

TAMIL VOICE INTERNATIONAL

TVI

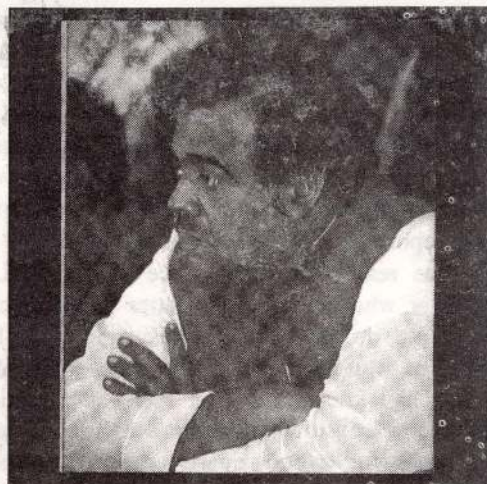
Vol. 3 No. 1
1st January, 1990

THE TAMIL VOICE WILL NOW BE HEARD IN NEW DELHI

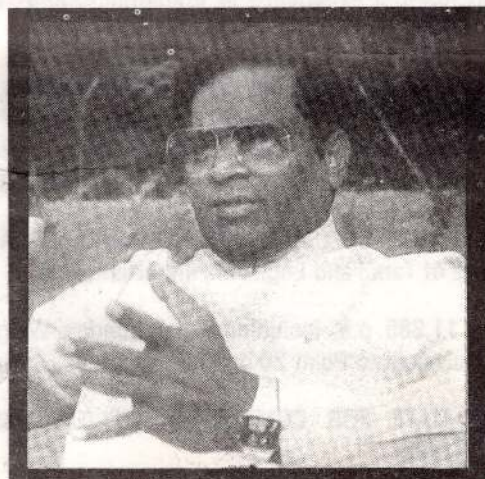
George Fernandes



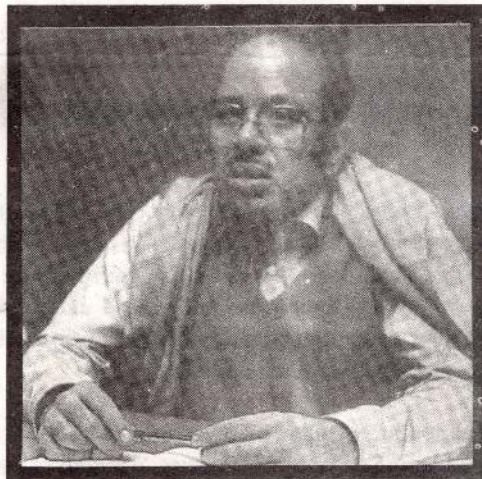
K P Unnikrishnan



P Upendra



Murasoli Maran



They are just four of the Union Cabinet of 21 who have consistently and openly espoused the claim of the Tamils of Eelam for justice, equality and a secure future.

YOUR VOICE

THE HINDU'S RAM & THE EELAM STRUGGLE

E. Shanmugam, Narahenpita, Colombo

In your last issue, under the headline - TAMIL EELAM ISSUE, BOFORS AND MR RAM (Excerpts from media) you published a report from The Illustrated Weekly of India, October 29, 1989, which said, among other incorrect facts, that on the Sri Lankan issue The Hindu "virtually campaigned for militant Tamil groups, particularly the Tigers". "Towards the last quarter of MGR's rule The Hindu had all but become a mouthpiece of LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran..." I haven't seen the original article and you haven't published the name of the writer. But whoever wrote it had got his facts wrong. Except for a long interview with the LTTE leader published by the paper some time in 1986 (which probably misled The Illustrated Weekly writer) The Hindu had shown no appreciation of the role of the LTTE, and had on the contrary carried on a sustained vendetta on the LTTE, particularly after the Indo-Sri Lanka accord. Even the "hand-picked" D.B.S. Jeyaraj, whom I know well, referred to in the report, was sacked by Mr. Ram for his trouble when he reported incidents of rape in which the IPKF men were involved. It was unworthy of a newspaper with an international reputation to disown not only its own report but also its own reporter. The Hindu during the earlier period from 1984 was really the mouthpiece of the TULF and PLOT, and later when it found the latter group discredited among the people, dropped Uma Maheswaran like a hot potato. Those of us who had been in Sri Lanka when all these happened and had known the true facts, and particularly some of us who belong to a generation which had learned to respect the paper for over a quarter century, were really shocked and amazed at the deliberate distortion of events in the columns of The Hindu. For the past two years and more the paper had really become a mouthpiece of the IPKF. If it was an Indian journalist who wrote that report in The Illustrated Weekly, and I presume it is, he should have known better.

ALLEVIATE MENTAL DISTRESS AND AGONY

S Ramanathan, Lancaster, USA

I read Tamil Voice International and am happy that the Tamils living abroad find it a source of useful information. Posterity will remember with gratitude your service to our community which has undergone and is still undergoing immense hardship, loss of life and property during this most difficult and perilous period of our history.

We, of Tirumoolar Sangam of Sri Lanka who held weekly meetings at Tamil Sangam, Wellawatta, decided to publish a Magazine in order to alleviate the mental agony of our people by quoting verses in Tirumantiram. The editor of the magazine is Selvam Kalyanasunderam, B A, Barrister and Attorney-at-Law, residing at 3, Ridgeway Place, Bambalapi-tiya, Colombo 4.

She writes to me that our people in Sri Lanka are in great

mental distress and agony and are facing a moral and religious crisis. She says that we can alleviate their sufferings, even in a small way, by making them to follow the spiritual path shown by Nandhi's disciple Tirumoolar, author of 3,000 verses of Tirumantiram, and Patanjali, author of Yoga Sutra which is internationally recognised. Tirumoolar in one of his verses exhorts the whole world to know the knowledge he realized, in order to live happily in this world.

Any one interested in the magazine may please contact Mrs Kalyanasunderam.

JOB ADVERTISEMENT

WOMAN WELFARE WORKER

Tamil Refugee Action Group (TRAG) is a community based voluntary organisation involved in dealing with problems of settlement, welfare and human rights of Tamils fleeing from oppression in Sri Lanka and coming to Britain.

TRAG seeks to recruit a suitable person to help in its WOMAN TO WOMAN Programme the aim of which is to deal with the problems of Tamil women refugees in particular.

The post holder will identify the needs of Tamil women and children, concentrating specifically on direct work with women who are experiencing difficulties or problems arising in the process of seeking asylum/refugee status in the UK and acclimatising themselves to the strange, unfamiliar and at times hostile environment in Britain.

The welfare worker must have a sense of self-initiative and be sympathetic and understanding to refugees from a grassroots and self-help perspective. The worker must have a background knowledge of the issues affecting refugees and relevant experience in Immigration and Welfare Benefit system.

A commitment to protect the rights of the refugees is essential for the post holder. A mature outlook and an ability to offer practical and emotional support in a community based setting is more important than formal qualifications.

REFUGEES ARE SPECIALLY ENCOURAGED TO APPLY. Knowledge of Tamil and English is important.

SALARY: 11,385 p.a. including Inner London Weighting. This is equivalent to Point 20 on the NJC scales (Scale 4).

CLOSING DATE FOR COMPLETED APPLICATIONS: 22 JANUARY 1990

For Job description and application form contact: The Co-Ordinator, Tamil Refugee Action Group, 2nd Floor, Mill Mead Business Centre, Mill Mead Road, London N17 9QU.

Race Relations Act 1976 exemption Section 5(2) (d) applies
Sex Discrimination Act exemption 7(2) (e) applies

EDITORIAL 1

LOOK WHO IS WORRIED ABOUT OUR SAFETY!

Since that time six years ago, in July 1983, when Indian Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi intervened in the Sri Lankan imbroglio with her offer of "good offices", and until the end of term of her son Mr Rajiv Gandhi who offered his army instead, the pursuit of peace in that once "Paradise Isle" has remained a pipe dream. And within these six long years (while the Tamil people kept dying) the number of negotiators, peace-makers, and policy-shapers who filled the arena - strutting, flying, shuttling between Delhi, Madras, Colombo and Thimpu, back and forth - must read like an Indian Who's Who: Narasimha Rao (now out of power); G Parthasarathy (later sidelined); P Chidambaram (now out of power); Romesh Bhandari ("banished" to the Andamans as Governor by the new government but who resigned); Chief Minister M G R (alas, now dead); Panrutti Ramachandran (now in no-man's land); The Hindu Associate Editor N Ram (now more involved in family squabbles); High Commissioner Dixit (now trouble-shooting in Pakistan); Defence Minister K C Pant (now out of favour with his own party) ... Add to the list the various Ministers of State for External Affairs who handled policy - Kursheed Alam Khan, B R Bhagat, Natwar Singh (now without a seat), the number of bureaucrats (many of them on the way out), the Intelligence busybodies, the number of Generals - Gen Sundarji (now in retirement); Gen Depinder Singh (ditto); Gen Harkirat Singh (shunted out)... what a galaxy of men, what an array of talent, what loss of man-hours for six long years, and where were the Tamil people at the end of it?

Now at last we see a light at the end of the tunnel. A new government is installed in Delhi, which even if it cannot wipe the old slate clean immediately, can be depended upon not to add to the mess that its predecessor created. There appears to be an honest intention to change course. The commitment to "de-induct" the IPKF has now an authentic ring. Those who claim that while governments might change, the basic thrusts of foreign policy do not, are expressing only a half-truth. They forget the human element in foreign policy dealings - absence of deviousness in doing business with others, the ability to earn trust, and certainly not to betray it (as the previous government did in respect of Eelam Tamils), and the capacity to carry credibility. As far as these attributes go, the new government shows promise. But that of course is not all.

While TVI applauds the intention of the V P Singh Government to "de-induct" blundering bureaucrats and the Intelligence service hawks from the decision-making cockpit, and restore policy-framing to the rightful hands - those of the elected representatives - may we at the same time warn the government against insidious attempts to smuggle back the distorted perceptions of the previous government on issues affecting Eelam Tamils, and pass off old wine in new bottles? That danger can come from within the National Front itself. Any bid, for example, to stall the IPKF de-induction process (from Trincomalee and Jaffna), on the specious plea that it has to be tied up with the question of safety of Tamils, which was the contention of the previous administration, should be squashed right away. If the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Mr Karunanidhi, whose services have been drafted in initiating a peace formula, himself continues to reflect the Congress-I thinking on this question, he would have not only failed in his mission, and at the risk of losing credibility with the National Front Government, which regrettably he could not assist by sending at least one elected M P from Tamil Nadu, but he would have also blotted his copy-book in the eyes of the Eelam Tamils for ever. After all, it cannot be claimed that either Mr Karunanidhi or any government in Delhi could have greater concern for the safety of the Eelam Tamils than the Liberation Tigers who have been shedding their blood for over a decade for precisely the same end - the safety of their people.

