

Hot Spring

A Journal of Commitment

JANUARY - 99



SRI LANKA'S AIR POWER AGAINST THE TAMILS

INSIDE

- Adrian Wijemanne on THE ART OF THE IMPOSSIBLE
- Kosovo & Tamil Eelam
- Bandaranaike advocated Federalism in 1926
- Perumal's home coming
- Burmese Boy Soldiers
- Mauritius pictures



New! Matrimonial Service - Page 40

*Help find Food & Shelter
to these people - TRO appeal*



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Editor

S.Sivanayagam

HOT SPRING
P.O.Box 14258
London
SW16 6ZU
UK

Fax: + 44 (0) 181 696 7761

e-mail: editor@hotspring.org

website: www.hotspring.org

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Editorial Comment

Two cheers for Democracy!

President Kumaratunga's hesitant opening "democratic" gambit at the recently concluded northwestern provincial council polls seems to have resulted in everyone calling names at what happened. "A shame", said her own Muslim Ports Minister Ashraff. "A fraud", said veteran M.P. Ronnie de Mel. "A mafia operation", said an Opposition candidate. "Gangsterism", said someone. "Goonda power", said another. "Gestapo tactics", said a newspaper headline. "A disgrace that passed for an election", said another. No event in that country's recent history provoked such an outpouring of adjectives, such semantic thunder, and such copiousness of vocabulary as this election - if you call it one - to a mere provincial council, and one of several in the country.

Not terrorism?

We have no complaint to make at the various colourful descriptions ascribed to Madame President's electoral adventure. Every one of them seems apt and appropriate. But has it struck anyone that the one word that would have described perfectly what happened in that electoral province appears to have been scrupulously avoided by all concerned, as if by common consent. That word is TERRORISM. What happened in Wayamba was nothing short of terrorism. Polling stations were invaded by armed gangs, polling agents were chased away, ballot boxes were forcibly stuffed. There were two murders, and several attempted killings. A 53-year old woman was stripped naked and paraded. Pistols were waved, and even T-56 fully automatic weapons used by the combatants in the 15-year old war figured at the Wayamba election scene, according to two commentators. Can terrorism be any different? And yet, that one word did not creep into the rich vocabulary that was used to describe the Wayamba scene. Why? Because terrorism is a word that is exclusively reserved for use against

the Tamil Tigers! It would not do to use that word to anything happening in the Sinhala south. In the Sri Lankan lexicon, an army of Tamil Tigers wiping out a Sri Lankan military camp in the north, along with over a thousand armed soldiers would be described as the act of terrorists, but if a hundred gun-toting Sinhala citizens terrorise a few thousand Sinhala voters from voting? Well . . .

Holding elections is not necessarily indicators of a thriving democracy. Stalin held elections. And so did Hitler, whom Madame President recently compared to Prabhakaran - taking advantage of a safe audience in FRONTLINE editor N.Ram. The latter of course prefers to liken the LTTE leader to Pol Pot who is reputed to have presided over the death of two million Cambodians. Well, each person to his taste. Madame President's mother incidentally is on record as having presided over the death of a mere 20,000 Sinhala youths in 1971. All that is by the way. What we were trying to say is, Stalin held elections, Hitler held elections, and now President Kumaratunga has also held a little election. The common problem in all these elections is how one rescues democracy from such elections.

Disappearances

The Tamil man is all too familiar with such elections. In 1981, under another Sinhala political dispensation, elections were held in Jaffna for some toothless District Development Councils, and when whole ballot boxes disappeared: that was long before Tamils themselves began disappearing under the present dispensation. As also everyone knows, if a man could sit in Parliament today by securing only eight or ten votes, that could happen only in Jaffna, and that was what happened in the last Parliamentary elections of 1994. The President has nine such M.Ps under her wing today. So that is also Democracy for you. Two cheers!

S.Sivanayagam

What They Say

"The President isn't above the law and that's what's at issue. It isn't sex. When the President of the United States raises his right hand and swears to tell the truth and he doesn't, calculatingly and deliberately, we think that is serious enough to be brought to the attention of the US Senate."



- U.S. House Judiciary Committee chairman Henry Hyde, who himself was accused of an illicit affair, while being married.



"I don't believe that Scotland wants to break off from the UK at all. They (the Scots) know perfectly well that if Scotland left the UK, the consequences in terms of jobs and business and influence for Scotland in the world would be disastrous".

"We have taken the whole of Jaffna peninsula and we have taken parts of Jaffna. We have now taken the entire road - there are only two main roads from the South to the North; we have taken the one that goes west towards Mannar. We have taken two thirds of the one that goes straight up to Jaffna. To Killinochchi and beyond"

- in chatting up with FRONTLINE editor N.Ram, Frontline Jan.1.'99.

"I had studied enough about the LTTE to know that they were not just going to jump into a peace agreement - and even less so Mr.Prabhakaran, the leader. I saw

- British Prime Minister Tony Blair in an interview with THE FINANCIAL TIMES, Jan.14

"He (Sir Rob Young) is the kind of diplomat that Delhi needs right now - a man who speaks little and listens carefully".

- India's High Commissioner in London Lalit Mansingh on Britain's High Commissioner designate to India, Sir Rob Young who is considered the antithesis of his predecessor Sir David Gore-Booth.

"Jesus is not a meek, mild wimp in a white nightie".

- Rev.Tom Ambrose, justifying the launch of a poster depicting Jesus as a Che Guevara style revolutionary.



"No one talked about Iraq when it used chemical weapons against the Kurdish people in the '80s, and no one is mentioning anything about the

weapons of mass destruction in Israel. They want to destroy Iraq now because it has the potential to challenge Israel. Muslims and Arabs should not allow this by any means.

- Osama bin Laden interviewed by Palestinian journalist, NEWSWEEK, Jan.11 '99



"My position hasn't changed in spite of the tougher Chinese attitude. I'm fully committed to the middle-way approach (of seeking autonomy for Tibet). It's actually an antidote to separation"

- Dalai Lama on pursuing talks with China on the issue of Tibet.

"Apart from knowledge of mathematics and astronomy, Alberuni was struck by the fact that Indians could expound extensively on subjects that they knew absolutely nothing about".

- Economics Nobel Prize winner Dr.Amartya Sen, quoting Iraqi poet and traveller Alberuni, raises a laugh at a reception accorded to him at India House, London.

What SHE says

A President's obiter dicta



him as a ruthless leader of a very rare type. I would classify him with Adolf Hitler and a few others".

- in the same chit-chat with N.Ram.

"My personal life is certainly affected. I am a total prisoner in this place. It's almost as if I've gone into a nunnery. I am a person whose idea of entertainment is to go for walks on the beach, visit museums. I love the theatre, I love the cinema... But I know it

is for a limited period of time. I am not going to hang around in this job for a long time, so it's like a meditation".

- in an interview with Nirupama Subramanian, INDIAN EXPRESS, ahead of her recent visit to India.

"We are carrying on a peaceful election campaign. If anybody tried to resort to acts of violence from our party, tie such a person to a tree and send a message to me. I will see that such persons are taken into custody. We don't believe in violence like the UNP"

- Govt. owned DAILY NEWS, 8th January '99.

Pinochet & Kumaranatunge

Birds of a Feather and Fellow International Criminals

Twenty-five years after engineering disappearances in his country, the law has finally caught up with Pinochet. The rapid changes in legal theory have recognized the criminal responsibility of heads of state who knowingly violate the human rights of their people on a massive scale. Since torture and genocide have now been recognized as international crimes, it has become possible for the prosecution of such leaders before the domestic courts of other states, which are inclined to adopt legal policies, based on ethical considerations. The setting up of international tribunals to punish the atrocities committed in Rwanda and in Yugoslavia has accelerated these changes in the last few years.

The projected International Criminal Court which the United Nations is to establish will further accelerate these developments and the prosecution of these criminals both before international tribunals specially set up for specific atrocities and

before domestic courts of different states will become frequent and common-place. **Such trials will serve as a deterrent towards heads of state unleashing the machinery of the state to wreak havoc on sections of the state on the basis of their ethnicity or religion.**

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa also provides a further example of the need to punish leaders who have terrorized sections of the populace or caused massive and large-scale "disappearances." Such actions are necessary in order to prevent future leaders engaging in similar practices and also for ascription of the blame for the



events.

It is in the light of these international developments that one has to view Chemmani which provides evidence of the fact that Kumaranatunge and her coterie have ruthlessly suppressed the civilian population of



Pinochet

In the same vein, we should not forget the fact that Kumaratunge's mother, Mrs Bandaranaike was responsible for the death of over 20,000 Sinhalese youth. This figure, incidentally, is less than the 3,000 that Pinochet is reputed to have killed.

Sri Lankan leaders do such killing, even of their own kind, on a massive scale. It is necessary to ensure that such wickedness is also punished.

Professor M. Sornarajah
Centre for Petroleum and Natural Resources Law
Dundee Scotland.

Eelam during the occupation of their land. The criminal responsibility of Kumaranatunge, her "General" Ratwatte and the underling Kadrigamar, have to be assessed in the light of these emerging principles.

Tamil communities living abroad must be prepared to have recourse to the courts of the states in which they *live to try out litigation based on the new theories of jurisdiction of these courts over responsibility for international crimes committed by the people like those mentioned. This is one service that could be provided to the people of Eelam by their brethren living abroad.*

No family has brought such misery on a people in the pursuit of power as the Bandaranaike family.

Amnesty International which announced that it is prepared to take over the litigation regarding Pinochet, should be similarly generous if Mrs. Bandaranaike comes for treatment to the UK or some other country to prosecute her, for it is Amnesty which recorded these killings in its reports.

Since Amnesty has also expressed concern over Chemmani, let us hope that the next visit abroad of Kumaranatunge, Ratwatte or Kadrigamar will be the occasion for Amnesty International to test itself,

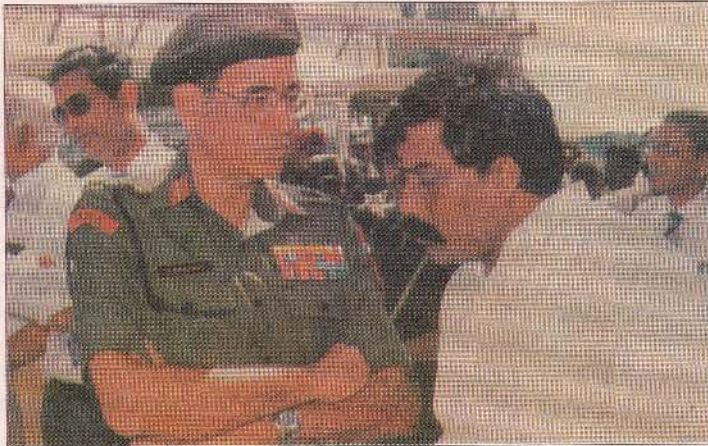
Mystery surrounds Perumal's Homecoming!

BY S.S.SELVANAYAGAM

Mystery surrounds the sudden arrival of former North-East Provincial Chief Minister Annamalai Varatharaja Perumal who arrived in Sri Lanka incognito, officials said.

A top source said Mr. Perumal was allowed entry through the VIP lounge of the Bandaranaike International Airport after he reportedly took a flight to Sri Lanka last Wednesday night from a South East Asian country and not from India where he was domiciled for the past several years.

Mr. Perumal's entry was reportedly facilitated by Sri Lanka's High Commissioner in New Delhi Mangala Moonesinghe who also arrived in Colombo last week.



I.P.K.F's poodle: Perumal with the outgoing IPKF Commander Gen.Kalkat

The former North East Chief Minister is also reported to have had discussions with a top government minister a source revealed but refused to give details of the meeting.

Meanwhile, the Hindustan Times in India reported that Mr. Perumal was tipped to be made an MP on the National List.

In October last year it was reported that the PA government was planning to get the EPRLF to field Mr. Perumal

as a Presidential candidate, in a move apparently aimed at drawing anti government votes to the EPRLF instead of the UNP.

It was also reported in October that the Indian government was not keen on supporting the UNP as it thought the party was not all that serious in solving the ethnic issue and therefore it was ready to back Mr. Perumal as a Tamil candidate.

Analysts say it is possible that President Kumaratunga discussed the issue of Mr. Perumal with the Indian leadership during her recent state visit.



Perumal during his heyday in Trincomalee. addressing a Press Conference with his "Finance Minister" Kirupakaran beside him.

M r . Perumal's sudden arrival has caused a power struggle within his own party as he

is reportedly striving to wrest the leadership from the incumbent party Secretary General Suresh Premachandran, according to sources close to him.

The sources also said Mr. Perumal had often tried to visit Sri Lanka in the past four years but the incumbent party hierarchy dissuaded him from coming citing various reasons.

Mr. Perumal's supporters 90 per

cent of the members of the party's central committee are with him and he has plans to reorganise and build up the party.

Mr Perumal has reportedly held group meetings on Monday and

Tuesday with senior cadres from Batticaloa, Vavuniya and Mannar at an undisclosed location in Colombo. Sources said he is making this visit with the green light from the government as well as with the support of one Tamil party for his protection. He arrived through BIA's VIP lounge where special security is provided. Mr. Perumal also met a prominent government minister. He is also likely to meet Ministers S.B.Dissanayake and Mangala Samaraweera too.

A representative of a paramilitary outfit called the Razik Group which broke away from the mainstream EPRLF and now operates alongside the security forces in Batticaloa too has met Mr. Perumal, sources said.

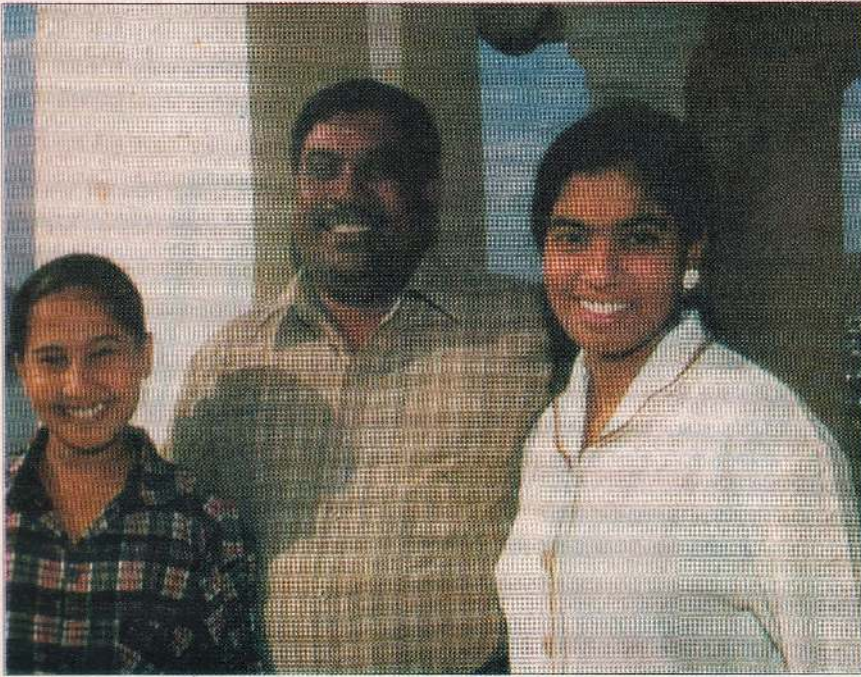
Sources close to EPRLF said most of the Central Committee members are dissatisfied with the existing hierarchy and Mr. Perumal has the clout to bring the cadres into cohesion and give the party new blood.

But officials of other Tamil parties said the arrival of Mr Perumal would not be of much significance because he is a spent force.

Mr. Perumal caused a major controversy when as chief Minister he made a unilateral declaration of independence before giving up everything and fleeing to India.

A Demanding Guest

As exiled EPRLF leader Perumal plans to emerge from obscurity, the Government worries about his security.



Perumal with two of his daughters

**BY ROHIT PARIHAR
(INDIA TODAY) MAY 11, 1998**

He is an unusual customer for the fish-mongers of Ajmer. The dark, heavily built, middle-aged Tamil is conspicuous in the crowded fish market not only because there are very few south Indians in the city, but also because he is always accompanied by a posse of stern-looking CRPF men in civvies. They know he is someone important and hard to please, being a fish connoisseur. But they do not mind his visits.

His escorts, however, do. For, Varadaraja Perumal, one of the few surviving leaders of Sri Lanka's Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), has been living in exile in India for the past eight years. High on the hit list of the LTTE, he is provided Z-plus category security by the Indian Government. "Adventures" such as visits to the fish market are frowned upon by his security people, who feel that such jobs should be left to his staff. But he protests: "This is unfair.

After all only I know about my taste. Tomorrow, they may not even let me buy a pen for myself."

Possibly not, if the Rajasthan Government can have its way. He is one guest the state would gladly do without. Chief Minister Bhairon Singh Shekhawat has written to the Centre four times in the past few months, requesting that he be removed from the state, but has drawn no response. "Perumal's had to be a secret presence, which is no longer the case, and so we cannot guarantee his security," says an aide of the chief minister.

Perumal, on the other hand, is quite at home in Ajmer, where he has been living since 1992 with his wife and three daughters. Elected chief minister of North Eastern Province of Sri Lanka in 1987 in elections held under the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, the 45-year-old Perumal played a crucial role in finalising the accord and bringing together political and democratic forces in the country. But when the

pact fell through, the Indian government provided him a home and a high-level security that is reserved for important politicians such as L.K. Advani, Buta Singh and Rajesh Pilot. The EPRLF leader and his family are provided a company of CRPF and 20 local police personnel, including women, in addition to members of the Central intelligence agencies for security. **His perks include a palatial bungalow, a dozen-odd domestic staff, including a liaison officer, cooks and servants, and two vehicles. The Centre also gives him Rs 6 lakh a year for personal expenditure and overheads, such as fuel and maintenance of vehicles. The annual Central expenditure on this friendly neighbourhood guest is Rs 1.8 crore.** The overall incharge of Perumal's security, however, is the local superintendent of police, who works under a dig's directions. In case of any mishap involving the family, the state Government will be held responsible and that's what is worrying the chief minister.

