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Hot Spring

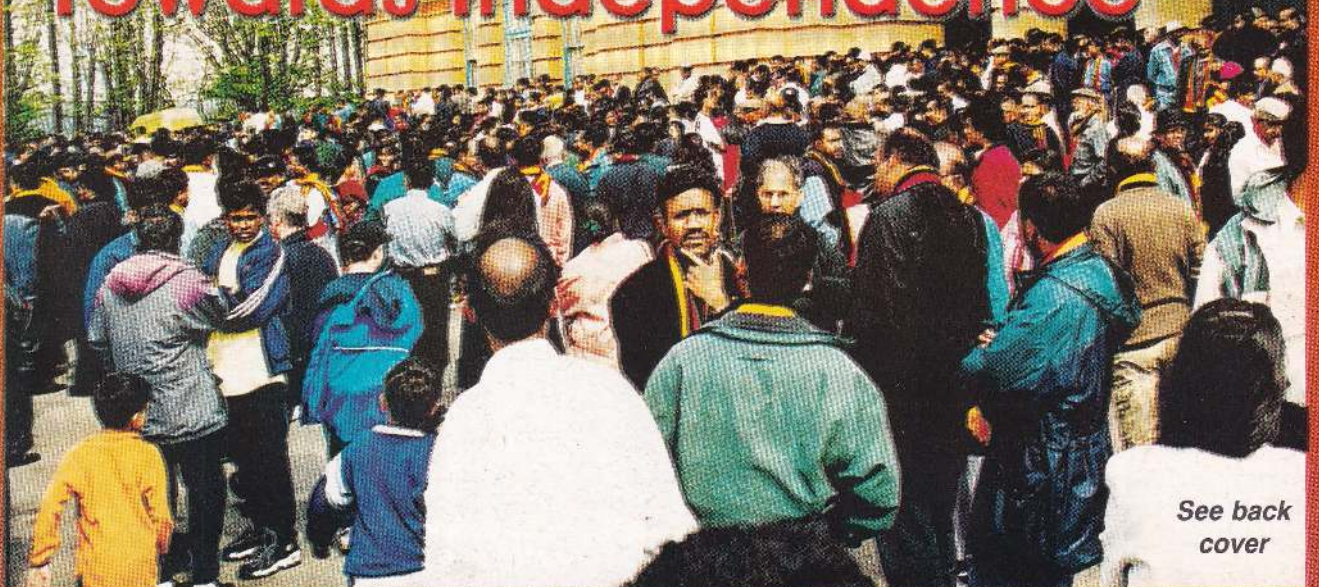
APRIL - 99

A Journal of Commitment



Chairman Dr.N.Sachi (right) and the
keynote Speaker Adrian Wijemanne

"Tamil Eelam Towards Independence"



See back
cover

“Withdraw Sri Lankan armed forces from Tamil Eelam”

A resolution demanding on the Sri Lankan government to stop the ongoing war and to withdraw its armed forces from Tamil Eelam, was one of four resolutions passed at a mass rally of Eelam Tamils held at Alexandra Palace, U.K. on 25th April 1999.

The rally and conference organised by the Federation of Tamil Associations, U.K. had as its theme : **TAMIL EELAM TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE..**

In a media release, the organisers said

“The Conference was attended by about five thousand Tamil people representing a broad spectrum of the Tamil Nation living in the United Kingdom. The Conference was addressed by leading members of the Tamil Nation and representatives of many Tamil organisations... The Tamil people demonstrated their solidarity behind the leadership of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

Security concerns

The Conference deliberated on the issues affecting the Tamil Nation in the island of Sri Lanka. The gross and systematic violation of their Human Rights, especially of the right to live, were uppermost in their deliberation. In view of the widespread disappearances of Tamils and the existence of mass graves, the security concerns of the Tamils were also addressed.

The Conference addressed the humanitarian tragedy of the refugees, specifically the suffering of children in the North & Eastern region of the island of Sri Lanka in a way establishes that there is deliberate genocide of the Tamil Nation.

Tamil homeland

The Tamil People living in the United Kingdom, being the victims and witness of the persecution by the Sinhala political and military establishment, having gathered and deliberated at the Alexandra Palace, London on the 25th April 1999 resolved to call upon Her Majesty the Queen and the

Government of Great Britain, the International Community, and the Government of Sri Lanka to:

1. To accept and recognise the Tamil Peoples Right To Self Determination.

To accept and recognise the North - Eastern Province in the island of Sri Lanka as the Traditional Homeland of the Tamil Nation.

3 To accept and recognise the

Liberation Tigers Of Tamil Eelam as the legitimate representative of The Tamil People.

4 Stop the ongoing war and withdraw the Sri Lankan Armed Forces from Tamil Eelam forth with.

The conference concluded that these are essential requirements for a durable political settlement of the Tamil national conflict in the island of Sri Lanka.

UDI - a red herring by the Colombo Press!



At the Press Conference: (From left to right) Mr.Arjuna Sittampalam, Mr.James Karan, Dr.Satchi, Mr.Kumar Ponnambalam and Mr.Adrian Wijemanne.

At no time during the 16-year Sri Lankan war against the Tamils, was a Unilateral Declaration of Independence even remotely contemplated by the Tamil leadership, but yet the scare has always remained. The man who first raised the scare was Krishna Vaikunthavasan of the UN rostrum fame, who in November 1981 created a storm in a tea cup by declaring: “we do hereby decide to make all necessary arrangements for Thamil Eelam Independence Declaration on Pongal Day 1982”. This being a sub-conscious fear in the Sinhala mind at all times, the government began war-like preparations with such seriousness that both the TULF leadership and Tamil youth groups had to shoot

down Mr.V's inspiration promptly to allay the excitement in Colombo.

This time, on the eve of the London conference, what began as an April 1 joke, made the ever excitable section of the Colombo Press attach so much seriousness to it that the silly scribes began to believe it themselves. Once they found that it was a stupid thing to have believed it, they turned their anger on the conference organisers for NOT announcing a UDI!

Asked at the Press Conference at Alexandra Palace, Chairman Dr.Satchi said it was not for anyone in London to declare UDI. It was a matter for the Tamil national leadership back home.

Hot Spring

A Journal of commitment

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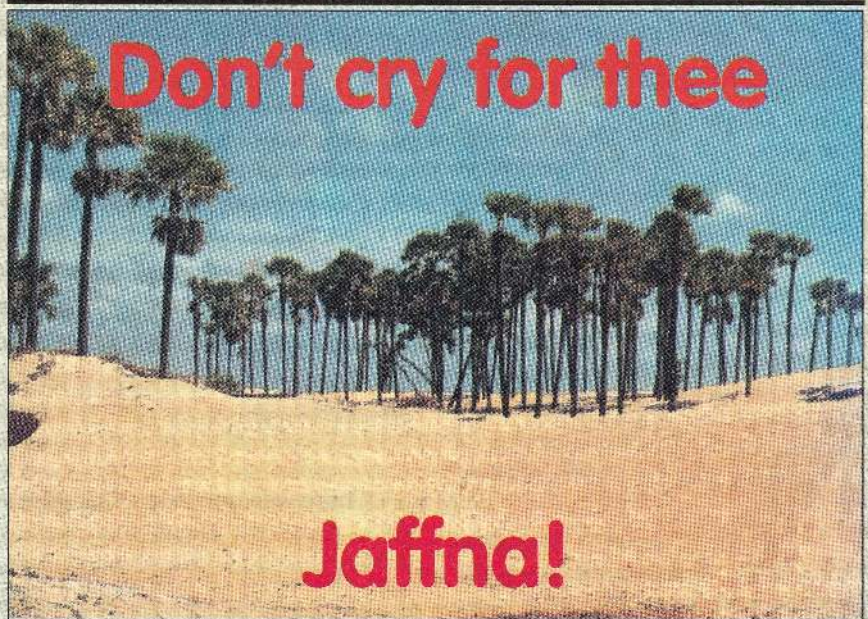
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Editorial Comment



When Sri Lanka's Deputy "Defence" Minister Gen.Ratwatte and his military cronies raised the imperial Lion Flag on December 5, 1995 over the remains of an old Dutch fort in the ghost town of "Yapa Patuna" - emptied of the Jaffna people - it marked President Chandrika Kumaratunga's ambitious conquest of Jaffna. To Gen. Ratwatte, the feeling must have been as good as conquering Mt.Everest!

But let us not forget that it was the third conquest of Jaffna by the Bandaranaike family: by the father in 1958 (when he sent troops there fearing a rebellion in the wake of the anti-Tamil riots in the other parts of the country); by the mother in 1961 (when she sent troops there to put down with violence the non-violent campaign of the Federal Party); and by the daughter in 1995 in pursuance of her policy of waging war for peace. The Bandaranaiques have thus been making a habit of conquering Jaffna now and then.

But in fairness to the Bandaranaiques, it must be said that they are not the only ones to develop an overpowering desire to walk over Jaffna. President Junius Richard Jayewardene also tried with the help of his "Defence" Minister Lalith Athulathmudali and his barrel bombs

from the air, but did not quite succeed, partly because the Tigers would not let him, and later because Rajiv Gandhi would not let him. Rajiv Gandhi wanted to have that pleasure of conquering little Jaffna for himself.

Long before Madame Kumara tunga thought of the ruse of WAR FOR PEACE, Rajiv Gandhi's South Block wallahs had thought of a more ingenious trick. They named their troops "Peace Keeping Force" so as to enable them to fight the Tigers with an easy conscience. That then became the Indian conquest of Jaffna. It came 300 years after the Portuguese conquest of the Jaffna kingdom.

Conquests therefore are not new to Jaffna, but never in her history has this hardy peninsula suffered as much as during the four and a half year rule of President Kumaratunga. To refer to her by her husband's name would be to dishonour that dead humane Christian whose marriage to her gave her a new political sheen. But with his death at the hands of a Sinhala assassin and the end of that marriage, that clean sheen got rubbed off and now she has reverted back to her parental genes. Today she has come to combine in herself the father's thirst for power and her mother's appetite for Sinhala-Buddhist hegemony.

Contd. on Page 3

What They Say

"I cannot hide the fact that Batty Weerakoon's attitudes have changed since he became Minister. He has mellowed. The present leadership cannot be compared with magnetic leaders like Colvin and N.M . . . I intend taking over the LSSP's political future . . ."



- *LSSP rebel Vasudeva Nanayakkara, after crossing over to the Opposition, SUNDAY LEADER, April 25*



"The ultimate result of the increas-

ing strength of the Tamil communal bloc vote (in the Western province) is a corresponding decline in the political will to oppose the separatist agenda. In the months ahead, we will see the PA government making more and more concessions to these forces, in an increasingly desperate struggle for political survival".

- *Columnist "Kumbakarna" in SUNDAY TIMES, April 18.*



"There was only one single M.P., CWC President Thondaman representing (the Indian Tamil) community from 1977 to 1989 in Parliament. His achievements during that period are part of the history of this country and needs no trumpet blowing".

- *R.Yogarajan, M.P., Chief Organiser,*

CWC, Colombo, (Sunday Times, April 18).



"...of course we have lost a big share of minority votes proportionately. There are two reasons for it. One is, we have failed to field a proper Tamil candidate in our list. The other is the security situation of the country. Almost all Tamils are being subjected to routine security checks. Although it is meant for security purposes people are fed up with it. So they have shown their dissatisfaction by their votes. Most of them did not cast their votes for either parties".



- *Susil Premajayanth, People's Alliance Chief Minister of the Western Provincial Council, (Weekend Express, April 17-18)*



International

"I see Asians as no less British than the Scots, the English, the Welsh and the Northern Irish....I want to see Asian M.P.s in Conservative Cabinets and one day - though you'll forgive me for saying not quite yet - a leader of the Conservative Party".



- *Conservative Party leader William Hague, at a dinner in London to honour the richest 200 Asians in Britain.*



"Once you kill people because you don't like what they say, you change the rules of war".

- *Robert Fisk in Belgrade commenting in THE INDEPENDENT on the NATO bombing of Serb Television studio.*



"Such criminals as Clinton and

Blair could not have been born by any mother. By comparison, even Hitler was but a little child".

- *Aleksandar Vucic, Serbian Information Minister. (THE INDEPENDENT, London, 24 April)*



"It is very, very important people realise that these TV stations are part of the apparatus and power of Milosevic...it is the apparatus keeping him in power"



- *British Prime Minister Tony Blair*



"It is high time that the Constitution is amended to bar a person of foreign origin from occupying top constitutional offices including that of President and Prime Minister".



- *Leading Indian Politician George Fernandes*



"They didn't bomb us when we attacked Chechnya - though the situation is exactly the same as the Serbs attacking the Albanians. Maybe they didn't bomb us because we have nuclear arms..."

- *Karen Hewitt of the Oxford University Institute for Slavonic Studies, quoting angry Russian students*



"I lived one-third of my life being dominated by my mother, another two-third by MGR. Now, I am living for myself. I will bring AIADMK back to power. I have responsibilities to fulfil and only then can I say good-bye to politics".



- *J. Jayalalitha before announcing withdrawal of support to the BJP-led coalition.*



Continued from page 1

Eighteen years ago, the Cyril Mathews and the Gamini Dissanayakes presided over the cowardly destruction of Jaffna's proudest possession - the Jaffna Public Library with its 95,000 volumes. But that was done by police reservist goons imported from the South and housed in the Durayappa Stadium to enable them to do the dirty work. But today Madame President needs no imported ruffians and arsonists. They are already there, and what is more, they are in uniform. For every ten Jaffna man, woman and child there is one armed soldier strutting around with gun in the hand, an eye on the women and hatred in mind, behaving as if he owns all what he sees

Madame Chandrika's government bombed temples and churches and schools; her soldiers raped dozens of Krishanthis, not all of them on record; her army did not spare even the graveyard of the dead Tiger heroes, they ploughed them down, an act that would have been considered obnoxious in any civilized society: her army shelled its way into Jaffna with indiscriminate abandon, forcing half a million panic-stricken people take to the roads (like the Kosovons of today) on the night of October 30, 1995, and flee their homes and villages in a massive exodus into the unknown. These were acts of inhumanity enough. But her government had achieved something today which no past conqueror was able to do - she has made the Jaffna man feel as if he is an interloper in his own land!

A sudden decadence

Thousands of them cannot go back to their own villages, nor to their own homes. They cannot move from one part of Jaffna to another without army permission. More than 90,000 of their homes remain as eyesores, part demolished or damaged, while in Colombo high rise buildings come up all the time. The Sinhala army has come to own the land and brought to Jaffna what all invaders bring - a sudden decadence and decline in social, moral and cultural values, into what was once an ordered, disciplined soci-

ety. What of the future?

The future of Jaffna lies, as has been in the past always, in human triumph - over geographical constriction and Nature's niggardliness. And so the Jaffna man began venturing forth into the big, wide world: sailors from Valvettiturai, scholars to India, employment-seekers to Malaya, and self-fulfilment seekers to the West. The island of Ceylon, let alone the peninsula, was not large enough to contain the Jaffna man. And everywhere he went, he survived and even shone.

Celebrities in London

The arid soil of Jaffna did not only produce onions and chillies and grapes and mangoes, but also raised great men. The first Asian knight was Sir Muthu Coomaraswamy, a friend of Victorian Prime Ministers Disraeli and Lord Palmerston. His son Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy was a savant of international repute. The services of the two Ponnambalam brothers - Ramanathan and Arunachalam to the public life of the country are unmatched in the island's history. A little village in Jaffna, Atchuvvely, produced a Tambimuttu who nurtured and published some of the best poets of England during the war years, and was the toast of literary circles in London. The first graduate to pass out from the Madras University was a man from Jaffna - C.W. Thamotherampillai. The achievements are endless.

Bernard Shaw's play

Jaffna herself attracted men and women of brilliance. The first Lady Superintendent of Ramanathan College was a famous actress of the London stage - Florence Farr, a friend of Irish playwright Bernard Shaw and Irish poet W.B. Yeats. Bernard Shaw wrote a play named "On the Rocks", the chief dominating character of which he named as SIR JAFNA PANDRANATHI! The man who translated the Bhagavad Gita from Sanskrit to English for Penguin Classics was a scholar from Majorca - Juan Mascaro, who lectured in Oxford on the Spanish mystics and then came to Jaffna as VicePrincipal of Parameshwara College. It is that same Parameshwara College that Ramanathan built for a

secondary school that today houses the Jaffna University! The late Indian music maestro, Maharajapuram Santhanam whose name is a byword in the Carnatic music world, once taught in Jaffna at the Ramanathan Music Academy. There was that scholarly Buddhist monk, Rev. Dhamma ratna Thero, who lived in Kokuvil in Jaffna during the late 40s and who did yeoman service to Tamil literature through his translations of Tamil classics to Sinhala. Jaffna had its Sinhalese Government Agents - Neville Jayaweera, Vernon Abeyasekera, Lionel Fernando... all of whom felt a great bond with Jaffna and her people.

Jaffna dreamed of freedom from colonial rule long before the rest of the country could learn to digest the idea. Mahatma Gandhi came to Jaffna in 1927 at the invitation of the Jaffna Youth Congress, and so did other Indian leaders of the freedom movement Jawaharlal Nehru, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Jayaprakash Narayan, Satyamurthi et al. They all felt an emotional closeness to Jaffna.

A great survivor

And this then is the Jaffna of today groaning under the heel of President Chandrika's semi-literate uniformed goons; a Jaffna that has seen the best of humanity honouring her, now being dishonoured by the worst of them. More than half of Jaffna's men and women are now everywhere, except in Jaffna. They are in the Vanni, they are in Colombo, and in the outside world, as refugees, wanderers, professionals serving other countries... thanks to the oppressive regimes in Sri Lanka. But place the Jaffna man in any part of the globe, whether in Paris or Papua New Guinea, in the freezing cold of Canada, or any unfamiliar terrain in the Mediterranean island of Sicily, and he has proved that he can cope. The Jaffna man is a great survivor - anywhere.

There is no reason why he cannot survive the worst of the suffocation in his own palmyrah land. Don't cry for thee, Jaffna. You will yet live!

S.Sivanayagam

15,000 CHILDREN SELLING SEX IN SRI LANKA!



A ravaged generation: Disabled soldiers racing on wheelchairs in Colombo.

Excerpts

“They (the tourists) don’t know it, but they also are getting a glimpse of what the war has really done to Sri Lanka.

More than 15,000 children, some as young as 8 years old, now sell sex on the southern beaches”, says a recent **NEWSWEEK** magazine feature on Sri Lanka, written by Tony Clifton, with inputs from Sugeeswara Senadhira in Colombo.

