

Tamil TIMES

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Children climbing out of a shelter after bombing attack.

THE DESTRUCTION OF JAFFNA



Row of shops in front of Manipay Mission Hospital after bombing of hospital on 7th August. Body being dragged out.



Mani Street, Jaffna



Damaged shops - near market in Kilinochchi.



Main Street, Jaffna. Premier Cafe.

Three Month Battle for Jaffna Fort

- ★ Opposition Calls for Halt to Bombing
- ★ Amnesty International Update on Human Rights
- ★ The Eelam Strategy
- ★ On Man-Hunts & Mass Murders
- ★ Civilians as Human Shields
- ★ Attorney General Abandons Murder Case of Journalist
- ★ Stop Aid - Plea to World Bank
- ★ India Urged to Act

STANDING COMMITTEE OF TAMIL SPEAKING PEOPLE (S.C.O.T.)

AN URGENT APPEAL FOR DONATIONS & SUPPORT

The Tamil people are today facing the gravest crisis in their history because of the continuing war and violence. Never before have the civilian population in the north-east of Sri Lanka been subjected to the scale of violence, violations, death, destruction and displacement that have occurred since June 11 this year. Every succeeding day has brought more havoc and devastation.

An estimated 800,000 people have been uprooted from their homes and even from their areas of normal residence and have become refugees. Over 100,000 people have fled to south India. Having been forced out of their homes and their areas, hundreds of thousands of people are suffering without food, medical and other essential facilities. A virtual economic blockade has been imposed in the north-east, particularly in the Jaffna peninsula, which has brought the people to the point of starvation.

The General Council of SCOT is of the view that we as an organisation which has traditionally been involved in providing relief for the affected and displaced people of North-East Sri Lanka should make our contribution in this hour of urgent need. From our limited resources, we have already provided relief assistance amounting to a sum of Ten Thousand pounds over and above our normal disbursements. We are aware that this is just a drop in the ocean when one takes account of the enormity of the problem.

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PEOPLE WHO BEAR THE BRUNT

'Just one more bomb left, what shall I do?', asked a pilot from a bomber aircraft. 'Drop it anywhere', was the prompt response from the pilot of the helicopter who was expected to indicate the target for the bombing. This conversation between two pilots heard at ground level over the FM band by all who cared to listen demonstrates the callous and indiscriminate nature of the bombing operations presently conducted by the government forces in Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka.

However, Sri Lanka's State Minister for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne told Parliament on 23 August, 'The aerial bombing in the north was being carried out with good intelligence and military precision to hit LTTE hide-outs'. And on 3 September he told an Opposition delegation which met the President that 'every care had been taken to avoid civilian casualties' in carrying out bombing operations in the north.

The Minister was not only being economical with the truth when he made these claims. His claims constitute brazen lies. The indiscriminate bombing operations carried out by government forces in the north, particularly in the Jaffna peninsula, have resulted in extensive destruction and an unaccountable number of civilian casualties. The evidence suggests that when bombs weighing between 100 to 300 kilograms are dropped by bomber aircraft from 3000 to 3500 metres high, they explode causing a deafening noise, and each bomb demolishes about ten houses completely and about twenty more are damaged to varying degrees. It cannot be acceptably argued that the Chunnakam electricity power station which provided electricity to the whole district, the various hospitals at Manipay, Manthikai and Moolai, the Bishop's House and several Cathedrals, churches and temples, the many college and school buildings and the like, which are located several miles away from the besieged Jaffna Fort were all bombed with 'military precision to hit LTTE hide-outs'. Nor can it be credibly claimed that the helicopter gunships which fly about pumping out two to three thousand bullets per minute from their high velocity super-machineguns in their sustained strafing operations all over Jaffna peninsula have taken 'every care to avoid civilian casualties'. Or can it be justifiably claimed that the long-range artillery shells repeatedly fired indiscriminately from Palaly airbase or from Karainagar naval base or from gunboats anchored off the Jaffna and Mannar coast are being targeted 'with military precision' and 'to avoid civilian casualties'?

In the eastern province where government forces are said to have regained control, reports are being received that a considerable number of people have been and are being deliberately killed or have 'disappeared' and are 'disappearing' without trace. Many an instance can be cited where government forces have picked up hundreds of people at a time, even from refugee camps, and whose whereabouts have remained unknown and in some cases their dead bodies have been found later. The unfortunate friction between the Tamil and Muslim communities has been further manipulated and exacerbated by the security forces. The so-called Muslim Home Guards ostensibly created to provide

security for the Muslim civilians are being armed and encouraged to kill members of the Tamil community or drive them away from their homes and villages. Besides the members of the security forces, death squads presumably sponsored by government agencies go about in unmarked vehicles committing atrocities of a kind worse than what had been happening in the south of the island in the recent past.

It is self-evident that the civilian population have borne the brunt of this ongoing war. Nearly a million people have become refugees. Over 125,000 people have braved the attacks from the Sri Lankan navy and fled to India as refugees. Subjected to a virtual food-blockade, people are starving to death and we hear harrowing reports of mothers poisoning their own children unable to endure the suffering of their dear ones without food. The sick and the injured have no hospitals or medicines. Hospitals have been bombed and incapacitated and doctors and medical staff have been kidnapped or have fled in search of physical safety. People are dying being bombed in their homes and even in refugee camps. Most people in the Jaffna peninsula spend long hours in bunkers and under culverts even when they are flooded during rainy days.