In 1990, Perumal and his family were put up at a haveli in Madhya Pradesh that belonged to the Scindias. But on his request for a place that offered better educational facilities for his daughters, the Centre allowed his family to shift to Ajmer in September 1992. Though the state Government had initially agreed to let him stay in the city, it now wants him moved out. And not without reason. During the early years of political exile, Perumal was advised by the then V.P. Singh government to maintain a low profile and complete silence. He religiously adhered to this advice, keeping away from any controversy and maintaining a distance from even local politicians.

Lately, however, Perumal has come out of his shell and seems keen to get back into action — the non-violent way. He says, "I will end my political vanvas (exile) this year. We have lost everything to violence and it is only ahimsa that will revive us." The EPRLF had been a non-militant organisation except for about five years before the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord when it took to arms. He calls that a fatal mistake. His efforts at staging a comeback in Sri Lankan politics are well-timed as the

tenure of incumbent President Chandrika Kumaratunga, whom he describes as the finest elected leader in Sri Lanka, ends next year.

The change in tack is obvious. For the first time since his arrival in India, Perumal is seeking a review of the political restrictions imposed on him. He told India Today: "I want the Government of India to review its stand on me and understand that I can use my political rights even in India." He, however, takes care to add hastily that he would never do or say anything to embarrass the Indian and Sri Lankan governments.

Perumal also claims that the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government understands the EPRLF well. "I hope Vajpayeeji will perceive my role the same way as Rajiv Gandhi did," he says. "Expression of my political opinion is not a matter of relationship between the two countries, it is the right of an individual." But that is a right the state Government is unwilling to grant him because it is fraught with danger. Whatever the pitfalls, living in total isolation is perhaps too much to expect from a high-profile leader like him. Over the years, he has made many friends. His daughters, aged 13, 16 and 18 years, have their own lives in Ajmer — while one of them attends stitching classes, the youngest one is learning Kathak. The family also socialises and attends late-night parties. The security personnel, of course, shadow them round-the-clock. Sometimes Perumal or his family members travel in someone else's car or let their friends travel with them when they go out. Security requirements do not permit this. One officer associated with his security, in a confidential communication, complained to his bosses that Perumal often insisted on using his friend's car — a security risk. Besides, his security has to be beefed up during his frequent outstation trips.

And that's not all. Perumal has purchased land in the state in some Indian relative's name, and security agencies suspect he wants to settle down in Ajmer. Perumal admits to having bought 2.5 acres of farmland and says he keeps cows there. Since he has several Indian relatives, it wasn't

difficult. He justifies the purchase, saying, "It is time I saved and made some investments for my daughters' future. I may have to settle them here eventually." His security staff also question his use of government vehicles for bringing fodder for the cattle and selling the milk.

These activities have not gone down well with the state Government, which now hopes that the BJP-led Government in Delhi will be more kindly disposed towards its request for moving the Sri Lankan from Rajasthan. Though feigning ignorance about such moves, Perumal says he does not mind shifting out of Ajmer. "I've never had any problem with Indians," he says diplomatically. "They have cared well for my family." He becomes quite nostalgic about his stay in India, but has some grouses too. For example, he was unable to meet Sonia Gandhi and pay his condolences after Rajiv Gandhi's assassination due to his

forced isolation. Any reference to Rajiv makes him emotional about his brief association with the former prime minister, whom he describes as "an honest leader who was the image of a new India". He cherishes those memories. His eventful life and his associations with powerful people could make for interesting reading. Is he planning an autobiography? "I am too young for that," he says. Instead, he has started writing a book on rural development in India.

The exiled EPRLF leader would love to become a columnist or speak at seminars on Sri Lanka, but is quick to add: "I will not do that without the Indian government's consent." That should be music to Shekhawat's ears. But with Perumal's avowed intent to end his political vanvas this year, his security staff and the state Government could well have much more to worry about than occasional jaunts to the fish market.



"For British Asians, the Old Values are dying"

British Asians are developing a new identity that abandons the traditional value system of the subcontinent, claims a recent research poll.

More than 6 out of 10 Asian people believe that India and Pakistan should reunite. 70 percent of Asians would still settle in Britain if they had to choose again and nearly 8 out of 10 people reject the term Black to describe themselves, says a poll commissioned by the television company Zee TV.

The pollsters suggest that the British Asian community is modernising - it is no longer a homogeneous immigrant community and has now developed a unique identity peculiar to this country. This is not without some traditional elements such as faith in the extended family, trust in the police and support for the political system.

For example, 64 percent of those

questioned said that the extended family still had a role to play in the millenium while a similar number were satisfied with the country's political system.

Astrology, however, is on its way out with almost 77 percent insisting that their lives were not influenced by astrological predictions.

Interestingly, British Asians see themselves as men and women of honour with the leading question "Is honour the most important thing in your life", eliciting an affirmative from 70 percent of those questioned.

"This is the first time that these questions have been put to Asians living in Britain. There's a misconception among the wider community that all Asian people think in the certain way. These stereotypes just aren't true and the results of the phone poll prove it", said Ms. Anita Anand, the Big Debate's presenter.

(THE ASIAN AGE)

"What is true for Kosovo is even more true for Tamil Eelam"

HOT SPRING reader **P.Varothayasingham** sends us the **DAILY TELEGRAPH** London, editorial comment of 28 December 1998 under the headline: **KOSOVO MUST BE FREE**, and adds the comment "What is true for Kosovo is even more true for Tamil Eelam". We reproduce below the Telegraph's editorial interspersed with our own comments. - (Ed. H.S.)

"The Government is losing sight of the fundamental rights and wrongs of the ethnic conflict in Kosovo, where the fragile ceasefire of the last two months is unravelling. Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, has responded to the latest outbreak of violence by reprimanding the rebel forces of the Kosovo Liberation Army. The KLA, he lectured, should "renounce violence and engage in the political process"

(Aren't the Tamil Tigers familiar with this kind of lecturing too, from patronising "peace-makers" who find it easier to lecture to the victim than to the oppressor?)

"Has he forgotten that the ethnic Albanian majority in Kosovo has already tried peaceful resistance, without result?"

(The Tamil leadership had tried peaceful resistance for 20 years from 1956 to 1976, and had always been met with mob and State violence)

"Under the leadership of Dr.Ibrahim Rugova, the Albanians displayed remarkable self-restraint in the face of Serb repression, for year after year, only to see their grievances ignored by the Western powers in the Dayton agreement in 1995.

(Substitute the name S.J.V.Chelvanayakam for Dr. Ibrahim Rugova and you have the identical parallel)

"The KLA has emerged as the dominant movement in Kosovo because all else has failed.



Robin Cook: Lecturing to the victim

(Substitute the word LTTE for KLA, and there is no difference)

"There is no turning back after the savagery of the Serb military campaign this year, which left more than 1.000 dead. Any arrangement that falls short of full independence cannot be made to stick. The KLA controls much of Kosovo's hinterland. It is evolving into a serious military force, and is reportedly acquiring anti-tank weapons.

(The Telegraph writer does not realise it, but he is making a very strong case for the LTTE and Tamil Eelam)

"For Mr.Cook to say that the KLA will not achieve anything through fighting except increasing the misery of their own people...

(As Bishop Savundranayagam is alleged to have said recently)

"... as he did last week, uncannily echoing Douglas Hurd's "level killing

field" in Bosnia - gravely misjudges the will to national liberation in Kosovo.

"Both sides have violated the ceasefire in recent days, but there is no moral equivalence to these infractions because the KLA was not party to the agreement in the first place. The ceasefire was signed by the American negotiator, Richard Holbrooke and Mr.Milosevic, without the participation of the ethnic Albanian movement.

(As what happened between the late Rajiv Gandhi and J.R.Jayewardene in 1987).

"As a gesture to the Western powers, the KLA signalled that it would desist from offensive operations. But that forbearance has been tested to the limit. It is clear that Mr.Milosevic is trying to provoke the KLA in order to justify a pre-emptive counter insurgency, knowing that the rebel forces are gaining in strength by the month.Perversely, the deployment of 600 Western ceasefire "verifiers" in Kosovo may encourage him to risk renewed warfare, for he knows that NATO will not launch punitive air strikes on Serb forces so long as the inspectors are on the ground, unarmed and vulnerable to reprisal.

"The West has got itself into this-familiar mess because it has been disingenuous in condemning Mr.Milosevic while tacitly using the Serbs as proxies to prevent the creation of an Islamic "Greater Albania". It is time to get back to principle. President Milosevic stripped Kosovo of its autonomy in 1989, callously and illegally, and Serbia has long since forfeited all moral claim to sovereignty over the province. Any attempt to impose a settlement that leaves the ethnic Albanians under continued Serb control is not only unjust, it is unworkable."

Karen boy soldiers fight the Burmese army

MICHOOL BROOKE

reports for AP, Kaw Long Cho (Burma), Jan. 10

“A half century of conflict between Burma's government and rebellious minorities has produced countless orphans - and today, some in their teens are fighting for the rebels against the latest Army offensive.

“The Burmese Army murdered my father, who was a Christian pastor, so I joined up,” said Peterson, 15. **“They laughed when they shot him in front of me. I'm fighting to avenge his death”** Peterson, who goes by one name, is one of 30 boys under 16 among 300 fighters in a Karen National Liberation Army battalion at Kaw Long Cho, a camp just inside Burma, near the Thai border.

“The Karens and other minorities who have refused or broken cease-fires with the military regime are now facing the brunt of the Army's annual offensive, according to rebels and Thai military officers who monitor events inside Burma. Orphaned boy soldiers are being deployed alongside older rebels to face them, the Karens say.

“Many say they have seen their parents killed, part of a pattern of what human rights groups and refugees have long said is rape, torture, murder by the Burmese Army. The Karens call it ethnic cleansing - the government denies it totally. Kaban, one of Peterson's comrades, said on Friday



Members of the 2,000-strong Burmese Students' Regular Army, at a daily drill in a rebel camp.

he joined the rebel army - the military wing of the Karen National Union - after soldiers slaughtered everyone in his village.

“The soldiers killed my parents”, said Kaban, who has a look in his eyes far older than his 15 years. **“The KNLA is now my family”**. The Karen National Union is the largest of a score of rebel outfits that have fought

for more autonomy since Burma received independence from Britain 50 years ago. The Karens are the biggest minority, about 3.4 million people among a total population of 47 million. They are mainly Christian in an overwhelmingly Buddhist country.

“The military has ruled Burma since 1962. Most rebel groups in recent years have reached cease-fires with the government, though a couple appear to be breaking down

“The Karen have never signed one, though their long-time capital, Manerplaw, was overrun in 1994. They have shifted to guerrilla tactics and say they operate from about 300 mobile bases along the frontier. Battalion commander Capt. Go To estimates there are perhaps 2,000 boy soldiers in the KNLA. He claims the rebels can field about 20,000 fighters. Independent analysts put the figure at less than half that.

“Boys wanting to be soldiers typically arrive in rebel areas and are put to work in the camps, gathering firewood and hunting

before being taken out on operations to learn fighting on the job. Kaban and Peterson have joined attacks on an army base in the middle of hostile territory, Capt. Go To said.

“There, the enemy is surrounded and we ambush them every time they come out for supplies, Capt. Go To said.

"PA GOVERNMENT NEUTRALISES PRESIDENT MANDELA"

PRESS RELEASE

Sri Lanka

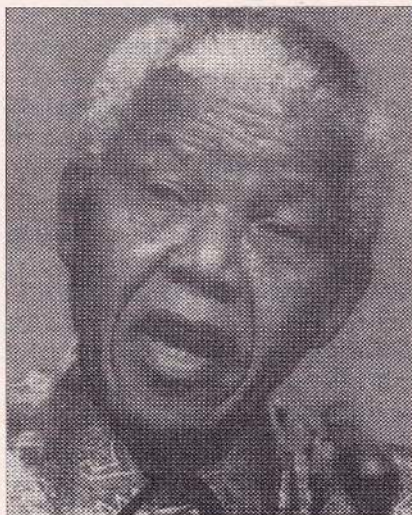
16 January 1999

A senior member of the political wing of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Mr Thamichelvan, invited President Chandrika Kumaratunga (a Sinhalese) in early September 1998 to re-commence negotiations with the LTTE to resolve the ongoing armed conflict between the Peoples Alliance (PA) Coalition Government and the LTTE-led Tamil National Movement in Sri Lanka. He also underlined the indispensable role of a mediator, who possessed no vested interest in the conflict, in commencing and conducting the proposed negotiations (Sunday Leader, 6/Sep/98). The LTTE leader, Mr Velupillai Pirabakaran, repeated the invitation about eleven weeks later, during his Heroes Day Address on 27 November.

The LTTE did not stop with verbal exhortations. The organisation actively lobbied neutral foreign governments to intervene in the armed conflict. It is well known that the LTTE invested considerable effort to induce South African President Nelson Mandela to offer his services as mediator.

Indeed President Nelson Mandela, while speaking in the UN General Assembly on 21 September, recommended third party intervention to resolve Sri Lanka's armed conflict. The Sri Lankan Government would have found it extremely difficult to refuse a direct offer from President Mandela, given his unrivalled international political stature. Consequently, his involvement as a mediator and the re-commencement of negotiations toward a democratic political solution to the Tamil Question appeared very likely.

There was nothing new in Mr



Nelson Mandela

Thamichelvan's invitation. The LTTE had extended the same on many occasions after the termination of the Cessation of Hostilities (COH) on 19 April 1995. **President Kumaratunga and her Foreign Minister Mr Lakshman Kadirgamar (a Tamil) responded to Mr Thamichelvan's invitation in the same contemptuous way they had dismissed earlier overtures, by rejecting mediation but expressing willingness to consider facilitation. They blatantly dodged negotiations by stipulating pre-conditions well known to be unacceptable to the LTTE: that the organisation should lay down arms and must disavow the goal of an independent Tamil Eelam.**

In contrast, gallons ink flowed over reams of paper to comment and criticise Mr Pirabakaran's invitation extended on 27 November 1998. The President and her Foreign Minister, whilst rejecting the invitation, have gone to great lengths in domestic and international fora to stress the irrele-

S. Sathananthan

Dr S Sathananthan, Secretary

vance of a mediator and to question the sincerity of Mr Pirabakaran's overture.

The immediate reason for the unprecedented agitation in Colombo is the virtual collapse of the Government's war strategy, demonstrated by two major events in September 1998. On the 11th in Jaffna, a remote controlled explosive device detonated by the LTTE killed Mayor Pon Sivapalan (a Tamil) and Brigade Commander Brigadier Susantha Mendis (a Sinhalese), together with most of the senior members of the military hierarchy in Jaffna. The attack all but neutralised the Government's subterfuge of "re-establishing normalcy", in order to politically marginalise the LTTE, by cobbling together a Vichy-type collaborationist Tamil administration in the Jaffna peninsula. On the 27th in Kilinochchi, Operation Jayasikurui (Sure Victory) came to a grinding halt when the LTTE inflicted the worst military debacle upon the armed forces by over-running key fortified army camps and killing about 1,800 soldiers. The Government was compelled to abort the eighteen-month long Operation Jayasikurui at the end of November and the much-trumpeted military victory over the LTTE-led Tamil National Movement in the North-Eastern Province (NEP) turned to ashes.

The shift in the balance of power in favour of the LTTE was underlined when its air wing, the Air Tigers, took to the skies on 27 November.

Popular disenchantment over the war deepened among the Sinhalese and the PA came under increasing political pressure to genuinely negotiate with the LTTE. Sensing the mood of the Sinhalese electorate, the Opposition United National Party (UNP) leader Mr Ranil

Wickremasinghe (a Sinhalese) voiced again his earlier demand (Uthayan, 29/Aug/98), more confidently after the Kilinochchi debacle, that President Kumaratunga should negotiate with the LTTE without setting pre-conditions. Later, he also repeated the allegation he had made in Parliament on 20 August that the Government is using food as a weapon of war against the Tamil people. Mr Wickremasinghe urged that "war and talk can go on together, but it also means that the Government must ensure adequate food and medicine is made available to the people in the Wannu" (The Island, 22/Dec/98).

Political fig leaf

However, the manoeuvres of the PA Government to counteract the political pressure have confirmed again the assessment made by The Action Group Of Tamils (TAGOT). **We have for long maintained that the Sinhalese-dominated Government is enforcing a draconian military solution to the Tamil Question in Sri Lanka, that its alleged commitment to a negotiated settlement is a political fig leaf to dignify the military onslaught.** The reactions of the Government to the events, which unfolded between 6 September and 27 November, amply substantiate our position.

To avoid negotiations, the Government moves swiftly to pre-empt the potential mediatory role of President Mandela. The Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry alleged in October that the LTTE was about to shift its international headquarters from Britain to South Africa. Rumours were spread that the organisation is operating training camps in South Africa and that the African National Congress (ANC) is partial towards the LTTE.

On 14 November, about two weeks before Mr Pirabakaran's Heroes Day Address, Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar flew to Pretoria supposedly "to block Tigers' move" (Indian Express, 15/Nov/98). At a news briefing on the 19th in Pretoria, Mr Kadirgamar explained: "I have not come here to make any accusations, but to forewarn the South African Government and ask for its help" to

prevent the LTTE establishing a base in that country. Whilst speaking at the Centre for Policy Studies in Johannesburg, Mr Kadirgamar reiterated that the Sri Lankan Government will not entertain a mediator (Reuters News Service, 19/Nov/98).

In short, the PA resorted to the cynical ruse of throwing enough mud knowing that some of it is bound to stick. It insinuated that the South African Government is not a neutral party in the armed conflict in Sri Lanka and thereby damaged President Mandela's standing as an impartial mediator.

To discredit the Mr Pirabakaran's 27 November invitation, barely a week later the Defence Ministry enacted hilarious theatre. The Ministry staged - some would say concocted - a mortar attack on the Deputy Minister of Defence Anuruddha Ratwatte (a Sinhalese) and the Heads of the Army, Navy and Air Force (all Sinhalese) when they visited newly captured Oddusuddan on 5 December. All four officials allegedly narrowly escaped death. (Sunday Times, 6/Dec/98). The Government would prefer the world to believe that the LTTE helpfully exposed the insincerity of the invitation through its own ill-timed attack!