The **NEWSWEEK** report under the headline: “SRI LANKA LOST IN THE HELL OF WAR: An endless rebellion reshapes the national psyche”, opens thus:

“The European tourists have flocked to Sri Lanka again this year, and, as always, the country’s endless guerrilla war seems so far away. The

casinos are humming, the Hilton’s Blue Elephant disco is hopping, and other elegant restaurants like the Paradise Road Galerie are filled with diners who think nothing of spending the equivalent of a soldier’s monthly pay on dinner for two.

The beach boys

“The southern beaches at Bentota and Galle are packed with bathers, awash in beer. Beach boys circulate everywhere, making their offers in German

or English: “Smoke? Girl? Or you want Boy?.” Yes, that’s what some of the tourists want.

Newsweek

occasional military roadblock aside, there’s nothing to stop the fun in Colombo. The MGM Grand and other

"They don't know it, but they also are getting a glimpse of what the war has really done to Sri Lanka. More than 15,000 children, some as young as 8 years old, now sell sex on the southern beaches....."

"The children themselves become everyday commodities in the war economy that now dominates what can only be called a war society. Plenty of other conflicts get more space on the world's front pages, but nowhere has war embedded itself more malignantly into the normal workings of a nation.

"It has now been 19 years since the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam launched their war for an independent Tamil homeland in northern Sri Lanka. If war is hell, a war stalemated for so long deserves its own special ring of fire. In a country of 18 million people, 50,000 have died so far, an additional 30,000 have "disappeared" and more than, 1 million have lost their homes.

"The social stresses are not as easy to quantify, but violent crime, especially rape, is rising rapidly. Sri Lanka also has the world's highest suicide rate; more Sri Lankans kill themselves each other - about 7,000 - than are killed in the war. The depression and alcoholism that lead to most suicides must go largely untreated, as the nation's psychiatrists have joined the tens of thousands of other professionals who have fled abroad. **More Sri Lankan psychiatrists now practise in London than in the whole of Sri Lanka, where only 18 remain.**

"The war's billion-dollar-a-year cost has stunted the economy and kept foreign investors away. Sri Lanka should have the greatest promise of any South Asian nation. It has the highest literacy rate in the region, no deep-rooted poverty, spectacular natural and archeological attractions for tourists, great deepwater ports lying along major shipping routes and

lucrative natural resources of tea, gems, and minerals. But the war has relentlessly ground down the nation's aspirations.

"People now accept 5 percent annual economic growth rather than reaching for twice that rate", says Saman Kelegama of the Institute of Policy Studies. "We're like someone with a gangrenous foot who leaves it to rot because it won't kill him tomorrow", he says "The war is our gangrene and we live with it, rather than embarking on the radical surgery of ending it".

The Social costs

"Numbers alone can't capture the social costs of the war of attrition. As in Vietnam 30 years ago, the government clings grimly to its fortified positions while the Tiger guerrillas stage hit-and-run raids from the jungle. Few prisoners are taken, and casualties can be horrific; in just two actions last year, the Tigers overran government-held towns and killed 3,000 soldiers.....

"...Young unmarried women - tens of thousands of war widows among them - now outnumber available men by as many as 5 to 1 in northern war areas, according to one reasonable estimate.... **Lacking husbands as well as jobs, almost 1 million Sri Lankan women have had to leave their country to find menial jobs as maids abroad, mainly in the Arab gulf countries.**

Widows benefit

"In a society wasted by war, only the Army offers a future to many impoverished young men. "It's a regular income and a rise in status you couldn't get any other way", says Tyrol Ferdinands, head of an anti-war group. A foot soldier's 57 dollar monthly pay - 145 US dollars in the combat zone - is a huge incentive. Even death benefits are important to poor families who send their sons to war. A widow receives a lump sum of US dollars 2,173 if her husband

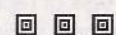
comes back dead, plus his monthly pay to what would have been his retirement age of 55.

"Bring conscription"

"Living with this social rot has indeed become normal. While the war chews up poor, young Sri Lankans in the north, the southern elite in and around the capital have had to put up with no more than the occasional terrorist bomb. Ferdinands, general secretary of the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka, has been pressing for negotiations between the warring sides for years....Only half jokingly, Ferdinands suggests that the country subject all men of fighting age to a military draft. **"Bring in conscription tomorrow and the war will end a few days later". he says, "when the first doctors, businessmen and stockbrokers lose their sons".**

"Army veteran Upali Ekanayake, 29, belongs to none of these categories. The son of a rural farming family, Ekanayake lives with other disabled veterans in Ranavirugama, "The Village of the War Heroes", secluded in a forest outside Colombo. Growing up near the war zone, Ekanayake says, he never wanted to be anything but a soldier. That career ended when a Tiger sniper shot him in the spine, leaving him paralyzed from the waist down.

"Ekanayake still has his pride, as well as a young wife, Pushpa, who married him after his wound despite great parental opposition. Now, he wants nothing more than peace. The Tamils should be refused full independence, he argues, but given autonomy in the north. **"We have to end this war, and we have to go to any lengths to stop the fighting", Ekanayake says. "Otherwise, this country will be filled with people in wheel chairs like me".** That would make the wheel chair one more tool of everyday life in a war society"



Sonia Makes Her Play

Vajpayee's government falls. But now what?



BY SUDIP MAZUMDAR

Sonia Gandhi made her name by avoiding the rough trenches of Indian politics. As the Italian wife of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, scion of India's first political family, she had deliberately stayed out of the public eye. But after his assassination in 1991, she was drawn slowly into the fray, both to protect the family name and revive the faltering Congress party it led for decades. She promised "morality in politics" after she officially became party leader last year. Yet soon she fell under the sway of veteran Congress power-brokers who missed the privileges of office. Pressured by these satraps, Sonia Gandhi engineered the downfall last week of straight-arrow Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Working hand in hand with Jayalalitha, an actress-turned-politician who faces at least 45 charges of corruption, Sonia forced a confidence vote on Vajpayee's 13-month administration. After 48 hours of tense maneuvering, Gandhi prevailed by the slimmest possible margin: 270 to 269.

It was a dubious victory. With her own reputation tarnished by association with Jayalalitha, Sonia Gandhi now faces the task of replacing the rising star of Vajpayee's Hindu national-

ist Bharatiya Janata Party. Over time, Vajpayee won enormous popularity as a man of peace, and a man of war. He had unveiled India's nuclear weapon in a test that shocked the world last year, and followed up last week by test firing a missile capable of carrying nuclear warheads up to 2,000 kilometers. Both times, Pakistan responded in kind. Yet Vajpayee dampened fears of an arms race by making bold diplomatic overtures to India's archrival—including a now famous bus trip to Pakistan this February. Vajpayee had also tempered his party's economic nationalism, recently reviving free-market reforms and rekindling prospects for growth and foreign investment this year. In a recent newspaper poll, three out of four Indians said Vajpayee would make a better prime minister than Sonia Gandhi. After he officially stepped down last Saturday, Vajpayee vowed in an indirect slap at Gandhi to behave as a "responsible opposition."

There was little joy in the Congress camp. "In fact the problems start now," admitted Kapil Sibal, a Congress leader. Though it's virtually certain President K.R. Narayanan will give Congress the first chance to form a new government, Gandhi will have to win support from perhaps 20 rag-tag parties, some just one-man outfits, to

gain a parliamentary majority. She will have to reconcile the fierce ambitions of her own party hacks with these new allies, not least Jayalalitha, who is known to demand that visitors bow in her presence. Indeed the widespread view is that Sonia's coalition can only be a mass marriage of dueling ambitions. "This will appear as patently unethical and may prove to be Sonia's undoing," says political commentator Dipankar Gupta of the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi.

Many Indians wonder if Sonia is prepared to lead the nation. She has never faced a press conference, and still reads out prepared texts in English or accented Hindi. Gandhi's platform is a work in progress, and may prove too infirm to hold back pressure from powerful new allies to roll back free-market reform, or the opening to Pakistan. She also faces an ongoing probe into her late husband's alleged role in a scandal involving kickbacks from a Swedish arms manufacturer. After the confidence vote, the Mumbai stock exchange crashed by more than 250 points. And Pakistan publicly reaffirmed the crowning achievement of Vajpayee's diplomacy: the Lahore Declaration of friendship between India and Pakistan.

Vajpayee will play a caretaker role until a new government forms, but he is far more than a lame duck. Even during the final days of his administration, with Pakistan firing test missiles and opposition leaders lining up to denounce him in Parliament, Vajpayee showed no anxiety whatsoever. It was as if he knew "he would maintain the upper hand in the political gamesmanship" even if he lost the vote of confidence, says Gupta. In fact Vajpayee would be the instant front runner if an election were held today. And even before Gandhi had spent one day in power, many Indians were wondering whether she had set herself up for a quick fall.

(Newsweek)

Jayalalitha-Portrait of a Political temptress

The arrival of the entourage of Jayalalitha Jayaram - the buxom starlet of 166 movies - triggered a political earthquake, which by Wednesday had moved the Indian President to direct the Prime Minister, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, to prove his majority in Parliament. The withdrawal of Ms Jayalalitha's southern bloc of MPs from Mr Vajpayee's year-old coalition all but sounded the death knell for a government which tested nuclear weapons and failed to protect minority Christians from attacks by Hindu extremists.

She had arrived on Monday from Chennai (formerly Madras) with 800 kilograms of luggage, including all her own bed linen, and moved into a six-room suite at the Maurya Sheraton hotel once occupied by Prince Charles. The royal connection was firmly established, but the raw silk curtains in the Chandragupta suite could not conceal the power-play about to unfold.

When the hotel staff asked what kind of flowers she liked, the answer came back: "Red." A crimson avalanche of roses and carnations soon followed.

Perched on the 16th floor, her elusiveness driving a waiting media pack to near-hysteria, she savoured grilled cheese sandwiches and the delicious irony that the next prime minister, like Mr Vajpayee, would depend on her for survival. The cult of the woman known to her admirers as Divine Mother began in the 1960s when her wheatish skin graced fly-spotted cinema screens alongside Tamil superstar M.G. Ramachandran. "MGR" always played underdogs, and when he stepped out of films and into politics he took his offscreen leading

lady, and not his wife, with him.

The Dravidian movement he led championed South India's lower caste peoples against their Brahmin elites,

Like the Hindu goddess Kali, whose belt is festooned with the heads of male victims, a former Tamil cinema siren is about to claim the scalp of India's controversial Hindu nationalist Government", wrote Christopher Kremmar just before the Vajpayee government was toppled by the margin of one vote. Christopher Kremmar is the HERALD correspondent in New Delhi.



seen as descendents of Aryan invaders. When MGR died in 1987, Ms Jayalalitha inherited his mantle, and in 1991 she was elected chief minister.

Initially, the earnest young woman, who had left school at 16 to go into movies, impressed the State's 60 million people with populist initiatives such as women-only police stations, free bus passes for children, and lower taxes on cosmetics.

But soon the line between reality

and fantasy, always indistinct in India, began getting extremely blurred, and the woman dubbed the Iron Butterfly descended into an orgy of self-aggrandisement.

She celebrated her first anniversary in office at the temple town of Madurai, sitting on a silver throne and wearing a jewel-encrusted tiara, as an almost endless queue of party workers paid homage.

Her birthdays were legendary. When she turned 44, scores of people died in a stampede when frenzied devotees tried to bathe near her in a holy river. At 45, free saris were given to 4,500 poor women, 45 couples had their wedding costs paid for getting hitched on the day, and new shelters were built at 45 bus stops in Chennai.

When she turned 47, hundreds of devotees literally walked on fire near another temple in Chennai, a city whose residents spent their lives in the shadow of 20-metre-high cut-out billboards of their "revolutionary leader". Supporters on trucks roamed the city, tattooing her likeness on anyone standing still.

Unmarried, but with a grown-up daughter from a brief liaison away from MGR, she developed an intimate relationship with a former video store owner, Ms Sasikala Natarajan, variously described in media reports as her "confidante", "best friend" and "girlfriend". Ms Natarajan's family suddenly started getting rich.

Ms Jayalalitha adopted Ms Natarajan's son and, when he married, hosted a lunch for 150,000 people, serving a vegetarian menu which had taken 3,000 cooks almost a week to prepare. Chennai became a giant film set, with plywood castles and forts lin-

ing the route of the wedding procession. Given that her symbolic salary as chief minister was one rupee (four cents) a year, questions about corruption began to arise.

Then there were the standover tactics. In a Chennai court, a man accused of throwing acid in the face of one of Ms Jayalalitha's political opponents tried to kill the judge.

Criticism was not encouraged. A Chennai-based editor, Mr Rajgopal Ramanathan, claimed Ms Jayalalitha ordered an attack on one of his reporters, whose left thumb was chopped off after he wrote a story alleging that an upset chief minister had hurled a slipper at one of her Cabinet ministers. In her first two years in office she launched more than 200 defamation suits, a legal bludgeoning which soon had journalists avoiding Tamil Nadu - and stories about Ms Jayalalitha's amazing exploits.

But critics wouldn't be silent.

"She had become not only corrupt, but highly vengeful too," said Mr Cho S. Ramaswamy, editor of Chennai's Tughlaq magazine, who has known her since she was a child. Amazingly, her main adviser in the present political crisis, Dr Subramaniam Swamy, was previously one of her most damning critics.

He launched a court case alleging she made \$A47 million on the import of Australian coal by the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board in 1993 by manipulating tenders and tampering with files. Driven from office by angry voters in 1996, she has been hounded on corruption charges ever since. **On December 7, 1997 Ms Jayalalitha was arrested and spent 27 days in jail. Police raids of her residence in Chennai's exclusive Poe's Gardens netted 30 kilograms of gold, 500 kilograms of silver, 10,500 sarees, 250 pairs of slippers, a gold waist-belt studded with diamonds weighing about 1.5 kilograms and worth about \$A400,000, plus a .32-calibre pistol licensed in her name.**

Police have estimated that her assets are disproportionate to her income of \$26 million, and have produced documents showing she

acquired at least 160 properties during her tenure. Alleged kickbacks included \$4 million on a deal involving her friend Sasikala to give 45,000 colour television sets to poor villages. Sasikala also faces charges of violating foreign exchange regulations in transactions totalling \$1 million when she was chairwoman and director of the now defunct TV channel JJ. Sasikala is still in jail, where she has steadfastly refused to say anything against Ms Jayalalitha.

Now 51, plump and pink, and with pristine elocution, Ms Jayalalitha today bears a closer resemblance to an Indian Queen Victoria than to the present crop of Bollywood starlets.

Her role models are Indira Gandhi and Margaret Thatcher, strong women who "made it in a man's world".

Surviving by skilfully manipulating India's great love of grand theatrics, she launched her political comeback last year when her alliance won 27 seats at national elections. The Hindu nationalist BJP could not form government without her support.

In return, she demanded control of key ministries such as Law, Finance and Home, in order, her critics claimed, to block the corruption charges against her and Sasikala. She also insisted on the dismissal of the Government in her home State, run by her political opponents. Mr Vajpayee managed to string her along for a year, making numerous concessions, but it was never enough for Ms Jayalalitha.

When a furore erupted over the sacking of India's Naval Chief, Admiral

Vishnu Bhagwat, she leapt on the issue to demand the resignation of the Defence Minister, Mr George Fernandes, a key coalition partner also essential to the Government's survival.

The woman who came to New Delhi this week wears a simpler cotton sari than she did in her heyday. However, she remains a political temptress and a ruthless powerbroker.

"The BJP going is certain - the nation will be liberated," said her adviser, Mr Subramaniam Swamy, welcoming what he said would be a national government with strong secular credentials.

But after the following days of intense plotting, Ms Jayalalitha's victory may prove pyrrhic. Her tactics have undermined the confidence of other potential partners, such as the Congress party president Sonia Gandhi, who are considering whether or not to accept her support.

After all, this was the woman who at last year's elections ran on a manifesto which promised "to install a stable, able and powerful government which will rule for the entire term of five years".

Mr Swamy's words may come back to haunt all those who deal with her.

"I'm fighting Idi Amin 10 times over," he said once, after accusing her of trying to have him killed. "I'm not fighting a woman, I'm fighting a demon".






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Sri Lanka's war horror unearthed

BY CATHY SCOTT-CLARK AND
ADRIAN LEVY, JAFFNA



THE SUNDAY TIMES

THEY were digging for peace when they uncovered evidence of the brutality of war. As labourers sank the foundations for new changing rooms at the Duraiyappah stadium in northern Sri Lanka, their spades struck bones.

Renovation of the stadium had been hailed as a sign that normality had returned to the Jaffna peninsula, the battle-scarred heartland of the Tamils. Instead, it exposed a secret atrocity in a 16-year-old conflict between the Sinhalese majority and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam that has claimed more than 50,000 lives.

The government has refused to say how many skeletons lie in the grave and has used armed police to keep relatives away. But as the battered skins of six oil drums were pulled back last week to reveal a pit a few feet across, horrified villagers clutching the identity cards of missing sons and husbands pressed forward to glimpse layers of skulls and broken vertebrae crushed into hardened clay 3ft below the turf.

Looking for his son

Paramanathan Selvarajah was in the crowd. He said he was looking for his son, **Pirapakaran, who disappeared in July 1996 at the age of 24 after being taken by the Sri Lankan army (SLA) as he rode home past a checkpoint in Jaffna.**

"I saw his bike lying behind a bunker and heard him crying inside," he said. "We never saw him again." Pirapakaran, a tailor, is among more



Maheshwaree Jeyaratnam, maimed and lost her unborn child.

than 12,000 predominantly Tamil civilians believed to have disappeared since the war began.

It is the second time in nine months that Jaffna families have gathered at a mass grave. Last July an SLA corporal revealed the existence of a secret burial ground beneath the Chemmani salt flats, four miles from Jaffna town, where he claimed 400 Tamil civilians had been executed - the first acknowledgment by the army that some of those missing had been secretly killed.

The discovery of the two graves has brought new heartache to the tiny, crab-claw shaped Jaffna peninsula blighted by years of conflict. It was fought over in the 1980s by the Tigers and the Sri Lankan security forces, and was ruthlessly policed by an Indian peacekeeping force for four years until 1990. It was finally seized by the SLA in December 1995 after 800,000 Tamil civilians fled or were killed.

The government insists "normality" has since returned. More than 400,000 Tamils have come back.

Pigtailed girls ride their bicycles to school every morning and fishermen ply the Jaffna lagoon. However, it is a peace requiring the presence of more than 30,000 police and soldiers in Jaffna to enforce it. Checkpoints block every road and the farmland is riddled with landmines. Few Tamils are allowed to leave - and those who return are scrupulously screened by the army.

What normality there is ends with curfew at 9pm and the dull thump of nightly shelling begins as the army and the Tigers exchange fire. Last week four soldiers patrolling the village of Kilali were killed by an anti-tank mine freshly laid by the Tigers.