TAMIL VOICE International

எப்பொருள் யார்யார்வாய்க் கேட்பினும் அப்பொருள்
மெய்ப்பொருள் காண்ப தறிவு

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The views expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of the editor, the editorial board or the directors. Material sent for publication may be abridged and edited if found necessary.

EDITORIAL 2

GANDHI GROUNDED: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT ?

The short answer to our caption is: hope for the best, expect the worst. The states of South Asia are politically destabilized, now with India also experiencing a minority government. When the region's epicentre (New Delhi) is suffering shock, the ripples will be felt in the peripheral states. We are not certain which foreign powers will now be fishing in the troubled waters of the Indian Ocean and how many will want to poke their dirty fingers in Sri Lanka.

Be all this as it may, Gandhi's discomfiture gives reason for the Tamils of Eelam, whom he had harassed and hounded, to feel comfortable. The government of Mr V P Singh, it can be certain, will be more understanding and Mr Singh's plans to make his first foreign visit to Colombo bodes well for the people of the north and east who have suffered numerous deaths of innocents and wanton destruction of the dwelling places of the poor. We trust that Mr Singh will devise a mechanism which will ensure that due compensation is paid to the victims after hearings by a judicially-constituted tribunal. We are not unaware that the first priority of the Indian Prime Minister's visit will be to ensure India's vital interests. We expect that he himself will be gracious enough to raise the question of war reparations and the adequate devolution of powers. As well we expect that he will urge all fratricidal slayings be ended whether these are in the Sinhala or Tamil areas. India can play a role in this situation. We have every reason to think that leaders such as Messrs George Fernandes, Unnikrishnan, Upendra and Murasoli Maran, members of the Indian cabinet, will represent our interests in New Delhi.

Gandhi's failure arises from his disastrous domestic follies and external misadventures. The fact is that the electors had ceased to regard him as anything more than supercilious.

Gandhi has decided to continue as Leader of the Opposition. Either he expects President Venkataraman to call on him to form an alternative government should the Singh government disintegrate or, if Mr Singh calls for another general election, Gandhi expects that he will be able to stage a comeback. A return of a chastened Gandhi may have a salutary effect on India's foreign and internal policies. It will not be a return to the jingoism that characterised Gandhi's last phase.

We cannot in our comments refrain from expressing our views on the "extermination" of the JVP core. This may or may not have a bearing on the policy-making strategies of the South Block and the obscene designs of the RAW which is sometimes dignified by being referred to as the counterpart of streamlined agencies such as the CIA and the KGB. Now, we believe, is the time for Sri Lanka to return to a strict non-aligned policy. At the same time the decapitation of the JVP leadership leaves no problem solved. The causes for the JVP phenomenon must be removed by positive governmental action. We cannot rule out that the JVP and its military wing were at all times prepared for the eventuality of the loss of their top echelons. They probably trained, in Mao Tse Tung's inimitable phraseology, "millions of successors" and though the Peramuna has lost a leader and a tactician who will not easily be matched, the movement cannot be expected to die with Wijeweera. The failure to comprehend that ideas rule the lives of men and it is not men who solely create ideas has still to be learned. Destroy the men and the ideas will continue to remain. There must be satisfaction among the Sinhala bourgeois that with the elimination of the JVP leadership, the government can turn its guns on the LTTE and Gandhi's EPRLF puppets. If that is their thinking in respect of the former, they are sadly mistaken.

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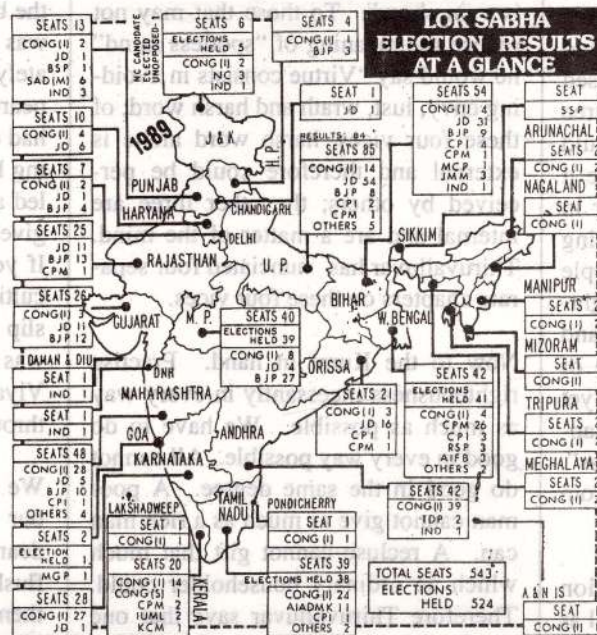
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WHAT DIFFERENCE POWER (OR THE LOSS OF IT) CAN MAKE TO POLITICIANS' FACES!

The confident-looking countenance of the new Prime Minister V P Singh (left) and the drawn, deflated physiognomy of the defeated Rajiv Gandhi (right)



UNION COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Vishwanath Pratap Singh: Prime Minister; Minister/Department of Defence; Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions; Science and Technology; Atomic Energy; Electronics; Ocean Development; Space; Environment and Forests and other subjects not allocated to any other Cabinet Minister or Minister of State.

CABINET MINISTERS

Devi Lal, Deputy Prime Minister: Agriculture.
Madhu Dandavate: Finance.
George Fernandes: Railways.
Ajit Singh: Industry.
Sharad Yadav: Textiles with additional charge of Food Processing industries.
Mufti Mohammad Sayeed: Home Affairs.
Arun Kumar Nehru: Commerce and Industries.

Srif Mohd Khan: Energy with additional charge of Civil Aviation.

Ram Vilas Paswan: Labour and Welfare.

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K P Unnikrishnan: Surface Transport with additional charge of Communication.

Dinesh Goswami: Steel and Mines with additional charge of the Law and Justice.

Murasoli Maran: Urban Development.

Nathu Ram Mirdha: Food and Civil Supplies.

MINISTER OF STATE

Manobhai Kotadia: Water Resources.(Independent charge)

Maneka Gandhi: Environment and Forests.

Vishwanath Pratap Singh, born on June 25, 1931, stepped into the shoes of Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Indira Gandhi, Morarji Desai, Charan Singh and Rajiv Gandhi. Jawaharlal Nehru occupied the post for the longest duration - 17 years. Lal Bahadur Shastri was Prime Minister from June 1964 till his untimely death in January 1966. Indira Gandhi ruled the country for 15 years with a break of 31 months during the Janata regime, 1977 - 1980. She regained the post in January 1980. Morarji Desai was in office from May 1977 to July 1979. Charan Singh was Prime Minister for just six months, from July 1979 to January 1980. Rajiv Gandhi was in power from October 1984 to November 1989. V P Singh assumed office on December 2, 1989. There are only two surviving former Prime Ministers today - Morarji Desai and Rajiv Gandhi.



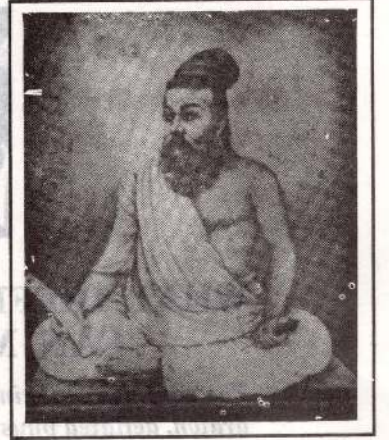
THIRUKKURAL

S. Sriskandarajah

ஒல்லும் வகையான் அறவினை ஓவாதே
செல்லும்வா யெல்லாஞ் செயல்.

"Ollum Vahaiyaal Aravinai Ovaatheey
Sellum Vaay Ellaam Seyal" [Transliteration]

"Practise Virtue incessantly, in every way, as much as possible" (Translation)



Thirukkural is a work of ethics and virtuous practices. Though the main body of the Thirukkural is divided into three sections as "Virtue" "Wealth" and "Love", yet Thiruvalluvar has stressed the importance of virtue in all the three sections. His view is that virtue should be adhered to in all walks of life be it in the field of economic activity or in the area of enjoying pleasure. Being human it is but likely that people breach principles of ethics and righteousness. Although he has time and time again stressed the importance of righteousness throughout the book, yet he has authored a special chapter captioned "Emphasising Righteousness". The Kural under review is one from that chapter.

There is a popular misconception among those who regard Thirukkural as a literary masterpiece that Thiruvalluvar has prescribed different ethical rules for the different levels people have reached in the attainment of equipoise. For example, they seem to think that what Thiruvalluvar has prescribed under the main section THURAVARAIYAL = RECLUSION OR ASCETICISM is not meant for others. It is not so. What it really means is that a person who leads a mundane life could elevate himself to the position of a recluse or anchorite only through the observance of the rules prescribed in the chapters 25 to 37. To repeat, the rules of conduct prescribed by Thiruvalluvar are equally applicable to all. What he has prescribed for an ordinary man is applicable to a king and recluse and vice versa.

What is virtue or righteousness? one may ask. Thiruvalluvar answers it simply and lucidly - "whatever is done

with a spotless mind is virtue: all else is vain show". To those that may not realise the meaning of "spotless mind" he would say "Virtue consists in avoiding envy, lust, wrath and harsh word; of these four vices, harsh word alone is external and therefore could be perceived by others; the other three are internal and are a matter of the mind. Thiruvalluvar has nunciated four separate chapters on these four vices.

Now to the Kural in hand. Practise righteousness incessantly in every way as much as possible. We have to do good in every way possible. All cannot do good in the same degree. A poor man cannot give as much as a rich man can. A recluse cannot gift that much which an ordinary householder could. Therefore Thiruvalluvar says that one should give according to his ability. What is important is the mind to give, the feeling for others. Equally important is the spontaneity. As procrastination can kill the will to give, he stresses that one should give without postponing. Through this Kural Thiruvalluvar has also tried to portray human nature.

Let us illustrate this mental make-up of human beings from the Mahabharatha. Karnan, the first son of Kunti, was a great philanthropist; he was a king too. One day he was getting ready for an oil bath. Befitting his status, he was applying a rejuvenating oil from a gold cup. He kept the empty cup by the side of the well and started drawing water from the well. Then there appeared a destitute and begged that he be given something to eat. Karnan could not think of going into the house to fetch something to give to the beggar. His

eyes set on the gold cup. He immediately took that cup and presented it to the beggar cheerfully. The beggar who was astounded left the place immediately. As he disappeared his wife appeared and asked Karnan as to why he had dismissed the beggar without inviting him into the house. Karnan chuckled and told his wife; "If you decide to give, you should give then and there. If you postpone there may come difficulties in giving; there can be many a slip between the cup and the lip". This was sound advice which the great Viyasara gives to the whole world through the lips of Karnan.