"A newspaper canard"

Thus the PA Government deliberately sabotaged another opportunity to commence negotiations toward a political settlement to the armed conflict. To mask the ploy, a pro-government newspaper disgorged the canard that President Kumaratunga has accepted an offer from President Mandela to mediate in the conflict (The Independent, 14/Jan/99).

Others pitched in to help the Government out of the feared "peace trap". Maj Gen Prasanna Dahanayake (a Sinhalese) rejected the LTTE's invitation to negotiate as a "warning order" (Sunday Leader, 13/Dec/98). Mr DBS Jeyaraj (a Tamil) heroically bolstered the sagging morale of Sinhalese nationalists. "Those Sinhala sections feeling dejected over the progress [sic] of Jayasikurui", he implored, "do not

realise that the groundwork for effectively negating the demand for Eelam in the long run and a North-East merger in the short run has been laid as a result of Jayasikurui" (The Island, 16/Dec/98). Dr Jayadeva Uyangoda (a Sinhalese), who had been a member of the so-called "negotiating team" that visited Jaffna between October 1994 and April 1995, again apologised for the Government. "In the current atmosphere of Sri Lanka's politics," he defended glibly, "there is no political space for the Chandrika Kumaratunga Government to resume talks with the LTTE. To begin with, there is no political compulsion for the Government to change its present military approach to the LTTE. And no government in Colombo, approaching the end of its term and facing crucial elections within the span of a year, would want to burn its hands again with the LTTE." And Dr Uyangoda callously explained why war is preferable to peace thus: "positions are now hardened. Amidst severe setbacks on the battlefield, the Government cannot even appear to be relaxing its military campaign against the LTTE. In the current political thinking in Colombo, negotiations with the LTTE will represent a trap and the continuation of the war is the logical option" (Frontline, 19/Dec/98).

In other words, it is politically inconvenient for the PA Government to stop the war and roll back the Sinhalese military domination over the Tamil people. By justifying the continuation of the war, those forces ranged against the Tamil National Movement accept the death and mutilation of many thousands more Tamil men, women and children with an abysmal amorality that staggers the mind.

Therefore, TAGOT has no intention whatsoever of indulging in pedestrian appeals to the Government to "respond positively" to the LTTE's invitation. Instead we repeat that the PA Government is unwilling and incapable of negotiating and implementing a political solution to the Tamil Question with a united Sri Lanka.

□□□

ARTICLE 19 slams Sri Lankan censorship

ARTICLE 19, the London-based international anti-censorship organisation has accused the Sri Lankan government and military of using the emergency regulations "to conceal from the Sri Lankan people the true cost of the continuing war" against the LTTE.

ARTICLE 19 called on the Sri Lankan government to immediately lift its censorship and take other "long-promised steps" to guarantee press freedom in a new report, "Fifty Years On; Censorship, conflict and media reform in Sri Lanka" unveiled today.

In a statement issued by the organisation, Andrew Puddephatt, ARTICLE 19's Executive Director said that censorship being used to conceal the "high number of casualties" and "the extent of civilian displacement".

"Clearly, the re-appointment of an official censor to vet media reporting of the conflict and related affairs is having a severe 'chilling effect'. This seriously impedes the free flow of information about issues of key public interest, including the high number of casualties on both sides and the extent of civilian displacement" he said.

"This has exacerbated a long standing problem of lack of information arising from the military's denial of effective access by journalists to the war zones" he added.

ARTICLE 19's report also criticises the government's retention of criminal defamation laws and their continuing use against leading editors and journalists who take issue with official policy.

"When the People's Alliance government came to power four years ago it promised a whole series of media reforms, to break with the repression of the past and guarantee respect for freedom of expression and other basic rights. At first, there were some positive

signs but four years on very little of the reform agenda has been achieved" according to Andrew Puddephatt:

"Furthermore, the government has shown an increasing tendency to target its media critics through the use of lawsuits and other kinds of harassment" he added.

ARTICLE 19 was skeptical about the government's appointment last year of a parliamentary select committee to examine the case for media reform.

"We hope that this is a genuine process even though the select committee will be covering much ground which government-appointed expert groups already examined more than two years ago and no firm date has been set for it to make its recommendations. Only time will tell" he added.

"But it would be tragic for the future

of Sri Lanka's democracy if it turns out to be no more than a recipe for further delay" he said.

On 9 December 1998, the President appointed a new, civilian 'Competent Authority' - the Director of Information - to administer the censorship on reporting of various security matters under emergency regulations.

Direct censorship under emergency regulations had been reimposed in Sri Lanka in June 1998, when for the first time a military censor (the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army) had been appointed.

ARTICLE 19 noted that the content of Sri Lanka's emergency regulations, which govern censorship, remains unchanged.

TAMILNET, JANUARY 20, 1999

HUMAN RIGHTS & The Moral Dimension in Journalism

CHRISTIANE AMANPOUR is a CNN journalist. Her eight years as foreign correspondent is like a guidebook on human rights violations with detailing of tyranny, oppression, slavery, torture, indignity, inequality, invasion of privacy, the denial of political rights, arbitrary arrest and imprisonment, the denial of free speech, of association and worship. Throughout, her problem was a troublesome inner voice which kept on compelling her to speak out when it would have been wiser to keep quiet, to witness horrors about which she could speak unflinchingly to the world but which kept her awake at night... It was in this seeking to expose the truth that she became aware of the moral dimension to her work as journalist.

Writing in the 1998

Commemorative Anthology of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights published by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Christiane Amanpour says:

"I realised that objectivity means giving all sides an equal hearing, IT DOES NOT MEAN TREATING ALL SIDES EQUALLY. WHEN YOU DO THAT, WHEN YOU CANNOT DISTINGUISH BETWEEN VICTIM AND AGGRESSOR, RAPIST AND VICTIM, YOU ENTER THE ZONE OF MORAL EQUIVALENCE.... I could not do this, I took some hits,... there were complaints that I had lost my objectivity, that I was siding with one faction. My answer is that I sought the truth and that I became aware of the moral dimension to our profession. I also became aware of the power of a journalist's words and the consequences they have ...".

Australian tourist robbed

An Australian national who was staying in a guest house at Yakdehimulla in Unawatuna in south Sri Lanka was robbed of Rs. 450,000 in cash and personal belongings worth over Rs. 1 million by six youths.

A complaint in this regard was made by the victim Russel Parking to Galle police.

Sub Inspector Upali Asoka of the Galle Traffic Police who took into custody a youth on suspicion was able to make a breakthrough. Investigations led to the recovery of a T56 rifle and 40 rounds of ammunition at Morawaka.

The rifle was reported to have been sold to one of the suspects for Rs. 22,500 by an Army Sergeant attached to the Galkulana Camp in Anuradhapura, police said. Police have rounded up six suspects in this connection. SI Upali Asoka described two of the six suspects as JVP activists. They have now been remanded pending further investigations.

Wheat flour abandoned

Fourteen lorry-loads of wheat flour were abandoned in the Wannai District when the Sri Lankan security forces at the Paraiyanalankulam check post insisted on having all the bags unloaded in torrential rain last Wednesday [6th January]. The government soldiers at the checkpoint slit open the flour bags in pouring rain for checking contents of each bag. The bags were also asked to be left out on the ground for a few hours before being loaded onto the lorries again. By the time the loading hour arrived the bags were found unworthy to be taken to consumers.

Although the government should have dispatched 100 lorry-loads of dried rations to the Wannai District in December, excuses were given for the delay and delivery postponed. The 14 lorries that left for Wannai on Wednesday 6th January with wheat flour had to return without delivering

NEWS IN BRIEF

their consignment to the needy after the flour bags were abandoned at the checkpoint at Paraiyanalankulam.

(IBC TAMIL RADIO, LONDON)

Kad hasn't heard of Perumal!

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Kadirgamar when asked about the reported return of the one-time Chief Minister of the Northeast Mr. Varadaraja Perumal had according to the Indian correspondent who asked the question retorted: "Perumal? Who is he?" He also was not aware of the presence of such a person in Colombo.

UK Hovercraft being tested

The Sri Lankan Navy has taken delivery of its first UK-built hovercraft, with trials currently being conducted in the northern Kilali Lagoon that divides mainland Sri Lanka from the northern Jaffna peninsula. The M10 medium-lift hovercraft, designed by ABS Hovercraft and built by Vosper Thornycroft, was ready at least four months ago. Its delivery was delayed after reports emerged that Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam intended to destroy it while the vessel was being transported to Sri Lanka. Cargo operators declined efforts by UK and Sri Lankan authorities to have security personnel accompany the vessel during shipment. Ultimately, the hovercraft was delivered under 'close protection', a term the navy refused to define. The M10 has been specifically designed for the Sri Lanka Navy and has a capacity to carry 56 troops or two small vehicles and 20 troops.

LTTE inaugurate phone service

The LTTE have inaugurated a two-way international telephone service at Puthukudiruppu in the Mullaitivu district. A charge of Rs.700 is being levied

for a one minute call, and the service is reported to be functioning satisfactorily all 24 hours of the day.

Meanwhile, on top of the Sinhala service of the Voice of Tigers started recently moves are on to start an English language service as well.

Sinhala Only at the Red Cross workshop

At the 5-day workshop of the all-island Red Cross Society held at Kegalle from December 26-30 last year, the entire proceedings were held in Sinhala only, depriving the representatives from the north and east from full participation. Despite this language handicap, the Jaffna district topped the list as the best organised branch with a membership of 5,000. The Jaffna participants totalling 21 were led by Mr. Selvaranjan and his deputy Mr. Arunthvarajah. The ICRC representative in Colombo was the chief guest.

Her Italy journey ends in Kalutara

A 26-year old married woman from Jaffna, Nicholas Placidus Tamila who came to Colombo to join her husband Jeyarajah Jeyakanthan in Italy, has been languishing in the Kalutara jail for the past eight months. While she was staying in Kotahena for the sponsorship papers to be completed, she was arrested and held on suspicion that she belonged to the LTTE movement at one time. Her fundamental rights application which was to be taken up on November 30 last year was rejected on the grounds that she faces a charge of having undergone arms training.

Wild boar shoot causes panic

It happened at the small village of Miravodai next to Valaichchenai around 12.30 p.m. on January 7. Sounds of repeated gunfire caused panic not only among the residents but also among soldiers at the army camp

who began to run out of the camp thinking that the camp was coming under attack by the LTTE. Teachers and students at the nearby Tamil school fell flat on the floor. A little while later the truth came out when some soldiers were seen carrying a wild boar they had shot back to the camp.

Trinco U.C. irked by army meddling

The Trincomalee Urban Council under the chairmanship of Mr.P.Suriyamoorthy has lodged a strong protest with the governor of the northeast province Maj.Gen.Asoka Jayawardene over the constant interference of army personnel in the affairs of the Urban Council. Both the Sinhalese members of the Council, Messrs. B.A.Gamini and Susil Hewavitharane strongly backed the Chairman. When tenders were called for the letting of ten shops belonging to the Council at the Anuradhapura junction, the army had asked the chairman to cancel the tenders and give the shops to Sinhalese applicants.

Floods add to the human misery

Heavy rains with the beginning of the year have added to the human misery in various parts of the Vavuniya and Mannar districts. Thousands of displaced Tamil families have been uprooted again from their temporary shelters and distribution of foodstuffs has been hampered by flooding of roads. Among those badly affected are 300 fisherfamilies in Mannar and Talaimannar. In Batticaloa district nearly 10,000 families were affected. ***

Pettah area rounded up: 125 Tamils held.

Police rounded up the Pettah area in the early hours of the morning on the 6th January, and took into custody 125 Tamils on suspicion. Six women were among those held. Police say most of them did not possess identity cards, and therefore they were taken for questioning. Another 12 Tamils who

were occupants of a lodge in Kotahena were also arrested allegedly on a charge of possessing false documents.

Driver tried to rob temple trustee

The trustee of the New Kathiresan temple, Bambalapitiya, R.M.Palaniappa Chettiar was attacked and nearly robbed by his own van driver Piyasena on Friday January 15. Mr.Palaniappa Chettiar was reported to be carrying the temple collection on Thai Pongal Day amounting to about Rs.50,000, when the van driver deviated from the usual route and drove the van to a isolated spot at D.R.Wijewardene Mawatha in Maradana. He had then stopped the van and tried to throttle Mr.Chettiar's neck and rob the money. Unfortunately for the assailant, some passersby intervened and handed over the man to the police. The driver is reported to have been in Mr.Chettiar's employ for the past five months.

Stabbed to death at Mt.Lavinia

A rich businessman Sabri (40), a resident of Nawala, Colombo, was stabbed to death at Mt.Lavinia and his money and jewellery of his woman companion were robbed by a gang, according to Police. The incident is reported to have occurred on Friday the 15th around 9 p.m. The couple is stated to have had dinner at a beach tourist hotel and were about to get into their car after a stroll when they were attacked. It was while trying to save his woman companion from the armed gang that the businessman suffered stab injuries and had died on admission to the Kalubowila hospital.

30 underground gangs in Colombo

More than 30 underground gangs are believed to be operating in Colombo, and despite the arrests of some of the members of the gangs, the leaders of these gangs have so far

evaded the police net, according to the D.I.G.(Crimes) H.M.G.P.Kotakadeniya. Drug peddling and contract killings are among crimes committed by these gangs. The police are now reported to be keeping watch on some Chinese restaurants believed to be the hideouts of these men.

Police and Navy men clash at Borella

A clash between the police and some Navy men at Borella on 11th January resulted in two policemen receiving grievous injuries and the arrest of three navy personnel. A hand grenade and a "kris" knife found in the vehicle of the naval personnel were seized by the police. The clash is reported to have followed a dispute between the naval employee and a fruit seller, with the former refusing to pay for his purchases.

TELO member shot dead in Jaffna.

Jacob Antony, described as a TELO representative in the Valvettiturai Town Council and TELO organiser for Nelliady, was shot dead by unknown persons at Nelliady, around 7.30 p.m. on the 11th January. Born in Kandy, he is reported to be a longtime member of that group.

Fisherman survives after Navy attack

A fisherman, Sellar Kanthasamy (35) who along with T.Selventhiran went fishing off the Mullaitivu sea was found unconscious at a beach near Kuchchaveli. Fellow fishermen said that the boat was shot at by naval personnel, and had caught fire and sunk. Sellar Kanthasamy had swum 45 miles before being washed ashore in an unconscious state. He is the father of two children. The fate of the other fisherman is not known, and he is believed drowned.

6 students in Jaffna get all four A grades

Despite the heavy odds facing students in army-controlled Jaffna, six of them scored "A" grades in all four subjects in the G.C.E (AL) exam held last year. Two of them were from Hartley College, Point Pedro - Murugupillai Maheswaran and Thangarajah Pratheepan; two others from Vembadi Girls' College - Kunarajah Pratheepa and Shanmugasuntharam Sinthuja; one from Jaffna Hindu College Krishnapillai Kuruparan; and the sixth from Udupiddy American Mission School - Sellathurai Sutharsan.

Kalutara detainees fast in protest

Thirty one Tamil political detainees are maintaining a protest fast on the roof of the maximum security Kalutara prison, 43 kilometres south of Colombo. They are demanding that Sri Lanka's Attorney General (AG) file charges against them or release them forthwith.

Many of them have been languishing in prison for more than four years as the AG's department is yet to file cases against them.

Twelve of these detainees had started their protest fast on the prison's roof on January 18. The others joined them in batches until the 20th.

TAMILNET

False bomb alarm prompts evacuation

Students and staff at two schools in Colombo were evacuated following a false bomb alarm this morning. Anonymous callers had told the authorities at Ananda College in Maradana, close to downtown Colombo and another school at Muttuwal that powerful bombs were planted in the premises of their schools and could go off at any time.

The Sri Lankan Army (SLA) and Police rushed to these schools imme-

NEWS IN BRIEF

diately and evacuated everyone. Other schools in Colombo were also alerted.

A thorough investigation revealed this afternoon that the callers had created a false alarm.

Police sources investigating the matter said that the bomb scare could be the work of some elements which are opposed to the educational reforms that are currently under way in the state run schools of the country.

TAMILNET

N-East Governor charges Trinco U.C. Chairman

The North - East Governor has served show cause notice on Trincomalee Urban Council Chairman P. Sooriyamoorthy on 11 charges made against him by a Committee which probed complaints of misappropriation of funds and abuse of power.

Governor Asoka Jayawardene has asked the Chairman for an explanation before Jan. 27. The charges against the chairman relate among other things to the construction of the new market at Keerathoddam in Trincomalee and Kulakattam Community building and the allocations of state land without following proper procedure.

3 Tamil suicides in Colombo

Three suicides were reported at Colombo's National Hospital within ten days of the New Year - all three of them of Tamils. The victims were a 14-year old girl, Miss.H Balachandran of ~ 2, Colombo 2, a 65-year old man S.Selliah of Wellampitiya, and a 12year old girl, Miss.I.S.Suganthini of Mattakuliya.

Mr.Balachandran, the father of the first victim told the City Coroner that his daughter was a student of Hindu Ladies College, but they removed her from school in order to give her away

in marriage to a nephew who was living in Germany. She had set herself on fire in the bathroom. The mother of the second teenage girl, Mrs.V.Sumathy told the Coroner that her daughter was a student of Modera Tamil School in Grade 6, and that her family consisted of seven members. She had taken her school uniform to the laundry to be ironed, and her daughter insisted on her coming too, but she stopped her and took her third daughter along. When she got back, she found the house locked and discovered Suganthini hanging from a bar from the ceiling.

Sri Lanka 'hiding true cost of war'

Officials are accused of hiding casualty figures

Sri Lanka's Government and military have come under fire for allegedly hiding the true financial and human cost of its war against the Tamil Tigers. In a report released on Wednesday, the British anti-censorship group Article Nineteen, accuses the authorities of using emergency regulations to conceal information about the conflict from ordinary people.

It says the appointment of an official censor to vet domestic media coverage of the civil war is a chilling development that seriously impedes the free flow of information about key issues of public interest.

The 70-page report says ordinary Sri Lankans are kept in the dark about the high number of casualties on both sides and the extent of civilian displacement.