A few days earlier Maheshwaree Jayaratnam, a mother, lost her leg and her unborn child when she stood on an army mine in a Kilali field. "We are still at war," she said from her hospital bed.

Beyond her village a full-scale battle is raging, barely 30 miles from Jaffna town. Villages have been trans-



Guarding the evidence: a policeman at the mass grave

formed into army bases and trees felled for bunkers and roadblocks.

More than 4,000 government soldiers have already died, with 24,000 injured, in an operation launched by the army in May 1997 to win control of the nearby A9 highway, the only land link between the peninsula and the rest of Sri Lanka, as it crosses Elephant Pass.

Commanders of the estimated 10,000 government troops dug in around Paranthan, a dusty, deserted village on a critical crossroads, are still confident of

eventual victory. "We could take back this territory at any time," said Brigadier S B Kulatunge, the deputy commander of Elephant Pass. "It's a war of attrition. If we kill just one Tiger it has been a successful day."

Although outnumbered five to one, the force of 2,000 Tigers ranged against them is not giving up. A mixture of men and teenage girls - all with cyanide capsules around their necks to be swallowed in the event of capture - they blast the Sri Lankan lines every day with megaphone messages as well as bullets, leafleting the Tamil farmers with warnings to leave the area in preparation for a full-scale Tiger attack.

It is also a conflict in which Britain appears to be playing a role - on both sides. The Tigers' international secretariat, based in London, is coordinating a fundraising drive that is thought to be netting up to £150m a month.

The British government recently approved 47 export licences for arms sales to the Sri Lankan security forces. There have been reports that members of the SAS have been unofficially drafted in to advise the security forces, although the British High Commission in Colombo says it has no knowledge of their presence.

For people gathered behind the stadium, however, it is the fate of their loved ones that remains their chief concern.

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More and more human skeletons unearthed at Durayappa Stadium

More and more human skeletons, skulls and bones continue to be unearthed from the Durayappa Stadium in Jaffna. Twenty three skeletons were discovered when excavations went on for the fourth day on April 10. At least three of them were believed to be of women, and some others of children. Some spent cartridges and broken pieces of plastic bangles worn by young girls were also discovered.

The Durayappa Stadium named after a former M.P and Mayor and government collaborator, Alfred Durayappa, earned notoriety in 1981, when policemen brought from Colombo torched the Jaffna Public Library while being housed in that stadium.

Make Business while the War goes on... !

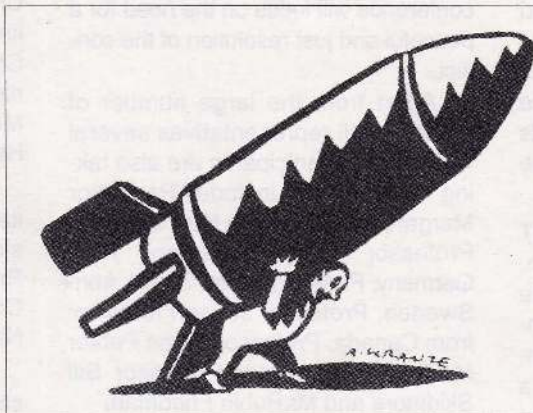
“Make business while the war continues.” A new Sri Lankan business strategy has developed based on this concept. There is another way of putting it. Forget about Social Marketing ethics , Morality, Law and order, Communal harmony, Respect for human lives. These are not parameters or criteria to be followed for attracting foreign investments or for making quick money while War (sun) shines . **Many politicians , VIP's in the defence and government departments want the war to continue as they have interests in many businesses which have links to the needs created as a result of the war.** Bottle necks are created against any peace proposals that will end the war. Peace is detrimental to new businesses. The real estate market in Colombo will crash and the property prices in North and East will shoot up if there is peace. How about stock market that is linked to property investments?. Who are the beneficiaries, if peace sets in? So delay peace as far as possible for the benefits of the few.

Ethics & Buddhist society

The war created new needs of the people. Needs create businesses. The marketing strategies to be redefined to meet the needs of the people, the Sri Lankan culture and politics. The aim is to make money. Some intelligent Marketing guys use the available opportunities to expand the businesses, beating all ethics. There is no need for ethics in a majority Buddhist society. The news item below explains how the election violence in Wayamba was profitably used by a fisherman.

“The news item:

One of the wisest men in the violence-hit Wayamba must be this fish-



erman from Hiripitiya in Hiriyala. As tension rises and politicians hammer each other on both sides of the battlefield, the fisherman takes the time-tested middle path. He has a blue flag to sell fish to PA supporters, a green flag for UNPers and a red one for the left.

Pon Kulendiren CANADA

As a result of the War , Emergency regulations , Indiscriminate arrests of Tamils, Travel Restrictions, many new businesses bloomed:

- False propoganda in the Internet News group for payment from Sri Lankan Government.
- Unscrupulous Agencies earn big money by sending people out of Sri Lanka
- Arms deals are carried out with links to VIP's in the Defence Ministry .
- Getting tickets and passes to go to Jaffna is more difficult than going to the moon.

Procedures and restrictions were enforced to create demand and queues . But there are Travel agents with support of the government officials to by pass security checks and queues for a special payment under the table.

■ Contractors have a lucrative business to build luxury houses with swimming pools for VIPs in the defence forces and PA politicians who have earned money through buying arms and providing logistic supplies to the war front.

■ Foreign and local Journalists and Media earn quick buck and increased circulation by writing fiction stories about LTTE and the war front

■ Residents of Colombo earn big money by way of Rent and Key money by renting Garages and Annexes for those who are Transit in Colombo from Jaffna.

■ Private communication centers in Colombo have a lucrative business as many desperate families from the war affected areas are anxious to contact their dear ones who are living abroad for financial and other help

■ Private Telephone call offices and Sri Lankan Telecom Operators make good business through those Tamil families who are desperate to contact their children and relatives living abroad.

■ Illegal foreign exchange businesses (Hawala) in Sri Lanka and abroad make thousands monthly. Money is delivered to the door step whether in Colombo or in the North for a special commission

■ Visa brokers, who earn lots of money to get visas to go to India, Canada and other Western countries with the help of corrupt Embassy personnel.

■ Passport and ID card brokers who earn lots of money with the help of Government officials

■ Mafia and underworld gangs earn millions to quickly dispose Political Rivals or attack houses of selected Journalists , or kidnap people. Many use these gangs to evict people who refuse to leave rented houses.

“When businesses thrive in this manner who wants peace or a third party mediation in Sri Lanka, so long as a selected few are becoming richer and richer and live a happy life?”

Ottawa Conference on Tamil Nationhood and the Search for Peace in Sri Lanka

An international conference on the above theme is to be held on May 21-22 at Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. This 2-day conference is organised by the Academic Society of Tamil Students (ACTS), Carleton University and the University of Ottawa.

In a communication to HOT SPRING, by Mr. Ravi Ponnampalam, Advisor to ACTS states that the Conference will review the circumstances which led to the Tamil national conflict in Sri Lanka, its impact on a significant segment of the Canadian population and on the life of the people in the conflict zone. Past and present peace initiatives to resolve the conflict and the shortcomings of those initiatives will be examined. The current political dynamics in Sri Lanka and the likelihood of resolving the conflict will

also be critically assessed. Finally, the conference will focus on the need for a peaceful and just resolution of the conflict.

Apart from the large number of Eelam Tamil representatives several international participants are also taking part. They include Professor Margaret Trawick from New Zealand, Professor John Neelsen from Germany, Professor Peter Schalk from Sweden, Professor Joseph Manyoni from Canada, Professor Karen Parker Ms. Barbara Jackman, Professor Bill Skidmore and Mr. Rubin Friedman.

Among other participants are : Mr. Joseph Pararajasingam, M.P., Dr. Vikramabahu Karunaratne, Mr. G.G. Ponnambalam and Dr. Jayalath Jayawardene M.P., all from Sri Lanka, Mr. Viswanathan Rudrakumar, Ms. Deidre McConnell, Professor

A.J. Wilson, Professor (Fr.) Joseph Chandrakanthan, Professor Naga lingam Ethirveerasingham, Professor Chelvadurai Manogaran, Dr. Sachithanandan Sathananthan and Mr. Vasantha Rajah. and Ms. Avis Harrell Sri Jayantha.

Fr. S.J. Emmanuel will deliver the keynote address at the opening session on "Moral and Ethical Responsibility of the International Community to help resolve the Tamil National Conflict in Sri Lanka".

The various sessions will be chaired by Professor A.J. Wilson, Professor Selvanayagam Kanagayagam, Professor of English, University of Toronto, Dr. (Mrs.) Nalini Srisankarajah, Dr. Muthuthamy Sreetharan, Professor Bill Skidmore of Carleton University and Professor Joseph Manyoni, also of Carleton University.

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Virus fever in Vanni: 15 children dead

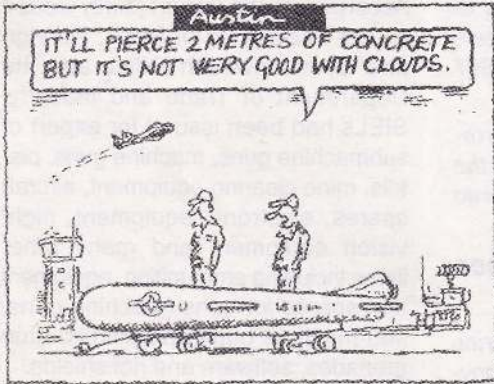
Virus fever has been raging in the Vanni areas such as Akkarayan, Mallavi, Thunukkai, Visvadamu and Vaddakachchi. Fifteen children have already fallen victims to this epidemic. These are areas outside the government control, and as a result there is indifference on the part of the government in sending essential drugs to hospitals in those areas. Some residents who had drifted from there to army-controlled areas in Mannar out of sheer desperation state that during the past one year there have been not less than a hundred deaths due to disease, and malnutrition. Most of those affected are displaced people living there.

Malaysian Tamil hacked to death

A young Malaysian Tamil businessman Rajendran who had gone to Sri Lanka on a business trip was found hacked to death at Peliyagoda near Colombo. Rajendran was later identified as a major exporter of motor cars in Malaysia. It was learnt that he had arrived in Colombo on March 19 and had stayed in a luxury hotel in Colombo. He was known to have begun business negotiations with a Colombo businessman. On the 21st, however, his body was discovered near the Kelani river at Peliyagoda with 15 cut wounds. Two suspects have been taken in, in connection with the killing, according to the police.

What They Say about

THE U.S., NATO and KOSOVO



"NATO's action is ill thought out, ill considered, misjudged, miscalculated and disastrous. It is also totally illegal and probably represents the last nail in the coffin of the UN. The justification for the action - "humanitarian considerations" - is clearly a very bad joke. It also demonstrates a profound

bringing them independence. It is rather a display of military might whose long-range effect is as disastrous as a similar policy in the Middle East.... What I find most distressing is that destruction is being wrought from the air with a fastidiousness about loss of American life that is positively revolting. Clinton knows that Americans will not tolerate Americans dying. Yet he can destroy Yugoslav lives with modern airpower technology, sanitising horror with the illusion of safety and distance. When will smaller, lesser, weaker people realise America is to be resisted at all costs, not naively paraded to? "

- **Edward Said, Professor, Columbia University, writing in THE OBSERVER, London, 11 April.**

* * *

"...NATO bombing was designed, or so we were led to believe, to halt the flow of refugees. It has increased it a hundredfold. Another reason was to weaken political support for Milosevic within Serbia. Instead, it has strengthened him... I don't think that the main concerns of the US in this war are the sufferings of the Kosovan

Albanians. I fear that the motives are much more sordid. Even the most servile NATO apologists who fervently claimed in this paper and elsewhere that the bombing of Serbia was designed to help the Kosovans must, surely be able to see the scale of the humanitarian disaster that this has unleashed. The



bombing has been an abject failure on every count . . ."

Tariq Ali, writing in THE GUARDIAN, April 1.

* * *

"..Mr.Clinton has developed such an affection for cruise missiles that he has launched attacks on Afghanistan, Sudan, Iraq and Serbia in the past six months alone...."

- **SUNDAY TIMES, London, Editorial comment, 4 April.**

* * *



hypocrisy on the part of the US and UK. Sanctions on Iraq - led by those countries - have killed nearly one million Iraqi children. That's genocide for you - in no uncertain terms. Milosevic is undoubtedly ruthless and savage. So is Clinton...

- **British playwright Harold Pinter, Letter to THE GUARDIAN, April 8.**

* * *

"It's time the world stood up to the American bully.. Nothing of what the US or NATO does now has anything to do with protecting the Kosovors or



Bigger arms exports from Britain?

Tamil expat circles surprised

A Page 1 lead report in a Colombo newspaper has caused surprise and consternation among Tamil expatriate circles domiciled in Britain. The report said: "The Sri Lankan Navy (SLN) last week took delivery of a British built hovercraft as officials said that armed forces will seek more British armaments as the United Kingdom's policy on arms exports no longer bars arms sales to Sri Lanka.

THE ISLAND Sunday edition of April 11 adds:

"An undisclosed number of British personnel who were here to conduct tests on the hovercraft left Colombo last week after completing their work, an authoritative security official said.

"According to the first annual report on Strategic Arms Export Controls released in London on March 25, a copy of which has been made available to the SUNDAY ISLAND by the British High Commission in Colombo, Standard Individual Export Licences (SIELs) had been issued for perma-

nent export of certain categories of arms and equipment. The report deals with SIELs granted between May 1997 and December same year.

(It will be noted that this corresponds to the first six months after the present Labour government came into power).

THE ISLAND report goes on to say:

"Explaining changes on UK's arms exports, the report states that the government is determined that there should be fundamental change in exports while maintaining commitment to strong defence industry. The British have said that they will not issue export licences for the sale of arms to regimes that might use them for internal repression (sic) or international aggression, or where they might intensify or prolong existing armed conflicts or where they might be used to abuse human rights (!) .

"We are extremely happy to acquire quality British arms and equipment", the local defence official said.

According to the report jointly issued by the Ministry of Defence, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department of Trade and Industry, SIELs had been issued for export of submachine guns, machine guns, pistols, mine clearing equipment, aircraft spares, electronic equipment, night vision equipment and many other items including ammunition, equipment and spares for guns (machine guns, sub machine guns and pistols) stun grenades, software and riot shields.

"The officer who did not want to be named said that the hovercraft was the biggest single purchase made since the British lifted restrictions imposed on arms sales to Sri Lanka.

"....The SLN is expected to deploy the hovercraft for operational purposes before middle of the year. Acquisition of the British built hovercraft is important as Sri Lanka has mainly sought Chinese and Israeli vessels in the past except for some purchases from South Korea, France, United States"

NEWS IN BRIEF

Question mark over Premadasa killing

While the world has been told that the Tamil Tigers killed former President Premadasa, his son, Sajith Premadasa has called upon the government to appoint a commission to probe the assassination of his father. In an interview given to the Colombo newspaper, THE ISLAND, he has said that a big question mark hangs over the assassination and it was difficult to say who actually killed him. The investigation that the Chandrika government promised soon after it came to power, has yet to be ordered, he said.

Israeli-built spy plane crashes

An Israeli-built Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) crashed at Pompaimadu in the Vanni on 29 March. The multi-million rupee flying machine called "Spy in the Sky" came down soon after it was launched from the Sri Lankan airbase at Vavuniya. It was recovered later, but the extent of the damage was not known. It was reported that since the deployment of these aerial surveillance aircraft a few years ago, at least four had been lost or destroyed. The life span of the engine of these aircrafts is only 100 hours.

Jaffna M.C. flies from Colombo

A strange spectacle took place on 29 March when the acting Mayor and members of the Municipal Council who live in Colombo were flown to Jaffna to hold their monthly meeting there. The acting Mayor whose name was given as S.Raviraj was flown back to Colombo along with the members at the end of the meeting. Ferried to Jaffna with Sri Lankan government help, they are reported to have registered their protest over the Sri Lankan government's plan to expand the Palaly army camp.

57-year old woman robbed & murdered

A mother of nine children, Thavamalar Pasupathy (57), who had been going for daily early morning worship at a neighbouring temple was robbed of her jewellery and murdered at the temple premises on the 12th April. The incident happened near the Ariyakulam junction.

Thavamalar who was a resident of 3rd Lane, off Point Pedro Road, had, according to evidence given by one of her daughters, S.Sulochana (25) left for the neighbouring Gurusamy Temple with flowers as usual. Usually, she returns by 6 or 6.30 a.m., but on that day she hadn't returned even by 7 a.m. On hearing from a neighbour that a woman's body was found near the temple well, she had rushed there to find her mother killed. She had been stabbed on the neck with some sharp instrument, and her gold bangles, chain and earstuds had been robbed. Her body had been apparently dragged from the spot where she was killed.

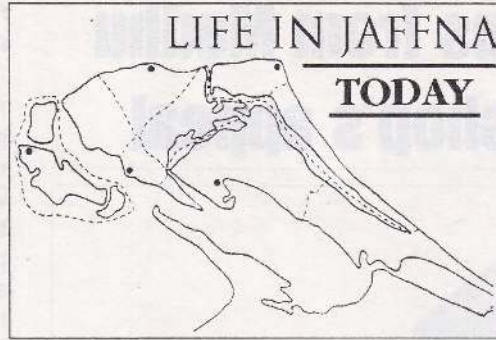
An inquiry was held in the presence of Judge S.A.E.Ekanathan.

Sinhalese books for Jaffna schools

Sinhalese-language books for Grade VI students are being sent to schools in Jaffna. Jaffna Central College which has 230 students in Grade VI has been sent 230 Sinhala-language books along with 25 language books in Tamil. Vembadi Girls' College which has 180 students in Grade VI has been sent 200 Sinhala books. There are no Sinhalese students or Sinhalese teachers in any of these schools, and these books serve no purpose. The motive of the Ministry of Education in Colombo in sending these books is not known, unless the intention was to notify Sinhala hegemony in the peninsula.

Army order on student identity cards

All school-going children over ten



years of age have been ordered by army authorities in Jaffna that they should carry with them special identity cards. In the case of students over 16 years they should carry not only identity cards issued by the schools but also national identity cards, or proof of application for national identity cards, along with photographs. Anyone seen without such proof of identity are liable to come under suspicion and stern action will be taken against them as of May 1, the army has warned.

I was raped by army men, sobs expectant woman

A 26-year old unmarried woman teacher from Atchuvely who had gone to the Jaffna hospital for treatment had confided in the doctor how she had been forcibly gang-raped by some army men. In between sobs she had said that on the 6th February last she had been going with her younger brother in Atchuvely South when some army men forcibly gang-raped her and threatened her that she would be killed. She ascribed her pregnant state to that incident. The hospital police was informed.

