMIL NATION

COLONEL TO QUIT THE ARMY

Colonel Gotabhaya Rajapakse, Commanding Officer of the First Battalion of the Gajaba Regiment is to leave the Sri Lankan army early next year. He is a brother of the SLFP MP for Hambantota district, Mahinda Rajapakse. Col. Rajapakse had taken part in several campaigns against the LTTE since the outbreak of hostilities in June this year. There is speculation in Colombo whether this could be a prelude to several others in the officer ranks leaving the army.

GOVT ENLISTS 700 PLOTE CADRES TO FIGHT TIGERS

A Colombo report says:

"The People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) has commenced sending their cadres to the Wannu region to strengthen units deployed against the LTTE in support of the Sri Lanka Army (SLA), military sources said yesterday. This movement of PLOTE cadres was in response to orders from Colombo, these sources said.

"An unestimated number of PLOTE cadres arrived at an army camp in the area this week before moving out to join their own cadres in the front.

"This PLOTE 'movement' is in addition to the nearly 500 of its 'fighters' expected shortly

from South India and Male, sources disclosed.

"Though security sources refused to divulge the exact number of 'fighters' sent to the Wannu region, informed sources put the number of PLOTE cadres at about 700, under a senior leader identified as S. Vasanthan.

"On November 28, Government representatives met senior PLOTE leaders in Colombo and informed them of Government's desire to intensify PLOTE 'operations' in the north in the near future. The Government clearly indicated to the PLOTE the immediate need to beef up its 'troops'

following the Mankulam debacle. Strategically important, Mankulam camp fell on November 23 after soldiers decided to vacate it after 24 hours of fierce fighting.

"The Government which sought the help of the PLOTE, EPDP and the TELO to fight the LTTE in June this year, has further indicated its willingness to meet their requirements of arms and ammunition. Sources said that with the intensification of operations by these groups against the LTTE more arms and ammunition would be released to them....

"According to reports, there were about 240 PLOTE 'fight-

ers' in two refugee camps. In Mankulam and Kottapattu in Tamil Nadu. Attempts were being made to get these men back as soon as possible. Some PLOTE cadres have already returned to Colombo with the intention of joining the Government's war effort.

"Meanwhile the PLOTE is also awaiting the return of 68 cadres including many key members from Male, sources added.

"PLOTE has already made representations to the Male as their return was going to help the Government's war effort, greatly.

"Meanwhile the Tamil Eelam

Liberation Organisation (TELO) has also stepped up 'operations' in the Batticaloa district where the army and the PLOTE operate against the LTTE 'terrorists', sources disclosed. TELO cadres had even conducted joint operations with the Government soldiers and were responsible for many raids of LTTE hideouts. In a recent operation, TELO cadres killed the LTTE area leader for Navakkudah sources said."

In Madras however, the spokesman of another TELO group, G.S. Kantha said that his group would never indulge in the "treacherous act" of joining the Sri Lankan army in "hunting for the Tigers."

GUERRILLA WAR HOTS UP IN THE EAST AGAIN

After a lapse of several months since the June war began, the Liberation Tigers have intensified their guerrilla operations in the East again. Although the Sri Lanka government has long been claiming that unlike the north, the east is fully under its control, the ground realities reveal otherwise. The government has been regularly losing men, material, and ground within the past one month.

Here is a catalogue of reported incidents, and Government casualties in the East over the past one month:-

November 24: Six soldiers of the second battalion of the Gemunu Watch were killed, and four others critically wounded, when the Tigers set off Claymore mines at a place called Thirappane between

Bakmeegama and Gomarakan-dawela. The soldiers were engaged in a route clearing patrol.

On the same day, there were reports of two other incidents. The Tigers stormed an army guard point at Katupotha, shot dead three soldiers and two others in civils, believed to be Home Guards. Elsewhere, two more soldiers on a route clearing patrol in an unspecified location, were killed. In all three incidents, the Tigers had taken away arms and ammunition, and killed eleven soldiers.

December 1: Policemen and soldiers on guard duty in two Sinhalese villages in the Anuradhapura district - Kivilkade and Thammannelawaka - came under Tiger fire. Casualties not known.