Article Nineteen's spokesman, Malcolm Smart, says President Chandrika Kumaratunga has even barred the press from printing details about the country's unusually high suicide rate.

"What we see is a return in some respects - obviously there are many differences - to some of the repressive policies towards the media that characterised the previous government," Mr Smart said.

Article Nineteen is also concerned that many libel cases in Sri Lanka are

treated as criminal cases allowing journalists to be imprisoned.

But they stress it is not just the government that is exerting pressure on reporters: so too is the military.

In the past the armed forces have threatened or beaten up journalists who have written articles critical of the war effort, the report says.

EPRLF accused of extortion

DUSSELDORF, Germany, The trial of 11 alleged EPRLF members accused of extorting money from fellow Sri Lankan immigrants in Germany started on January 20 under heavy police protection. The defendants, are on trial for violently extorting money from Sri Lankans living in Berlin and North-Rhine Westphalia between 1985 and 1990 and for criminal association.

Heading the German arm of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), the accused "bludgeoned and thrashed" those who would not pay, and threatened their families, according to the prosecution. The EPRLF, whose German section is based in Gummersbach, collected and sent to Sri Lanka some 1.7 euros (1.9 million dollars) between 1987 and 1991, the prosecution added. The trial, for which 22 lawyers and five interpreters were hired, is to last through August. Some 60 witnesses are expected to testify during 36 days of hearings.

SLAF Hercules to fly passengers

The Sri Lankan Air Force (SLAF) will begin its own passenger service to fly civilians between Colombo and Jaffna. This service will be run as a commercial operation sources said. The flights were scheduled to begin soon.

Jaffna SLA, SLAF officers and the Government Agent (GA) have discussed the logistics of passenger service such as issuing tickets, screening passengers, their transport to and from the Palaly SLA base etc.,

An informed source said that SLAF

intends to use one of the three Hercules troop transports for the service so that a large number of people could be flown to and from Jaffna in each flight.

The Russian AN 32 aircraft which were used for commercial passenger flights earlier could accommodate only about 48.

Three Hercules transports have been delivered to the SLAF last week by the British Royal Air Force said sources.

TAMILNET

Jaffna posters warn people

Posters urging people not to associate with the Tamil paramilitary groups working alongside the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) appeared in many parts of the Vadamaradchi division of Jaffna. A group calling itself 'Freedom Fighters' put up the posters in the Tamil language which were titled "Go no longer to the traitors of the nation".

The poster said "the treacherous Tamil gangs which grovel at the feet of Sinhala chauvinism have raised their heads again in the Jaffna peninsula with the assistance of the army. These gangs are harassing our people everywhere on the pretext of restoring civil administration."

The posters urged the public to cease assisting or having any relations with these "gangs which are enemies of the nation".

"Justice and Dharma shall be victorious eventually. Prepare yourselves for that day" the poster further said.

Sources in Jaffna said civilians were seen gathered in several parts of Vadamaradchi to peruse these posters. Sri Lanka Army troops removed some of them later.

TAMILNET

Army imposes fishing ban

The Sri Lankan Army (SLA) has prohibited fisherman in Southern

Thenmaradchi in Jaffna from fishing in the Jaffna lagoon. This order follows a clash between the LTTE and the SLA in Koilakkandy in which five Tigers were killed.

The ban has affected a large number of fishing families in the villages of Thachchanthoppu, Navatkuly, Koilakkandy, Thanagkilappu, Maravan Pulavu etc., sources said.

SLA sources in Jaffna, however, claimed that the ban was necessary as the Liberation Tigers are frequently infiltrating the peninsula from the mainland across the lagoon in canoes similar to those used by fishermen in these parts.

TAMILNET

Big army search in Mannar

More than 500 Sri Lankan Army (SLA) troops from the Thallaadi base and the detachment at the Portuguese fort in the Mannar island cordoned off and searched the suburbs of Moor Street and Uppukkulam in Mannar town from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on January 21.

Four persons, including two Muslim women were arrested and detained by the SLA during this operation.

A very large quantity of match boxes and a motorcycle were discovered in a house during the search. Inquiries by SLA had led to the arrest of the two women.

The SLA, according to the Mannar TamilNet correspondent, suspects that the goods found in the house were meant for smuggling to that part of the Mannar mainland that is under the control of the Liberation Tigers.

The SLA and the Sri Lankan Police have said that there is rampant smuggling of banned goods to the LTTE controlled areas of the Vanni from Mannar town.

The clandestine conduit for essential goods banned by the SLA to the Vanni from the island of Mannar remains open despite frequent search operations said Police sources.

TAMILNET

Tamils under military rule & resolving the ethnic conflict

Her Excellency C.B.Kumaratunga,
President of Sri Lanka,
Temple Trees,
Colombo-3

Your Excellency,

"Rejection of Prabhakaran by Tamils greatest victory of PA" - flashed a state controlled English newspaper quoting you as its Front page Banner Headline on 27th October 1998.

The report reads as follows: -

"The rejection of Prabhakaran and his terrorist Organisation by the Ordinary Tamil people of Jaffna is one of the greatest victories of the PA Government.

By returning to and living in Government controlled areas enmesh, Tamil civilians have expressed their faith in us. In fact, more than 85% of Tamils in the North live under Government control.

She said the Tamils in the North constantly praised the Government and the military for liberating them from the grip of the Tigers. They have appealed to us to ensure they never ever fall into the Tigers' net".

Clearly this is a Government's propaganda ploy to mislead the International community that Prabhakaran had been rejected by the Tamils and all Tamils living under Sri Lanka military occupation in the North and East are fully behind the Government. It is a pity that such propaganda is being purveyed.

This reminds one of a similar situation during World War II. Some Frenchmen over in Paris saluted Hitler during the occupation of Paris by the Germans. So did the Malaysians and Singaporeans hail Emperor Hirohito of Japan during the Japanese occupation of both Malaysia and Singapore during the same period. Singaporeans and Malaysians had to tell the Japanese Army that they welcomed them and that they were happy of the British being driven away. This was the only way for them to survive

from torture and Japanese prisons.

The P.A. Government's main priority for the past 3 years had to take the International Community for a ride stating that all the Tamils are behind the Government and the Tigers are a bunch of terrorists with no support from the Tamils in any part of Sri Lanka. The present PA Government's political games up to date have been attempts to isolate the LTTE and its supporters in the International arena for its "War for Peace "One people One Nation" slogans.

The majority of the people of Jaffna who fled to Vanni jungles on the occupation of Jaffna by the Army returned to their homes in Jaffna due to the intolerable living conditions in the jungles without adequate water, food and medicine. It would be really a comic interpretation if their return from the jungles to their homes is described as acceptance of the occupation of Jaffna by the Army.

Your approach towards the Tamils and the Tamil problem has to change. The strategies that have been followed by your Government up to date had been disastrous and have brought only death and suffering to thousands of Tamils.

The results of the probe by your Government into the report of

Amnesty International that some 600 people disappeared in Jaffna region in 1996 when the Army took control of the Peninsula is awaited. So is the exhumation of the mass grave at Chemmani. Even at this late stage the Government can open its eyes and come to terms with the Tamil people on the basis of the objectives of the Tamils and their aspirations.

The day the P.A. Government and the Opposition UNP accept the truth that the Tamils of Sri Lanka are not a mere percentage of the total population of the Island but a distinct Nationality who had been living particularly in the North and East for centuries and that they are entitled to the same rights enjoyed by the Sinhala people, most of our problems would get resolved.

The casualties in Kashmir for all these years is only 28,000, in North Ireland it is less than 3000, whereas it is 60,000 in Sri Lanka from 1983 to date, majority of whom are Tamils.

The death toll during the PA Government of 4 years has been very much more than what it had been from 1983 to the date of the P.A. Government was installed on November 1994. This has to be stopped.

With regards

Yours truly,
N. Vijayasingam
PRESIDENT
AGOTIC

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THE ART OF THE IMPOSSIBLE

"The actions of governments generally produce results which are the opposite of those intended."

1. Benjamin Disraeli once famously described politics as the "art of the possible". He spoke in the context of a late nineteenth century, maturing, parliamentary democracy. He was drawing attention to the systemic limits to the capability of that type of parliamentary government. His epigram is, however, a pointer to a wider truth, namely, that governance itself is "the art of the possible". Governance in its widest connotation, is subject to inherent limits on capability. This runs counter to the absolute, unqualified, untrammelled competence which is the foundation of the doctrine of "sovereignty" in legal jurisprudence. Here we reach an important divergence between practice and theory. **There are limits to the capability of every government however sovereign it may deem itself to be. There are things, many things, especially in the social arena, which governments cannot do.**

2. It is not common for sovereign governments to understand, much less publicly acknowledge, the limits to their power and capability. **The temptation, and the tendency, is for governments to believe they are all-powerful and omniscient. It is this triumphalism which produces the widespread phenomenon of government activities being counter-productive. So, we get the apocryphal Murphy's Law which says that "the actions of governments generally produce results which are the opposite of those intended."**

3. This danger is heightened in countries where the state is not a native, locally evolved, historically entrenched institution but, on the contrary, is a relict of foreign rule, superimposed by a foreign ruler drawing on parallels in that ruler's experience and history back in his home country. Most newly-independent, former colonial countries are in this predicament. The

state is disjunctive from their historical evolution of royal courts and feudal institutions. The rule of law, individual rights enforced through a judicial structure, the concept of a social contract being the foundation of civil society, the legitimacy of the state being dependent on the consent of the governed were not part of the pre-colonial political culture. They were exotic foreign imports, so exotic indeed, that 50 years after the end of foreign rule they are still not widely absorbed and internalised within civil society.



Adrian Wijemanne

4. The colonial state was external to the civil society upon which it was imposed from above by the force of imperial arms. It did not need the foundation of a civil society from which it derived its legitimacy and of which it was a natural outgrowth. It did not need the consent of the governed. In essence the colonial state was not a modern state and, far more importantly, it could not become one. It was the antithesis of the modern state founded upon a modern society.

5. In Sri Lanka the abrupt departure of the imperial ruler in 1948 thrust

the colonial state into the hands of the local elite which had emerged through election as the representatives of the governed. Little thought was spared for the fundamental nature of the transition and what it meant for the state. The new situation required both a new kind of state and a new kind of society. It needed a state broadly based upon the consent of the governed, a base far wider than a contested representative system could provide. Correspondingly, it needed a society in which democratic fundamentals were understood, accepted and observed, a society essentially secular, protective of individual equality and common rights, conscious of the superiority of society over state.

6. **Unhappily, neither of these vital essentials was present when the transfer of power took place. The new holders of power were overwhelmed by the power so suddenly decanted into their hands, power which for the first time included command over police and military forces.** The omnipotence of the state within its territory was taken for granted, especially after the withdrawal of British naval forces from Trincomalee was negotiated by S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. Civil society, on the other hand, remained in its age-old compliant stance inculcated by centuries of monarchical and feudal rule and latterly by colonial domination. No less than superhuman prescience and wisdom was needed if the state was to avoid an hegemonistic posture and eschew laying hands on the levers of omnipotence. It was almost too much to expect and in the event it did prove too much. The leaders of that time (and since, right up to now) drank deep of the heady draught of sovereign omnipotence and laid about them with a heavy hand to prove the point. The thought that there were important limits to the power of the state, that

there were things which it just could not do was furthest from the mind of the ruling class. The concept that politics was the art of the possible, implying that the impossible was always near at hand, was unknown and would have been heresy to suggest. This overweening confidence in the power of the state resulted in governance becoming the art of the impossible. Sri Lanka's history in the first 50 years of independence is the classic demonstration of this evolution.

1. Repatriation of plantation workers to India

7. The euphoria of February 1948 had barely cooled when in November of that very year the first steps were taken against the Tamil plantation worker population which had enjoyed full voting rights under British colonial rule. The newly independent state embarked on a deliberate course of compelling a large population, against its will, to leave the country and return to the land of their origin which was now reluctant to receive them. It was a policy based upon the delusion that an omnipotent state could do as it thought fit regardless of the effect on those whose existing rights were to be whittled away. **The thought that those who were to be adversely affected should be consulted or even informed of the rationale behind the legislation before it was introduced did not even occur to the powers that were. The state did not care what those affected felt. Predictably, the policy produced a dramatic upsurge of resistance and hatred from the affected population, outrage from India upon whom the cascade of repatriation was to descend and a long history of tense confrontations between Indian and Sri Lankan leaders, Jawaharlal Nehru vs, John Kotalawela, Shastri vs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Indira Gandhi vs. J.R. Jayawardene and much later Rajiv Gandhi vs. R. Premadasa. It gave birth to a powerful, cohesive, well-financed political party-cum-trade union unmatched by anything on the Sinhala side to this day.** The original

mirage of compulsion soon gave way to compromise and negotiation and, finally, in 1987, to capitulation. Legislation is one thing, its implementation is quite another and legislation founded on delusions of grandeur produces discord, rancour and eventual failure.

8. Today, in the heartland of Sinhala society there is entrenched a compact enclave of a million or more plantation Tamil persons with full voting rights. Their leader sits in every cabinet under the presidential form of government for their votes are indispensable for the election of a President. The policy of exclusion from citizenship and forced repatriation was the first example of an essay in the art of the impossible.

Legislation is one thing, its implementation is quite another and legislation founded on delusions of grandeur produces discord, rancour and eventual failure.

Language Policy

9. Then came the policy which more than any other produced the bitter harvest of division. "Sinhala Only" was assumed by all Sinhala politicians and the vast majority of the Sinhala people as being beneficial to themselves. The dangers of mono-lingualism for a people whose language was far removed from the main sources and expressions of modern knowledge, both ethical and scientific, were not even mentioned. The policy locked the Sinhala people into the primitive mediaevalism which their language had purveyed and from which escape into the modern world was vital in order to create a modern democratic society which in turn could have produced a stable and cohesive state as successor to the colonial state. The Sinhala Only policy foreclosed that possibility. **Instead, the Sinhala people were fed on the majoritarian delusion of grandeur to the effect that whatever they decided was good for themselves could be imposed on all others regardless of**

their views. Once again the policy produced discord, rancour, violence and this time, war. 31 years later (in 1987) it was abandoned as incapable of implementation.

10. It was a policy based on a dual fallacy - on the one hand majoritarian invincibility and on the other hand a grossly ignorant misconception of what the majority needed for its enlightenment, welfare and progress. Today the myth of majoritarian invincibility lies shattered and through the length and breadth of Sinhala society, from its highest to its lowest levels, desperate efforts are being made to acquire proficiency in English, a world language, which could open the door for escape from a backward, violent, shattered society. The university system has been wrecked by the medium of instruction being switched from English to the vernaculars and now produces in their thousands graduates who are unemployable in any but the most menial occupations. **The Sinhala Only policy is one of the most tragic mileposts in the pursuit of the art of the impossible.**

Nationalisation

11. It is assumptions regarding the omnipotence and the infallibility of the state that lay behind the policy of nationalising "the commanding heights of the economy". The government persuaded itself with barely a tremor of doubt, that it could operate businesses better than any private businessman. Hundreds of government corporations were set up, many buttressed by monopolies imposed by the state in their respective fields. Tea, rubber and coconut plantations were nationalised. The two state banks virtually monopolised the banking sector. Foreign banks narrowly escaped nationalisation but were hamstrung by government imposed restrictions on branching and new business. The consequences were predictably calamitous. No independent audit of the enormous damage done to the economy of the country has been, or can be, done. From 1977 this catastrophic policy has been reversed vigorously. Nationalisation from being the panacea for all the ills of society is now

regarded as the root of all evil. Monumental delusion and error produced an exercise in the art of the impossible.

Industrialisation

12. Industrialisation was attempted first behind closed doors, protecting local industries from the bracing winds of international competition. The uneconomic scale of production for the small local market of a minuscule middle class with any purchasing power mandated shoddy goods at high prices. The consumer was sacrificed and the entrepreneur was misled into the belief that we could stop the world, get off, and do our own thing, in our own way and that that would be best for us. We could withdraw from the world market and manage in a market of our own.

These were the convictions not only of the ideologically perverted left wing parties but also of the capitalist right wing party. Complete delusion and error reigned supreme and universal - there was no dissentient voice till 1977.

13. Once again disaster was predictable and unsurprisingly it was the government which was the chief proponent of this policy (the 7-year long government of Sirimavo Bandaranaike from 1970 to 1977) that paid the supreme penalty of decimation at the polls. The orthodoxy of those dark years is today an unspeakable heresy. Today the world market is all and the country fights for its niches in it. The art of the impossible had to be abandoned lock, stock and barrel. What is now seen to be possible is very difficult but it is not the art of the impossible.

Free Education

14. "Free Education" is one of the most sacred cows of social policy. To

criticise it is like criticising motherhood. With a tiny base of direct taxes and a system of indirect taxation that fell equally on the small handful of the rich and the middle class on the one hand and the mass of the impoverished on the other hand free, tax-funded education meant very, very, poor underfunded education. It meant very cheap



Only the most inflated assumptions of omnipotence could have led serious leaders of governments to such egregious error.

education in the two vernaculars. A modern education, with access through English, to the exponentially growing stock of the world's knowledge was quite impossible. **The Sinhala nation with a tradition of low numeracy was condemned to deeper immersion in purely literary skills in a language with little relevance to the modern world. The Sinhala nation, small, insular, and desperately in need of being fitted for participation in a rapidly integrating modern world was relegated to a backwater of mediaeval traditionalism.** This tragedy was compounded in the sixties by Sirimavo Bandaranaike's nationalisation of the schools of all religious foundations. Today reality has prevailed and broken through the state monopoly. Today a parallel fee-levying system of schools delivering a progressively improving education thrives. The educational structure reflects the stratified structure of society. The attempt to provide a tax-funded common free education to

the whole of society has been shown up for what it is - an egalitarian dream and another essay in the art of the impossible.