Virus fever epidemic in Manthikai area

Out of about 800 patients who call for treatment daily at the Manthikai hospital, more than half the number are found to be afflicted with virus fever. During the first week of April, 135 patients who were in a serious condition were admitted to hospital. 45 women and 40 children were among those admitted. Since the hospital does not have enough beds to accom-

modate the increasing numbers, floor mats have been provided for many of them.

1,200 new phone links by end of May

The Jaffna peninsula is to have 1,200 more telephone connections by end of May, according to Telecom authorities in Jaffna. So far Motorola has given seventy connections only. The required technical equipment to make the new connections are already in Colombo, according to reports.

No compensation to renovate houses

There are an estimated 91,000 houses in Jaffna which were either demolished or damaged during the conflict. But the government has not made any effort to pay the promised compensation leaving the affected owners dejected and disillusioned. According to one report from Jaffna, all what has been paid so far is a meagre sum of Rs.25,000/ to 2,500 beneficiaries who are living under the poverty line, and that too in two instalments.

Population figures for the peninsula

The number of persons living in the Jaffna peninsula by the end of January this year has been found to be 500,400, according to statistics compiled by the Jaffna Secretariat. Jaffna had at one time a population of 1 million, half of whom are now either internally displaced or had left the country.

Corpses rot in the Jaffna mortuary

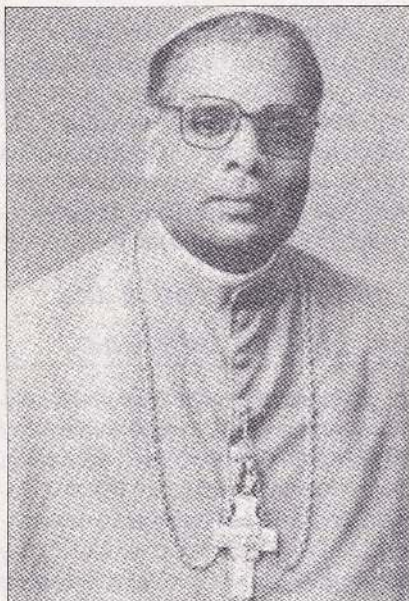
Inadequate cooler units and equipment at the Jaffna hospital mortuary have made the storage of corpses a nerve-racking problem to the authorities. Decomposed cadavers are sometimes attacked by rodents, fouling the atmosphere and throwing a big strain on doctors and minor cadres during judicial inquiries into the deaths.

□□□

'Remove troops from Madhu Shrine' - Bishop's appeal



The Bishop of Mannar, Rt. Rev. Dr. Rayappu Joseph, has written to President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga appealing to her to remove the armed security forces from the precincts of the Madhu Shrine.



Rt. Rev. Dr. Rayappu Joseph

He has told the President that the recent entry of the Army to the sacred

precincts of the church and its continued presence there is religiously very painful.

The Bishop in his letter said:

"The historical Shrine of Our Lady of Madhu, so dear and close to the heart of the Nation as such and to the Catholics in particular has a tradition ancient and sacred of being a Spiritual Abode of Prayer and Meditation. It has served the country, in this capacity for the last 350 years and in a very special manner during the last 100 years. A code of strict discipline had been maintained here by the Church Authorities in order to foster and promote this Spiritual Atmosphere. The common and neutral nature of this Shrine had also been contributing to its serenity and peacefulness. It has always remained a peace zone and had ever been maintained as out of bounds for any Armed Groups or Forces. Besides, its precincts had since 1990 become a haven of war-refugees and is functioning at the moment as also an Open Relief Centre under the international mandate of the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) housing at present over 10,000

refugees in its 400 acre-sacred precincts.

"The recent entry of the Sri Lankan Army into these Sacred Precincts and its continued presence there in large numbers with its war machineries and weapons using the innocent refugees as its human shield is religiously very painful and humanly untenable. This sad situation had robbed this spiritual home of all its Serenity and Peace. This age old house of Prayer and Meditation had been turned out to be an explosive location of armed conflict and confrontation, thereby endangering the lives of over 10,000 innocent refugees besides spelling out destruction of the Sacred Edifice of the Shrine and the Venerable Statue of Our Lady of Madhu. This, in all respects, is a very serious situation.

"Therefore, with all urgency and earnestness that this subject deserves, I appeal to you, Your Excellency the President of Sri Lanka and the Commander in Chief of the Security Forces, to prove your noble disposition towards things spiritual and your praiseworthy commitment to respect minority rights and their feelings by immediately ordering the removal of the Armed Security Forces and all in military uniforms from the sacred area of the Madhu Shrine consisting of the 400 acres of land on the four sides of the Shrine."

Sacrilege at the shrine: Army men after liquor

Sinhala Bishops, Malcolm Ranjith of Ratnapura and Bishop Gomis of Anuradhapura have also joined Mannar Bishop Rayappu Joseph in protesting over the army presence at the Madhu church precincts.

Complaints have been made that army men are moving around with arms, and engage in boisterous activity after liquor, disturbing the sanctity and serenity of the area.

The rank and file of the Sri Lankan army is not only composed of 100 percent Sinhalese, but is also predominantly Buddhist.

Repeal the 6th Amendment, says G.G.Ponnambalam at Geneva

The following is the text of the statement made by Mr.G.G.Ponnambalam at the 55th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on Friday 9th April, 1999. He was speaking on behalf of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, under the head - Civil and Political Rights.

"Vanakkam, Madame Chairperson, "Despite clear and universally agreed standards, violations of basic and fundamental rights continue in many parts of the world. The Geneva-based Centre for the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, recently carried out a fact-finding Mission in Sri Lanka, and concludes that:

"The present and previous Governments of Sri Lanka have been in serious breach of their obligations to ensure to all individuals, subject to their jurisdiction, the rights recognised by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights".

"Freedom of expression, a question we are considering under Item II, is included in Chapter Three of the Constitution of Sri Lanka captioned "Fundamental Rights". Article 14(1) (a) reads thus: "every citizen is entitled to freedom of speech and expression including publication".

In August 1983, the Parliament of Sri Lanka passed what is popularly referred to as the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution which made it an offence to advocate separation. This Amendment was passed in the wake of the disgraceful pogrom against the Tamil nation in Sri Lanka that made the then Sri Lanka government and the extreme chauvinist section of the Sinhala Nation a laughing stock in the eyes of the world. The Amendment was passed when no Member of Parliament from the North and East of Sri Lanka was present in Parliament.

"In the very recent Past, we have seen two separate incidents concerning another dimension to freedom of expression. In November 1998, as the General Secretary of the oldest recognised Tamil political party in Sri Lanka, I was interviewed in Sinhala over the Swarnavahini television's Sinhala channel, where, although not being a



G.G.Ponnambalam

spokesperson for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), I said I support their political ideology. Immediately thereafter, there were written and verbal attacks and threats on me, emanating from the racist section of the Sinhala nation. Their attitude was encouraged enthusiastically by the Sinhala pro-Government print media. Soon the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) was involved and visited my home twice and I was interrogated for many hours.

"Though the LTTE is a banned organisation in Sri Lanka at the

moment, the LTTE's political wing, the People's Front of the Liberation Tigers (PFLT) is yet a recognised party in Sri Lanka and has been so since 1987 and the PFLT has not been banned.

"In contrast, in February 1999, a number of members of the Buddhist and Christian clergy went into the jungles on their own and met with high-ranking members of the LTTE and had discussions. Thereafter, there was wide publicity to this meeting in the print and electronic media. But there was no objection from the extremist section of the Sinhala nation for going to meet a banned organisation - perhaps because all who went were Sinhalese!

"Madame Chairperson,

"With regard to disappearances and summary executions, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, in its Report prepared for this 55th Session of the Commission, states that in Sri Lanka, disappearances continue to occur at high levels.

"On July 3rd, 1998, an army soldier, named Rajapakse, just convicted of murder by the High Court of Colombo, reported to the same Court a mass grave of about 400 persons in a vast desolate tract known as Chemmani in the Jaffna Peninsula. This disclosure became international news immediately. Even after 9 months today, the most elementary step of taking Rajapakse to the site and asking him to point out the exact spot has not been done. Instead a dubious drama has just been enacted by the Sri Lanka government of getting some experts to give a report as to whether the soil has been disturbed.

"I am aware of what I am about to say may shock this august audience, but coming from the island of Sri Lanka, it behoves me to speak what is

happening there.

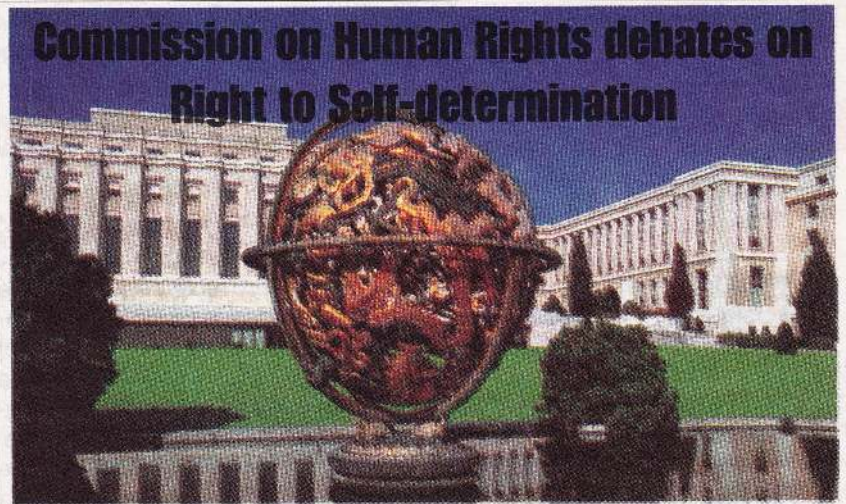
"An incident took place in February 1999. The head of one Rajaratnam Rajeswaran was found in the drain opposite the Jaffna New Market. Investigations revealed that Rajeswaran's identity was with the army at one of the Vadamarachchi check points and that the head belonged to a torso that was found in the toilet pit of an abandoned house in Nelliady within the Vadamarchchi area and about 25 miles away from where the head was found. As if this were not enough, there are 15 check points between the places where the head and the torso were found !

"On 25 March 1999, construction workers were digging a part of the Durayappa Stadium in the heart of Jaffna City and about five miles from Chemmani itself, when they came across at least ten skulls and a pile of human bones. The find was reported to the police and the Municipal authorities. For almost a week, the police or the authorities did not think it fit to cordon off the area or to place police guard.

"This brings to mind what the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions has said in his Report after a recent visit to Sri Lanka, "effective impunity encourages political violence and is a destabilising element in all contexts of the Sri Lankan socio-political system.... This impunity has led to arbitrary killings and has contributed to the uncontrollable spiralling of violence.... Impunity for those responsible for human rights violations remains a serious concern."

"Madame Chairperson, We therefore call upon this assembly:

"To demand of the Sri Lankan government the immediate repeal of the Sixth Amendment to the Sri Lanka Constitution. To demand of the Sri Lankan government that Freedom of Expression is not selectively implemented against the Tamils, and to request that the Sri Lankan government be transparent and fair in dealing with sensitive issues such as mass graves and disappearances. "Thank you".



Review of the right to self-determination by the Commission on Human Rights took a topical turn on the morning of 26th March as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) variously debated its application, states a Press release issued by the United Nations Office at Geneva. They debated its application to Kurds in Turkey and Iraq, questioned the pros and cons of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) intervention in Kosovo, and termed economic embargoes against Iraq and Cuba violations of the principle.

Also mentioned were situations in East Timor, Tibet, Kashmir, SRI LANKA, occupied Palestine and Guatemala, states the Press release.

As at previous sessions, a number of remarks dealt with the question of when the right to self-determination was appropriate, and whether self-determination required independent statehood or could be satisfied by other conditions, such as the ability to enjoy one's own culture, speak one's own language and practise one's own religion within the framework of a pluralistic society.

Representatives of the International Institute for Non-Aligned Studies and the Indian Council of Education asserted that definitions should be found for self-determination that fall short of statehood. A spokesman for International Educational Development (Mr.S.V. Kirupaharan) contended that a people with a distinct language, distinct

culture and a strong relationship to their land had a right to self-determination.. Such was the situation in Kosovo, he claimed, and so the current campaign on behalf of Kosovans was a just one.

East Timorese also had the right to self-determination, as did the Tamil people in Sri Lanka, whose rights had been violated with impunity for half a century by the Sinhalese-dominated Sri Lankan government; all attempts of the Tamils at peaceful and democratic co-existence had been rejected; hence there was no alternative but for Tamils to be given independence; the Commission must adopt a resolution to that effect, Mr.Kirubaharan said.

Halepota Munawar of LIBERATION, said the Tamils in Sri Lanka had an ancient heritage, vibrant culture and a language which was 5,000 years old, yet they had their cultural identity suppressed for decades by the Sri Lanka government; attempts at peaceful resolution of this situation had been rejected by the Government which continued to pursue a "military" solution to the conflict. Sri Lankan troops must be withdrawn from the Tamil region and the Commission must encourage the Government to take this step.

The Commission must also persuade the Turkish government to respect the right to self-determination of the Kurdish people, both in Northern Iraqi Kurdistan and in Turkey.

EXTERNAL SELF DETERMINATION, INTERNAL DE-COLONISATION AND CONFLICT PREVENTION

Paper presented at the Seminar on Self-determination and Conflict Prevention Sponsored by Centre UNESCO de Catalunya and the UNESCO Etxea UNESCO Centre of the Basque Country Palais des Nations, Geneva. March 22-23, 1999.

De-colonisation and self-determination

There are approximately one hundred and fifty national liberation movements in the world today. Their aim is national self-determination for their peoples, who seek varying degrees of political autonomy within, or outright independence from, the respective sovereign States. Many of them have matured into armed resistance in direct response to military repression by States.

The February 1990 UNESCO meeting of Experts on Further Study of the Rights of Peoples was an early attempt to explore the complexities of the right to self-determination. The Martin Ennals Symposium on Self-Determination, co-sponsored by the College of Law, University of Saskatchewan and International Alert in March 1993, examined anew the principle of, and right to, self-determination. A further attempt was made at a meeting on Self-Determination, Sovereignty, Territorial Integrity, and the Right to Secession, convened by the United States Institute of Peace in conjunction with the United States Department of State Policy Planning Staff in February 1995.

More recently, the deliberations of the November 1998 UNESCO conference on The Implementation of the Right to Self-determination as a Contribution to Conflict Prevention concluded inter alia that *"the peaceful implementation of the right to self-determination in its broad sense is a key contribution to the prevention and resolution of conflicts"*. **The negation or abridgement of the right to internal self-determination, that is, self-determination short of independent Statehood, was viewed as the primary cause of national liberation movements.**

The principle of self-determination

had been incorporated into the United Nations Charter in 1945 and it referred to the right of each State to pursue its interests unhindered by other States.

S Sathananthan

The term "State" applied to a sovereign power and not to colonies, which the respective colonising State defined as integral parts of its own territory. The Portuguese claim over Goa was a case in point.



Nelson Mandela: *The oppressor determines the mode of struggle*

Between 1945 and 1960, numerous anti-colonial movements emerged in Asia and Africa. But each colonising State laid claim to its colonial territories as extensions of its own territory. And the colonising State often rejected demands for political independence by its colonies on grounds that "secession" is a violation of its territorial integrity. As President Nelson Mandela perceptively noted, the oppressor determined the mode of struggle.

Many of the movements were compelled to resort to armed struggles and eventually won independence.

As more and more newly independent States took their seats in the United Nations, the balance of voting power within the organisation shifted in their favour. It was in their interest to regularise de-colonisation, and law followed reality. A new meaning was added to the right to self-determination in the December 1960 UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Peoples. Clause 2 provided as follows: *"All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development"*. The right to independent Statehood was guaranteed by Clause 4, which enabled the *"dependent peoples...to exercise peacefully and freely their right to complete independence, and the integrity of their national territory shall be respected"*.

The dominant peoples of the States, whose collective interests was embodied in the Declaration, limited the right to Statehood to the context of external de-colonisation, that is, independence for each colonial territory from foreign colonial rule. Clause 6 categorically stated: *"Any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations."* The dominant peoples jointly adopted the argument advanced earlier by colonising States, that State borders were inviolable, and unilaterally applied it to their respective subordinate peoples.

Moreover, Clause 6 arbitrarily abridged the inalienable right of subordinate peoples to national self-determination by excluding external self-determination, the right to independent Statehood. It must be emphasised that the national aspirations of subordinate

peoples inhabiting the territories of the member-States of the United Nations were in most instances not reflected by the contents of the Declaration.

Indeed Clause 6 effectively legitimised internal colonialism. While colonialism had de-empowered all peoples within each colonial territory, it also reproduced the colonial centre-periphery relationship typically between the dominant and the subordinate peoples. In each post-colonial instance State power passed invariably into the hands of the dominant people(s) and the new State became the embodiment of their national aspirations, expressed by the official language, State religion and so on.

The subordinate peoples became in effect internal colonies of the States, controlled by the dominant peoples. Their demand for internal de-colonisation, that is, the re-empowerment of the colonised and now subordinate peoples, is today the ideological core of the right to self-determination, which does NOT exclude external self-determination.

The roots of conflict therefore lie in the insistence that subordinate peoples must restrict their political horizon to internal self-determination, that they must seek their political destiny within the parameters of the political power of dominant peoples and the confines of State borders drawn by colonialism. **The emergence of new States in the post-Cold War era weakened the arguments in defence of the inviolability of State borders.** So the alleged threats to peace were dredged up to counteract the demand of subordinate peoples for external self-determination.

Peace and self-determination

The 1995 meeting convened by the United States Institute of Peace articulated this concern for peace. The conference report explained that the Institute, "recognising the challenge to world peace that demands for self-determination present", invited "lawyers, political scientists, and regional experts...along with relevant policy makers" to the deliberations. The participants concurred that "the

unchecked proliferation of new States is not a desired outcome". They also stressed for good measure the inviolability of State borders and viewed the exercise of the right to external self-determination as dangerously destabilising and an imminent threat to world peace.

The sweeping statements cynically criminalised national liberation movements in general as subversive, "secessionist", forces. The unspoken corollary is that the political and/or military repression of such movements is justified and necessary in the interests of main-



Boutros Boutros-Ghali: 400 UN member states by 2020

taining peace.

In other words, the legitimate exercise by a people of the fundamental right to external self-determination was caricatured as a threat to peace. The absurdity of this formulation requires no elaboration.