We realise the worth of this advice in our day to day life. When somebody dear and near visits us we, in the first flush of enthusiasm, feel like giving them something. Say we decide to give one hundred pounds and go into the room to get the notes or to write the cheque. As we are about to count the money we change our mind and decide to give only fifty pounds justifying that fifty would do. While taking the notes to make up the fifty pounds our mind again wavers and we reason out that there would be future occasions when we may have to give him money and that twenty five pounds would do; Then again our fickle mind comes out with another comforting argument and we finally come out of the room with fifteen pounds. What a change within a matter of minutes! Initial £100.00 has shrunk into £15.00.

This then is the reason why Thiruvalluvar says that we should do virtuous deeds incessantly and whenever possible. Let the story of Karnan keep ringing in our ears constantly.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE WAR?

If once-hated enemies can get together, why can't the different militant Tamil groups get together for a national, patriotic cause. After all the solutions are simple, only the spirit is not willing. Can't we unite, demand and negotiate from a position of strength?

It has been proved throughout history that the Sinhalese and Tamils can co-exist in the island as good neighbours, as they did during the early 16th century when the Portuguese arrived. They had stabilised into separate areas after centuries of warfare and we are now foolishly once again going through the same process.

NOT THE SAME PROBLEM

It has been said that India would not want us to separate because it would be a bad example to other Indian states who might want to emulate us. We are a different country with different circumstances and this should not deter us from exercising our right to self-determination. I can't see how our situation is going to influence India, which already enjoys a federal government.

REALITIES CHANGE

Are we going to submit ourselves once again to a position of dependence on the Sinhalese? Would not the protection of India of an independent Tamil Eelam be better than being a second-class nation under Sinhala domination? Some think that befriending India would involve a loss of sovereignty. In today's world of international inter-dependence such is not the case. In 1992 many of the nations of Europe are to come under a single European Act. Ex-Prime Minister Edward Heath calls this a pooling of sovereignties. The US have 2 military bases in the Philippines which provide employment for about 185,000 workers and now Singapore is offering the US a base there with no loss in sovereignty. Likewise the leasing of bases in Tamil Eelam to India would increase employment, attract foreign exchange and promote trade with India. So one should view the whole thing in the interests of national security which is a vital and necessary pre-requisite for freedom and economic growth. We must combine national

Lt Col Anton J N Selvadurai, UK
compulsions with international realities and make them serve the needs of our people.

NATIONS HAVE ONLY INTERESTS

Lord Palmerston said "Nations have no permanent allies or enemies, only permanent interests." Do not India and Tamil Eelam have a mutual, common and permanent interest in security? India's actions in South Asia have all been governed by her need for security. Her presence in Tamil Eelam will satisfy her need for dominating Sri Lanka - provided she doesn't flirt with China. During the 15th and 16th centuries when there was an independent Tamil kingdom in Jaffna there was always moral and military support available from India. In today's world of inter-dependence this mutual assistance and understanding are all the more assured.

SELF DEFENCE WITHOUT INDIA?

In order to defend ourselves without outside assistance we will need 50,000 troops, including armour and artillery, and a suitable navy and air force. This will take some time and we can think of it seriously only after we have completely rehabilitated ourselves at a cost of billions of rupees. We will also need a very strong economy to support this, with about 20% or more of the GNP going on Defence. We can only do this after we become an export-oriented country like South Korea and Taiwan. It will take years for us to be able to afford even a jet-fighter.

THINK OF TOMORROW

A good relationship with India will also make it easy for India to compensate for war and economic damage caused by the IPKF. No Sri Lankan government could afford or be willing to provide the billions of rupees they owe us for war reparations prior to the arrival of the IPKF. The importance of Indian assistance is all the more essential. Many of us are angry with the IPKF behaviour and the way they have persecuted our people, with strong reprisals. But realities change and today's enemies can become tomorrow's friends. This has happened all the time through-

out history and is happening now at this very moment in various parts of the world, especially with the advent of glasnost and perestroika. So it would be unwise to be averse to the idea of cultivating friendly relations between the LTTE and India, because of today's animosities. Tomorrow we would be gone, but future generations must continue to live and walk tall with a sense of security and freedom which only Mother India could provide. So let us think of tomorrow - after the war is over, after the break of morn, after the stars have gone.

GREATER GLORY

If the LTTE could achieve this difficult task and avoid the fratricidal warfare that has been predicted - in a wise and statesman-like manner - their place in history will all the more be glorious.

THE 15TH CENTURY PROPHECY

According to Natesan's "History of the Northern Kingdom", a holy man, Subaditta-Munivar, came to the court of King Pararajasekeran of Jaffna, and made a prophecy which so far has run true. He said that his kingdom would pass into the hands of foreigners at the end of his reign. He said that the Portuguese would rule first, forcing their religion on the people and destroying their temples, that the Dutch, the English and the French would succeed them and that finally the country would be restored to one of its own people. Although Jaffna was not occupied by the French, Trincomalee was occupied by them for a short time. It would be interesting to see the final part of this prophecy, which no doubt will come true, although we would have to wait for some time with more bloodshed to come.

Muhamillatha Manitharhal - Tamil Play

Jan 6, 1990 at 6.30 p.m.
Venue: Langdon School Hall
Langdon Road, East Ham

Jan 13, 1990 at 6.30 p.m.
Venue: Goldsmith College
Lewisham

Tickets: Family of four 5.00
Single: 2.00

MEDIA EXCERPTS

TIGERS FIND BATTICALOA
AN EASY PREY

After two days of intense fighting, Tamil Tiger separatist guerrillas have taken this eastern coastal town from the Tamil groups which had supported their recently departed enemy, the IPKF. Batticaloa is the latest conquest of the LTTE, who see themselves as at last living up to their name by freeing the north and east of an occupying army and the surrogate Tamil force, it left behind.

The TNA briefly assumed military control in the eastern district of Amparai, the first to be vacated by the Indians. But devastating attacks on two camps and the seizure of a huge haul of weapons by the Tigers put the TNA members to flight. When the Indian force left neighbouring Batticaloa at the end of November, the TNA dug in.

An estimated 500 Tigers attacked the TNA's main camp of about 3,000 men early on Monday and the defenders were routed. Of the 87 bullet-riddled and fly-covered corpses laid out on the floor of the local mortuary, 85 are said to be TNA soldiers. Many look to be the young boys forcibly recruited over the past few months. Despite their numerical superiority and sophisticated weapons, they are no match for the highly-motivated Tigers. One captured youth said he had been given some potent arrack, a rifle, and was then told to shoot.

The grown-up Sri Lankan police have to ask the 'boys' permission to get around town. But Police Superintendent M S Stevens has a peculiar sense of keeping law and order. "If anybody fights, why not let them go and fight, why should the police intervene?" he says of the battle for Batticaloa.

India is logistically supporting its old Tamil allies who know that with the peacekeeping force gone they will be annihilated. The TNA's belligerence appears a desperate attempt to force the Indian force to postpone its departure. The Sri Lankan Government's attitude appears to be that the TNA has dug its own grave with this tactic. (*The Guardian* Dec 16, 1989)

NO HURRY IN IPKF WITH-
DRAWAL

The Government of Prime Minister

Vishwanath Pratap Singh has concluded that it would be militarily and politically inadvisable to hasten the de-induction process from what was broadly determined by the previous government.

Wijeratne, in the company of top policy advisers, arrived in New Delhi even before the new administration had time to dig in. But beyond tea and sympathy Wijeratne and his delegation got little else for their exertions with Singh and External Affairs Minister Inder Kumar Gujral.

With the campaign rhetoric behind him and seized with the compulsions of realpolitik, Singh has taken a hard-nosed view on India's role and responsibility, especially with regard to Sri Lankan Tamils, and feels it would be unwise to upset the political equilibrium by suddenly accelerating a phase-out process. In his press conference, Singh said that the government could not wish away "ground realities" in Sri Lanka, a reference to the slow devolution of powers to the north-east and the bloody internecine clashes that have broken out there between the rival LTTE and the EPRLF-backed Tamil National Army.

Singh told journalists that his government was restricted in its decision making on Sri Lanka because "we have inherited a situation and we are not starting with a clean slate". He said the safety of the Tamils had to be ensured and devaluation of power too kept in mind. The only indication of any change in policy was the assurance that India would not henceforth "arm-twist" its neighbours and indulge in "bullying tactics" while dealing with them.

"There will be no radical change in Sri Lanka policy", an Indian diplomat said after the press conference. "Even Rajiv Gandhi was committed to bringing back the troops by early next year." He said de-induction would continue from the other five districts with Trincomalee and Jaffna being the last to be vacated.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Muthuvel Karunanidhi met LTTE's political spokesman Anton Balasingam and Dileep Yogi over the week-end in what is viewed in diplomatic circles as de-freezing of ties between India and the dominant Tamil militant group after two years of bitter fighting.

"Everybody backs the winning horse,"

said a source with access to official thinking on Sri Lanka. "And in the north-east India has reluctantly realized that it is the LTTE that is going to matter in the future and not the EPRLF." If that means ditching India's long-standing ally, it is just too bad. But that's politics, say officials, where neither one has permanent friends nor permanent enemies. (Tarun Basu in *India Abroad*, Dec 22, 1989)

TAMIL MILITANTS KILL
EACH OTHER

With the phased withdrawal of the IPKF from Sri Lanka, cadres of the dominant Tamil group, the LTTE have started creeping out of the jungle hide-outs and taking effective control of strategic points in Tamil dominated north-east.

At least 87 bullet ridden bodies have been piled up at the mortuary at the Batticaloa Hospital. The LTTE admitted that two of their members were killed and all others killed were TNA members. However, the number of civilian casualties was not known.

Superintendent of Police M S Stephen admitted that he was informed by David, the area leader of the LTTE, that the group was planning to attack TNA. However he could not take any steps to prevent the clash. It is evident that the authorities were not bothered. The police chief told a group of foreign correspondents. "Our only duty is to safeguard lives of police personnel."

He said that the TNA occupied camps immediately after they were vacated by the IPKF. "The TNA men took away all the government vehicles in the city and now those vehicles are being used by the LTTE," he said.