Free Medical services

15. As in education here too the gap between promise and reality is glaringly obvious. Free, exclusively tax-funded medical services cater for the great mass of the population on low incomes; those who can pay, pay for far better and steadily improving private healthcare. The emergence of new, extremely expensive modern medical technologies and drugs widens the gap between the two systems to the detriment of the free state system. All that is possible on a free basis with exclusive tax funding is a rudimentary medical service for which the word

"modern" becomes more and more a misnomer with the passage of time. The provision of a free, exclusively tax-funded, modern medical service is an impossibility.

Foreign Policy

16. It is in this area of public policy that the practice of the art of the impossible is most glaringly evident. In paragraphs 7 & 8 of this paper reference has been made to the impossible aim of forcible repatriation of plantation Tamil workers to India. Yet again India figured in another misguided policy that produced disaster for both countries.

The Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord of 1987

17. If one were to seek a classic in the genre of the art of the impossible one need look no further than this Accord. It was based on a series of delusions so breath-taking as to beggar belief.

First, President Jayawardene and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi persuaded themselves that an agreement between the two of them could be made binding on Mr. Prabhakaran who was not a party to it. Both assumed Prabhakaran could be forced into compliance. Within weeks the absurdity of that assumption became clear.

Secondly, the Accord provided for the disarming of the LTTE in 72 hours by the Indian forces should that become necessary. Only the most inflated assumptions of omnipotence could have led serious leaders of governments to such egregious error.

Thirdly it was taken for granted unquestioningly that when the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan constitution was enacted and the provincial council system was introduced, the great majority of the Tamil people would accept it as a reasonable alternative to their determination to have an independent state for themselves and would desert the LTTE which would, consequently, be "marginalized" and eventually extinguished. This was based on the delusion that the Vaddukoddai Resolution calling for an independent Tamil state and the enormous vote of the Tamil people at the general election of 1977 in favour of it were somehow "negotiable" and would be abandoned at our behest. Everything unpalatable to us is regarded as "negotiable" - it was impossible for either the Sinhala or Indian leaders to understand that the rights of a nation are not negotiable. They have an autonomous existence independent of the wishes of outsiders.

Finally, both governments fortified each other in the mistaken belief that Tamil nationalism and its armed protagonist, the LTTE, could be militarily defeated and extinguished. Today, 11 years later, resurgent Tamil nationalism and the LTTE are stronger than ever before, a consummation greatly assisted by the self-destructive policy based

upon ignorance and delusion. The attempt to do the impossible did not succeed even though two governments combined in making it.

The "Package"

18. It is ironic that the present government while adopting all the policies and practices (both good and bad) of the J.R. Jayawardene government on grounds of pragmatism, should also embrace its greatest failure i.e. the mistaken attempt to deal with armed Tamil nationalism by means of a constitutional amendment to the Sri Lanka constitution. "The Package" is a re-run of the 13th amendment with some progressive modifications and some reversions to pre-1987 conditions. There is no awareness that between 1987 and 1999 twelve years of bitter and inconclusive warfare have taken place, that the LTTE is now far stronger than it was then, that the Sri Lankan military forces have suffered several spectacular defeats at the hands of the LTTE and that these happenings necessitate far more radical steps than those of 1987 to secure peace. The art of the impossible, which proved its impossibility in 1987, is being relied on still regardless of bitter experience.

Pressurising the Tamil Diaspora

19. The Sri Lankan government seems quite unable to understand the very height of absurdity that its foreign policy in respect of the Tamil Diaspora projects. The Foreign Minister attempts persistently to secure the co-operation of Western governments which play host to the Tamil Diaspora, to stifle the flow of financial and other aid by the Tamil Diaspora to their nation's struggle for independence in the north-east province. He seems oblivious of the universally known fact that the electronic transfer of funds around the world today is beyond the control of

any government nor is it in their interest to impose inoperable controls on it. These are modern governments with a well-honed sense of what a government can do and what it cannot do. They are familiar with the art of the possible and the art of the impossible and cannot be persuaded to embrace the latter. In addition, the Sri Lanka government seems entire-

ly ignorant of the fact that the more strenuous the Foreign Minister's futile efforts in this direction, the

The attempt to win the war is an exercise in the art of the impossible.

greater is the stimulus to increased funding by the Tamil Diaspora of their national cause. It may be far-fetched to suspect that the Foreign Minister is a covert supporter of the LTTE but the reality is that his mistaken efforts are counter-productive and redound to the benefit of the LTTE. He is practising the art of the impossible and his government is too obtuse to understand that he is achieving the opposite of his declared intentions.

War, The National Question and the Single All-Island State

20. The war now in progress has been characterised by the present government as a "War for Peace". Though the two words "War" and "Peace" are juxtaposed in this way there are two intervening stages in the progress from one to the other, in the progress from war to peace. The intervening stages are first victory in the war and then secondly the elimination of the causes of the war. Only then can peace be achieved on a lasting basis.

21. It is the purpose of this paper to advance the proposition that neither of the intervening stages can be achieved. The attempts to achieve them are but exercises in the art of the impossible. The world's experience in respect of guerrilla wars of national secession is that as they drag on the guerrillas grow stronger rather than weaker and the forces of the state are unable to overwhelm and eliminate them. This experience

The most powerful guerilla force (the LTTE) operating anywhere in the world today,

is common to wars of this type which have been concluded as well as to those that are now in progress. The Sri Lankan experience is merely a repetition of that in other theatres of such conflict - the LTTE is far stronger after 15 years of fighting than at the beginning in 1983.

22. The Sri Lankan government has neither the manpower nor the financial resources for a credible military effort comparable to those in other theatres of such conflict.

Whereas states have fielded high ratios of troops to guerillas, as in Russia, Myanmar, Ethiopia, The Sudan, The Philippines, Pakistan, and some as high as 100 to 1 (the UK in Northern Ireland), the Sri Lanka government can barely manage 10 to 1. Even for such an abysmally low ratio of troops to guerrillas, the financial provision per annum is one-eighth of what it should be at Sri Lankan cost levels i.e. Rs.50 billion per year when Rs.400 billion is needed. And worst of all, the Sri Lankan government faces the most powerful guerilla force (the LTTE) operating anywhere in the world today, the only one currently using surface-to-air missiles and equipped with a naval force. The attempt to win the war is an exercise in the art of the impossible.

"The single all-island state should not be resurrected and, fortunately, it cannot be resurrected"

23. The second intervening stage before peace can be achieved is the removal or elimination of the factor or factors that caused the war. The principal factor is Tamil nationalism and its decision as far back as 1976 (The Vaddukoddai Resolution) to secure an independent sovereign state for the Tamil nation in the area of its domicile. That determination is still held by all Tamil political parties, constitutional as well as militant. They differ in the modus operandi for reaching this goal - the constitutionalists seek to get there by incremental stages in a constitutional progress, the militants by unilateral and autonomous means backed by military force. **Nationalism, (not internationalism which made waves in the middle decades of this century) has been the dominant force of the 20th century. It cannot be over-**

come by force of arms and the attempt to do so only intensifies it. Tamil nationalism is no different. It cannot be extirpated by military force. The attempt to do so has made it, and continues to make it, stronger than ever before. Just like other nations, the Tamil nation too cannot be cowed into submission by war or economic blockade or both together. The attempt to do so strengthens its will to fight on. The Sri Lanka government does not seem to be able to understand this and hopes for a weakening of the Tamil nation's will for independence. As in all previous cases mentioned in this paper the result of the government's action in this case too is the very opposite of that intended. In short the basic cause of the conflict, Tamil nationalism, cannot be removed - the effort to do so is but another exercise in the art of the impossible.

24. **Though not often stated, and obliquely when it is stated, the proximate object of the war is not peace but the restoration of the single all-island state however riven by discord and rancour it may continue to be.** It is hoped that constitutional changes, such as the "Package" will produce a stable, cohesive, multi-national society acquiescent in the continuance of the single all-island state. The assumption here is that constitutional change can massage nationalism out of the body politic. This is the most egregious error of all for it is the very nature of the body politic - the single all-island state - that produced the frictions and ructions that gave rise to the emergence of two nations, each with an autonomous dynamic of its own, a dynamic totally incomprehensible to the other. Constitutional change works within the body politic but cannot alter the body politic to reflect the aspirations of two diverging, and now divergent, nations. The body politic, the single all-island state established by foreign imperial rulers and maintained by the force of their arms, has been the *fons et origo* of the tragic misfortunes of the peoples of both nations on the island. It should not be resurrected and, fortunately, it cannot be resurrected. Only those inspired by "the dead hand of the past"

seek to do so and their attempt is the culminating, virtuoso, performance in the art of the impossible.

25. This paper has shown that though the Sinhala people and their governments have been drawn as if by a compelling magnet to the art of the impossible, they have been pragmatic enough to understand, even late in the day, when the impossible is just that - impossible. Then they have changed tack and reversed themselves and been reconciled to the practical and the possible. **It is that proven and established record of pragmatism that offers hope that in the issue of war and peace as well the art of the impossible will be abandoned eventually and peace will be secured on the only possible basis, namely, the satisfaction of the legitimate aspiration of the Tamil nation for a state of its own in the area of its domicile.**

**Adrian Wijemanne
30th November 1998
Cambridge, UK.**

Mr. Adrian Wijemanne, who has been a regular contributor to HOT SPRING, ever since this journal began publication in May 1996 is a historian and a political analyst known for his incisive opinions and prophetic insights.

Mr. Wijemanne read European, Indian and Sri Lankan history at the University of Ceylon. In 1948 he entered the Ceylon Civil Service where he worked for 14 years, the last five, as Deputy Land Commissioner, implementing the Government's re-settlement policy. After a varied career in Sri Lanka in both public and private sectors, he worked in Switzerland and the Netherlands in charitable foundations, financial institutions and with the World Council of Churches.

Mr. Wijemanne is the author of the book - War and Peace in postcolonial Ceylon, 1948-1991, Orient Longmans Limited, 1996, and Sangam Books Limited, London E1 6EP, UK. E12.95.

A Dutch subject, Mr. Wijemanne now lives in Cambridge, U.K.



Eelam Tamil struggle inspires the Mauritian Tamils

There is now a new awakening of Tamil ethnic identity in the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius. It is the liberation struggle waged by the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka that has brought about a new consciousness about the Tamil language and Tamil ethnicity, according to a correspondent, Gounden Canavady, from that island, a Tamil himself.

Mauritian Tamils who hail from South India have long neglected their language, and many carry names which are not all Tamil sounding. The numerically bigger Hindi-speakers have also contributed towards the decline of Tamil, because of the common Hindu religious identity. The Tamils there now want to be known by their ethnic origin rather than by their religious identity.

Recently, as reported in HOT SPRING of December '98, the Tamils there won a great victory by compelling the Central Bank of that country to withdraw the new family of bank



notes which gave precedence to Hindi over Tamil. Thousands of Tamils took to the streets forcing the government to print new notes with English, Tamil and Hindi, in that order.

Mauritius, with an area of 720 sq.miles lies 530 miles east of

Madagascar, and has a population of 1.2 million. The island was occupied both by the French and the English at one time. The pictures here show the Tamil demonstration and protests which also expressed support to the Tamil Tigers.



Kadirgamar says he does not believe Thai Foreign Ministry

The Executive Editor of a Bangkok newspaper - THE NATION - visited Sri Lanka recently. Whether he went there as a invitee of the Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry or whether he was hosted by Mr. Kadirgamar, the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka is not known. But this visit by this "Executive Editor" - a Mr. Kavi Chongkittavorn - to Colombo raised some eyebrows among journalistic circles in Colombo, because of the known habit of the Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry to "engage" reporters and free lancers from other countries to do a disinformation campaign against the LTTE in the foreign media.

Some of the journalists who have already been used for this purpose hail from U.K., Hong Kong, and India.

The upshot of the visit to Colombo by the NATION's Executive Editor was an article in that paper titled: TAMIL REBELS USE PHUKET AS BASE. The report quoted Kadirgamar as saying: "We are very concerned that they are using Thai territory, a country with which we have excellent relations".

But the Thai Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan was quoted by the same paper denying that the Tigers had used Thailand's coastal areas as secret bases to ship weapons and ammunition. Army spokesman Somkuan Saengpathaneth also dismissed reports that senior Army officials were assisting the LTTE to procure and ship arms for their cadres.

Interviewed by the BBC World Service Asia Today programme on January 12, the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister proved irritable and was not inclined to accept the Thai Foreign Minister's denial.

The full text transcript of Minister Kadirgamar's interview to the BBC is as follows:

The Sri Lankan Government says that it has evidence that Tamil Tiger

separatists are receiving arms supplies from Thailand and it has publicly called on Thai authorities to investigate. A Bangkok newspaper "The Nation" quoted Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister, Lakshman Kadirgamar, as saying he was very concerned by the use of Thai territories. Well that prompted a vigorous response. The Thai Foreign Ministry has received similar complaints in the past but found no substantiating evidence. So, over to Colombo and the man who made the charges, Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar. I asked him what exactly he was alleging.

FM: Well, we have had some evidence in the past that there has been use of some of the Thai ports by known LTTE ships and coastal towns on the Thai border used as naval bases.

Q: Minister, are you suggesting that Thai military officers have been involved in supplying weapons to the Tamil Tigers?

FM: No, I am not suggesting that at all. What I am talking about really is apprehensions. Many of these matters we are not able to prove beyond reasonable doubt as in a criminal court or something of that kind. But you know as far as Sri Lanka is concerned anything to do with the Tamil Tigers and their heinous activities is a matter of life and death for us. And so we do go and say to our friends, and Thailand is very much a friend of Sri Lanka with a very old historical relationship, and we go and say to our friends, if something like this is happening on your soil please be so kind as to look into it and stop it.

Q: Minister, you would have seen the intelligence reports, briefings from your senior officers, do you personally believe that Thai territory has been used by the Tamil Tigers?

FM: I do not give personal opinions. I am the Minister of Foreign

Affairs of Sri Lanka and I don't give personal opinions on matters of this kind. All I am saying is that we have reasonable apprehensions that activity by the LTTE is going on in certain parts of Thailand and it is a matter that we must bring to the notice of a friendly country.

Q: The Thai authorities say that you have brought it to the notice in the past, they have investigated it and it is not true.

FM: We have brought some matters to their notice in the past and whatever they have said is not true we accept. But this is an ongoing matter and we would like them to look into certain new aspects.

Q: We have spoken to the Thai Foreign Ministry. They say there is no evidence to support allegations that weapons for the Tamil Tigers are passing through Thai territory. Do you accept that?

FM: I do not at the moment. We will have to look into that. But anything that the Thai Foreign Ministry says we would take with the utmost care and respect.

Q: But isn't this issue going to sour relations between Colombo and Bangkok?

FM: That is not possible at all because relations with the Thai Government are extremely cordial and have been for centuries.

Q: And the weapons that are passing through Thai ports, where are they originating from?

FM: I don't know, I wish I knew. Do you know where from?

Q: I don't know but I am asking you because you will have access to the intelligence reports of your Army.

FM: Even if I knew I will not tell you what the intelligence reports are, would I?

LETTERS

Supportive "White Tiger" and unsupportive Tamils!

December 1998
The Editor
Hot Spring

Dear Sir,
"Vella Puli" (White Tiger),

That Tamils should protest the subservient status the Sinhala government seeks to impose on them is understandable, but that "Vella Puli", a foreigner (Hot Spring, November 1998) should concern himself with the suffering of a people on an insignificant island (insignificant not in humn but in economic and political terms), fills me with wonder. His is a disinterested involvement, that is, an involvement free from motives of selfish gain.

White Tiger reminds me of an article on "Unsupportive Tamils" in Hot Spring last year (Vol 2, No 9, October 1997, pp. 9-13). Vella Puli's commitment and contribution throw into stark relief those Tamils outside the Paradise Isle" who are indifferent to the condition and suffering of their own people on the Island. The example of outsiders like White Tiger and others should shame those Tamils into concern and care. But then, who is an "outsider"? I would argue that individuals like Vella Puli - sympathetic and with an active concern - should be counted as one of us, and that uninterested, uncaring Tamils are the outsiders, since they have voluntarily placed themselves "outside" the suffering, and consequent struggle, of the Tamil people.

I express my admiration and thanks to all White Tigers, male and female. When justice finally triumphs, they will be remembered, and will find an honoured place in our history.

By way of a postscript, let me state that my wife (white but a nonTiger) objected to this letter, questioning

Unsupportive Tamils: Analysing their mind-sets

recently read M. Thiruvava
karan's *Broken Promises* (1997,
1998, 901926 801) Readers

...ed by the title: it is
...ers' some made
more tragic
as cynically
and callous
not concere

whether
I was not giving
White Tiger's
purely humanitari-
an involvement, a polit-
ical cast. White Tiger,
she said, is concerned with
Tamil children suffering because of the
war - traumatised, some without
homes, most without proper education
and health care. My reply was that
since he signs himself "Vella Puli", it
must mean, at the least, that he has
seen the injustice and cruelty under
which the Tamils suffer, and therefore

Why should they, then? No nation, no
people were given rights through
altruism, or kindness of heart.
Rights were granted either because
there was no other choice or
because continuing to deny them

So how does one begin to under-
stand the mind-set of those Tamils
abroad or outside the North-East
province who are indifferent with an
... cost

also
the necessity
for, and justice of, the
struggle. In short, he may
disagree on details - and we
who fight for freedom must not, in
turn, deny it to others - but is in accord
where fundamentals, where those
things basic and really important, are
concerned. I hope I am not guilty of a
misreading.

C. Ponna
Middle East



Concede the North to the Tigers?

In the December '98 issue of HOT SPRING, we reproduced a letter by a SUNDAY ISLAND reader Shivaji F.de Zoysa published in an issue of the paper, which began thus: "This is not written from the head but from the heart". The writer was advocating "Let us give the Tigers the North..."

We invited HOT SPRING readers to respond to Mr.de Zoysa's letter. Below are two responses:

January 12, 1999
The Editor
Hot Spring

Dear Sir

"Concede the North to the Tigers"?

When our children were little babies and I found either of them playing with two objects, one of which I did not want the child to play with, I used a strategem which was rather successful. Instead of snatching the one

object I did not want the child to have, I would take away all. Of course, the child would immediately go into fits of tantrum. I would give it a little time and return the object I did not mind the child playing with keeping the forbidden one away. Happy to be given one back, invariably, the child would calm down and the other object would usually be forgotten. This little trick we should know will not work when the baby grows up to know its mind and certainly will not work with adults.