On the contrary, the primary threat to peace is the obstinate adherence to State borders and the resulting exclusion of the right to external self-determination. What is required for conflict prevention is instead the acceptance of the following principles. (a) The right to self-determination is inalienable and includes the right to independent

Statehood. (b) Re-empowerment is the fundamental right of subordinate peoples. The scope of re-empowerment must include, if they so wish, the right to external self-determination. (c) **The borders of States are neither God-given nor permanent. They must be subject to change in response to the exercise of the right to self-determination by subordinate peoples and during the course of internal de-colonisation.**

Internal de-colonisation and State-formation

Distinguished political geographers have predicted that the number of States represented in the United Nations would increase to at least three hundred by the year 2010. Given the intensity and spread of national liberation movements across the globe, that prediction would seem an understatement. **Indeed, on the eve of relinquishing his position as United Nations Secretary-General, Mr Boutros Boutros-Ghali estimated that the member-States in the organisation would number four hundred by the year 2020.**

Bangladesh was an early challenge to the refusal to recognise the right to external self-determination. The independence of the former Soviet Republics, Slovakia and Eritrea is well known. Scotland, East Timor and Tamil Eelam are examples of peoples waiting to take their place as independent States.

The experience of the national liberation movement in Tamil Eelam demonstrates the relevance of the right to external self-determination. **The Tamil people are victims of ethnocide, of the denial of linguistic and cultural rights; they are subject to demographic manipulation and military aggression of genocidal proportions at the hands of the Sri Lankan State, controlled by the dominant Sinhalese people.**

It would be ill conceived, for example, to offer the Tamil people effective implementation of internal self-determination by the Sinhalese-controlled State. It is in effect a promise to reform the oppressor. History does not vindicate such a utopian scenario.

More importantly, the right to external self-determination is not contingent on national oppression, which no doubt is one condition under which a people may exercise the right. Fundamentally, the right to external self-determination is self-evident just as a people is self-defined.

The referenda held in Quebec underline the ontological nature of the right to external self-determination. It would be difficult to argue that the demand for independent Statehood in Quebec is a result primarily of the ineffective implementation of internal self-determination. Rather, it is the product of the sense of political destiny, of the desire of a people to freely determine their future.

Concretely, it refers to the political objective of the people of Quebec to secure State power necessary for the exercise of their collective rights, which is the essence of the right to self-determination. The British Government has in effect confirmed this principle by the referenda held in Scotland and Wales, which are widely interpreted as the first steps to the eventual independence of the Scottish and Welsh peoples.

Canada and Britain are by most criteria eminently democratic societies. But the referenda held in the two countries conclusively demonstrate that the implementation of internal self-determination has failed to satisfy the national aspirations of the Quebec, Scottish and Welsh peoples.

It would require a galactic leap of faith to assert that the less democratic post-colonial States in Asia and Africa would be able, or could be induced, to implement internal self-determination more effectively. Indeed such assertion is little more than a disingenuous ploy to de-legitimise the right to external self-determination.

It is by now obvious that most national liberation movements cannot be pacified with offers of internal self-determination. The borders of most States, which are in fact multi-national, would in all likelihood be re-drawn over the next few decades. Under the present dispensation, the process in almost all instances is bound to be violent due to resistance by the dominant peoples who control the States.

The Canadian and British precedents encourage us to propose that an

international mechanism be set up to oversee and facilitate the non-violent birth of new States. **Such a mechanism should provide legal recognition to national liberation movements as non-State actors and thereby preclude States from criminalising the movements as "terrorism"**. It must include mandatory and supervised referenda to crystallise and ascertain the will of peoples and thereby pre-empt the States from generating conflict by repressing the movements.

Conflict prevention, therefore, is primarily and inextricably linked to an internationally managed re-empowerment of subordinate peoples. It is a facet of internal de-colonisation and a process that does not exclude, and in most instances will require, the exercise of their right to external self-determination.

18 March 1999

About the author

Dr Sachithanandam Sathanathan read for the Ph D degree at Wolfson College, University of Cambridge. He is the Founder-Secretary of The Action Group Of Tamils (TAGOT) in Sri Lanka.

Media mischief about Hameed and LTTE

Misinformation about the LTTE travels fast in the media world of Colombo and Chennai. But surprisingly it all began with the Paris-based Tamil weekly - the EELANADU - which apparently published a "planted" story that said that the LTTE had at the last minute called off a Paris meeting with Mr.A.C.S.Hameed, one-time Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka, and a veteran of the talks between the LTTE and the Premadasa government in 1989-1990.

Quick to grab anything that is designed to embarrass the LTTE, a Colombo newspaper known for its entrenched racist outlook picked it up, and equally feverishly an Indian newspaperman, starved for news, took over the pickings.

The seasoned diplomat that he is, Mr.Hameed in a sober response, sent the following Press statement to HOT SPRING:



"One of the daily papers had given wide publicity to a story in the Eela Nadu published in Paris about a meeting between me and the LTTE to be held in Paris and subsequently being cancelled. This news item is an absolute surprise to me since there was no such meeting arranged. Mr.Joseph Pararajasingam, M.P. sometimes back urged me to re-establish my contact with the LTTE

and explore the possibilities of starting a dialogue. In last December I had a meeting with Prince Aga Khan in Paris and I contacted Mr.Joseph Pararajasingam to get the telephone numbers of Mr.Manoharan who had succeeded Mr.Thilakar in Paris. When I was in Paris I called Mr.Manoharan but he was not available.

"In February I was invited to meet Mr.John Hume who played a major role in the Northern Ireland negotiations and was awarded the Nobel Prize. On my return from Belfast while in London I gathered that a delegation of religious dignitaries had visited Wannai and some of the LTTE sympathisers whom I met expressed interest in this visit and I told them if I could be of any help in facilitating this development, I will be happy to do so. **This news item about a meeting with the LTTE being arranged and cancelled has absolutely no base**".



You are a very Stupid person, Mr. Milosevic!

"Sinha Laya" writes an open letter to the Serbian President

An open letter to: Yugoslavian President Slobodan Milosevic

Dear Mr. Milosevic,

I am compelled to write this letter to you because I think (pardon my frankness) you are a very stupid person. Bluntly put, your handling of the situation arising out of Kosovo has been inept, amateurish and utterly foolish.

I am from Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka is an independent country situated in the Indian Ocean - I need to spell this out to you because, evidently you don't know anything about our country. If you knew about us, and more significantly about our recent history, you would not have gotten yourself into this mess you are in now.

Just about a month ago, you were in a situation very similar to what happened to us about 12 years ago. In fact it was exactly the same.

We are a country of 17 million people (you have 11 million) of which about 3.5 million are of a different ethnic group called Tamils who live in an area they call Eelam. They are very much like the 1.9 million Albanians who live in the Kosovo province of your country. The uncanny similarities between these two groups extend from their kinsmen having statehood elsewhere (Tamil Nadu state of India, and Albania in your case), to these people wanting separate states and to armed insurrections.

We feel exactly as you do about these 'minority people' wanting their own countries. Unfortunately for you and for us, outsiders have been trying to tell us as to how we should run our respective (sovereign) countries, and in particular, how we should deal with our minorities.

What I want to tell you today is how well we have managed *our* case, as opposed to how you have bungled yours, and then go on to give you a few helpful hints.

We did get into a difficult spot about 15 years ago, by doing what you have been doing to the Kosovars (actually a bit more than you), to keep them restrained. But, unlike you, we have managed to extricate ourselves from foreign criticism. We have done so well that, today there is no country in the world that is critical of Sri Lanka. As a matter of fact, many countries have come down hard on the (Tamil) rebels of our country, and there are several who are helping us crush these insurgents, including your enemy the USA.

You, on the other hand, have the most powerful nations of this world joined together, hell-bent on destroying you, and no one supports you. Think about it.

We also had a nationalistic president just like you, Junius Richard Jayewardene - popularly called JR in our country. He was a champion of the Sinhalese nation, just as you are to the Serbian nation. But when in our case, a powerful foreign power wanted to intrude on us, JR knew how to manage them.

In 1987, India the regional superpower in our vicinity, flexed its superior military muscle to tell us what we

should do, just like what the US is doing to you right now. At that time, JR also protested the foreign interference in our country, but he knew when to back down.



Chandrika Kumarathunga

He, unlike you, invited them over and signed an agreement with them, which he knew he will never have to implement. Then he got *their* army to fight *our* rebels, and in due time sent them back them without losing an inch. How clever! You should have learned from him!

I can write volumes about how clever JR was, but his cleverness pales in comparison to our current leader - Mrs. Chandrika Kumaratunge Bandaranaike. You could learn a lot more from her. Let me elaborate.

You have to realize that you are the leader of an entire nation (Serbia),

that fully understands what this is all about. They have been groomed by a long history - a history of others oppressing them and how they overcame this by oppressing others - just like us. They instinctively know what to do. They don't need your help or your leadership to fight the Albanians in Kosovo.

Look at the street demonstrations in Belgrade. Look at the Serbian musicians, artists and the intellectuals, who have taken to the streets to protest against the NATO. Do you think that they would be doing this if they disapprove of what your army is doing in Kosovo? Do you think they need your help?

You have to give them credit. They want to do exactly what you want to do with the Albanians in Kosovo - "Out of Our Country." We Sri Lankans want the Tamils out too - except that our leader knows how to handle the foreigners! Ask our President and she will teach you.

By your actions you are actually doing harm to the Serbian cause. By your assuming exclusive and centralized leadership for Serbian nationalism you are providing these foreigners an identifiable solitary target. Your enemies are able to marshal all their resources and focus them on a single target - YOU.

Let me help you here. Please listen to me.

First of all you need to back down a little - Your fellow Serbians will do what is necessary to deal with the Kosovo Albanians and their leaders. There are Serbian journalists and intellectuals who can do it better than you, and they will do it superbly, whether you want them to or not. They don't need your input, supervision or your leadership. You need not have any

qualms about this. Our intellectuals and journalists in Sri Lanka are doing a marvelous job against the Tamils.

Give your army a little elbow-room. Pretend, if you have to, that you don't have full control. Your armed forces (all Serbian, I hope) will do everything that you want them to do to these bloody Albanians living in your country, without your direct order. After all they share with you the same Serbian nationalistic fervor and sentiments.

Then start making public statements about how badly you feel about the Albanians in your country. Believe me, you will come to no harm. Your stature will actually improve. You will achieve immediate international recognition and praise. Nations and their leaders will fall over each other in praising you as a true statesman!

You won't lose local support either, as long as you handle it well. Our President has done it and so can you. It is somewhat of a delicate task, I must admit, but you can do it.

You have to, first of all, make it very clear to the important nationalists (privately, of course) that there will be no significant concessions to the Kosovars. There will always be, as in our country, a segment of 'nationalists' that will try to rise against you, but you can manage and marginalize them, in fact quite easily.

You may want to produce a 'Peace Package.' This is actually a brilliant lesson that you can learn from our government. You don't have to concede anything significant at all. A Serbian nationalist opposition to your proposals, if any, will actually be a good thing. You can then call them radicals, extremists, etc., and take for yourself the moral high ground, without having to concede anything at all to the Kosovars. You will be perceived as a

moderate. The majority of Serbs will understand you and support you.

You may even want to rename the military operations inside Kosovo as "war for peace". You don't need to change the nature of the military operations, just the name. Believe me, this has tremendous PR value.

You may also find a few Kosovars to go along with you on this, as you already found out yesterday. All nations have opportunists amongst them and you can use them to your advantage. Some will cooperate believing that they are helping their people (they don't need to know what you have in mind) and the true mercenaries amongst them will help you regardless.

More significantly, you can be sure that the Kosovar leadership will oppose your "Peace Package" because after all they will not be getting anything from your proposals. You can then go around calling them 'intransigent' or whatever other adjective you want to use. Trust me, the whole world will believe you and support you.

If you still want to continue with your present strategy there is another option - tell the world that you are not alone in what you are doing. Tell them that there are others who are doing exactly the same thing, but that they are doing it differently (Sri Lanka, for example).

Perhaps then, the world will understand your position.

*Sincerely,
Sinha Laya
2nd April 1999*

PS: Sinha Laya is a nom de plume.

(COURTESY: ILANKAI THAMIL SANGAM, WEBSITE, USA)



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Morality? Don't make me laugh

John Pilger sees only one Balkan winner: the arms trade

Tuesday April 20, 1999

The struggle of people against power,' wrote Milan Kundera, 'is the struggle of memory against forgetting.' The idea that the Nato bombing has to do with 'moral purpose' (Blair) and 'principles of humanity we hold sacred' (Clinton) insults both memory and intelligence. The American attack on Yugoslavia began more than a decade ago when the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund set about destroying the multi-ethnic federation with lethal doses of debt, 'market reforms' and imposed poverty. Millions of jobs were eliminated; in 1989 alone, 600,000 workers, almost a quarter of the workforce, were sacked without severance pay. But the most critical 'reform' was the ending of economic support to the six constituent republics and their recolonisation by Western capital. Germany led the way, supporting the breakaway of Croatia, its new economic colony, with the European Community giving silent approval. The torch of fratricide had been lit and the rise of an opportunist like Milosevic was inevitable.

In spite of his part in the blood-letting of Bosnia, Milosevic, the 'reformer', became a favourite among senior figures in the US State Department. And in return for his co-operation in the American partition of Bosnia at Dayton in 1995, he was assured that the troublesome province of Kosovo was his to keep. **'President Milosevic,' said Richard Holbrooke, the US envoy, 'is a man we can do business with, a man who recognises the realities of life in former Yugoslavia.'** **The Kosovo Liberation Army was dismissed by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright as 'no more than terrorists'.** **Last October, the Americans drafted a 'peace plan' for Kosovo that was pro-Serbia, giving the Kosovans far less autonomy and freedom than they**



John Pilger

had under the old Yugoslav federation.

But this deal included, crucially for the Americans, a Nato military presence. **When Milosevic objected to having foreign troops on his soil, he was swiftly transformed, like Saddam Hussein, from client to demon.** He was now seen as a threat to Washington's post-cold war strategy for the Balkans and eastern Europe. With Nato replacing the United Nations as an instrument of American global control, its 'Membership Action Plan' includes linking Albania, Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia. Like Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic before them, these impoverished countries will be required to take part in a £22 billion weapons' buildup. **The beneficiaries will be the world's dominant arms industries of the US and Britain - the contract for fighter aircraft alone is worth pounds 10 billion.**

Like the 1991 'moral crusade' in the Gulf, which slaughtered more than 200,000 people, including the very minorities the West claimed to be protecting, the terror bombing of Serbia and Kosovo provides a valuable laboratory for the Anglo-American arms business. Mostly unreported, the Americans are using a refined version of the depleted uranium missile they tested in southern Iraq, where leukaemia among children and birth deformities have risen to match the levels after Hiroshima. The RAF is using the BL755 'multi-purpose' cluster bomb, which is not really a bomb at all but an air-dropped land-mine: read-

ers will recall the Blair government's 'ban' on land-mines. Dropped from the air, the BL755 explodes into dozens of little mines, shaped like spiders. These are scattered over a wide area and kill and maim people who step on them, children especially.

Britain's new military-industrial-arms trade, which Margaret Thatcher built and the taxpayer subsidises through 'soft loans' to dictatorships, is central to the 'Blair project'. Each time New Labour has sought to bring big business into the fold, arms companies or their representatives have been at the head of the queue. A New Labour backer is Raytheon, manufacturer of the Patriot missile and currently under contract to the Ministry of Defence to build tanks. **More arms contracts have been approved by the Blair government than by the Tories; and two-thirds of arms exports go to regimes with appalling human rights records** - such as the dictatorship in Jakarta, which is currently deploying death squads in East Timor.

Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that British-supplied small arms have caused in East Timor the equivalent of the Dunblane massacre many times over. Last year, the Defence Secretary, George Robertson, intervened in a Courtaulds Aerospace deal for armoured vehicles, headed for Indonesia's Kopassus special forces whose commander, General Prabowo, he described (in a letter to Robin Cook) as 'an enlightened officer, keen [on] human rights'. Kopassus is the Waffen SS-style force that spearheaded the invasion of East Timor, murdered five journalists and is responsible for the worst atrocities in the illegally occupied territory. When Prabowo's father-in-law, the tyrant Suharto, was toppled from his throne last year, the general was also sacked.

The parallels with Kosovo and East Timor are striking. However, no bombs will fall on Jakarta. They might hit the local offices of British Aerospace (supplier of machine guns and Hawk fighter bombers) and the Defence Export Sales Organisation, the Blair government's official merchants of death who, as Thatcher used to say, 'are battling for Britain'.

** under Agenda Item on the Right of Peoples to Self Determination and its application to peoples under colonial or alien domination or foreign occupation, 25 March, 1999*

Self Determination and the Question of Tamil Independence

The experience of the last fifty years years shown us that the international community is still woefully ignorant of the importance and nature of what is meant by 'self determination'

Throughout the Cold War, the lack of interest in conceptualising self determination at the theoretical, legal and political level, paralleled the International community's overall reluctance to engage in the internal conflicts of states.

The end of the Cold War, and the lack of any critical threat to global security in our time, has once more placed internal conflicts at the forefront of the international agenda. Due however to the inexperience of the international community in this area neither individual states such as the U.S, or international organisations such as the UN or OSCE, have been able to craft coherent and far sighted policies to address the realities and dynamics of internal conflict.

The struggle of the Kosovo Albanians for self determination appears to have at last galvanised the international community to take a more pro active stand towards such conflicts, and to question whether the stubborn insistence on the absolute Inviolability of established borders, be they colonial or otherwise, could constitute a potential threat to global security. From the international perspective, the so called 'brush fires' of internal conflicts are clear signs that existing patterns of international boundaries no longer correspond to the realities and prerequisites of effective governance.

Naturally, the application of self determination is not necessarily tanta-

mount to the granting of political independence. As embodied in various international instruments, among them the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and the affirmations by the ICJ in the Western Sahara and East Timor cases, self determination can be implemented along different political modalities ranging from local or regional autonomy to outright independence. What is lacking in this description, however is a common set of criteria specifying how the implementation of self determination can be calibrated with the context in which those aspiring to self determination find themselves.

The glaring lack of interest and activity among the international community in developing such criteria is obvious when we consider the fifty conflicts in the world today that are being fought over the issue of self-determination. Only by analysing these and other past conflicts can we begin to develop criteria for self determination, and in the process contribute to removing the stigma attached to liberation movements and clarifying the often subjective understanding of 'terrorist activities'.

The struggle of the Tamils of Sri Lanka for instance, provides a strong argument for determining when a people should have the right to declare itself an independent and sovereign state. The current conflict in Sri Lanka began following independence in 1948 with a series of government policies that progressively and systematically deprived the Tamil population of its fundamental rights, and institutionalised violent persecutions and human rights abuses. Following 1983 the Tamil's struggle for their rights which

had hitherto been non violent, transformed into a military campaign led the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, whose objective remains the removal of Sinhalese control of the north-eastern region of the island, the historical homeland of the Tamils.