Most of the civilians seem to prefer the LTTE to the TNA. The government village officer, A Nesan, said that things were much better after the LTTE's arrival. "The LTTE is well disciplined. They do not harass people but the TNA men robbed many houses and they forcibly took away youngsters for their army. They even robbed grocery stores," Nesan complained. However, a group of trainee male nurses of the Batticaloa Hospital were of the opinion that they did not want any of the militant groups. "We want peace. What is necessary is a proper civil administration," they said.

Karun Thambimuttu, wife of Batticaloa M.P Sam Tambimuttu, who was abducted by the LTTE and released on the following day, said "the group leader of the LTTE who abducted me and my son, asked me to tell my husband that the LTTE goal is clear and they would not allow any obstacle in their path". (*India abroad* -Dec 22, 1989)

THE SILENCE OF THINK-TANKS

Mr Neville Kanakaratne, former Ambassador to the US and the USSR told a Colombo audience recently that the educated, intelligent people of this country were displaying total indifference to the national crisis and the plight of the nation's youth.

"Our youths are dying in large numbers before they have had a chance to live. But what have we, the middle class, the educated people, the so-called intelligentsia and the professionals, done about it? Have any professional bodies passed at least a resolution about these events? No! Not a murmur from them! Then what can we expect? Can we expect the government alone to solve the crisis?", the former diplomat said, according to an *Island* report, at the Olcott Memorial Meeting at Ananda College.

Mr Kanakaratne also said: "When the Jaffna Public Library was burnt a few years ago, where were all our intellectuals, where were all the university dons, educationists and vice-chancellors? What did they do? Did anyone or any organisation, even issue a resolution protesting this act against the entire intelligentsia?"

In another forum, another speaker, this time a member of the government, also lamented the silence of the thinkers, but in another context. Dr Wimal Wickremasinghe, a former Central Bank economist and now Minister of State for Policy Planning and Implementation, had found that the nation's economists, social scientists and the "think-tanks" were "dreadfully silent".

So, said *The Island* commenting on these two speeches, is the highbrow guilty of letting down the people? Yes and no, *The Island* said: "It is an undeniable fact that Sri Lanka's intelligentsia, with a few exceptions, has been pathetically supine in the face of the inroads made by the political and governmental machinery into the most cher-

ished political, social and cultural institutions of the country. But it must also be borne in mind that for quite some time there was a growing culture of intolerance in the country which made it appear that dissent was heresy and protest apostasy. While it is easy to blame the intelligentsia for allowing such a situation to develop, it is also necessary to remember that during the past two decades or so society has become so crudely politicised that politicians of whatever hue have acted as if they did not need any guidance from the think-tanks" (*Lanka Guardian* - Nov 15, 1989)

TOUGH CHOICES IN SRI LANKA

Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh has inherited the debris of a Sri Lanka policy.

Between the Sri Lankan demand for the IPKF withdrawal earlier this year and now, the situation on the ground in the North-Eastern Province has changed qualitatively. It is the familiar 'Contra' syndrome of armed pro-Indian Tamil groups and the Tamil National Army (TNA), all trained and equipped by India, in addition to the Civil Volunteer Force (CVF), which was raised to undertake a law and order role in the Tamil areas, taking on the LTTE.

The Rajiv Gandhi Government, which through the IPKF had underwritten the North-Eastern Provincial Council, had a stake in ensuring the latter's survival against the onslaught of the LTTE. Much to India's chagrin, the LTTE has been negotiating directly with Colombo and on the agenda is the dissolution of the North-Eastern Council to enable fresh elections. If not stage-managed by the IPKF, as in 1988, the LTTE is sure to emerge the ruling party.

India's perfidious role, it is now clear, was to set its Contras against the LTTE which, logically, would have had Colombo's support. Colombo seems to be keen on averting what amounts to an India-Sri Lanka proxy war. (Editorial - *Independent*, Bombay Dec 11, 1989)

BEST CHANCE TO GET OUT OF THE LANKAN QUAGMIRE

The installation of a new government under Prime Minister V P Singh provides the long awaited opportunity for India to extricate itself from the unenviable position it finds itself today in

Sri Lanka. It would, indeed, be ideal if India could treat what happens in the island as a strictly internal matter and look the other way. But if there is widespread violence in the Tamil majority in the north and east and another exodus of refugees to Tamil Nadu, can New Delhi afford to adopt such an attitude? The recent developments in the north and east have made it clear that a savage bloodbath is inevitable after the IPKF withdrawal.

In the meanwhile, both the Tigers and the Sri Lankan Government have greeted the defeat of Rajiv Gandhi in the parliamentary elections with delight and relief.

It would be incorrect to dub the LTTE as "anti-Indian" and dismiss them because if the Indians have reasons to be angry with the group for waging a war against their army, sent on a peace-keeping mission, the same holds true for the Tigers, too. The fact that they want to build bridges with the new government should be accepted in good faith until it is proved otherwise.

At the same time, it should be made clear to the Tigers, as well as all other Tamil groups, that they could aspire for India's goodwill and friendship only if they bury their hatchets and unite for the common good of their community. No one group can claim that they are the sole representatives of the island's Tamil people and it should be left to the people to decide. (Annapurni Mani - *Sunday Observer*, Bombay, Dec 3-9, 1989)

TNA WITHDRAWS TO THE JUNGLES



EELAM thoughts

Kurusheeran

My expatriate friend, in the course of his letter (TVI: Oct 1), has also let himself into an excess of breast-beating, self-pity and self-damnation. He said: that we can never unite; the so-called "our boys" who took to guns to fight the enemy are now turning their guns at each other and on our own people; that they are engaged in a "blood-thirsty struggle for their own power". He concluded by asking: "Do you think that we as a people deserve to have a homeland of our own? Why talk of the inevitability of Tamil Eelam?"

The initial flaw in my friend's outburst is that he has indulged in a sweeping generalisation. As another expat friend* told me recently: "...not all our people are selfish", and he is quite right. That apart, selfishness is not an exclusive failing of the Tamils. One should think the predominant segment of the world's humanity is selfish. If you take the cases of most of the success stories in the world, whether among Tamils or otherwise, you would find that the secret of their success lies in a life-long preoccupation in advancing their own personal interests - in varying degrees - either without caring for others, or at the expense of others, or by exploiting the weaknesses of others. My friend should be knowing, as we all do, several individuals who had made good in the material sense - successful doctors, successful lawyers, successful businessmen, successful politicians, successful emigrants.... In the case of most of them, had they been busy showing concern for others, they could not have made a success of themselves materially. For example, a man who shares his wealth with others cannot hope to end up as a millionaire; a man who shares his power with others cannot become a dictator. A man who shares his time with others - unless it is for money or private gain - is quite likely to end up as a pauper, and at least half the world would regard him as a fool. While selfishness is therefore a widely prevalent human trait, it has to

THE INEVITABILITY OF TAMIL EELAM - 13

be judged each according to the circumstances, the background, and according to the degree to which that quality is carried. Arms dealers and drug pushers for example are specimens of extreme selfishness because they survive on death, destruction and human misery; and tragically enough they are the most successful "quick money" earners. In the case of a liberation struggle like ours selfishness on the part of a people takes many forms - the kind that makes men remain aloof from it, even mentally; the kind that makes some mock at it, so that they could soothe their conscience for not contributing anything towards it; but the worst of course is the one that makes some exploit it for their own personal ends. While conceding all these to my friend, **the point one would wish to make is that the Eelam struggle had witnessed over the past several years innumerable acts of UNSELFISHNESS on the part of our people which if they are hardly known, it is because all such acts were done in complete anonymity. Think of the number of Eelam youths who had forsaken their parents, homes, their education and their future in order to fight for the cause, the number of women and girls who had voluntarily parted with items of jewellery (mostly from middle income and lower middle income families to whom gold is the ultimate insurance for the future), think of the number of Tamil expats who had channelled funds to the tune of millions of dollars over the years, think of the number of youths who willingly paid the supreme sacrifice - their lives - in the course of the struggle. If these are all not pure acts of selflessness, what are they?** The fact that their names and identities have not been recorded in the columns of newspapers should not make us think that they do not exist, nor the fact that they constitute a minority should lead us to make a sweeping condemnation of the entire Tamil Eelam nation.

(My friend used the word "race" which
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I think is an outmoded concept and better avoided).

The next grouse of my friend is that "we, as a people, can never unite". Unite for what? - that is the first question to be answered. Unite to liberate ourselves from all forms of oppression and hegemony and achieve our own independent homeland? Or unite to fight the LTTE? Or unite behind the LTTE? Or unite behind India and ensure some kind of autonomy for the north-east to be wrested from the Sri Lankan Government with the help of the Government of India? Or unite behind the EPRLF-ENDLF-TELO axis in the hope that they would bring us Tamil Eelam? The word "unity" therefore means nothing, unless the goal is made clear. The motives have to be spelt out. Does my friend remember that old verse about the Spider and the Fly:

"Will you walk into my parlour?"

Said a spider to a fly;

"Tis the prettiest little parlour

That ever you did spy".

Well, that was one kind of invitation for unity, an absolute, comprehensive unity in which the fly would end up inside the spider! There is no point in mouthing the word "unity" merely as a pious wish or as a "manthram" to solve all problems. Any call for unity by anyone should not only have a genuine motive, but it should also be framed for a clear-cut, purposeful objective based on agreed means of achieving that objective.

My friend of course is not alone in his reactions. He typifies a growing mood among our elderly expats in the West. The in-fighting on the ground among the militant groups, some of which have lost the moral authority to call themselves militants - indulging, as they have been, in naked terrorism among their own people - is one reason why some Tamils abroad are "cheesed off" with "our boys". In the case of some others, it is a case of let down by the very groups they once supported, and on whom (owing to poor judgment)

they had placed implicit faith. But it has to be remembered that any deviant behaviour on the part of any group is a reflection of our own ethos, our own collective behaviour patterns as a people. None of us can afford to stand outside and exculpate oneself from the misdeeds of our younger generation, while at the same time taking pride in the deeds of some of them. Let us for a moment turn the spotlight on the behaviour of our expat brethren themselves. While about 90% of them are indifferent to the tragedies on our soil (having themselves escaped from them), even the remaining 10% who show concern do not show any sense of unity among themselves. In communities of thousands, whether in Britain or the U.S. or Australia or Canada, a hundred horses would not be able to drag a hundred Eelam Tamils into acting unitedly on any issue. One hears of dozens of Eelam Tamil groups spread all over the western world, many of which cannot boast of an active membership of even a dozen members each. While most of them I am sure are mature, elderly men, academically qualified, professionally successful, men of experience, men of the world, what prevents all of them from coming under one organisation? Or two organisations? Or three, or four, or even five? Why dozens of them? On the other hand, let us look at the record of "our boys" whom our elders are eternally complaining about being divided. Functioning on the ground, amidst life and death, are the LTTE, EPRLF, EROS, TELO, ENDLF, and if you include the PLOT, six organisations comprising in all at least six thousand activists. It means on an average one organisation for a thousand. Does my friend get the point?