Mr. Zoysa's letter as quoted by your magazine presumes that the Tamils are still in their political childhood or even worse that they do not know the difference between one and two. Moreover, his suggestions and statements are at once absurd, outrageous and because of these and more, futile.

It is absurd because his suggestion is like telling a captive that only half of him is "allowed" to go free, the other half, sliced down the middle is not! What meaning is "freedom" to a mother who had been shackled to her child when told she is free to go leaving the child behind in chains!

It is outrageous because Mr. Zoysa nor his Sinhala leaders can give or take what is not theirs to give or take. Tamils' land belongs to the Tamils and the Sinhalese cannot sensibly talk of giving it to the Tamils who already own it. Mr. Zoysa confounds the outrage by using the word "giving" when what he really said was about taking away our eastern half! Or is he presuming all Tamils are imbeciles? It is like the use of the term "devolution" which says volumes about the Sinhala leaders' arrogant presumption that they are the depositories of power over the Tamils, a tiny part of which they would deign to transfer to suitable Tamils provided the Bhikkus agree to the arrangement!

Of statements that are futile it is futile to make statements (apologies to Wittgenstein). Thus I would have dismissed Mr. Zoysa's letter and statements summarily if not for the pointed request for comments. It is like a Zen master posing a koan to his disciples to test their spiritual fitness except in this case it is our fitness to be a free people.

Let Mr. Zoysa be informed that our land, like our freedom, is indivisible — and indefeasible!

Thank you.

Sincerely,

K.S.Rathinam
3512 SW 82nd Street
Gainesville, FL 32608



Response to Mr. Shivaji Zoysa

(Referenae HOT SPRING, December 1998) I find many flaws in what Mr. Sivaji Zoysa has written "from the heart (Sunday Island, Colombo, 22 Nov.98), but have objectively picked up points of agreement.

Yes, Sir: 1) "Both sides have fought, won some and lost some, both sides have spent ... money ...lost precious lives ... and enough is enough.

2) Do "give them"the State of Eelam.

3)"Let us both give up this foolishness and live happily ever after

4) "tell them to leave us alone live in peace"

5)"Naturally this agreement will have to be negotiated by a third party, perhaps the UN"

6) "Let us put this proposal to the people. Let us have a referendum islandwide"

7)"Too much blood has been spilt. Too many young lives have been permanently scarred and traumatized. Let us not be vain and arrogant Let us "give" a State of Eelam to Tigers,

TamilsThese decisions are too important to leave in the hands of politicians

Thus, Mr. Zoysa, we agree almost wholeheartedly, AND SUGGEST ONLY ONE SIMPLE CHANGE - FROM "NORTH" TO "NORTHEAST".

Prof.Kopan Mahadeva.



Poet Kasi Anandan

Dear Editor,

I should thank Dr.T.Wignesan for the trouble he took to write about Kasi Anandan: Poet Laureate of Tamil Eelam. No doubt like Bharathi who inspired India's freedom struggle so is Poet Kasi Anandan vis-a-vis the liberation struggle of Tamil Eelam. However, I wish to correct some minor discrepancies that have inadvertently crept into the article.

More than Periyar E.V.K.Ramasamy - it was K.P. Athiththananar (Leader of Nam Thamizhar Movement and

Founder/Editor of Thinathanthi) with whom Kasi Anandan established a very cordial relationship while studying in Tamil Nadu. Kasi Anandan very often appeared in the same platform with Athiththananar and attracted large crowds with his flawless Tamil oratory.

It is not the Tigers, but Athiththananar who conferred the title "Unarchik Kavignar" on Kasi Anandan in appreciation of the many inspiring poems he wrote.

The TULF was formed on May 14, 1976 (Earlier the TUF was formed on May 14, 1972 at Trincomalee) and Thanthai Chelvanayagam was one of the co-leaders, others being G.G.Ponnambalam and S.Thon daman. Thanthai Chelvanayagam passed away in 1977. Therefore, the TULF did not emerge under the leadership of Amirthalingam, but it emerged during the lifetime of Thanthai Chelvanayagam.

I trust I have put the record straight for the benefit of your readers.

V.Thangavelu
Canada

"I don't think you and I are closely related, but if you are capable of trembling with indignation each time that an injustice is committed in the world, we are comrades; and that is more important."

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“Federal Government is the ONLY solution...”

Who said so ?

S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike

Where ?

In Jaffna

When ?

In July 1926

How do you know ?

It was fully reported in the *CEYLON MORNING LEADER* of Saturday 17 July 1926.

That report in the Morning Leader was reproduced in the *TRIBUNE*, Colombo, (edited by S.P.Amarasingham) of July 2, 1977, with introductory remarks by the late scholar and raconteur James T.Ratnam, who wrote:

“Bandaranaike returned to Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) in 1925 after a brilliant career in the Oxford Union as a political speaker. He missed the Presidentship, but he was Junior Treasurer of the Union, the stepping stone to the higher office. Politics was his special study. He was an ambitious man. He shed his loyalties to the feudal society into which he was born.

“His father was a servant of the Crown in the Imperial Court of the Governor. His grandfather S.C.Obeyasekera despised the aspirations of the common man. He had called them “nobodies trying to become somebodies”. But as young Bandaranaike stepped into the island, he became the rising hope of the radical youth of the country. He founded in 1926 the progressive Nationalist Party of which I too was a member.....

“I give below his speech which is not found among his Collected Speeches and which he himself in the course of time chose to side-step with a political pact, purely because of the insatiate appetite of racial chauvinists and the opposition of political opportunists

From the *CEYLON MORNING LEADER*, Saturday July 17, 1926.

“FEDERATION IS THE ONLY SOLUTION TO OUR POLITICAL PROBLEMS”

“Under the auspices of the Students’ Congress, Mr.S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, B.A. (Oxon), Barrister-at-law, delivered a very interesting lecture on “Federation as the Only



S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike

Solution to our Political Problems”. Dr.Isaac Thambyah presided.

“Mr.Bandaranaike said that it was necessary in the first place to realise the importance of the present time. A revision of the constitution was due in 1928. A satisfactory measure of self-government was expected. It was therefore necessary to think very clearly and realise in its entirety the whole political question. A false step taken , a false proposal made now would be very difficult to retrieve in the future. They all wanted self-government. The question remained what was the measure of self-government they were aiming at .

“There were briefly two forms of Government met with in Ceylon. One form was the “Nindagama” system of land tenure, the other was the Headman system of provincial administration.

“The Nindagama system was a feudal form of Government. As long as the feudal dues were paid (they were always paid in hand) no notice was taken of anything else. In the Headmen system, the village was considered as the unit. The King had his various Disawas, Rate Mahatmayas etc. The various provinces were divided and sub-divided till one came to the Gansabawa. The Gansabawas was composed of the head of each family of all those in the village irrespective of wealth.

“The litigants had the right to appeal to the King himself but the Gansabawas’ decision was rarely upset. All that meant that the whole land was a loose federation bound by one common oath to the King. When the British came to the island they introduced a centralised form of Government. That centralised form of Government had a semblance of a free institution. Even to the present day it was nothing else but a bureaucratic form of Government.

“The lecturer then referred to the course of political agitation for larger measure of reforms. It did not start till 1915 when the ritos took place. The lecturer then referred to the great part played by Sir P.Ramanathan, then the Educated Ceylonese Member, Sir P.Arunachalam who started the National Congress. It was he who fathered the movement for agitation for reform. When the Congress was started the articles to which all the members subscribed themselves was that their aim and goal should be selfGovernment within the Empire.Beyond the securing of a few more seats in the Legislative Council,

nothing else was done.

"Those who agitated for reform concentrated their whole energies on arguing in two directions on fallacious bases. The system was not questioned as to its suitability. Secondly they aimed at copying the type of government as existing in England. The result was that the Legislative Council at present was a most mongrel assembly. It was an assembly of the people in theory but in reality it was utterly useless.

"Various compromises were made. They were Government members who were not responsible to any body of voters. The territorial principle was acknowledged, the communal principle acquiesced and when all was said and done, the assembly had no real power.

"The Legislative Council had a certain measure of control over the finances, but that did not amount to much. The Executive Council was divorced from the Legislative Council which looked like a Schoolboys' Debating Society. That was the nett result of the agitation of the last few years. The price paid for it was the Sinhala-Tamil split and the Low Country and the Kandyan Sinhalese split. The minorities looked with mistrust, one at the other.

"It was wrong to think that the differences were not fundamental. There were men who thought that the differences were created by a few ambitious persons and when those persons died the differences would disappear. A hundred years ago there were no such differences. They did not appear because the Englishmen sat on the heads of the Tamil, the Low Country Sinhalese and the Kandyan Sinhalese.

"The moment they began to speak of taking the Government in their hands, then the differences that were lying dormant smouldered forth. **If they considered past history they would see that the three communities, the Tamils, the Low Country Sinhalese and the Kandyan Sinhalese had lived for over a thousand years in Ceylon and had not shown any tendency to merge. They preserved their language, their customs, their religion. He would be a very rash man who would pin his faith on the gradual disappearance of those dif-**

ferences.

"The lecturer then proceeded to outline the difficulties that would crop up. The Legislative Council would under the anticipated reformed government, elect their Prime Minister and the various Ministers. Now there was a certain proportion of members to represent the various communities. If that proportion was maintained in the ministry too the communities would demand a certain proportion.

"A centralised form of Government assumed a homogenous whole. He knew no part of the world where a Government was carried on under such conflicting circumstances as would be experienced in Ceylon.

"Those would be the troubles if a centralised form of government was introduced into countries with large communal differences.

"In a Federal Government, each federal unit had complete power over themselves. Yet they united and had one or two assemblies to discuss matters affecting the whole country. That was the form of Government in the United States of America. All the self-governing dominions, Australia, South Africa, Canada, had the same system. Switzerland offered a better example for Ceylon. It was a small country, but three races lived there, French, Germans, and Italians. Yet, Switzerland was a country where the Federal form of Government was very successful. Each canton managed its own affairs. But questions of foreign affairs, commerce, defence etc., matters about which differences and controversies would be at a minimum were dealt with by the Federal Assembly.

"In Ceylon, each Province should have complete autonomy. There should be one or two assemblies to deal with the special revenue of the island. A thousand and one objections could be raised against the system, but when the objections were dissipated, he was convinced that some form of Federal Government would be the only solution.

"He had not dealt with the smaller communities. For such communities temporary arrangements could be

made for special representation. Those temporary arrangements would exist till the fear existed about one community trying to overlord the other. He would suggest the same for the Colombo Tamil seat.

"The three main divisions in the island were the Kandyan Sinhalese, the Low Country Sinhalese and the Tamils. It was difficult to find a system that would completely satisfy everyone. That was in brief the Federal system. He would be amply satisfied if it was recognised that the problem did exist. If there were a better form of plan he hoped someone would think about it and place it before the people.

(Several speakers then made comments and asked questions).

"Mr. Bandaranaike in reply said that the question of religion was hardly a matter to be dealt with by legislation. The question of financial inequality was a serious objection, so also was the question of education. The common fund could be shared among provinces that required help. The subject was full of controversy. The last speaker had hit the nail on the head. Why not remain under the British? Why all that worry and discussion? No nation deserved the name of a nation if it did not want a measure of selfgovernment. It deserved to be wiped out of the surface of the earth.

"Dr. Isaac Thambyah said that the lecture was powerfully delivered and reasonably thought out. He hoped that a great deal of interest would be created. The British Malaya was a place that he knew where Federation was working and working well too. He suggested that their leaders of thought in Jaffna and Colombo should pay a visit to Malaya and come back and tell them what they thought of Federation.

"In conclusion, Dr. Thambyah congratulated the Students' Congress for its choice of lectures. Sometime ago a gentleman spoke of the ideals of education. That night Mr. Bandaranaike had spoken of the ideals of Government. He moved a vote of thanks to the lecturer. The vote was carried with acclamation.

- JAFFNA COR.

Suppressing the LTTE point of view is wrong - Jehan Perera

The lengthy questioning of Mr Kumar Ponnambalam by the CID cannot be glossed over as an inconsequential event, says Mr. Jehan Perera, a Peace movement activist.

Mr. Perera says:-

“According to news reports, Mr Ponnambalam was questioned about certain statements he had made publicly in support of the LTTE in a television interview done in Colombo. He was questioned under the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act, which has been locally and internationally condemned. The section of the law under which he was questioned was reportedly that of causing disaffection between races and inciting violence.

“He is likely to be questioned further on the matter. There is reason for the peace movement to be concerned about the CID’s questioning of Mr Ponnambalam in the manner he has been. There is the danger of a governmental design (probably badly thought out) to suppress dialogue between the people, and power groups, inhabiting the two parts of the country and two mind sets even in the same part of the country.

“On the contrary, what the country needs are more bridges of communication to be built up for successful conflict resolution.

“It may be that many of those who saw and heard him on television believed he also supported the latter aspects. OSTRICH SYNDROME But why the CID should question him for four hours about his alleged links with the LTTE is worth analysing. It cannot be for security reasons.

“The Sinhalese people who

remained unprovoked in the face of the LTTE’s bombing of the Temple of the Tooth could not possibly have been provoked to communal violence by any of Mr Ponnambalam’s utterances. Nor is it likely that his claims to be an LTTE supporter make him specially privy to any of the LTTE’s military plans. The reason for Mr Ponnambalam to be questioned by the CID is most probably to harass him into silence and to intimidate others not to emulate him. This is part of the ostrich syndrome practiced by the Sri Lankan government.

“They seem to believe that if the LTTE point of view can be suppressed, locally and internationally, the task of suppressing the LTTE itself will be easier. If the first principle of life is to know oneself, the second would be to know one’s opponent. It is necessary to comprehend fully the nature of the LTTE, its ideology and the support base it enjoys among the Tamil population. Otherwise the government will be at a disadvantage in coming up with the correct strategy to deal effectively with it.

Noaccess to LTTE areas

“For the past several years, the government has been handicapped by the fact that it has not had access to LTTE-controlled parts of the country and to the minds of the people living there. Due to the government ban on the LTTE, the difficulty of travel to the LTTE-controlled parts of the country and its inaccessibility even to journalists, a vast communication gap has arisen between the Tamil people in whose midst the LTTE operates and the rest of the people. For a government that claims to be sincerely inter-

ested in conflict resolution and in ending the ethnic conflict, the next best option is to permit those persons who do have access to the LTTE-controlled parts of the country to speak up without harassing them.

“This does not mean that the government in anyway gives up its primary objective of protecting the unity and territorial integrity of the country, but only that it better understands its opponent for purposes of conflict resolution. Last week a group of people from the Theatre Action Group of Jaffna who have access to the LTTE-controlled areas held a press conference in Colombo. What they said tallied with what Mr Ponnambalam had tried to articulate earlier, even though he lacks the direct access to people living in the LTTE-controlled areas that the group has.

“Led by Kandiah Sithamparanathan, a lecturer at the University of Jaffna, the Theatre Action Group has conducted its work in both the government-controlled and LTTE-controlled parts of the north-east, including Jaffna, Mullaitivu, Vavuniya, Batticaloa and Trincomalee. They use arts and drama to get people to overcome their fear and suspicion and to act out their true feelings. Listening to this group of young persons speak of life in the north-east and the sentiments of the people, it was easy to see how the fires of Tamil nationalism burned within them. They spoke of the “love-hate” relationship of the people to the LTTE, of the fear and humiliation that comes with living under an army of another ethnic people, and their desire to live as free beings with pride in their ethnic identity as a separate people.



Kadrigamar shaken up, down under

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Laxshman Kadrigamar faced some tough questions during an interview with Peter Mares of Australia's Radio National. Rattled by Mares's probing about the Chemmani mass graves, peace talks and the government's peace package, Mr. Kadrigamar lost his temper, became defensive and accused the former of being an apologist for the LTTE.

The interview was recorded in the week preceding the North West Council Provincial elections was broadcast on polls night. Radio National is broadcast Australia-wide.

Peter Mares said the Foreign Minister had admitted the government's package was stalled and asked him to comment further.

"Yes, it is stalled - but not completely" said Kadrigamar "Because we are not getting the two-thirds majority we need to amend the constitution" he added.

"Absolutely determined"

"It doesn't appear of the likelihood of that happening" said Mares citing the UNP's opposition to the proposals.

"We'll have to wait and see" said Kadrigamar. "The main thing to concentrate on is that our government is absolutely determined to see that those proposals that we have been discussing for a year and a half or more will finally be adopted," he said.

Mares asked Kadrigamar why the Sri Lankan government had not accepted the LTTE's offer of talks.

"Those talks are not bone fide," said the Foreign Minister. "Those are cosmetic gestures."

"How can you know they'll come to nothing until you try them" asked Mares.

"We know that" said Kadrigamar

firmly.

"How do you know that?" asked Mares again.

"I'm telling you we know that," snapped Kadrigamar.

Somewhat puzzled, Mares changed tack. The LTTE have suggested third part mediation said Mares, adding that both British and South African parliamentarians have offered their help.

"Why is the government so reluctant to take that up?" he asked the Foreign Minister.

"We have made it clear we are not interested in mediation," replied Kadrigamar.

"No role for mediator"

"This is entirely an internal matter and there is no role at all in the part of mediation of anybody outside" he added quickly.

But clearly the peace process is not progressing the war has cost some 57000 lives its chewing up some 37% of Sri Lanka's government revenues, protested Mares. "Surely now is the time to help the peace process move along?" he asked.

"Yes, but the people who can help the peace process move along is the LTTE - and they are not doing that," replied Kadrigamar.

Mares asked if the government itself had any new initiatives to help the peace process move forward.

"A new initiative?" queried the Foreign Minister.

"Given you say yourself the process is stalled," said Mares helpfully.

"Yes, the process may be stalled, but it maybe restarted at any moment" countered the Foreign Minister.

"Does the government have any new initiatives to restart it?" Mares asked again, wearily.

"There is no new initiative" admitted Kadrigamar "We are constantly on alert for that" he added, curiously.