In their struggle against government discrimination the Tamils have three objectives: equality in rights and opportunities, the right of self determination, and the withdrawal of government forces from the north-east. Given the history of the conflict to date, and the government's refusal to even entertain the possibility of dialogue, the majority of Tamils believe that these objectives can only be fulfilled through the creation of an independent Tamil state. This argument is buttressed by at least five factors that illuminate the conditions under which independence is justified as a form of self determination.

First, the Sri Lankan government has persistently deprived the Tamil population of its entire range of collective fundamental rights. Starting with the 'Sinhala Only' decree instituting Sinhala as the single official language of the state, Tamils have been denied access to education, effective participation in the political system, and have been economically defranchised through the confiscation of property and the destruction of their means of subsistence.

Second these individual policies together amount to what can only be called a form of economic, social and cultural genocide aiming to destroy the fabric of Tamil society by undermining and targeting the fundamental bases of Tamil identity. Instead of accommodating Tamil interests or even attempt-

ing to foster a pan Sri Lankan identity, the government has followed a policy of exclusion and annihilation against the Tamils relegating them to the status of social and political 'undesirables'.

Third these policies of social and political exclusion have in recent years been buttressed by policies of physical exclusion. Since 1991 an economic blockade has been imposed on the north-east, a region containing a 90% majority of Tamils. Justified for military purposes, this blockade has prevented the entry of educational materials, electricity petrol, and most alarmingly food and medicine. Through this blockade the government is clearly not targeting the LTTE but rather the Tamil population as a whole, revealing an exclusionary orientation that considers as 'aliens' and targets them for destruction.

Fourth, in other Tamil inhabited regions of Sri Lanka. the government has recently begun policies of forced displacement, removing Tamils from their lands and homes

and encouraging Sinhalese settlement . This policy of internal colonialism has only one goal: the alteration of the demographic realities of these areas and the forced relocation of the resulting Tamil refugees towards the north.

Finally, the Tamils have been prevented from effectively addressing their grievances at the political level owing to the permanent Sinhala majority in government. In the last parliamentary elections of 1977, over 75% of Tamils voted for the independence of the Tamil homeland, a result which triggered an escalation of repression by the government.

This vote is tantamount to a referendum on self determination and if the democratic nature of this principle is to be respected by the international community, it can only be considered as conclusive proof of the wishes of the Tamil population a whole to govern itself.

The struggle of the Tamils for independence in Sri Lanka is today one of the world's forgotten wars. Three rec-

ommendations follow from this situation.

First, regardless of the political situation, it is clear that the international community has a duty to provide humanitarian aid to the victims of this war and break the government blockade against the Tamils.

Second, greater scrutiny should be placed on those western states that supply the Sri Lankan government with arms and material - their implicit support of a government engaged in repressive acts equivalent to genocide should be publicly questioned.

Third, the United Nations should endorse the establishment of a fact finding mission to the conflict regions to assess both the nature the situation, and the basis on which the Tamil's claims for self determination rest. Only in this way will the international community be able to arrive at valid criteria linking the rights of people and the manner in which self determination is to be implemented.



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The tragedy of the Internally Displaced Tamils in Sri Lanka

Item 14(c)- Mass exoduses and displaced persons.

Madam Chair,

One tragic consequence of many wars is the displacement of people, driven to flee from their homes in search of safety. There are over fifty countries where there is conflict-induced displacement and the numbers of persons in these countries vary from 6,000 to 4 million.

It is well-known that displaced persons suffer greatly and are vulnerable, often to the forces of hostile climate, and to violations of their fundamental human rights. The UN General Assembly has proclaimed that women and children belonging to the civilian population and finding themselves in circumstances of emergency and armed conflict in the struggle for peace, self-determination, national liberation and independence shall not be deprived of shelter, food, medical aid or other inalienable rights, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Geneva Conventions or other instruments of international law.

There exist situations where governments contravene their obligations under humanitarian law, in this regard, and where food and medicine are in

fact used as weapons of war against a population. This is totally unacceptable. Consequent malnutrition and the ensuing illnesses and lack of resistance to disease can cause a desperate situation. It is unthinkable that such people deprived of their funda-

Mr. Bashanna Abeywardena, a Human Rights activist from Sri Lanka, speaking on behalf of the INTERNATIONAL PEACE BUREAU at the Human Rights Commission in Geneva



mental rights, be further subjected to indiscriminate bombing and shelling causing them to flee yet again, but this can occur.

16 years of war in Sri Lanka has led to major population movements in and from Sri Lanka. In October 1995 the Sri Lankan military launched a sustained army offensive and invaded Jaffna, causing half a million people, within 48 hours, to flee the aerial bombing and devastation. They became internally displaced and most have faced continued displacement sometimes up to ten times. There are nearly 1 million internally displaced persons in the Vanni, a collective name for an agricultural and forest area comprising four districts between the Jaffna

lagoon and the town of Vavuniya. These people are mostly living under trees in extremely harsh conditions.

Madam Chair,

Apart from the harsh situation in Vanni, we believe the difficult situation of the displaced persons that were relocated in the refugee camps by the state authorities where it is said to be much safer and secure, needs serious and immediate international attention. The

living conditions experienced by the displaced Tamil people who were relocated in these refugee camps are unacceptable. My recent experience in visiting these camps has convinced me the above fact. On 12th January 1999 our group visited one of the biggest camps in Vavuniya, Poonthottam Refugee Camp, where more than five hundred families

have been located, who were forcibly driven away from their homes in Omanthai, Oddusuddan, Kilinochchi and Mankulam by the government forces. Access to basic needs such as food, health care and clean water in the camp is inadequate. A child in the camp gets four string hoppers, which is nearly equal to one slice of bread, as his or her daily breakfast, while an adult is given seven string hoppers which is equal to two slices of bread. As a result there is an alarming increase of malnutrition and various illnesses among the children in the camp.

In addition to that, displaced people in this camp experience arbitrary

arrests and disappearances in their daily lives. Shivaramanan Danister, aged 21, was arrested on 05th January 1999 by the CID and taken to the Joseph camp in Vavuniya, but he never returned. His wife Danister Shivagini, aged 20, was left alone in the camp without being provided any information about him. Similarly, husband of Ketha Kanchana Darshani was also arrested by the police Officer in charge of the camp on 06th December 1998 and was handed over to the Vavuniya police station. She was being denied any further information regarding the arrest. These are just two examples out of numerous cases, which are occurring daily. The UN Special Representative for Internally Displaced Persons in his report, after his visit to Sri Lanka in 1996, (E/CN, 4/1996/52 para 39-40) stated " The questions relating to Physical and mental integrity of the displaced persons remain as pertinent today as they were two years ago. A further three years have elapsed since then. The conditions are even worsening.

Madam Chair,

The representative of the Secretary General, Mr. Francis Deng, in a recent report submitted pursuant to Commission resolution 1998/50, in regarding to the prevention of internal displacement in Africa, calls upon the decision makers to act in a manner that will avert the occurrence of armed conflicts, human rights abuses and forced population displacement. " But in contrary to this, the way the Sri Lanka Government is acting has encouraged forced population displacement in the Tamil areas. On 12 march 1999, the matter regarding the government's proposal to acquire the land in the Valilkamam North Division in Jaffna District was raised in the Sri Lankan Parliament. But the Government didn't respond. The Jaffna district contains 435 village divisions, out of which thirty five fall within the above mentioned Valilkamam North Division Located in the northern most tip of the Island, the approximately 12,000 acres are bound on the North by the palk Straits. The community infrastructure included a Base

Hospital, forty eight schools and two historic Hindu temples. Though there has been no public notification as to what the government intends to do with the land, it is widely speculated that a large Army Base will be built as a further expansion of the existing Military Base in Palaly. After this proposal is implemented, eighteen thousand families will lose their homes, the right to cultivate their land and the right to food security and will become internally displaced persons.

Madam Chair,

The treatment of the Tamil population by the Sri Lankan government reveals in fact an intent to destroy, in whole or in part a distinct group of people. We, as the International Peace Bureau, urge the Human Rights Commission to appoint a country reporter to Sri Lanka to investigate on the grave situation. Also we urge to take immediate measures to condemn Sri Lanka's unwillingness to prevent forced internal population displacement in Tamil areas.

Thank You!

M.K. SRI & Co

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"THE PAIN OF TAMILS NOT SEEN ON TV"

CALVIN WOODWARD

WASHINGTON (AP) - This decade - never mind this century - has been awash in blood, but the world's great power has been selective in using force to stanch the flow.

Multiply the loss of life in Kosovo by a magnitude of 100, and still it does not equal the toll in 90 days of Rwandan slaughter. Mass starvation in North Korea brings food shipments but no force from the United States to break a repressive regime's relief bottleneck.

Sudan's civil war has left almost 2 million dead, and counting.

How the United States picks its enemies can bear little relation to the scale of suffering it wishes to ease, even when intervention is conducted on largely humanitarian grounds.

"Any justification you can use for getting involved in Kosovo applies even more so to other conflicts," says Gideon Rose, a national security official in the first Clinton administration. "There is not a coherent intellectual rationale for doing just Kosovo but not a whole variety of other interventions."

The naysayers - and there are many - will fall quiet if the NATO attacks on Yugoslavia somehow result in a more stable, safer life for Kosovars without major casualties among the allies.

For now, foreign policy analysts are hard-pressed to see a logical pattern that would explain why Somalia, but not Rwanda; why Bosnia, but not Sierra Leone; why

Kosovo, but not so many other places where tyrants crush their people or their neighbours.

"If we're going to do humanitarian interventions, I'd rather do them in Africa because more Africans are dying," said Michael Mandelbaum, a European and national security scholar at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

Why do we (the U.S.) not intervene in Sri Lanka, asks Kissinger?

Henry A. Kissinger, one-time powerful American Secretary of State in an article on the Kosovo crisis, published in NEWSWEEK, writes, *inter alia*....

"...When American forces are engaged in combat, victory is the only exit strategy. And that requires a definition of issues that can survive scrutiny. The Administration, in pursuit of symbols that resonate with the public, has put forward three categories of argument. The most convincing is that suffering in Kosovo is so offensive to our moral sensibilities that we will use force to end it even absent traditional considerations of national interest. But since this leaves open the question of why we do not intervene in East Africa, SRI LANKA, Kurdistan, Kashmir and Afghanistan - to name just a few of the places where infinitely more casualties have been incurred than in Kosovo - the President has invoked historical analogies or current threats that are extremely dubious. Where he does injury to history

The short answer to Kissinger's question is: Your country's government HAS intervened in Sri Lanka, except that it has intervened on the side of Milosevic Kumaratunga.

- EDITOR H.S.

"Africans are suffering more and they don't have wealthy neighbours that can actually do something for them."

As Kosovars push for more autonomy, so do others whose pain is not seen on TV - among them Tibetans, Turkish Kurds, Tamils in tiny Sri Lanka and ethnic groups in Indonesia, where the bloodletting comes with a propensity for cutting off heads.

With so much going on, it probably is unfair to ask why the United States does not step in here and there, says Rose, senior editor at Foreign Affairs magazine and former associate director for Near East and South Asian affairs in the National Security Council. **He says it may be more on the mark to ask why it does, when it does.**

The U.S. decision not to support - in effect, not to allow - a sturdy and swift UN peace-keeping force in Rwanda in 1994, when at least 500,000 minority Tutsi and moderate Hutus were killed in one of history's worst bloodbaths, still weighs on the conscience.

Visiting Rwanda last year, U.S. President Bill Clinton pledged "never again must we be shy in the face of the evidence."

The slaughter came six months after 18 U.S. soldiers were killed in Somalia during an operation remembered as costly and messy, even if it did save thousands of Somali lives. Washington's taste for intervening in humanitarian crises not strongly and directly tied to American interests, soured.

So, why Kosovo?

Analysts largely accept the hard-nosed proposition that Europe is strategically more important than Africa. They are divided on whether the Balkans are an important part of Europe.

In pitching intervention to a public always wary of foreign entanglements, Clinton cited a "moral imperative" to move against the brutality that killed more than 2,000 people in Kosovo and displaced perhaps a quarter of the

population.

"That is why we have acted now, because we care about saving innocent lives," the President said.

Clinton also has tried to make the case that the conflict threatens instability well beyond Yugoslavia's borders, in other countries along the "major fault line" of continents and religions: "We act to prevent a wider war, to defuse a powder keg at the heart of Europe, that has exploded twice before in this century with catastrophic results."

Asked whether the administration believed the killing in Kosovo has been anywhere near as massive as elsewhere, Clinton spokesman Joe Lockhart said: "The White House doesn't compare things like that."



ODD SPOT

The world has yet to see the last of Clinton jokes. A float at a carnival in Germany carries a PREGNANT Statue of Liberty. Next to that is an effigy of American President Bill Clinton carrying a sign "It was not me!"

Two ships to be bought to transport refugees

Presidential approval has been granted for the purchasing of two passenger ships to transport people who are returning to Jaffna from Trincomalee, the Chairman of the Resettlement and Rehabilitation Authority of the North (RRAN), N. A. Obadage, told the Daily News. He said that a private ship is also expected to be chartered to Jaffna, once Government approval is received.

The RRAN Chairman said that the unavailability of a continuous transportation link to Jaffna has led to many being stranded in Trincomalee, unable to get to their home town.

He said that according to the Divisional Secretary of Trincomalee, there are around 6,000 people at present in Trincomalee awaiting return to Jaffna.

"The ship Lanka Muditha which is a cargo ship converted and used to

carry passengers is at present the only transport facility to passengers from

Trincomalee to Jaffna", Mr. Obadage said adding that it does not run to a regular schedule.

"We took 5,000 people from Trincomalee in December last year on four consecutive trips. The following trip was on February 12 where 1,500 tickets were issued but since the maximum number the ship could accommodate was only 1,250 people, 250 of the passengers had to be left behind", he said.

Commenting on the private ship that is expected to be chartered, Mr. Obadage said that ICRC escort is expected to be provided. "The ICRC has agreed to release two of its officials to accompany the ship", the RRAN Chairman said. "The Government approval for the chartering of this ship is yet to be obtained but we hope to receive approval soon", he said.

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S.Suntharam of Ocala FL,
U.S.A. writes:-

The Editor
Hot Spring

Dear Sir

When I left the shores of the island of Ceylon in 1958 the iterative headlines in the newspapers were chiefly about taking away one or more of the Tamils' rights or about imposition of further hardship on them as if the Sinhala politicians considered it a daily religious rite to enact a legislation to squeeze the Tamils. Soon after I left, the Sinhala highbinders must have thought that the already ugly legislative practice was not ugly enough and adopted a 'blood and guts' method of dealing with the 'Tamil problem' - I mean the 'pogrom' of killing and evisceration of 1958 conducted against the Tamils by the Sinhalese. I had seen, even before that, with my own eyes Sinhalese mobs deface signboards written in Tamil and casually smash plate glass windows of shops owned by Tamils (a kind of glass nict made famous by Hitler's Nazi hoodlums.)

In all the time I was in Ceylon I do not recollect having seen any protest organized by any public spirited Sinhalese group or read any critical writing by any enlightened Sinhala journalist or intellectual condemning the actions of vandalisms and criminality. When the Sinhala mob was massacring Tamil civilians and torching homes and temples in the Sinhala areas, Mr. Bandaranaike sent troops to the north to 'keep order' and to prevent harm to the Sinhala!

"Emergency '58" which recounted some of the atrocities against the Tamils was published in England. Written by ethnically neutral Tarzie Vithachi, it was promptly banned in Ceylon because the Sinhalese were

AN OCEAN OF INJUSTICE

"A re-acquaintance with Sri Lankan journalism after 40 years"

not praised well enough for their actions! As if to make up for this inadequacy the loathsome J. R. Jayawardene after urging the Sinhala mob on to another, more savage (they keep on "improving" their techniques to this day) pogrom in 1983 praised the perpetrators for their service to the Sinhala people! I do not have to dwell here on the various other outrages committed against the Tamils in between 1956 and 1983 or since then. What jogged my memory in recent times about the newspapers of Ceylon in the late fifties was my reacquainting

complaining about!" (The ignorant fish asked the old fish "What is this 'ocean' everyone is talking about"). Mr. Suriyakumaran was somewhat apologetically explaining in very mild and moving language how much suffering the Tamils have undergone, making some placatory statements as how a few Sinhalese had rescued some Tamils from sure death in the hands of the Sinhala mob and how the condition of the Tamils had deteriorated since those traumatic events of the past. Mr. Karunanayake responded by saying he still did not see why the

Tamils are complaining! Mr. Suriyakumaran who eulogizes at every opportunity Mr. Bandaranaike, the architect of the most far reaching anti-Tamil laws and changed the political landscape permanently against

the Tamils, as a non-racist (he only made discriminatory laws against the Tamils!) finally gave up on Mr. Karunanayake. At the time I read his letter I did not know that he was an influential (Sinhala) politician. Now I realize that he only behaved with the customary callousness and cussedness of his kind, a Sinhala politician.

We witness today the Sinhala armed forces' attempt to wipe out the younger generation of our people. We have seen the army try to destroy our heritage (the destruction of the Jaffna Library) and the memory of our fallen warriors (the leveling of the monuments at the Heroes' cemetery). We also read the counterfeit histories that consign

Mr. Karunanayake's question: "What exactly is the problem Tamils are complaining about?" is like the ignorant fish asking the old fish "what is this "ocean" everybody is talking about?"

myself with Sri Lankan journalism, after a gap of nearly forty years, through the advent of the internet. These Sri Lankan papers on the internet are just old wine in new bottles; though the names are somewhat different the tenor and contents are the same and in some cases worse, old Tamil-baiting contemptible stuff, particularly the Op-ed pages.

A few months ago there was an exchange of correspondence between a Mr. Ravi Karunanayake and Mr. Suriyakumaran in one of the newspapers which told me a great deal about Sinhala politicians' attitude to the Tamils' plight. Mr. Karunanayake's theme was something like "What exactly is the problem Tamils are

Tamils to insignificance and oblivion. We also know how the Sinhala politicians successfully fractured the Tamil movement by debauching some of the all-too-corruptible Tamils into behaving in insanely anti-Tamil ways. Now there is an attempt to discredit the very idea of the quest for ethnic rights! There was a recent article by a Kamalika Peries which says that the Tamils have extensively borrowed the terminology for our movement from the West and that in any case the ethnic movement is only a few hundred years old and therefore it has no authenticity! Most people would dismiss these statements not just as a non sequitur but as hogwash. But these are written in the media catering to the Sinhala intelligensia and thus it is preaching to the converted and add one more item to the vast literature of rationalization.