But let us not waste too much time on moaning about the lack of unity, and keep on wishing that the Tamils were different from what they are. Someone once said that when ten Irishmen meet to discuss a common issue there are bound to be eleven opinions on the subject. Where we are different from the Irishmen would be that we might have twelve opinions instead! Small communities, small nations, generally produce outstanding individualists but organisationally, not many team workers. If each man thinks he is the "cat's whiskers" and if every other man wants

to be the "Queen Bee" in any set-up, it is quite natural that there would be a plethora of organisations. But let us not moan about it. Let us accept it as part of an ingrained Tamil ethos, and then go from there and get on with the common struggle, each in his own way, yes, but collectively adding up to something worthwhile. If we cannot band together in one orchestra to produce good music, well, let a hundred soloists and instrumentalists produce it. **But, let's produce it!**

One-time U.S Ambassador to India and a lover of the country John Kenneth Galbraith once referred to India as a "functioning anarchy". There might be anarchy all round, but the important thing is that it functions. Galbraith did not extend the description to the fact that India is a Hindu society, but I have always felt that the anarchic impulse comes naturally to all Hindu societies, including the Eelam Tamil society which is basically Hindu. Take the religion itself. It is an eclectic religion, the bedrock of which is based on the firm belief that "all rivers lead to the same ocean". It has sufficient assimilative resilience to accommodate Christians and Communists, atheists and agnostics, Buddhists and Jains; and even Gorbachev in his present mood would be welcome to call himself a Hindu! No Hindu Pope is there to deny him that privilege, and no Khoemeni to condemn him to death. In a sense, a Hindu society provides for a free-for-all for a clash of opinions, a conflict of attitudes, and even a collision of egos, and a general jostle and bustle. An orderly church congregation of a thousand will be engaged in a peaceful, united prayer to God, but imagine the scene at a Nallur temple "Ther" festival in Eelam. Ten thousand worshippers bumping into each other will be filling the air with twenty thousand different, individual appeals to the deity. So what? No one arranges beforehand which thousand hands will take the heavy ropes and draw the chariot round the outer courtyard, but it gets done, on the dot, at the appointed time. How does it happen unless there was unity of purpose? What is missing there is not unity, but the seeming absence of order and the semblance of unity. Take again the various expressions of Hindu culture. Take Carnatic Music, where individual melody is the basis of music,

not harmony. There is but one figure occupying the centre stage - the vocalist - and the instrumentalists, however distinguished they are in their respective fields, are there in the role of accompanists. Take Bharata Natyam, Kathak, Kuchupudi, ... it is always a solo performance, unlike the western ballet, with the accompaniments contributing to the total impact of the one performer. It is time therefore that Eelam Tamils give up this wasteful obsession about this so-called unity and get on with the task in ways each man thinks fit. Pre-arranged unity in our society is a mere will-o'-the-wisp; only historical compulsions at given times could bring that about.

In the constant harping on inter-group killings among the militant groups, it is often forgotten that preceding these were more tragic developments - intra-group killings, and internal dissensions. The PLOT killed its own founder-ideologue and theoretician Santhathiyar (Vasanthan), the TELO killed its own leading military commander Dhas, and of all places within the premises of the Jaffna hospital, killing in the process a nurse and a patient as well. The EPRLF expelled its own popular military commander Douglas Devananda, thereby forcing him to form another group - the Eelam People's Democratic Front (EPDP). All these indicate that the problem of disunity goes even beyond the often highlighted inter-group warfare, and has its roots in the psyche of the people themselves. Does it therefore mean that we give up the struggle and fold our hands and wait saying that we do not deserve an independent homeland? (To continue)

* The venerable one-time Mayor of Jaffna and President of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Front, Dr S A Tharmalingam, who in his late seventies in 1983 had the physical courage to defend himself against his attackers inside the Welikade jail.

**There is no
salvation
without
Tamil Eelam**

GLIMPSSES OF LIFE IN JAFFNA

(N Shanmugaratnam, Associate Professor, Agricultural University, Norway)

(continued from Vol 2 No 17)

I am just not capable of capturing the poetry in their freely spoken Tamil when I translate into English. One of them, a mother of a teenage boy, expressed her anguish in words that sounded biblical. Haunted by the fear that her son may be taken away by force for military training by a militant group she said, "Nowadays, every moment, I feel 'blessed are those who are barren'. It was a joy to see my child grow up. Now, that joy has turned into grief. I may lose him any moment. I ask god why he gave me this son. I would have been a happier woman today if I did not have a child at all".

The other woman reflected on the political situation in general. "We have no aspirations to dominate the Sinhalese. At the same time we are not prepared to be dominated by them or any other power. For me, our struggle is a struggle for human dignity, our self-respect as Tamils. That is what we want, our dignity. It is worth dying for it. We are willing to live in one country with the Sinhalese, but only as equals. I am willing to be a Lankan only on that basis".

"What is freedom after all", she asked rhetorically and went on, "Freedom is the recognition of other people's right to exist. All we want them to do for us is to recognise our right to exist". I joined her, "They cannot be free as long as we are oppressed by them or in their name".

For the first time in my field visits I also heard some very frank opinions about Tamil expatriates. A tenant farmer and part-time agricultural labourer said, "We and our boys have suffered untold hardships for years, and we continue to suffer. Those Tamils who had the means to escape, to run away to Europe, may be waiting to come back to rule us when the war is over. They are the worst type of Tamils. We cannot allow them to enjoy the fruits of our sweat and blood".

27.6.89

We set out to Kilinochchi early in the morning. Our driver Balakrishnan has now become a part of the team. He is from the same village as Mala. He is a kind man with a great faith in his village deity 'Palam Pillayar' (the old Ganapathi - the god with the elephant face). My uncle and aunt were worried about this trip. They told me that there were so many IPKF checkpoints. I asked Balakrishnan if it involved more risks than driving within the peninsula. He said, "Oh! no. You have nothing

to worry as long as you are in this car (this was another A40). You know, I always have the blessings of Palam Pillayar. I don't start the day without going to the temple and praying. He has never let me down. Believe me elder brother, in the last two years, I have taken in this car more than thirty women in labour pain to the hospital during curfew hours through our lanes and by-lanes".

Balakrishnan turned to me with a broad grin which appeared to be his way of displaying his self-confidence and winning my confidence. Lowering his voice he said, "Don't worry, I got IPKF as well as LTTE passes. We use them accordingly to the situation". This time his grin was even broader, "These are survival tactics, elder brother!"

We were stopped only at the Elephant pass checkpoint, where we met an unusually polite and cheerful jawan. A boy in military attire greeted me, "Good morning sir, how are you sir?" He looked at Rajini and Laila and said, "Good morning auntees, How are you aunties". The ladies were visibly peeved by the Indian kid aunteeing them. He checked us and wished us, "Have a good day". It was quite an unusual experience. Ranjani said, "They might have taken you for an Indian visitor or a journalist. That is why he was so polite". I told her that he was just a pleasant young Indian, not a typical jawan.

In more than a sense Kilinochchi is the transition-zone between Jaffna and the rest of the Tamil homeland. It is a settler-region on the border of the Vanni which connects the North and the East. Settlers, and non-settler officials and businessmen from the peninsula dominate Kilinochchi which has a growing number of Tamils from the plantations who constitute the bulk of the working class. The social structure of Kilinochchi is not a mere reproduction of that of Jaffna, but a complex ensemble of Jaffna's caste system and an evolving class structure at the bottom of which is the proletariat from the plantations.

Kilinochchi has had its share of crop damage by IPKF troop movements. In one Assistant Government Agent Division alone (there are altogether four) more than 200 families had their paddy crops partly or fully destroyed by the IPKF. There was damage to other crops too. The military occupation has severely reduced wage employment. At Indrapuram, one of the poorest villages I saw in my entire field tour, people told us that their mobility was

highly curtailed and the coconut estates in which they found casual employment in the past were now occupied by the Indian army.

Indrapuram is yet another real piece of evidence of the discrimination perpetrated by successive governments against the North and East in agricultural and rural development. It was meant to be a state sponsored settlement for landless peasants selected from different parts of the North. But when these families came to Indrapuram there was hardly any infrastructure to begin settled economic life. Each family got a piece of land in a sandy area with erratic rainfall and without irrigation facilities. Of the 130 families who have joined the village's Thrift and Credit Co-operative Society, only 17 could afford to construct their own wells for irrigation. The rest are at the mercy of the weather gods.

Our meeting at Indrapuram took place in a little hut which is used as the village's community centre. Men and women were airing the grievances of a relatively new settlement which lacked practically every basic amenity and where cultivation entailed heavy risks due to its total dependence on an unreliable rainfall. Of course, they knew it was the responsibility of the government to provide the settlement with basic infrastructure. They have waited long enough to be disillusioned. "What about the newly set-up provincial council?", I asked. One of them smiled cynically and remarked, "the provincial council?...we don't feel any change in our lives. We don't see any of those people supposed to be sitting there".

As we drove back to Kilinochchi town from Indrapuram, I could not help letting out my feelings of depression. "If we and Indrapuram survive this war..." Before I could finish, came the instantaneous retort from Sita, a woman co-operative development worker from Kilinochchi who accompanied us. "You will return to the safety of your home in Norway. We will be here, and Indrapuram will be here. And, to talk of the future is very, very real for us". As I turned to look at Sita, her penetrating eyes matched the power of her words and left me speechless.

We were advised to leave Kilinochchi early as the situation was rather tense. On our way back, somewhere near Mirusuvil, we saw a group of colourful Kavadi dancers dancing to a Sinhala baila tune played by nathaswaram and thavil. They were dancing their way to a local temple. On the previous day Laila and I were talking about

the heightened religiousness of the people. Wherever we went we saw many people praying at temples. The topic was revived after the kavady scene and as we approached Jaffna, Laila wanted to see a big temple. We went to a Vishnu temple. There we saw a woman crying and singing a song for God Krishna.

She might well be praying for her teenage son to be saved from conscription. In a land without freedom spiritualism is also an outlet for the oppressed mind. After all, religion is the sigh of the oppressed, it is the heart of a heartless world.