"The main point is that the LTTE must be bona fide," Kadrigamar said further. "They must show and stop murdering democratic politicians" he added, seizing the opportunity.

"So what does the LTTE have to do - in your view to - show bona fide" asked Mares.

"They have to satisfy us" replied Mr. Kadrigamar vaguely. "and there are ways and means of doing it" he added.

"And they are not doing it" Kadrigamar said further. "That they are bona fide in their proclaimed intentions to bring about a peaceful prospect of the matter" he added.

"They released a number of Sri Lankan armed forces personnel as a gesture" suggested Mares.

"What? 9 people," sneered Kadrigamar. "when they are holding hundreds?" he asked.

"So what further gestures do you need from the LTTE?" asked Mares, exasperated. "Can you give us some examples?"

Those mass graves

"No I think they must make an effort" said Kadrigamar evasively. "I am not going to give you examples I am sorry" he added somewhat defensively.

Kadrigamar's irritation began to show.

"Anything else?" he abruptly demanded.

"Yes, minister," said Mares. "there have been reports from a Sri Lankan serviceman that he knows of mass graves in [Chemmani] in the north of Sri Lanka. Why haven't those graves been investigated?"

"An intervention order has been

(Contd.)

issued by the magistrate of the area. It is a judicial proceeding, it has started" replied Kadirgamar anxiously, realising the probable direction of the questions.

"When will there be an exhumation of those graves?" probed Mares.

"Whenever the authorities are ready" said Kadirgamar warily. "The magistrate is in control of it now" he added.

"We have a judicial system which is as good as yours" Kadirgamar snapped at a startled Mares.

"[But] It has taken 6 months now" said Mares, ignoring Kadirgamar's defensive statement.

"Well, there are various steps that have to be taken" fumed Kadirgamar, fighting to control his temper.

"So there is no reluctance to investigate this from your part of the government?" asked Mares.

Anger and growls

Kadirgamar flew into a rage.

"No certainly not!" he bellowed.

"Anything more? Any apologies for the LTTE?" the Foreign Minister then demanded, his anger conspicuous.

"I beg your pardon?" asked Mares, suprised.

"Any apologies for the LTTE?" growled Kadirgamar.

"Minister I'm not making apologies for the LTTE" protested Mares.

"Sounds like it" accused Kadirgamar.

"I'm [merely] asking questions" said Mares.

"Yes but there are certain ways of asking questions. All the questions are highly loaded" grumbled Kadirgamar.

"Anything else?" he demanded again, suddenly.

"Yes, What do you think is going to happen in the provisional elections for the north west provisional council?" asked Mares.

"We will win - obviously" declared Kadirgamar.

"You are very confident of that?" asked Mares.

"Of course" said Kadirgamar.

(TAMILNET)

Death of a veteran Journalist



Mr.S.P.Amarasingam, Editor of the now defunct "THE TRIBUNE" for more than 30 years (1952-1985), died in Colombo on January 22 He was 84.

THE TRIBUNE, which was a little magazine with a big reputation was not only a storehouse of knowledge for serious-minded readers, but attracted to its columns some of the best writers of the day.

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“Ruling family feud surfaces again”

COLOMBO, (NNI): The Bandaranaike family feud, involving President Chandrika Kumaratunga and her mother Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike, surfaced once again when Kumaratunga sacked powerful Telecommunications Chairman Hamasiri Fernando after he openly clashed with Telecommunications Minister Mangala Samaraweera.

Sirimavo Bandaranaike, visibly upset by the move against one of her key loyalists who is also her secretary, has complained that the President was sidelining long-time supporters of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) founded by her late husband S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, a former prime minister.

Newspapers reported that the Prime Minister, wiping tears, told cabinet ministers Mahinda Rajapakse, Alavi Moulana and Dharmasiri Senanayake, “Look what she (Chandrika) has done to Hemosiri, who sacrificed a lot to bring our party to power”.

Hemasiri Fernando had opposed Samaraweera’s orders to extend special facilities to private sector telephone companies SunTel and Lanka Bell and subsequently refused to resign from his post. Finally Samaraweera persuaded Kumaratunga to sack Fernando, reports India Abroad News Service.

“I was trying to protect public sector interests and I was victimised,” Fernando charged. He has filed a fun-



“Visibly upset”

damental rights violation case in the Supreme Court against Samaraweera and the other officials involved in his



Anura

dismissal, challenging it on the grounds that Sri Lanka Telecom was established under the Companies Act and therefore the minister had no juris-

diction in the appointment or removal of its nominee director.

Fernando said in his petition that he had incurred Samaraweera’s wrath because he had opposed granting undue benefits to private operators in Sri Lanka Telecom’s best interests.

Samaraweera has branded Fernando a potential candidate of the opposition United National Party (UNP) in the next general election. But UNP leader Ranil Wickre-

me singhe evaded a question whether Fernando was a member of the party.

Obviously enjoying the family feud in the ruling party, Wickremesinghe told IANS, “If the Prime Minister is keeping a UNP member as her secretary, Samaraweera should ask his party to take disciplinary action against her”.

He said he would like to know whether Samaraweera suspected the hand of the Prime Minister’s son Anura Bandaranaike, who is a deputy leader in the UNP, in the whole episode.

Sirimavo’s differences with her daughter first surfaced when she refused to step down as Prime Minister in favour of one of her cousins Anuruddha Ratwatte and instead demanded that Kumaratunga appoint one of her loyalists, Lakshman Jayakody to the post. Since an agreement could not be reached, 82-year-old Sirimavo, confined to a wheelchair, is continuing as Prime Minister.

Urgent help required: TRO appeal to Tamil diaspora



Dr. Moorthy

The Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO) is urgently appealing for funds to help alleviate the hardships of the displaced in Vanni in the north of the island and Vakarai in the east, said TRO officials.

The TRO, registered as a charity in Sri Lanka, Britain and other countries, is appealing to the Tamil Diaspora to support its disaster relief operations.

"Over 400,000 people are displaced without adequate food or proper shelter," said Dr. N. Moorthy, a senior TRO official in London.

"The heavy rains and the cold weather is causing widespread suffering to the Tamils in Vanni and also in Vakarai" he said. "Providing shelter is particularly important now".

"The TRO is doing everything it can to help, but supporting such a large number of people every day is an enormous strain and we are urgently appealing to the Tamil Diaspora to come forward and help their brethren," he said.

"The Sri Lankan Army is blocking food supplies, and we hear it

has destroyed 125 lorry loads a few days ago. The extra rations which were promised by the government have not been sent. No material for shelters is coming through either" said Dr. Moorthy.

"As a result, the TRO is rapidly running out of resources" he said.

The TRO is uniquely placed to help the displaced people he said. "Unlike other charities operating in Sri Lanka, we have thousands of unpaid volunteers across the Vanni, who can ensure aid is distributed quickly" he said.

"We have the means to get move relief supplies to the needy in the Vanni and elsewhere" he said.

"The Diaspora need not send material donations, as it takes time and considerable effort to transport to Sri Lanka" he said.

"We prefer people to help us financially by donations and fundraising events" he said.

"There are many ways people can raise funds to help our humanitarian work" said Dr. Moorthy.

Generous proceeds from temple worshippers

TRO volunteers waited outside temple and a church on New Year Day '99, on a begging mission for th suffering people in the Vanni and realised £8,550.07 in all.

The monies realised are as follows:

<i>Lewisham Sivan Temple:</i>	£ 1,204.91
<i>Archway Murugan Temple:</i>	£ 1,719.87
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<i>Manor Park Church:</i>	£ 240.54

He said people can donate directly to TRO volunteers who are currently collecting at Tamil community temples or send their donations to TRO offices.

"As some people have done recently, even social occasions provide an opportunity to raise funds" he said.

"For example, some people have held sponsored Arangetrams, dinners and so on" he said.

People who wish to make donations can contact the TRO in their respective countries or in London (+44-181-520-5876 or +44-181-682-3567). <http://www.tro.org.au>.



At a T.R.O. (UK branch) workshop held recently. Freeman Dr.N.Moorthy, TRO's UK Coordinator Mr. Kugan and Project Coordinator Dr. Puvinathan conducted the workshop.

Landmark Judgement by Supreme Court: Presidential powers clipped

A landmark judgement that limits powers of the Sri Lankan president, the world's most constitutionally powerful leader, will set a precedence for nations grappling with human rights issues, analysts said.

The Supreme Court, in a historic 21-page judgement, censured President Chandrika Kumaratunga for using a nationwide state of emergency to cancel elections called in August last year.

For the first time, the judiciary defined limits on the all powerful executive presidency and made it clear that officials who carry out wrong executive orders will not have immunity enjoyed by the head of state.

Under the 1978 constitution, the president is above the law and if US President Bill Clinton had to work under a Sri Lankan constitution, he could not be tried for perjury or sexual misconduct.

Legal experts said the three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice G.P.S. de Silva has also recognised the vote as a fundamental right of free expression guaranteed by the constitution.

For the first time since the introduction of universal adult franchise in Sri Lanka in 1931, the right to vote is equated to freedom of expression by the latest Supreme Court ruling.

Constitutional lawyers said the ruling could be cited by activists abroad to strengthen voting rights in their countries and used in cases challenging disruptions to electoral processes.

"This judgement will have repercussions not only in Sri Lanka but in other countries as well," opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinghe said. "This may be cited in court cases abroad. This is historic."

Wickremesinghe, who is also a lawyer, said the Supreme Court ruling has set limits on the executive presidency, which the ruling People's

Alliance vowed to scrap before coming to power in 1994.

However, the ruling party has continued with the presidency, which was enacted in line with a constitution that draws elements from the French, British and US systems of government.

Government ministers declined to comment on the ruling.

The court censured both the president and elections commissioner Dayananda Dissanayake for putting off the August 28 election using the cover of a state of emergency, and ordered fresh polls within three months.

The judges said Kumaratunga's order in August cancelling the elections was "arbitrary and unreasonable."

They made it clear that officials could not carry out wrong presidential orders with impunity and said presidential immunity did not transform an "unlawful act into a lawful one."

The ruling also defined limits of presidential immunity.

"Immunity endures only while any person holds office as president... It would be anomalous in the extreme if immunity for private acts were to continue."

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North West Provincial Council Election

Bishop blames the war for the culture of violence

An influential Catholic bishop has demanded fresh elections in Sri Lanka's Northwestern Province, where the opposition and monitors have accused the government of rigging and fraud.

"...the people of Wayamba (Northwestern Province) woke up from their sleep and suddenly realised that they had become second-class citizens of Sri Lanka," Bishop of Chilaw Marcus Fernando said in a speech at a college awards ceremony.

"For all practical purposes their democratic right to vote had been taken away from them. People of Wayamba demand, as a right, a fresh election," he said.

"Surviving that event (elections) was like surviving a war," he said. The outspoken bishop commands a huge following in the province, which has a large Catholic population.

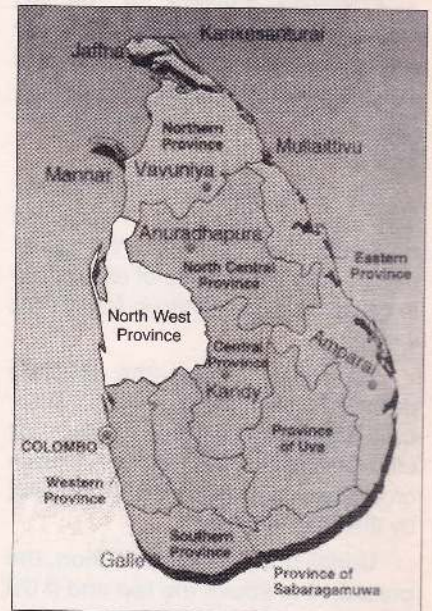
Monitors and opposition parties have complained of widespread vote-rigging and intimidation in the election in Northwestern Province, which President Chandrika Kumaratunga's ruling People's Alliance won by taking 30 of the 52 seats at stake.

"The fabric of our national life is coming apart," he said, adding that the culture of violence had spread mainly due to the ongoing war against Tamil Tiger rebels in the north and east.

"As long as the war lasts — with its rhetoric and political jostling, its deserters and firearms, its news bulletins and killings — we cannot think of overcoming this culture of violence."

U.S. expresses concern

The United States has voiced concern over reports of violence and electoral malpractices in the



regional polls in Sri Lanka and hoped authorities would look into the allegations.

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New Zealand doctor in Sri Lanka's war zone

Pauline Horrill, a Christchurch doctor, spent six months working in the war-torn areas of Sri Lanka. She talks to SCOT DUFFTON about the positive way people dealt with the horror of war.

When Pauline Horrill takes a walk from her home in Heathcote, under Christchurch's gondola, she does not have to worry about being blown apart on the beach at Sumner or fear landmines when she sits back against an inviting tree.

What do you say to a young man with five children who has just seen his wife blown away by a shell? —Pauline Horrill Christchurch doctor

Explosives were everyday concerns for the six months she spent in Sri Lanka this year.

She worked with *Medecins Sans Frontieres* — an international medical aid organisation — in Sri Lanka. Perhaps better known in New Zealand for superb surf beaches and cricket tests, Sri Lanka has had a civil war waging in the north for the last 15 years between the Sinhalese government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

The Tamils, an ethnic minority, are fighting for an independent homeland.

A working doctor since 1991, Pauline Horrill had spent 10 months working in obstetrics and pediatrics in Zimbabwe in 1994. She came back to New Zealand to complete her training as a GP and a year as a locum in rural areas.

Colombo is a large city — bustling, crowded, and noisy. There's a large international tourist presence. Driving out of it on good roads it's hard to know there's a war on.

Four hours out of Colombo a major checkpoint separates the military area.

From here the mood changes dra-

THE PRESS On-Line

matically.

"It was like being in a movie set from 'Saving Private Ryan'," says Dr Horrill.

There were checkpoints, military camps, and barbed wire everywhere. Soldiers, some looking as young as 15 or 16, carry automatic rifles and look around nervously. They're recruited from poor Sinhalese villages.

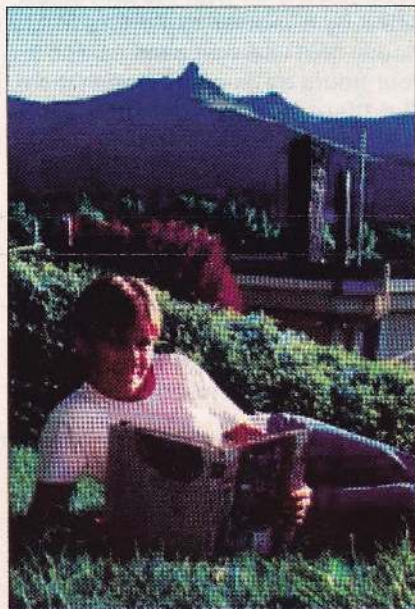


PHOTO: SCOTT DUFFTON

Pauline Horrill relaxing at her Heathcote home.

The miles seem interminable along pot-holed and mined roads that haven't been repaired in 15 years — think about those ski roads at the end of just one winter. Four-wheel driving is a way of life here rather than Sunday recreation.

Pauline Horrill was based in Batticaloa, a beautiful seaside resort before the war, bounded by the ocean on one side and a lagoon on the other. Now there are landmines in the rebel

areas, and a United Nations mine-clearing team operating in the north.

With territory changing hands often in the last 15 years, nowhere is safe. The "Tigers" plant mines around the base of trees where soldiers like to sit, and the army will mine an area if they are forced to withdraw from it.

For Dr Horrill that made even necessities like going for a pee potentially dangerous — not to mention the children's eyes that always seemed to be focused on her!

So what was an average day like?

"First, we would load up the vehicle, either a landcruiser or Toyota van with a stretcher, with supplies we'd need for the clinic. Going into jungle villages that meant everything — tables and chairs as well as dressings and medicines. Fifteen years of war has meant that there's nothing left at all.

"The government is extremely strict on what's allowed into rebel areas. For instance, we couldn't take crepe bandages. We were subject to army checks all along the route, some of which would involve every single item being inspected, so we were scrupulous about what we carried.

"It's this attention to detail and correctness that has allowed MSF to be seen to maintain its neutrality and continue to work here over the last 10 years.

"We'd have to contact the brigadier of the area we wanted to be in that day to make sure that no 'actions' were planned.

"We were refused permission (to enter areas), in the six months that I was there, and on two occasions for a week at a time. That was the hardest — wondering what was happening to villagers and their homes that we'd met previously.

"The first part of the journey was always the most dangerous with the

risk of ambush, crossfire, or mines.

"We would never leave before 8.30 in the morning to allow the mine-clearing team to go through. On average we'd travel 11/2 to two hours each way to the clinic along damaged roads, and arrive to find up to 250 people to be seen by two doctors and a nurse.

"Sometimes we would arrive at a village to find it almost deserted. This would be after an army action. Villagers usually got warning of impending fighting and would flee into the jungle, maybe not returning for days afterwards.

"The medical work was daunting.

"Among the usual respiratory cases and skin diseases was severe diarrhoea from poor water supply in the dry season and no sanitation, with hepatitis, TB, leprosy, and malaria thrown in liberally. It was difficult not to be able to offer the curative medicine that we would expect at home.

"For severely ill people we tried to get them to come back to the base hospital at Batticaloa, but often they would be scared and refuse.

"Young men of potential army age in particular would never return with us. It was very difficult to have to leave these people behind with only patch-up medicine. Consequently, a lot of our time was spent advising on nutrition and setting up basic public health measures.

"In this way we were able to contin-

ue the national vaccination programme in areas of the country where the government health system was unable to operate.

What do you say to a young man with five children who has just seen his wife blown away by a shell?

**—Pauline Horrill
Christchurch doctor**

"Terrible things happened along the way. On one occasion MSF were asked to go into an area after a mortar attack to help. Five injured villagers with deep shrapnel wounds were transferred back to Batticaloa, but what do you say to a young man with five children who has just seen his wife blown away by a shell?"

"On another occasion, they received a man with his arm amputated by a mortar exploding in his paddy field who had been carried for four hours by ox-cart to reach them. But there were heart-warming stories, too.