"DHUSTA" GEMUNU

The concept of democracy itself as we all know originated and was practiced more than 2000 years ago in Greece. That it is a "foreign" ideology may be the excuse why Sri Lanka does not practice democracy but it does not make the many democracies outside Greece 'invalid'. Ethnic campaigns recorded as such may be recent occurrences in Europe but ethnic hatred in Sri Lanka is as old as Dhusta Gemunu, for we know that Ellala was the justest king Ilanki ever had and the only reason Gemunu wanted him killed was for his ethnicity. **That Gemunu was called a "Dhusta" and not a "terrorist" may be due to the fact that the current connotations of the word 'terrorist' were not recognized in an earlier age.** Since Gemunu hated the Tamils simply because they were Tamils this then was an occasion for the Tamils to reflexively ponder their Tamilness and, lo and behold, ethnic consciousness was born among the Tamils too but not the hatred as it was in Gemunu. One could even conjecture that ethnic

hatred is as old as Vijaya, the putative progenitor of the Sinhala race, for it can be argued that he killed Kuveni and her tribesmen in an act of treachery not just because of his greed for the land but also because she and her tribe were ethnically different.

"BOTTOMLESS WELL"

Right into the fray jumps in a Mr. C. Wijesekera. Writing on the 10th of February 1998 in *The Island* paper in reply to Suryakumaran he says "Since independence the Tamils of Sri Lanka seem to be immersed in a bottomless well of grievances and blameshifting.—" Indeed he sounds exactly like the erstwhile colonial governments, contemptuously dismissing the overwhelmingly justifiable complaints of the subjugated people against the masters. Unwittingly though, he uses a metaphor that expresses the Tamils' condition rather well 'Bottomless well of grievances' - not just complaints but

"There is no appropriate reason why an ethnic group should deem its religion more important than language"

real grievances from which there seems to be no hope of redemption. That is to say that the Sinhala rule is indeed a bottomless well for the Tamils!

The next paragraph starts thus: "The list of grievances is similar to the unsupported and imagined traditional homeland claim. **Time and again the traditional homeland theory has been exploded by many historians. Really? When did this 'explosion' take place? It is worse than saying that the Sinhalese have no country because according to Mr. Wijesekera, having lived in a well defined area for a long, long time**

does not make that area the homeland of residents. One can similarly 'explode' the homeland 'theory' of the French in France, the Germans in Germany, the Turks in Turkey and so on. Also if the majority community is the arbiter of the political rights of nearby minorities then China will be dictating to the rest of the world what language they will be ruled under and what any political rights they could have; or if this principle is regionalized, then Tamil should be the language of government and the entire island can be declared homeland of the Tamils!

In the next paragraph Mr. Wijesekera says, "Tom Nairn's dictum that when masses were invited into history 'The invitation card has to be written in a language they understood' holds good for Sri Lanka". So why was the invitation not in Tamil? Is it because they were not invited into history? They are less than lumpen masses? Mr. Wijesekera's next sentence is a howler. "The language often would be the language of the majority"! he adds peremptorily. Has he not got an ounce of intellectual honesty?

QUOTING THE DEVIL

In the very next paragraph Mr. Wijesekera quotes, of all people, Sir Razeek-Fareed! This is like a sinner quoting the Devil. Mr. Razeek formed his Moors political party in Ceylon because he thought he was a Moor - yes, the same as those who live in N. W. Africa. (Incidentally, Tamils belong to the only ethnic group which is unequivocally children of the island; the others are from Bangladesh, NW Africa, Europe, Java or parts of India). (Tamil speaking Muslims were rumored to have shot down Razeek's proposal to name his party "Moors Sunni Party". Razeek held this against the Tamil language.)

Mr. Razeek is difficult to categorize; one does not know whether he was the worst politician, opportunist, racist or all of these. Also he was incompa-

rably brazen to have taken upon himself to tell the Tamils - the ancient inhabitants of the island - what language they may be ruled by, for by his own claim he is the descendant of NW Africans. **There is, in my view, no appropriate reason why an ethnic group should deem its religion more important than its language. In fact it appears from history that religious conversion is easier accomplished than language. Would Razeek have, for example, suggested that Ceylon was too small for more than one religion? After all, most Islamic countries permit only one religion, Islam, as the sole religion and have Sharia - Islamic law - as the law of the land.** Some Islamic countries prohibit the open practice of other religions and many make it a criminal offence for a Muslim to convert to another faith!

TALKING IN ARABIC?

In my years of teaching in a Muslim school and my contact with other Muslims there I had never encountered any two Ceylon Muslims speak to each other in Arabic nor do I believe that there is any group of people born in Ceylon who had Arabic as the language of communication not to mention the sole language of communication. In fact the vast majority of the "Moors" has Tamil as the language of communication besides English. The so called Malays came mostly from what is now Indonesia as mercenary soldiers for the Dutch. Here again any two persons speaking to each other in Malay was a rarity if it happens at all. I say "speaking" because Malay had no script of its own.

A "SPEECH COMMUNITY"

To be recognized as a 'speech community' there must be a substantial number using a particular language as the sole language of communication, there must be institutions like schools, cultural organizations where that language is exclusively used and quite desirably there must be some literature

including books and newspapers produced and read by that community. To be recognized as a speech community with political rights for its language the community should have been authentic residents over a period, not as rulers or as imperial powers. That is to say that the language should not have been an instrument of oppression, subjugation or humiliation for obvious reasons. This rules out English users as a speech community with recognizable political rights. Believe it or not a Muslim leader is now proposing that English be made an official language because of its value as the premier world language, commercially and scientifically. So much for Razeek and exclusivity of the

is not going to plead "aberration" for the third commission if he has any respect for the intelligence of the jury.

If the word "aberration" is used in the sense "departure from what is right, true, correct, etc." he is just confirming what we Tamils have been telling the whole world and which the Sinhalese politicians have been covering up from the eyes of world with extensive use of disinformation techniques. But, evidently, Mr. Wijesekera uses the word in the sense 'deviation from the normal or typical'. **This he does in the face of the continuing, uninterrupted atrocities being committed by the Sinhala army — thugs no different from those of 1958, 1977 and 1983, but in fancy uniform and heavily armed with modern weapons. This is no aberration Mr. Wijesekera! This is the only behavior one recognizes in them. He uses the word 'provocation' by**

"Unlike the Sinhala army the Tamil freedom fighters did not physically harm the Muslims"

apparatus of Sinhala power - language, religion, phony history and the like.

THE COMMUNAL RIOTS

Now let us get back to Mr. Wijesekera. He continues "—The communal riots of 1958, 1977 and 1983 are aberrations — The Tamils have come back to live with the Sinhalese. —They did so in 1958 and 1977. That is because people realize that violence under provocation dies down. It is not so under a long-term calculated programme. This is why there is ethnic cleansing in Jaffna—."

If a person commits a crime once in his otherwise impeccable life it could be considered an aberration, yet cannot escape punishment. If he commits the same crime a second time he is certainly a repeat offender emboldened by escaping punishment the first time. Predictably, because he is a habitual who escaped punishment twice he commits yet more serious a crime a third time. Even a seasoned criminal lawyer defending a mafioso

which he means the democratic process of peaceful demonstration by the Tamils to protest the large scale violation of their rights! Does Mr. Wijesekera have a mental aberration?

DETAINED UNLAWFULLY

He also mentions that "Tamils have come back to live with the Sinhalese". He does not of course mention the hundreds of thousands who have left the island in fear and despondency. Nor does he mention the harassments arbitrary and large scale arrests and detention, in many cases, for years without trial for just being a Tamil. These are happening right now as I write this. The irony is that the Sinhala army is not able to perpetrate as egregious a violation of human rights of Tamils outside Tamil areas as inside it because the Tamil areas are closed to the foreign journalists and too far away from the international community which is represented in Colombo, mainly. **When sixty thousand Tamils are killed, 300,000 are made "internal refugees" and an equal number of Tamils were made to flee the country, all by the Sinhala army, it is**

an 'aberration' but when in the height of insurgency and in dire peril the Tamil freedom fighters ask the Muslims for their own safety to move, Mr. Wijesekera calls it 'ethnic cleansing'. Unlike the Sinhala army the Tamil freedom fighters did not physically harm the Muslims. This says a lot about "the long-term calculated programme" of the Sinhala army (and Wijesekera) vis a vis the Tamil freedom fighters.

He goes on to write the usual garbled shibboleths - "territorial integrity" "inviolability of frontiers followed by principles of sovereignty," rights of states to self defence", etc. implying that only Sinhalese have these rights but not Tamils! If the views expressed

in Mr. Wijesekera's article are the credos of the Sinhala intelligensia - which I believe to be the case - there is no hope and no place for Tamils for any form of political association with the Sinhalese.

SPURIOUS ARGUMENT

That I have dwelt at length in rebutting the argument made by somewhat inconsequential persons in newspapers some months ago might appear pointless to our readers. Also the fact that this article, if read at all, might have only a limited readership mostly sympathetic to the Eelam cause, a readership that is already emotionally committed, may be considered not worth the effort. These contentions, I grant, are very relevant. My reasons

for spending a lot of time and effort in answering the arguments made in those articles are, however, as follows:

1. These sophisticated and tendentious arguments are served up, mainly by Sinhala intellectuals, repeatedly over a number of years, in almost similar phraseology, as if they repudiate the cause of the Tamils.

2. Those of us who have strong existential reasons for our commitment to the struggle should also be aware of the dialectic underpinnings for it if only to counter subversive and spurious arguments advanced against it by our enemies.

LETTERS

Editor
HOT SPRING

Dear Sir,

Having just read the article "*The Bane of Bhikkhuism*", in the HOT SPRING issue of Sept-October 1998, I am shocked, but not entirely surprised by the claims made that Buddhists may be active in the repression of the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka.

I am a journalist, psychotherapist and Buddhist meditator, and study world politics on a regular basis. Since

The bane of Bhikkhuism

the left-investigative publications in the US such as *Z Magazine*, *EXTRA!*, *Covert Action Quarterly* have been the only publications covering even to a small degree what is going on in Sri Lanka, a more comprehensive article would be very much worth writing and placing in one of these.

Alternatively, there is some chance that one of the two mainstream Buddhist publications would be interested in the contradiction of Buddhist monks being involved in political vio-

lence. One did cover the fighting going on between Buddhist factions in South Korea.

However, while I have no reason to doubt the author's accuracy and honesty, some better documentation would be required, or, I could interview him via e-mail.

Sincerely,

Jim Cronin
Sedro-Woolley, WA, USA
email: jacronin@cnw.com

Hinduism's Greatest Son

A reader from Australia writes:-
(Name and address supplied)

Dear Editor,

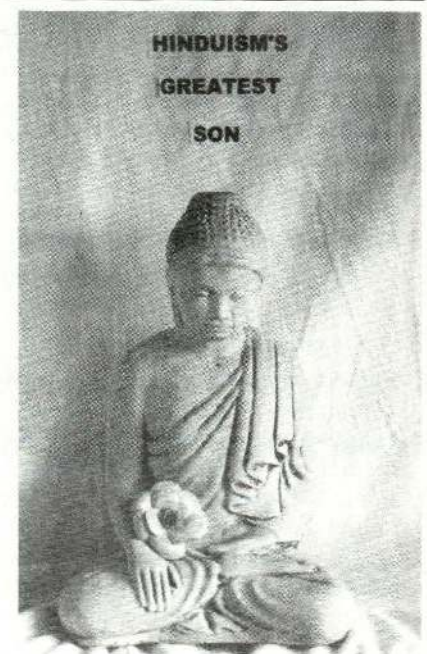
As a person who had left Sri Lanka even before the country acquired that name, I feel distressed when we hear of the goings-on there. I feel particularly sad that in a Buddhist country such as this, the Tamil Hindu population there should receive such shoddy treatment at the hands of a government that prides itself on its Buddhist heritage. I have been to Nepal and have seen how in a country known to be a Hindu kingdom, the two religions co-exist without any differences.

Dear Editor, I am enclosing the

photograph of a Vietnamese terracotta Buddha, a prized possession of mine. To many of us, Siddhartha Gautama is Hinduism's greatest son, the Martin Luther of the dark ages of Brahmanism in the 6th century B.C. He is not the private property of those idiots across the Indian Ocean.

Is it too much to hope that the very people who uphold Buddhism follow the tenets of the Buddha and bring about peace in the country and stop warring against the Tamils?

P.S. If you would care to publish this photograph as well, I would be most grateful.



Denmark - Protest rally by Eelam Tamils

Eelam Tamils in Denmark got together on 17th April to stage a mass protest rally in the capital city of Copenhagen. The rally was also addressed by members of the governing party in Denmark.

While affirming their loyalty to the Tamil leadership led by the Liberation Tigers, the assembly demanded justice from the international community in the Tamil struggle against the massive violations of human rights. Apart from leaders of the Danish community, Mr.Kumar Ponnambalam also addressed the gathering.



Hill country Tamil writer honoured

Well-known Hill country Tamil writer and novelist "MATALE SOMU" was honoured at a function held recently in London. Four of his books were also released at the function organised by "EELAKESARI" editor Rajagopal. Picture shows (left to right), "Matale Somu", M.Vithiananthan, Poet Ilavalai Amuthu, (who chaired the event) and Brent Councillor and Solicitor C.Selvarajah

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"...The defining characteristic of the State is supposed to be its monopoly of the means of legitimate violence, and the State gets its basic legitimation from the use of that monopoly to safeguard the citizen. It turned out in Sri Lanka that instead of the State safeguarding the Tamils, the Tamils had to be safeguarded from the State. They could be killed with impunity by the State, not by the people, and there was no question of their living in peace and dignity in the land of their birth..

- **Izeth Hussain, writing in the WEEKEND EXPRESS, of March 27-28, 1999, on the subject - THE LOGIC OF THE ETHNIC WAR.**

* * *

"... when a bomb goes off at a public place like a bus terminal, transformer or a telephone exchange, within a matter of a day or two, hordes of Tamil civilians are arrested on suspicion of being LTTE supporters, activists or spies and detained for months on end without being charged in courts "until investigations are completed". A classic example of these double standards was the detention of a Tamil driver of a vehicle conveying Dr.J.Jayawardena to the Wannai, who was questioned and released purportedly for having talks with the LTTE, but the Tamil driver was held in custody for nearly seven months and then released on the orders of the Attorney General...."

- **Harry Goonetilleke, Air Vice Marshal (retd.) writing in the WEEKEND EXPRESS of March 27-28, on REPRIEVES FOR WRONGDOERS - THE ORDER OF THE DAY.**

* * *

"...The war has made killing a common occurrence, whether in the battlefield or outside it, as we witness increasingly on the streets, on beaches, and instances like at Hokandara, Katugastota etc. Stealing, armed robberies, etc. could be seen to be rampant throughout the country, mainly as a result of the ridiculously high cost of living brought about by the war. Falsehood and lying, appear to be the order of the day, particularly so in polit-

ical and war propaganda. Sex crimes are turning out to be casual entertainment, reflecting the depth of degeneration of our society..."

- **Wg.Cdr.Mark Seneviratne, writing in the WEEKEND EXPRESS of March 20-21, on the subject - A STRONG REASON FOR PEACE.**

* * *

"...On the effort on the part of the army to reach out to the Tamils living in the newly captured areas north of Vavuniya.... there were a number of carrots that the military were liberally unloading on a people who had lived under Tiger authority for years. The carrots came in the form of kerosene oil, batteries, fertilizer for agriculture, an improved bus service and a fillip in the quality of health. They were essential ingredients the army had listed for its recipe for happiness.

"... Nevertheless,if such a diet of happiness
w a s

supposed to elicit smiles, then there was little of that on the faces I saw. And I didn't have to look far to feel such sullenness. It was evident among the men and women gathered in small groups outside the shabby grocery shops along the gravel road of this village. It was so among the crowds that had gathered to seek medical assistance from a female doctor conducting an outdoor clinic. And there were ample dour looks among those seated by the side of an army vehicle, a South African - made buffel.

"... Happiness has always been a relative term in the north and east. It depends on who you ask and what, too. But one fact is certain : the army has still to learn that offering carrots to a corralled people will never produce a smile. A GENUINE SMILE "

- **Marwaan Macan-Markar, in Iranai Ilippukulam, (brought under army rule in March), writing in THE SUNDAY LEADER, March 21,1999, under the title - CARROTS FOR CORRALLED VILLAGERS.**

* * *

" The experience of the countries that have federal governments is that federalism unites and not divides. There is no need to fear federalism. Actually it is the unitary constitutions that breeds secessionist movements. You will be aware of what happened in Tamil Nadu. In the forties and early fifties there was a strong secessionist movement.Dravidia Kalazham headed by Ramasamy Periyar was advocating a separate state for the Dravidians. His slogan was that the north was prospering at the expense of the south. Its offshoot, the Dravidia Munnetra Kalazham had separation as its political agenda. It abandoned it after the formation of linguistic states in 1995.... The creation of Tamil Nadu took the steam away from its demands. Tamils, ruling themselves, cannot say they are neglected or discriminated against. The need for a separate state disappeared. Similar was the experience in other countries..."

- **Professor Thomas Kleiner, Swedish academic, head of the Fribourg University's Institute of Federalism, interviewed by T.Sabaratham for the SUNDAY OBSERVER, March 28, 1999.**

* * *

"...several American newspapers have drawn a parallel between Kosovo and Sri Lanka. A U.S. Senator, who is opposed to NATO intervention in the Balkans, went on national television last week to argue that if Americans could unleash their fighter planes on Yugoslavia, they could also justifiably bomb Sri Lanka because both countries have one thing in common: an ethnic problem.

"Since there is only superficial comparison between the two situations, Sri Lanka has maintained tight-lipped silence at the UN, lest it antagonises one of its strongest allies against terrorism : the US. The decision is clearly a choice between national interest and political grandstanding. Sri Lanka has opted for the former".

- **Thalif Deen, reporting from the United Nations, SUNDAY TIMES, April 4, 1999.**

MYURESH - Miruthangam Debut

Wimal Sockanathan writes:
A very large number of friends and relatives of the Skanthabalan family gathered at the Broadway Theatre, Barking, Essex, to witness and bless twelve-year old Myuresh on the day of his graduation concert.

The Miruthangam, unlike Veena, Violin and Flute is rarely played as a solo instrument and is mainly treated as an indispensable accompaniment for vocal, instrumental and Bharata Natya performances. Therefore, whenever a student has a maiden concert on Miruthangam, it is usually in the form of a vocal recital. Inviting a high calibre artiste to do a vocal recital with a young student on the Miruthangam is usually a problem faced by many parents.