When one cannot open one's mouth in public to speak one's mind, speaking to God is the safest outlet. At least, God is not known to be an informant! But, ironic as it may seem, the Indian soldier and the ordinary Tamil worship the same gods in Jaffna; and in all probability both of them are praying for the same thing - personal safety! We saw it at the Nallur temple.

As we drove from Madduvil toward Chunakam we witnessed a horrible scene at Eevinai. I saw an Indian soldier hitting a farmer on the head with his rifle butt just ten metres away from our car. As I turned away from that gory sight, I saw, on the other side of the road, four jawans dragging two youths into a truck at gun point. That was a taste of the 'peace keeping style' of the IPKF. I was, of course, convinced even before I saw these scenes the IPKF was not professionally equipped to do peace keeping. India did not build the fourth largest army in the world with peace keeping in the region in mind! And, we are not living in the days of Dharmasoka or Elara.

27.6.89

It was a day full of political discussions with friends at the university. A student

counsellor told me about arrests and torture of undergraduates by the IPKF. Many male and female students from Jaffna University have been arrested and tortured by the IPKF and its allies. Some of the accounts of torture were blood curdling. A brave group of four members of the staff has produced a two volume documentation of human rights violations by the IPKF and Tamil militant groups including the LTTE which has shot several people on charges of collaboration with the Indian army.

The volumes bear the pregnant title "The Broken Palmyrah". Palmyrah, as alluded to before, symbolises the endurance of the Jaffna people. The title captures the social dislocations, deprivations, and the broken morale of the Jaffna society. "Where have we ended up after so many years of struggle?", asked a friend. "Do you get any impression of any kind of liberation, are there any signs that we have moved forward? In many respects we are more unfree than before we started. The way our people welcomed the IPKF was a show of their desperation. They had virtually lost hope in the militants who were spending more of their energies in fighting each other and, in the process, killing a lot of innocent people. People had a feeling that the 'boys' were too divided and politically too adolescent to deliver them the promised land of Eelam. In a fundamental sense our liberation struggle had yet to start". It sounded like a summing up of my own impressions of the past few days.

If casteism and status of women in today's Jaffna are any indicators, the liberation struggle has hardly made an impact on the social structure and reactionary values of the Tamil society. As we discussed the women's and caste questions, I remembered something I heard from a woman just

before I got into the car after the meeting on the 26th, at Pandaterippu. "They (the militants) talk of liberation of our land. They vow to fight to the last to defend the Tamil soil. They are heroic, but what is this soil without us, the people?"

"We must rediscover our humanity before we can go further" said a young man with glistening eyes. "The biggest casualty of this struggle in the name of liberation is the most cherished value of liberty itself".

A student from the up-country made an acute observation about Jaffna society. "as individuals, the people are highly literate and admirably persevering, but as a community they are not progressive, on the contrary conservative, reactionary". (To continue)

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THE WAY OUT OF THE IMPASSE

P Nedumaran - President, Tamil National Movement

[A brief submitted at the discussions the author had with a few members of the National Front Government is reproduced.]

May I first congratulate the National Front Government in assigning immediate priority to the improving of India's relations with her neighbours, especially Sri Lanka and Nepal. For, what is at stake here is not merely the restoring of good relations with neighbours, but restoring the very image and credibility of our country in the eyes of the entire SAARC region and the international comity of nations.

May I offer the following thoughts as a way out of ending our prolonged military involvement in Sri Lanka while at the same time paving the way for peace, normalcy and a democratic process in the island:-

1. What should have proved to be a step in the right direction in the signing of the joint communique in Colombo on Sept 18 was soon aborted by the stand taken by the previous administration - that "the question of withdrawal of the IPKF could not be de-linked from that of ensuring the safety of Tamils and maintenance of law and order in the north-eastern province". Any attempt at this stage to resurrect the same policy adopted by the previous government in linking the two issues should be dismissed out of hand. It certainly is not going to help the present government in pursuing its policy of improving relations with Sri Lanka.

2. The ensuring of the safety of the Tamils there should certainly figure in Indian policy calculations, but my plea is that it should be treated as a separate issue and sorted out at a diplomatic level, and should in no way affect the speedy de-induction of the IPKF.

The government has to be wary, at the same time, of a deceptive picture that is being painted of the ground situation in the north-east through inspired reports in the media that have no relevance to truth. These, one has reason to suspect, are engineered by a section of our own Intelligence Service, and actively promoted by interested parties in Tamil Nadu who have a vested interest in the rivalries among the Tamil militant groups. The objective appears

to be to pursue the war against the LTTE by proxy, by retaining a limited IPKF presence and Intelligence personnel, who while appearing to be uninvolved, would offer ground support to the surrogate groups. Needless to say, that would be a self-defeating exercise. If the IPKF at full strength could not bring the Tigers to their knees, it would be idle to expect these surrogate groups with no commitment whatsoever, and which have already earned the ill-will of the overwhelming civilian population through their high-handed arrogance undercover provided by the IPKF, and through forced conscription of Tamil youths of tender years, to perform miracles. The only way to stop these youths from being decimated, from preventing an influx of these youths into Tamil Nadu under the guise of "refugees" (it has already started happening) and creating law and order problems in Tamil Nadu itself, is to call off this foolish policy line forthwith.

3. The decision of the LTTE to open a dialogue with the Premadasa Government was the result of compulsion forced on it by the unwise policies of the previous government. The repeated attempts by the LTTE leadership to come to an understanding with India (which they consider their natural ally) were spurned off-hand by the previous government, and a complete laying down of their arms was made conditional to any dialogue. That opportunity which was missed earlier, and seized by the Premadasa Government instead, should now be taken up by the National Front government. It is my submission that the goodwill that the present government enjoys in the eyes of both the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE should be immediately put to good use, and tripartite talks should be initiated in Delhi involving these two parties. Such talks could eventually culminate in a top-level meeting involving the Sri Lankan President, Mr Premadasa, and the LTTE leader, Mr Prabhakaran, with India offering her good offices in determining the measure of autonomy to be given to the Tamil-dominated north-east and ensur-

ing immediate peace. It is my strong belief that the present government would be able to persuade President Premadasa to concede a higher degree of autonomy to the Tamils than what Mr Rajiv Gandhi tried to, under the 1987 accord, and failed.

It has to be realised in this connection that there is a fundamental, qualitative change in the ground situation in Sri Lanka between the time of the induction of the IPKF and now. At the time of the entry of the IPKF, the most representative Tamil militant group, the LTTE, and the Sri Lanka Government, were in a state of war. Today, they are engaged in a continuous, friendly dialogue with each other.

While offering these thoughts in helping to shape the broad guidelines of policy-making, there are other steps crying for immediate attention - steps which are mostly administrative - and which could clear the air and create a conducive climate for a successful conduct of policy. They are:-

- a) The release of about 150 political activists belonging to the LTTE who were arrested in Madras on Oct 9 last year, airlifted to north Sri Lanka and being kept in detention in IPKF camps until now.

- b) The release of an estimated 2,000 - 3,000 unarmed Tamil civilians, suspected to be LTTE sympathisers, rounded up in Jaffna itself and who continue to be detained in IPKF custody. Allegations that some of them are missing, and some have been tortured have led to Amnesty International investigating such cases.

- c) While the present government's priorities include the enshrining of the right to information in the Constitution, it is well-known that the State-directed electronic media, Dordarshan and All India Radio, had been for the past two and a half years involving itself in suppression of information from the north-east Sri Lanka, blatant disinformation, and an active propaganda against the LTTE particularly in the twice-daily Tamil programme of All India Radio beamed to north-east Sri Lanka, which

continues to this day. This had destroyed the credibility of this medium in the eyes of the entirety of listeners in north-east Sri Lanka and among the thinking sections in Tamil Nadu, while misguiding public opinion among uncritical listeners in Tamil Nadu. These Tamil programmes need to be wound up immediately.

d) Along with the de-induction of Indian troops it is very imperative that no weaponry is left behind in the hands of various sundry militant groups operating in the north-east. It is equally necessary that all such weapons be withdrawn immediately. It is ironic that the IPKF which was under the 1987 accord entrusted with the task of disarming the Tamil militant groups, particularly the LTTE, should instead have ended up in arming other groups while failing to disarm the LTTE.

I also make the following general observations:-

1. Policy-making in any country should be in the hands of the elected representatives of the people. What really happened in the case of Sri Lanka was that a handful of bureaucrats,

members of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and one or two cronies of the earlier Prime Minister were allowed to handle policy, with the elected Congress-I members as well as the cabinet rubber-stamping the policy decisions. This unsatisfactory way of running policy was the main reason for the fiasco in Indo-Sri Lankan relations, and loss of Indian prestige.

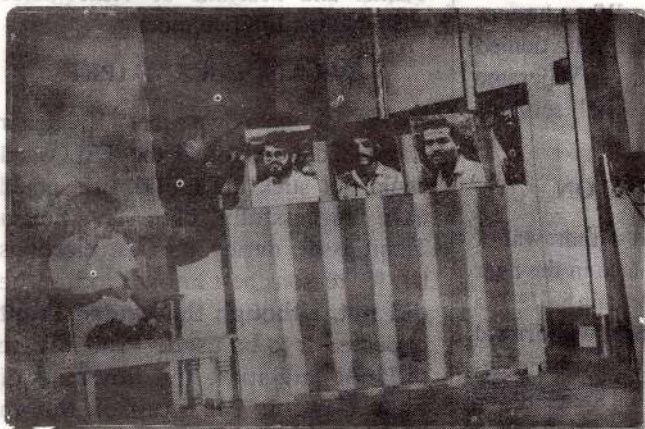
2. While the Congress-I leader and former Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, with hardly any justification, was yet able to campaign on the Sri Lankan Tamil issue at the recent elections in Tamil Nadu claiming that his government was able "to get more powers to the Tamils than what they were demanding in 1982 and 1983", it was a great pity that the DMK, while being the only constituent member of the National Front in a position to campaign effectively on the Sri Lankan Tamil issue, did not only fail to do that, but even failed to counter the palpably untruthful claim made by the former Prime Minister. It was not surprising that in his Marina Beach speech Mr Rajiv Gandhi publicly thanked the DMK leader. *The Hindu*, dated

6.11.89, published his speech.

On the ethnic issue of Sri Lanka, he said that after the withdrawal of the IPKF, the North-East province had become stable. He praised the co-operation given by the late MGR and the Chief Minister Mr M Karunanidhi in efforts to resolve the issue.

"However, the DMK which extended its support to the Centre on the Sri Lanka Tamils issue had joined hands with the National Front, the parties of which were opposed to Centre's approach towards the issue," he said.