"The day-to-day making-do and resilience of people who have lost their homes, perhaps several times, as well as loved ones.

"In Batticaloa the Butterfly Garden was a rehabilitation programme for war-affected children that used play and music to help restore their traumatised

lives and give some hope for their future.

"There was also a strong programme for war widows, helping to retrain them with skills to earn a living on their own."

For Pauline the over-all experience was positive. "For all the problems we may see with health care in New Zealand, access to basic health needs is largely met at all levels of society.

"For me, this is an essential humanitarian issue and the challenge is to believe in the principle enough to try and achieve this goal for all people in the world.

"It was important to me to be able to provide care to people who otherwise have none, and particularly to be able to leave behind knowledge and programmes that will help to improve their health."

Of the many new skills learnt in Sri Lanka, Pauline Horrill found one of the most important was communication.

"It was an integral part of the job to communicate with both the army and rebels in order to maintain MSF's neutrality, discuss schedules, and protect both their work and personnel."

Pauline Horrill regards these skills as applicable in many areas and looks forward to developing a role in mediation in the future. For the meantime she is grateful to be home in one piece.

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FRONTLINE's N.Ram as seen by S.A.David

S.A.David, one-time President of the Gandhlyam Movement in Vavuniya is no stranger to Eelam Tamils. Known affectionately as David Iyah, he lives in India and is a member of the Editorial Board of "Periyar Era", a monthly publication whose Editor-in-chief is V.Anaimuthu, thinker, writer and biographer of Periyar E.V.Ramasamy.

Writing in the January 1999 issue of "Periyar Era" on the subject of Tamil Eelam and South Africa, David Iyah draws trenchant pen portraits of two people - Rohan Gunaratna and Frontline editor N.Ram.

About Ram, he writes: -

'Now a few words on N.Ram. He is a more subtle and suave personality. He belongs to the Iyengar clan, the owners of THE HINDU, aptly called "Mahavishnu of Mount Road". He broke away from the orthodoxy of his family, married an European and dabbled in Left politics in his younger days. But he is now hardening into Brahminic sensibilities in old age.

"To get to the heart of Ram you have to read "The Inside Story of Bofors" by Chitra Subramaniam from Switzerland. In a cloak and dagger move he double crossed Chitra and saved Rajiv Gandhi.



S.A.David - N.Ram

"He has the habit of rushing to Colombo at the time of crisis and publishing lengthy interviews to sidetrack attention from the dirty and deadly politics of Sri Lanka. He interviewed J.R.Jayewardene, the "Beast of Welikade Prison Massacre of July 1983" during the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord days and lent respectability to a brute villain

"Now on 7.12.98 Ram has interviewed Chandrika Kumaratunga and has given an impression of her as an

angel of peace in Sri Lanka. Ram makes statements like "Sinhala Only trap" and "Eelam Trap". This is a meaningless jingle equating widely different entities. Ranil Wickremasinghe's comment "The government is stuck on every front" neatly negates all Chandrika's mumbo jumbo.

"After 15 years in Madras, our sincere advice to the readers of "Hindu" and "Frontline" is to take everything you read in these papers with a pinch of salt. When it comes to preserving Brahmin domination these papers will not hesitate to print blatant lies, of course in matchless technicolour . . ."

David Iyah, now aged 82, is a Melbourne educated architect, who by sheer dint of hard work rose from humble village conditions to work as an Architect and Town Planner in Sri Lanka, Australia, the United Kingdom, Nigeria and Kenya.

He was a survivor of the Welikade prison massacre in which Dr.Rajasundaram and several others were killed.



Ram with Chandrika at "Temple Trees", Colombo

Indian Supreme Court reserves judgement

After hearing marathon arguments for over two months, the Supreme Court on Friday reserved judgment on January 15, 1999, in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case in which the trial court had awarded death sentences to all the 26 accused.

A three-Judge Bench comprising, Mr. Justice K. T. Thomas, Mr. Justice D. P. Wadhwa and Mr. Justice S.S.M. Quadri, reserved judgment on the special leave petitions (SLPs) filed by all the 26 accused, who were charged with being part of a conspiracy by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) of Sri Lanka.

Rajiv Gandhi was killed on May 21, 1991, at Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu when the human bomb, Dhanu, blew herself up before the former Prime Minister as he arrived to address an election rally.

The trial court in its judgment, which ran over 2,000 pages, had awarded capital punishment to all the accused after the Special Investigation

Team which probed the assassination had arrested the accused. The apex court had in March last year stayed the operation of the sentences against the accused pending the hearing of the SLPs.

Arguing for the accused, senior counsel, Mr. N. Natarajan, contended that the main accused, the LTTE chief V. Prabhakaran, Sivarasan and his associates who were directly responsible for the conspiracy and assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, were either dead or were outside India.

"All those arrested were minions, who had no knowledge of the manner in which the former Prime Minister was killed. They only helped the main accused in very small ways," he said.

Mr. Natarajan said the trial court erred in awarding death sentence en masse as the accused had various degrees of complicity in the offence, warranting awarding of different sentences.

He said on perusal of the overall circumstances of the cases, one would

be safe to aver that these accused persons were not directly involved in the case.

However, the Additional Solicitor General, Mr. Altaf Ahmed, vehemently argued that all the accused were directly involved in the conspiracy to kill Rajiv Gandhi and deserved capital punishment keeping in view the gravity of the offence.

The accused persons were S. Nalini, T. Suthenthiraja alias Santhan, Sriharan alias Murugan, P. Ravichandran, Robert Payas, S. Shanmugavadivelu, Shankar, Vijayananda, Shivarupan, Kanakasabhpathy, Athirai, Jayakumar, Shanti, Vijayan, Selvalaxmi, Bhaskaran, Suchindran, Perarivalan, Irumborai, Bhagyanathan, Padma, Subhasundaram, Dhanasekharan, Rangan, Vicky alias Vigneswar and Rangan. Mr. Justice Thomas thanked Mr. Natarajan and Mr. Altaf for smooth conduct of the hearing. He also thanked the CBI team, led by Mr. D. R. Karthikeyan.

Three of the accused

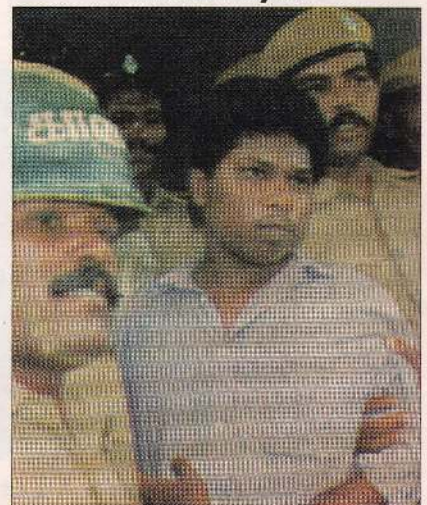
Perarivalan or "Arivu"



Jaikumar



Robert Payas



Sachi Sri Kantha Wears Another Hat!

Eelam Tamil academic, Sachi Sri Kantha, 45, has joined the academic ranks as a specialist translator in science. In 1994, he received a commission from the Oxford University Press to complete an English translation of a multi-authored Japanese neurobiological reference atlas. With his wife Saki as an able collaborator, it took almost three years for Sri Kantha to complete the task successfully.

This recently published book entitled, *'Atlas of Neuroactive Substances and Their Receptors in the Rat'* was edited by one of the leading international neuropharmacologists, Prof Masaya Tohyama of the Osaka University. On the merit of this academic tome, the Oxford University Press notes in its introduction as follows: "The rat is probably the most widely used experimental system in neurobiology. There already exist several anatomical atlases of the rat nervous system, but this atlas is unique in that



Sachi Sri Kantha

it maps the distribution of all the neuroactive substances and their receptors by brain region."

Sri Kantha's previous books in English include, *Prostitutes in Medical*

Literature; An Annotated Bibliography (1991) and *An Einstein Dictionary* (1996). Both these reference works, published by the Greenwood Press in Westport, Connecticut, have merited inclusion in the American Reference Book Annual of 1992 and 1997 respectively. American academics and critics have also commented on the content worthiness and educational value of these books in reviews. He also contributed five entries on elite scientists to the five-volume *Biographical Encyclopedia of Scientists* (1998), published by the Marshall Cavendish Corporation, New York. Currently Sri Kantha is accumulating information for an *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Eelam*.

Since his undergraduate days in early 1970s, Sri Kantha is known among Tamil circles to wear many hats. Haisting from the Pulolay region in Point Pedro, he has been an ardent apologist for Tamil causes in Sri Lanka and international newsmedia for the past quarter century. Since 1991 he has been based in Japan and currently works as a biochemist at the Japan Institute for Control of Aging, a private research institute.

Eelam Tamil danseuse at Chennai Arts Festival

Not many Eelam Tamil vocalists or dancers get a chance to appear on the stage during the annual December "Isai Vila" in Chennai. Indumathi Srikumar did not only dance at the Kapali Fine Arts stage during the recent festival, but also earned the following review in THE HINDU of January 1, 1999.

"Indumathi Srikumar gave scintillating Bharatanatyam performance for Kapali Fine Arts. A disciple of the late Venkatachalapathi, she follows the Kalakshetra bani. A ragamalika thalamalika Natyanjali composed by Dhananjayan was the opening item which was appealing. The Sriranjani Vamam, "Sami Nee" was the main item which describes Lord Muruga. The sancharis included the tale of Valli being duped by Muruga, who is disguised as a hunter and old man, who finally reveals his true form to Valli. The



Indumathi Srikumar

interpretation for this was excellently enacted by Indumathi.

The intricate theermamams were very well executed with precise footwork. The song "Karpagavalli" in praise of Karpagambal, the Goddess at Kapali temple, composed by Veeramani Iyer of Jaffna, interestingly depicted the Goddess who transforms herself as a peacock to worship the Lord. In "Kanden Kanden," an Arunachala Kavirayar composition, Anjaneya's happiness on seeing Sita was brought out beautifully with emotion. The tillana (Kanda Ekam) in Behag was of high standard, highlighting the accurate footwork of the artiste.

K. Rajasekharan's excellent singing and nattuvangam were an asset to the performance. R. Thiagarajan (flute). Seetharama Sarma (violin) and Balachandran (mridangam) gave enormous support to the recital."

Thirumathi Indumathi Srikumar is the daughter of Mr and Mrs. Kulasingham of Aragon Drive, Hainault, Essex, UK.

Daughter, Tamil Doctor, 29, British born practicing in UK, non-practicing, Christian, seeks easy going sociable partner, religion immaterial, professional with education and upbringing in UK suitable. Please forward details. Ref: MPG206 Hot Spring.

Jaffna Hindu Daughter, 40, resident in London, divorcee, no children, seeks Hindu partner, understanding divorcee acceptable with no children. Please send details. Ref: MPG 205 Hot Spring

Jaffna Hindu Son, 30, settled in USA, vegetarian, in computer software engineering profession, seeks suitable partner, preferably degree holder and willing to settle in the US. Send horoscope and details in confidence. Ref: MPB102 Hot Spring

Jaffna Hindu Son 43, PhD in Electrical Engineering with secure job and settled in the US, seeks suitable partner. Send horoscope and details. Ref: MPB 104 Hot Spring

Jaffna Christian son, 26, UK citizen, professionally qualified and employed in London, seeks Christian

The Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora has in recent years spread to many different countries in the World - to the UK and other European Countries, to America, to Canada and Australia. As a result contacts between those who were previously friends and neighbours back in Sri Lanka have become almost non-existent. The hardships and pressures in trying to establish ourselves in the new country of residence have made matters even more difficult.

Many young men and women of marriageable age are therefore faced with difficulties in finding suitable



Respondents are invited to write to THE MEETING POINT, c/o HOT SPRING, P.O. Box 14258, London SW16 6ZU, U.K.

Please ensure that you quote the appropriate Ref.No. given at the end of the proposal in which you are interested.

All letters will be forwarded in strict confidence to THE MEETING POINT (See details below).

partner 21 - 25 with degree or professional qualification. Please send details. Ref: MPB 105 Hot Spring

Jaffna Hindu Boy, Doctor 39, Vegetarian, now practicing in the US seeks vegetarian Tamil Hindu partner. Please forward details with horoscope. Ref: MPB 103 Hot Spring

Tamil Doctor Boy 33, UK citizen, practicing in London, Mars dosha, seeks Hindu partner under 30, preferably UK educated. Send horoscope and details. Ref: MPB 106 Hot Spring

Jaffna Hindu Son, 26, MSc, Computer Consultant in London, seeks suitable Hindu partner 20 - 24, university education and UK residence preferred. Send horoscope and details. Ref: MPB 107 Hot Spring

Tamil Roman Catholic Daughter, 39, Masters degree holder, divorced with 2 children, now resident in, USA, and gainfully employed, seeks suitable partner. Please send details. Ref: MPG 204 Hot Spring

Jaffna Hindu Daughter, 31, British Born and employed seeks partner, preferably UK born, intelligent, sporty, in secure career. Forward details. Ref: MPG 203 Hot Spring

Jaffna Hindu Daughter, 28, British born, graduate and in good employment, seeks Hindu partner with long UK background and education to suit, not over 33 years. Please send horoscope and details. Ref: MPG202 Hot Spring

The Meeting Point

Tel: 0181 767 1230

partners in their own community.

The Meeting Point was inaugurated in London on 17th May 98, at a meeting attended by a large number of Tamil parents. The Meeting Point will operate as a voluntary organisation manned by a few respectable retired persons who are keen to serve the community by helping parents find suitable marriage partners for their sons/daughters. These volunteers understand the nature of this

exercise and will ensure utmost care and discretion in divulging information of individuals.

The Meeting Point also organises events such as parties and forums where young people will have opportunities to meet and get to know each other in a leisurely atmosphere. Suggestions, help and contributions are most welcome.

Parents/guardians/friends, desiring to seek a partner for a girl/boy, are welcome to make an application to The Meeting Point. Applicants are also welcome to visit the office of The Meeting Point by prior appointment.

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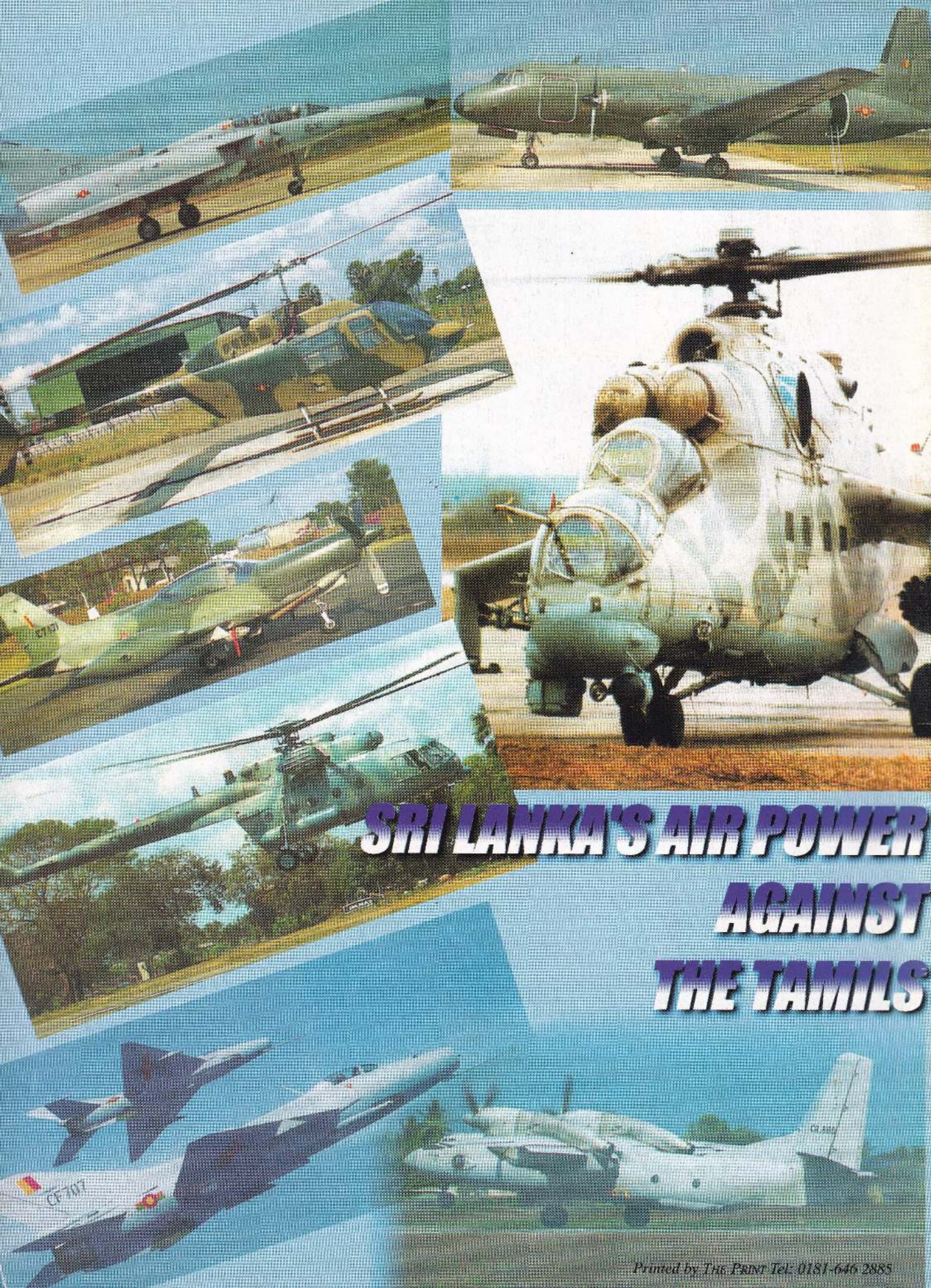
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REMEMBERING COL. KITTU

Tamil Tiger leader Sathasivam Krishna kumar (Kittu) who gave up his life in mid-sea on January 16, 1993, was remembered at a largely-attended public function at Alperton Community School Hall, U.K. Music, dance and drama events in Kittu's memory were staged on the occasion.





**SRI LANKA'S AIR POWER
AGAINST
THE TAMILS**