But young Myuresh came out with flying colours as he sat with confidence on stage with a vocalist who is one of the best known in the field of South Indian Carnatic Music from Chennai. The vocalist is Sri.K.Rajasekharan - a scholar of the Madras University and a Diploma holder of the Adayar Kalakshetra. Listening to him to the

accompaniment of Myuresh's young fingers on the Miruthangam playing with the ease of a master was indeed a pleasure.

As Smt.Pushkala Gopal said in her speech Rajashekarana was exhibiting his Guru's style. Therefore listening to Rajashekarana's display of "M.D.Ramanathan style" was indeed a double bonus for the invited audience



Myuresh with his guru - Muthu Sivarajah

- watching this great musician accompanying a young artiste on Miruthangam, but carefully guiding the youngster.

Myuresh was taught by Trinco's Muthu Sivarajah - who is one of

Trincomalee's greatest gifts to the London cultural scene. His talent and ability to impart knowledge and the rapport he has with his students even long after their arangetram, speaks volumes of his exemplary qualities in this imperfect western world of Gurus and Sishyas.

The programme started with a Varnam (Sarasuda). There were three compositions by Saint Tyagarajah, and three Tamil songs - "Thaye Thripura Sundari by Periyasami Thooran, "Mayil Vaahana" by Papanasam Sivan and "Kaani Nilam Vendum" by Subramania Bharathiyar, amongst other compositions.

Violin accompaniment was provided by Thiruvarur L.Kothanda pani,

Ghatam by Bangalore Sri R.N.Prakash, Morsing by Sri.K.Sitham paranathan. Mr.Ravi Sanguhan with his mellifluous voice compered the show.

Unlike many other performers, in particular some Bharata Natya dancers who hang up their costumes after their arangetrams, we would like to see more of Myuresh in performances on the London stage. I am sure this view will be shared by his parents and of course his Guru himself.

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 part-

The Meeting Point

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ners 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.

(See Page 40)

Obituaries

Mrs.Thillainadarajah



Leelavathy (83) wife of Mr.V.Thillainadarajah of Vannarponnai, passed away peacefully after a brief illness, in Wellawatte, Colombo, on 23rd March 1999.

She leaves behind her children Visvendran (UK), Visvakumar (Colombo), Vimaladevi (UK), Lalithadevi (Matale), Jeyadevi (Battaramulla), Jeyendran (Saudi Arabia/UK), Jeyakumar (Malaysia) and Thiyakeesan-Seelan (UK), sons-in-law Linganayagam, Nitsingham and Thamotherampillai, and daughters-in-law Suprabha, Arunthavarani, Yogarani, and Angela.

The funeral took place according to Hindu rites at Kanatte, Colombo, on 24th March.

25/2, Alexandra Road, Colombo-6.
Tel: 592076 (Contact in UK: son T.Visvendran, No.1, Trubys Garden, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5HA. Tel: 01908 241147)

* * *

Nagalingam Rasamany

Nagalingam Rasamany (Peria Rani), of Post Office Road, Chavakachcheri, daughter of the late Dr.Sinnathamby Nagalingam and Nesammah, sister of late Rasendra Nagalingam (Attorney-at-law), Rajeswary Sivayogan (Solicitor, UK), and late Rajadurai, sister-in-law of Pushparanee (Canada) and Sivayogan (UK). Cremated at Kanatte, Colombo.

* * *

V.Kengatharan

The death occurred in Colombo of Mr.Vaithilingam Kengatharan, Chartered Engineer of Nippon Koei Ltd. formerly of Irrigation Dept. and Central Engineering Consultancy Bureau, son of Mr. and Mrs.Vaithilingam of Kurumbacitty, husband of Thillainayagi (Ministry of Trade, Commerce), brother of Bhuvanarane, Thevaranee and son-in-law of Arumugam Gunanayagam, after a sudden illness. Funeral held on 5th April.

* * *

S.Velauthapillai

The death occurred in Colombo of Sellathurai Velauthapillai, of Allapiddy, husband of Rasammah, father of Jeyasunthararajah, Srisikandarajah, Shiamala, Someswari, Logendra, Theivendra and Vijendra (all of France) and Manjula (Colombo). Cremated at Kanatte, Colombo on 15th April.

* * *

Mrs.K.Visaladchy

Mrs.Visaladchy, of Karampon East, Kayts, Jaffna, resident of Nanthavil Amman Kovilady, Kokuvil East, wife of the late Kanapathipillai, mother of Sothimathy (Colombo), Saraswathy (France), Thurairajasingam (Vavuniya), Thanapalasingam (Germany), Thilakavathy (Kokuvil), Ratnasingam (Principal, St.Anthony's, Kayts), and Kulasingam (Germany). Cremation Kokuvil, 15th April

* * *

Mrs.Sarathambikai

Mrs.Sarathambikai (retired teacher), wife of the late N.Sivagnanasuntharam, mother of Sivakumar (USA), Arunakumar (Malaysia), Jeyanthi (Canada), Anandakumar (USA), and Dr.Krishanthi mother-in-law of Selvinee (Malaysia), Sritharan (Canada) and Dr.Gerard Shu (Ragama G.H.). Cremated at Kanatte, Colombo on 19th April.

N.Thangarajah



Mr.N.Thangarajah (59), Operations Manager, Eastern Zone, Bank of Ceylon, Colombo, passed away on Saturday 27th March 1999, at his residence, 38, Beach Road, Mt.Lavinia, Sri Lanka.

He was the son of Mr. and Mrs.Nadarajah of Tinnevely, Jaffoa, husband of Amirthambikai (Neela), father of Maithili, Vaheesan and Sateesan and father-in-law of Surekka (Australia) and brother of Thangaledchumy Selvarajah, Thanaledchumy Balachandran, Yogamalar and Thavabalan

Mr.Thangarajah joined the Bank of Ceylon as a cashier clerk, and soon rose up to the position of Operations Manager. He served as Bank Manager at Kilinochchi, Trincomalee, Chunnakam and Kalmunai.

S.Tharmalingam.

N.Chandrasegaram

Mr.Navaratnam Chandrasegaram of Navaly, Jaffna, Managing Director Sterling Products Ltd., Colombo, husband of Parameswaridevi, father of Ajanthadevi (USA), Kanchanadevi, Vasukidevi (USA), father-in-law of Raganandan (USA), Siddharthan (USA), Cremated, 25 April at Kanatte, Colombo.

* * *

Francis Xavier

Former teacher Hartley College, Point Pedro, and retired Principal, Kaladdy R.C.School, husband of Maria Theresa, and father of Ivon Christy, Reni Thavarajah(Canada), Jorrine Canacius (Bangkok). Burial, Hendala, Wattala on 26 April.

Para: Remembering a Man of Music

The recent passing away of S.K.Pararajasingham in Colombo has been widely and deeply mourned by his friends, associates and admirers scattered around the world: any one who had anything to do with Tamil Music or Tamil Broadcasting could not have failed to be grieved by his untimely death.

was itself going through a golden period during the late sixties and mid-seventies under the gifted professional eye of C.V.Rajasunderam. Mr.Rajasunderam, who is now Advisor, Development Communication, Ryerson International Development Centre, in Canada, in paying a tribute to Para recently said:

"... Para's multi-faceted contribution to Broadcasting endorsed by the UNDA Award cannot be divorced from his rich contribution to Tamil Arts - especially in the field of Music. His fine-tuned musical sensibility made a distinctive imprint on whatever jobs he undertook for broadcasting, whether it is news reading, producing a feature, writing a commercial copy, reviewing a cultural performance or talking about the sociology of Tamil folk arts.

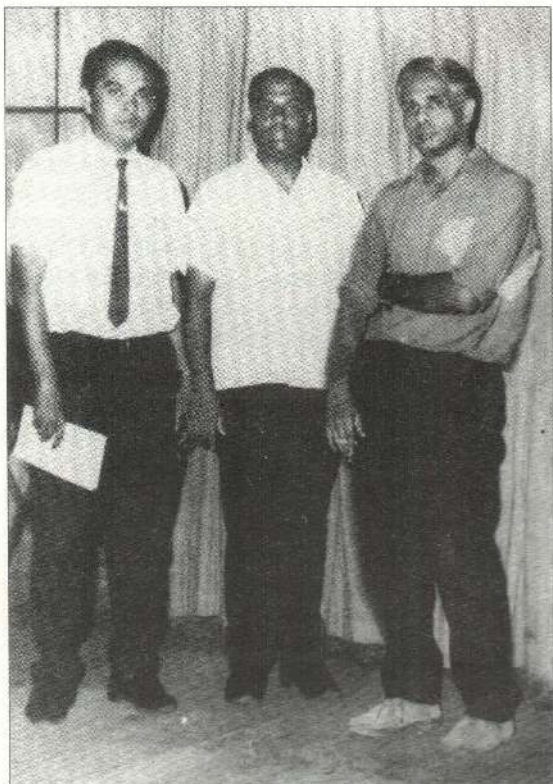
"Our times call for more broadcasters of Para's calibre endowed with the sensibility to respond to the infinitely complex variety of human tastes and needs which broadcasting has to meet"

Veteran broadcaster V.Sundharalingam ("Sundha" to everybody) whose euphonious voice is known to a generation of Tamil radio listeners writes:

"How can I ever get Para out of my mind - the friend who helped to unlock



This photograph was taken some years ago when he was felicitated in Colombo on receiving a prestigious award.



A TALENTED TRIO:(From left to right), S.K.Pararajasingham, V.Sundharalingam and C.V.Rajasunderam.

Known as "Para" to some and "Singham" by others, he was not only a respected music producer at Colombo's broadcasting station, but was also a music researcher, a lover of folk arts and music and a Carnatic vocalist himself. It was no accident that Para's talents saw full bloom at a time when the Tamil service in broadcasting

in me the love of good music, the one who initiated me into the sensuous world of "ragas" and "thalas"?

"Teaming up with him as an announcer in many of his musical ventures was itself an enriching experience

"He popularised light music; even the recording of jingles for the commercial service was a labour of love for him. He strove for perfection in everything.

"Even though his life has ended, there is no end to what one can say about Para. But yet it remains a great regret that whatever recognition that society gave him was in no way commensurate, either to the enormous untapped talents of the artiste in him, or to the need for affection and companionship of the human being in him.

Jaffna Hindu Daughter, 38, MSc working as research assistant in Sri Lanka, vegetarian, with brother settled in USA, seeks Hindu partner, preferably a professional settled overseas. Please forward horoscope. Ref: MPG215 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 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 Sister, 34, graduate in Chemistry, with post graduate diploma in Computing, presently in the United States with relatives in Canada, seeks suitable partner in the US or in Canada. Please send horoscope and details. Ref: MPG201 Hot Spring

Jaffna Hindu Girl, 29, 5ft 4" tall, mars in 8th house, educated in the UK graduate in Management and Admin. Studies, employed with British Telecom, currently pursuing Masters degree in computer science seeks suitable professional partner. Please send horoscope and details. Ref: MPG210 Hot Spring.

British Born Jaffna Hindu Daughter, 29, doctor training to be a GP, 5ft 2" tall, seeks professional partner, preferably with long UK background, religion immaterial. Please send details in confidence. Ref: MPG216 Hot Spring

Jaffna Hindu Daughter, 37, awaiting PhD in History resident in Chennai, India, seeks Hindu vegetarian partner with academic interests. Please send horoscope details in confidence. Ref: MPG222 Hot Spring

Jaffna Hindu Mother seeks a suitable partner in his forties, for her daughter holding a senior position in the Scientific Civil Service in London.



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 opposite).

Please forward details in confidence. Ref: MPG224 Hot Spring

Jaffna Hindu Daughter, 34, studied and worked in USA, with Masters Degree in computing, presently System Analyst in Washington DC, vegetarian, seeks suitable qualified partner in USA or willing to migrate to the US. Ref: MPG217 Hot Spring

Jaffna Hindu Son. 27, resident in the UK during last 9 years, holding a degree in Pharmacology and currently doing Masters degree, seeks suitable partner. Please forward details and horoscope. Ref: MPB108 Hot Spring

Jaffna Hindu son, 27, with long residence in the UK, with Masters degree in Computer Science, currently working in software engineering for an investment bank in London, seeks sociable professional girl with traditional cultural values, Please send details. Ref: MPB109 Hot Spring

Jaffna Hindu Daughter, 28, BTec in Business and Finance, currently employed in London, 5ft 7" tall seeks educated Hindu in good employment in the UK or abroad. Please send details. Ref: MPG218 Hot Spring

Father seeks a Tamil speaking Jaffna Hindu professional, working in US or prepared to move there, for his **daughter, 28**, vegetarian 5' 9" tall, Canadian citizen with degree in Electronics, currently working in the US as software engineer. Ref: MPG220 Hot Spring

Jaffna Hindu Daughter, 29, graduate, currently teaching in Madurai, South India, with brothers, sisters settled in other European countries, seeks suitable partner. Willing to move. Please write forwarding horoscope. Ref: MPG219 Hot Spring

South African Diplomat, Male, 34, of Asian descent, not Tamilian, divorced, someone with great interest in Tamil culture and people, but more importantly with Tamil fight for self-determination. Having served in the South African Embassy in London, presently serving in the Embassy in Moscow until August next year. Seeks Tamil partner, aged 27-33. Ref: MPB 101

Jaffna Hindu daughter, 29, graduate, high school teacher in Canada, 5'6" tall, vegetarian, seeks professionally qualified person who would settle in Canada. Please forward horoscope and details. Ref: MPG221 hot Spring

Daughter, 25, Jaffna Hindu, graduate, in good position in Sydney, Australia, seeks a professional partner, either settled in Australia or willing to move there. Please forward details. Horoscope is not a criterion if both parties like each other. Ref: MPG223 Hot Spring

Hindu daughter, 29, British born, graduate, in good employment in London, seeks suitable Hindu partner with long UK background and education. Please forward details in confidence. Ref: MPG225 Hot Spring

Daughter, London Degree Holder, 28, in the UK Civil Service, slim 5 ft tall, vegetarian, Mars in the 8th house, seeks suitable professional Hindu partner 29-32, with UK background, not necessarily a vegetarian, flexible on horoscope if both parties agree. Ref: MPG213 Hot Spring

Daughter, Doctor, 27, training to be a GP, currently working at a hospital near London, Christian, 5ft 4in tall, seeks pleasant friendly Christian professional, 27- 33 years, resident in UK, above 5ft 8in tall. Ref: MPG 207 Hot Spring

Jaffna Hindu daughter, 28, London Graduate, British citizen, Sai Baba devotee, completed Bharatha Natya Arangetram, seeks suitable partner willing to settle in UK. Forward horoscope. Ref: MPG209 Hot Spring

A new TIC publication

Refusing asylum on untenable grounds

There has been in recent times a tendency on the part of some European governments to introduce new measures that serve to deny asylum to Tamil refugees fleeing from persecution. This becomes particularly distressing when justification for this is sought based on erroneous information on the human rights situation in Sri Lanka. **A well-documented, timely report has now been published by the TAMIL INFORMATION CENTRE, London, which seeks to redress the imbalance by providing focussed information on the subject.**

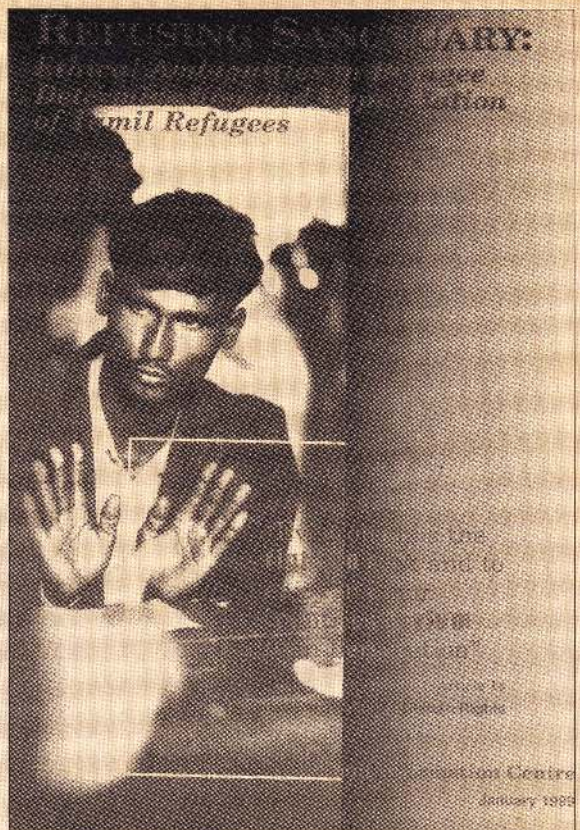
Titled "REFUSING SANCTUARY: Ethical Ambiguities in Refugee Determination and Repatriation of Tamil Refugees", this 64-page report responds to the justification provided by Western governments based on claims that there are adequate "improvements" in the Sri Lankan government's human rights record

In introducing the publication, the TIC observes: "It appears that the country assessment reports produced by some of the western countries and in particular the UK and the UNHCR position papers also contribute to the increasing number of refusals in asylum claims of Tamil refugees. These

assessment reports and the UNHCR position papers underplay the gravity of the Sri Lankan government's human rights performance and its ability and willingness to provide adequate protection for Tamil people and to those who return from exile.

"The Tamil Information Centre (TIC) has been inundated with queries from asylum lawyers and refugee agencies on the human rights development in Sri Lanka and the plight of refugees deported from various countries....

The report discusses in detail the Government's commitment to Human Rights, the State of Emergency and its impact on the Tamil people, in particular the residency restrictions in Colombo, search, arrest and detention and Judicial process; the role of UNHCR in Sri Lanka, and the arrest of deportees; internally displaced people and refugees; Government's policies on Food, Medicine and medical supplies; Health care, and the Government's commitment to Peace and International mediation. The



The report also contains an extensive chronology beginning from colonial times up to end-1998.

Containing over 50 references, it is an invaluable document not only for refugee agencies and governmental and non-governmental bodies but also for those who want to familiarise themselves with the problems afflicting that island country. (Price: £5.00. Tamil Information Centre, 720, Romford Road, London E12 6BT. Tel: 0181 514 6390. Fax: 0181 514 0164).

S.S

About the Tamil Information Centre

The Tamil Information Centre (TIC) was established in 1981 to provide information concerning all aspects of Tamil life and culture. The TIC also facilitates and encourages participation of people involved with human rights and humanitarian issues in Sri Lanka and provides facilities for the general public to be in touch with developments affecting the Tamil people of Sri Lanka and new emerging issues. It promotes public understanding of human rights issues through information and educational programmes.

The Centre's Documentation Unit is a major resource for researchers, practitioners and the media. The TIC is committed to human rights and community development and dedicated to the cause of understanding and co-operation between the different communities in Sri Lanka.

M.O.T

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Rally
and Conference:
25th April**



Arjuna Sittambalam



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