One wonders therefore what useful contribution the DMK leadership could make in formulating a policy on the Sri Lankan Tamil issue that would be in conformity with the sensible attitude adopted by the National Front hitherto on this issue. One would earnestly wish that the government would develop a mind of its own on the whole question, particularly when this cabinet (unlike the previous one) enjoys the advantage of having Ministers who are already very knowledgeable on the Sri Lankan situation.



SOLT IN BOMBAY AND BANGALORE

Supporters' Organisation of Liberation Tigers in Bombay and Bangalore have been very active for the last two years. Supremo Prabaharan's 36th birthday was celebrated in November in both cities on a grand scale.

At the **Tamilar Resurgence Conference** held in Bangalore pictures of LTTE martyrs 'Ponnamman' and others, were unveiled. A publication "*India's My lai*" was released.

THAI PONGAL AND SEASONS GREETINGS

WE WISH ALL OUR READERS HAPPY THAI PONGAL AND PEACEFUL NEW YEAR.
LET THE NEW YEAR BRING SOLACE AND TRANQUILITY TO THE OPPRESSED PEOPLE
ALL OVER THE WORLD.

LTTE LEADERS VISIT EAST

LTTE's political spokesman Mr Balasingam and Thilip Yogi visited some parts of the Amparai-Batticaloa area on Nov 28. They were flown by a Sri Lankan Air Force helicopter. They announced that 1,305 LTTE fighters had been killed in clashes with the Sri Lankan, Indian armies and rival Tamil groups. It was said that hundreds of TNA cadres who surrendered to the LTTE had been sent to their parents and the LTTE had assured safety to all who surrender. Some of the TNA cadres have surrendered to the Sri Lankan forces as well.

TNA ON LOOTING SPREE

Some of the TNA cadres who fled to Batticaloa after the LTTE attack had gone on a wild spree of looting Tamil and Muslim shops and houses taking advantage of the pull-out of Indian forces from Batticaloa. They are said to have entered shops and residences forcibly and robbed TV sets, radios, cassette players and motor bicycles.

IPKF ARRIVE

An Indian ship disembarked over 600 soldiers in Trincomalee on Dec 4 and took back about 500 IPKF personnel to return to India. The same ship in an earlier trip to Trincomalee port about a week back brought over 1000 soldiers before taking back about 450 personnel. On Dec 6, "Vishwawickrem" took back 50 IPKF men from Trincomalee while "Koncanshkti" ferried out about 400 men.

PEOPLE'S FRONT OF THE LTTE

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam has got its political wing registered as a political party under the name of The People's Front of the Liberation Tigers. The Tigers have had a political wing since 1976 but never registered it as a legal party. The move is the culmination of more than six months of peace talks with the government.

However, it is said that the party will not contest elections until there is peace, the Indian troops that fought for the last two years complete their pull-out and the government drops the constitutional amendment requiring election candidates to swear an oath of allegiance to the unitary state.

The party is dedicated to "fighting for the right of self-determination of the Tamils and Muslims" and "protecting and preserving the geographical identity and integrity of the traditional homeland of the Tamils and Muslims". By self-determination it is meant the right to associate and integrate with the unitary state, or, as a nation, to secede.

Mr Mahendrarajah alias Mahathaya was named as the President of the party while Mr Yogaratnam (Yogi) was named as its General Secretary.

PACK OF LIARS

Mr Ranjan Wijeratne described on December 21 India's civil servants and army generals as a "pack of liars" and accused them of misleading Indian politicians. He said that he would deal in future only with the new Prime Minister, Mr V P Singh, or his External Affairs Minister.

Mr Wijeratne said that the IPKF had already withdrawn from Batticaloa, Amparai, Mullaitivu and Mannar and would be leaving Vavuniya and Kilinochchi by December 31. But he said that no agreement had been reached on the withdrawal of IPKF troops from Jaffna and Trincomalee. When he was told by the journalists that India denied having trained the TNA, Mr Wijeratne replied that the Indian civil servants and generals were liars.

IPKF WILL STAY ON

It is understood that total withdrawal of the IPKF will not take place in the near future. The IPKF will remain in Jaffna and Trincomalee and their withdrawal will depend on the security arrangements for the Tamils in the area and the steps to be taken by the Sri Lankan Government for more devolution of power. Though the Tamils in general demanded immediate withdrawal of the IPKF from the North-East, due to the role it played, the Tamils and Muslims in and around Trincomalee town fear attack on them by the Sinhalese and the Sri Lankan forces no sooner than the IPKF leave. They fear that the LTTE will not be able to adequately safeguard them. The IPKF in Trincomalee has been behaving comparatively well.

It has been pointed out that the Sinhalese refugees in Trincomalee have not been settled due to an unresolved



issue - the refugees want to get back to the lands from where they moved out but the Provincial Council objects to it as these lands which belong to Hindu Temples and Tamil people were at one time forcibly occupied by these Sinhala people. It is said that the Sri Lankan Government is supporting the Sinhalese, taking good care of them, and waiting to re-settle them on the lands belonging to the Hindu Temples and Tamil people as soon as the IPKF leaves. Already several Tamil villages have been wiped out in Trincomalee and Muttur districts. Therefore, the Tamils and Muslims of Trincomalee wish that the IPKF to remain.

KALAINAR AND IPKF

It is not unknown that Kalaignar Karunanidhi supported the TELO and could not stick the LTTE. He could have successfully used the Eelam Tamil issue during the last elections but for reasons best known to him he did not, although the United Front expected it to be used. Probably he did not anticipate the downfall of Rajiv Gandhi. Mr Murasoli Maran who has a heavy influence on Kalaignar too has not been in good terms with the LTTE. Therefore, it appears that Kalaignar's stand is that the IPKF withdrawal should be linked to "Peace and Security of the Tamils".

INDIAN ARMY'S ARITHMETIC

LTTE cadres

In Oct 87 - Total strength

Rajiv said (boys) 2,000

In Nov 89 - Gen Kalkat said

Killed - over 2,500

Wounded - about 2,000

Captured - as many as 1,200

What do you understand ?

SRI LANKAN NEWS

JVP MEN COMMIT SUICIDE

At least ten men were reported to have committed suicide in the South following the deaths of JVP leaders and continuing security forces crackdown against the movement. According to reliable sources one man had committed suicide by hanging while the rest had taken poison. The deaths were reported from Deiyandara, Bamunugama and Devalegama in the Matara district. The JVPers had later set fire to the bodies of those who had committed suicide in the Deiyandara area.

However, the response of the rebels to the Sri Lankan Government's surrender appeal has been disappointing, military sources said. The rebels are pressing ahead with sporadic attacks against security forces, government supporters and state establishments, despite the arrest or killing of several of their leaders during the past month.

"We have finished our match with the first eleven," Ranjan Wijeratne told Parliament recently, referring to the killing or arrest of the Front's leaders. Wijeratne had said that six of the seven political bureau members of the Front had been recently "accounted for". "We are now playing with the second and third elevens and we will win." Wijeratne said.

At least 200 young men were shot or hacked to death on December 21 in the Hambantota district alone. Residents reported seeing bodies strung from trees and lamp-posts and others burning on car tyres. They blamed the killings on the rebels and pro-government vigilantes hunting the attackers. The vigilantes are members of the security forces and bodyguards of politicians from the ruling party.

VARITIES TO OPEN

All universities are to be re-opened on Jan 10. The campuses will function with military officers serving as competent authorities. Campuses were closed on July 11, 1989 under the or-

ders of the Defence Ministry. Since then, several universities have been converted into detention camps and at least 104 undergraduates have been reported killed or missing.

AI REPORTS

Amnesty International, the human rights organisation, has claimed that since the re-imposition in Sri Lanka of a state of emergency in June more than a thousand people are killed each month. Daily reports attribute random killings to both the security and paramilitary forces, it says. Hundreds of defenceless people, according to amnesty, have been deliberately killed by security forces and pro-government paramilitary groups attempting to quell increasing violent opposition to the government in southern Sri Lanka. The report also detailed alleged reprisal killings by the IPKF of suspected supporters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

In the light of the large-scale massacres, Amnesty said, it has appealed to the Sri Lankan Government to withdraw the emergency regulation which permits the disposal of bodies by the security forces without post-mortem or inquest. It also called for an impartial commission to investigate widespread allegations of the involvement in the killings of security force personnel and politicians belonging to the ruling United National Party. Amnesty expressed concern that some killings appeared to have been carried out to prevent effective investigations of human rights violations.

SIRIMAVO SAYS TO DISBAND TNA

Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the Opposition Leader, has urged the government to disband the TNA operating in the merged NE province. She has said that the situation in the north and east would be very serious unless the TNA was forthwith disbanded. Mrs B questioned, how it was that the camps recently vacated by the IPKF came to be occupied by this so-called Tamil National Army. Clashes between the LTTE and this illegal army had resulted in harassment of the people in this area.

REACTIONS TO RAJIV GANDHI'S RESIGNATION

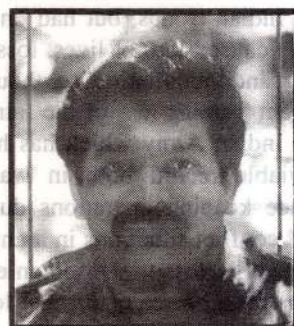
Rajiv Gandhi's resignation as Prime Minister of India has been welcomed with satisfaction and joy in Sri Lanka. *The Daily News*, which is a government-owned newspaper, recalled President Premadasa's comment last week-end that no one who harmed Sri Lanka would prosper and commented favourably on Congress (I)'s electoral defeat.

'Rajiv Gandhi Rejected' banner-headlined its sister daily, *The Sri Lanka Observer*, commenting on the electoral defeat of the Congress.

The LTTE has also welcomed the electoral defeat of the Congress and fall of Rajiv Gandhi. LTTE's spokesman commented that Rajiv Gandhi conspired to use the IPKF to wipe out the LTTE completely. The World Federation of Tamils too has expressed joy over the defeat of the Rajiv Government and has congratulated Prime Minister V P Singh and several Cabinet Ministers on their election to power.



May we hope
that the two leaders
see eye to eye
in resolving
the long protracted
problems of the
Eelam Tamils.



RECOGNISE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND CHART OUT A FRESH POLICY ON TAMIL EELAM

M K Eelaventhana

[We reproduce a letter addressed to Mr V P Singh by Mr M K Eelaventhana of TELF Madras]

It is with a sense of profound relief and happiness that the Tamil Eelam Liberation Front welcomes your acceptance of the high office of Prime Ministership of the great Republic of Bharat. In doing so, we are not only expressing the sentiments of our Party, but we are also reflecting the emotions of an overwhelming number of Eelam Tamils both within the island of Ceylon as well as outside.