December 2: Seven Special Task Force commandos were

killed and one other wounded, 3 miles off Panama, deep in the Eastern province, when Tigers ambushed the Land Rover in which they were travelling. According to the sole survivor, the Tigers first shot at the driver who lost control of the vehicle, resulting in the vehicle crashing into a tree. Before the STF men who could retaliate, Tigers had opened rapid fire killing the seven others on the spot. This was the first time that this British commando trained elite forces based in the East, suffered such a loss.

December 9: Two soldiers on foot patrol were killed at Arupana in Seruwila south of Trincomalee. They were in a party of soldiers on foot patrol engaged in a comb-and-search operation in the Seruwila area.

December 11: Five soldiers

were killed, four wounded and one reported missing, according to a Reuter report, when Tigers overran an army checkpoint at Moreawewa in the Trincomalee district.

December 16: Nine soldiers died, and eight more wounded, when Tigers blew up two vehicles carrying twenty twenty soldiers near Punani army camp in the Batticaloa district.

December 18: A Sri Lankan Brigadier was killed in a landmine blast in Trincomalee district, the senior most officer to have died in action in the war in the north and east. A Superintendent of Police was also killed in the incident. A military spokesman in Colombo said that Brigadier Lakshman Wijeratne, Co-ordinating Officer for Trincomalee district was killed when a landmine went off under his jeep at Panmedawachiya in the northern part of Trincomalee district. The Superintendent of Police Mr. Richard Wijesekera and four others who were in the jeep were also killed.

Thomas Abraham reporting for The Hindu says: "Though the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam used powerful landmines extensively when they were fighting the Indian Peace-Keeping Force, this is the first time they have used them in this conflict. Brigadier Wijeratne, one of the Sri Lankan army's best officers, was in his forties and had been trained in Pakistan. An articulate, intelligent soldier, he was working on a Master's degree at Edinburgh University.

SRI LANKAN MPs COME TO BLOWS

Sri Lankan members of Parliament traded blows and insults on December 15 within the well of the House in a fracas sparked by a garrulous M.P. who refused to stop talking. Fonseka who is the Deputy Speaker was forced to adjourn the session four times within half an hour, a record in the country's parliamentary history.

The trouble began when an Opposition member refused to

end a speech in the allocated time. When the Deputy Speaker told him to stop, the Member refused. While a Government M.P. tried to grab the mike, an Opposition M.P. grabbed the ceremonial Mace. This was followed by an exchange of fistuffs.

Earlier too, on December 10, there was an upsurge in Parliament and sittings were suspended for 15 minutes.

Under the Presidential system of government introduced by former President Jayewardene. Parliament itself has suffered devaluation and has remained largely a talking shop. The present Speaker Mr. M.H. Mohamed, political observers say, does not enjoy much credibility, as a fair-minded chairman, and the entire tone of proceedings has come down over the past several years.

MARYLAND MEETING: AMERICAN CITIZENS EXPRESS HORROR

The Tamil Welfare and Human Rights Committee of U.S.A. held a meeting in support of the world campaign on Human Rights Violations in Sri Lanka, being carried out by Amnesty International, on Nov 17, 1990 in Lanham, Maryland.

Several Human Rights activists including Mr. John Nides of Amnesty International, Mr. Wakely Paul, Dr. Anandalingam, and Dr. Sivendran addressed the meeting. The meeting urged the world community to take whatever actions that are necessary to stop the Sri Lankan Government from committing genocide on the Tamil speaking people and committing further widespread human rights violations against the Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese.

Photographs showing the recent large-scale destruction of life and property were displayed at the meeting. A slide show by Ms. Deanna Hodgkin, the courageous reporter from Insight magazine who visited northeast Sri Lanka recently concluded the well attended meeting. (Deanna Hodgkin's report appeared in Issue No. 6 of Tamil Nation)

Many American citizens, and representatives from various human rights and political action groups who attended the meeting expressed their horror, noting that though they were aware of the ethnic strife in Sri Lanka they did not know the extent of gruesome acts committed by the Sri Lankan government forces on the civilian population.