Your accession to the Prime Ministerial office represents, in our view, a return to the many lofty values of Truth, Honesty and Integrity in public life, a legacy left behind by the founding fathers of this nation, men like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. To us, Eelam Tamils, it also brings hope for the ushering in of a new era of peace and sanity in our own homeland. On behalf of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Front, may we submit the following proposals for your own active consideration and that of the National Front Government:-

1. In-as-much as the so-called Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Agreement entered into by the previous Prime Minister of India and the previous President of Sri Lanka had the sanction of neither Indian nor Sri Lankan nor Eelam Tamil opinion, and in so far as it has failed to bring about peace in the island and has on the contrary brought more violence to all sections of the people, the Agreement should be abrogated forthwith on a bilateral basis in consultation with the Sri Lankan Government.

2. Since the induction of the "Peace Keeping Force" has brought neither Peace to the Eelam Tamils, nor glory to the Indian troops, but had on the contrary caused loss of lives, loss of property and humiliation to thousands of Eelam Tamils; loss of the fair name of the Indian Army which has had an unenviable record both in war and in peace keeping operations during several conflict situations in many parts of the world; loss to the Indian exchequer of several crores of rupees; loss of In-

dian credibility in the eyes of the world - the "de-induction" of Indian troops from the Tamil areas in the island should be speeded up from now on, on a swift schedule in keeping with the spirit of the communique signed in Colombo on Sept 18.

3. Since there is strong suspicion that Indian Intelligence agencies are organising supplies of Indian weaponry to various nondescript Tamil groups that do not find favour with the vast mass of the peace loving Eelam Tamils, we implore the National Front Government to put a halt to this destructive process and ensure that all such weapons are withdrawn immediately.

4. Since there is a legitimate fear in the minds of the Eelam Tamils (as well as the Tamils in Tamil Nadu) that once the IPKF is withdrawn, they might come under attack by the Sri Lankan armed forces, we appeal to the National Front Government to use its good offices, and its greater stature in the eyes of the Premadasa Government, to ensure that any such possibility is obviated.

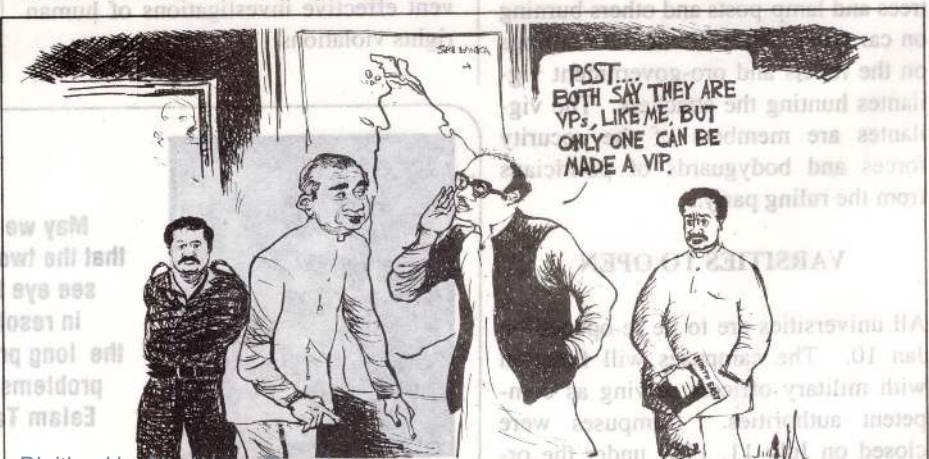
5. Since several Indian military commanders serving in the north-east have themselves been quoted in the Indian media as saying that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) enjoy widespread support among the people, and in the light of the dialogue they are carrying on with the Sri Lankan Government, it would not serve even India's interests in carrying on a mili-

tary vendetta against them on the ground and sustaining a propaganda blitz against them on Indian soil through Doordarshan and All India Radio, particularly on the special Tamil beams. We appeal to you strongly that these counter-productive and retrograde measures be stopped forthwith.

6. While all these steps would in themselves usher in a healthier atmosphere in India's neighbour, it is our earnest wish that the government that you head would, while turning away from the abrasive approach of your predecessor's, play a new, healthy, positive and healing role in Sri Lankan affairs, in ensuring that the Tamils live in peace and dignity, and that the rule of law returns to the north-east, and that democratic norms are restored.

7. Finally, we would like the National Front Government to review the policy in respect of Eelam Tamils in depth, re-assess India's attitude towards them, recognise their legitimate right to self-determination, and chart out a fresh policy that would enable the Eelam Tamils to live permanently in safety and security in a homeland of their own, as a close and friendly neighbour of India, which they had always held as their emotional motherland.

Thanking you, and assuring you the warm wishes of Eelam Tamils in all your future endeavours to restore the prestige of India in the eyes of the world and all of us.



FOLK TALES AND HISTORICAL STORIES

by Thaatha

THE SEA THAT OUGHT NOT TO BE THERE

Anyone who travels from Jaffna to Karainagar ("Karai Theevu" as it used to be known) would have noticed the ten large culverts towards the end of the journey. This stretch of the road connects Karaitheevu with the Jaffna Peninsula.

This roadway is recent in history. In the days of yore, the connecting linkway was at the northern end. Then the folks had to do the same journey by a more hazardous route. It linked the two outpost temples of Ponnalayam at the Jaffna end, and Sivan Kovil at the Karainagar end. This lowland route was given up due to rough seas and stormy weather from Palk Strait. The present roadway is through the shallow waters of the lagoon and is less troublesome.

But by doing the new roadway, a small stretch of sea has been extended to the North, called the "Vellai Kadal", which we can do without.

WILL JAFFNA BECOME A DESERT

When it rains, some of the water went underground, some of it flows to ponds (or kulams), and the balance goes as waste to the sea. There is also some evaporation.

The water that goes underground is conserved and stored there; just like keeping in deposit some money in a Bank. It is drawn upon during the dry months from wells, kernies etc. That is how life subsists in Jaffna today.

We should however be careful; in our greed, we should not overdraw. Just as in banking, we would then have to pay the penalty. Salt water would intrude if we draw more fresh water than the quantity that seeps into the well from the underground. Therefore so long as we do not overdraw, this water balance of input in the rainy season and withdrawal during the dry season will continue; there is therefore no reason for Jaffna to become desert.

It therefore becomes obvious that measures should be taken to increase the water stored underground. A device adopted by our ancients is to store the rainwater in "kulams" or small tanks. Such storage would in many cases increase the underground storage.

Our ancients knew this; they encouraged digging tanks wherever the ground is low. They even connected one tank to another by canal, in order to distribute the storage. The tanks were named after their builders. But many of these have now been converted into farmlands, encroached on or built upon.

But we still have the original pristine names; for instance there is the Ariya Kulam, near the Jaffna Railway Station. Vannan Kulam somewhere in the City, Brahmana Kulam in Nallur, Pandara Kulam also in Nallur etc. The total, number of tanks, would approximately be over five hundred.

So the answer to the question raised above becomes obvious.

A PRINCE'S LEGACY

Prince Ellalan ruled from Anuradhapura for 44 years, from 204 BC. He is reputed to have been a very just ruler. It is said that he had a bell hung outside his palace, which anyone with a complaint can ring; he is sure to be heard. One day, as tradition says, a cow was seen ringing it. Its young calf had been cruelly run over by the chariot of an important person of the realm. The King had him punished, without any sympathy.

Vavunikulam village is situated in Tunukkai, near Mankulam, in the Northern Province. It is in the site of an ancient township then known as "Pali Nagaram". *Palinagaram had the suburbs of Mannarkulam, Pannerkulam, Vanerikulam etc.* The mainstay of life in the region was an important large lake called Peli Wavi. That was a work of pristine glory in Vanni. Tradition has attributed the origin of all these to Prince Ellalan. That is the Prince's legacy which the Vanni is enjoying today.

Mention must also be made of the ruins of an ancient place of worship found at the site, which makes it hallowed. New temples have now been erected.

WHO ELSE CAN SURPASS THEM

Once upon a time in history, the Northern mainland of Lanka was neither under Jaffna, nor under the influence of Anuradhapura. This region consisted of the present Thunukkai and its neighbourhood. That was the Pallava era in early history.

There is a traditional lore in the Vanni, that at that time, three enterprising Chieftains arrived from India, with their retinue. They settled down in the area mentioned above; they built tanks and opened lands for cultivation and generally developed the region.

The leader was Pallava Rayan; others were Akka Rayan, and Kanaga Rayan. The settlements are known by their names even today. It is said that there was also a fourth one called Veera Rayan, of whom nothing is heard today.

Recently a statue of the Hindu Sivalingam deity, of the Pallava period, was discovered in the jungles. It has now been housed in a new temple called "Uruthirapuri Iswaran Temple".

BEHIND WHOM THE RAINS WOULD FOLLOW

The Vanni Region of the Northern Province once functioned independently under several Chieftains, known as Vanniyanars. They came originally from Thondai Nadu, in 32 groups. Each group settled around a well. Soon after a village and tank were founded in each place.

Foremost among these settlements was Pannankamam. The last of the rulers of Pannankamam was a lady named Nalla Naachchiyar. She is said to have been a noble person, who did much good to her subjects. So much so, that there is a symbolic traditional lore, that "Wherever she went the rains would follow her".



ROOT

தமிழீழ ஆய்வு நிறுவனம்

RESEARCH ORGANISATION OF TAMIL EELAM

SEMINAR

**RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT: Grass roots initiatives
in Tamil Eelam**

24th and 25th March 1990

The objective of this seminar is to identify opportunities for maximising the peoples' participation in the socio-economic development of Tamil Eelam.

It will examine the role of science and technology in meeting the aspirations of the Tamil nation for undertaking meaningful and sustainable development, taking into account the cultural history and prevailing political reality in the Tamil homeland.

This seminar aims to attract the participation of aid organisations, researchers and planners involved in development initiatives at grass roots level. It is hoped that the seminar will bring together professionals and intellectuals who will be sensitive to the needs of a deprived and oppressed people and draw up meaningful and constructive programmes for raising the living standards and promoting political stability in the Tamil homeland.

Papers are invited on

Tamil Homeland: Creation of suitable Indigenous Technology.

Community Development - Small Industries and Cottage Industries.

Community Development - Farming

Community Development - Fishing

Community Development - Energy Sources

Community development - Health

For more details, please contact Programme Secretary, ROOT,
8 Herm House, Clephane Road, London N1 2TP Tel: (01) 359 2834

Closing Date for submission of Papers: 10th February, 1990