'It is providence that we are still alive here. What we are going through cannot be expressed in words. The situation is worsening every day. People have no strength to endure any more. How long can we live in bunkers? In Jaffna town, people have no homes to live. Many hundreds of homes have been reduced to rubble. Many more have no roofs, windows or doors. Who can help our people from this massacre? Unnecessarily people are being decimated. The government is not worried about the people. The militants can't protect the people but the people who want to escape the violence and go elsewhere are being prevented. On the pretext of eliminating the militants, the government is destroying the people with their bombing and shelling. More than five people are dying when one bomb falls. Casualties in the Jaffna town are less because most people have abandoned their homes and gone away to other parts of the peninsula. But because of the bombing of other areas many miles away from the Fort, at least ten to twenty people are dying daily. Since even refugee camps are being bombed, people have no place to go. Our survival depends on the mercy of those who can appeal on our behalf. Please pray for us'.

The above extract from a letter recently received from a Nun in Jaffna and all the evidence of what is happening in the east of the island reflect, if not fully, substantially, the plight of the civilian population, and we believe that our description of the present war, when it broke out in June, as a 'WAR ON THE PEOPLE' and to characterise it as 'a callous imposition upon the people' are absolutely justified.

The Sri Lankan Government on the pretext of fighting the LTTE, is prosecuting a war against the entire Tamil civilian population. By its acts of commission and omission, the Sri Lankan Government stands condemned for flagrantly violating the most elementary requirements of the Geneva Conventions in the conduct of the present war.

THREE MONTH BATTLE FOR JAFFNA FORT

Rita Sebastian From Colombo

The 17th century Dutch Fort in Jaffna that had become a prestige issue, between the Government and the LTTE, in three months of bitter fighting, finally fell into Government hands on September 13.

The bursting of firecrackers in the south indicated the mood of the people to the 'meticulously planned and carefully executed operation' that put an end to the trauma of two hundred policemen and soldiers trapped inside. In a combined sea, land and air operation aptly code-named 'Thrividabalaya' (Three Forces) soldiers from six regiments in rubber dinghies were said to have sailed across the lagoon to take the Fort.

Casualties were necessarily high. Military officials put their dead at 26 and injured at 130 in the first two days, and estimated that over 100 LTTE militants were killed in the operation.

The Sri Lankan Airforce also lost its first aircraft, a Sia Marchetti, an Italian built single engine jet.

Although the military put it down to a mechanical defect that prevented the young pilot to take off after a dive to bomb an LTTE position, the LTTE claimed they had shot it down with a SAM missile.

Military officials dismiss the claim pointing out that if the LTTE were in possession of SAM missiles, the war would have taken a different turn at the initial stages of the war itself considering that the Sri Lanka Airforce has only a small fleet of planes.

Even the Sia Marchettis brought into the country as trainee aircraft were doubling up as bombers. Indian officials in Colombo dismiss the claim as well since the LTTE were not able to bring down any of the Indian aircraft in thirtytwo months of an offensive against the LTTE.

The freeing of the Fort had an element of surprise because when the forces launched, what it called a major offensive on the northern peninsula on August 22, the taking of the Fort seemed to be the first priority.

Yet in spite of securing the islands of Kayts and Mandativu, its forward march to the Fort was thwarted by a heavily mined Pannai causeway and the blasting of the mainland end of it.

What had at first seemed imminent, was suddenly shelved and it was to take another three weeks before the final assault was made. One reason was that Mullaitivu Camp was also under LTTE siege, with mortar and heavy artillery attack continuously trained on it.

Fears that it could well go the way of the nearby Kokkavil Camp that was overrun by the LTTE in the first weeks of battle and where 50 soldiers were killed determined the military's next move. And Mullaitivu Camp replaced the Fort Camp on the military agenda.

In Mullaitivu it was pitching strength against strength and the army won having mounted a combined offensive against LTTE fortifications. The military put down LTTE casualties at over 150 killed and put its own casualties at only 12 dead. There has always been confusion about casualties. Both sides have always downplayed the numbers.

The Government's fire power in the northern peninsula has been through aerial bombardment of Tiger positions, giving rise to allegations of indiscriminate killing of civilians. An issue that led to a delegation of seventeen opposition political parties led by Sri Lanka Freedom Party leader Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike meeting President Ranasinghe Premadasa in late August.

Although there had been some reservations on the part of some SLFP

party members that the question of aerial bombardment should not be taken up in the face of military strategy to hit LTTE targets, Mrs. Bandaranaike brought up the issue making it quite clear that the position she was taking did not run contrary to her position regarding military operations against the LTTE.

Although political commentators have been quick to describe some of the parties as 'bob tails and rag tails' whose membership would not be sufficient even to fill a buggy cart, the opposition leader didn't seem affected by it.

Arising out of the meeting was the appointment of a ministerial committee headed by State Minister of Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne and comprising the Ministers of Health, Rehabilitation and Food who would every week interact with representatives of the political parties and review humanitarian issues related to the on-going conflict in the island's North-East Provinces, with representatives of the seventeen political parties having undertaken to visit the affected districts and look into the situation on the ground with regard to refugee camps, food shortages, sanitation and other relevant issues.

With the refugee figure estimated at one million persons of all three communities located in over 600 camps in

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Late News

Fort at Jaffna Falls into Rebel Hands

Christopher Morris in Colombo

Conflicting reports emerged from northern Sri Lanka yesterday about the fate of the army fort in the town of Jaffna. The Sri Lankan government says its troops were deliberately withdrawn, while the Tamil Tiger separatists say the fort fell into their hands after heavy fighting.

There are no independent reports emerging from the north, which has been virtually cut off since fighting began again in June.

The fort had been under siege from the Tigers since then, until the garrison was evacuated earlier this month in a big military operation. Now the government says the remaining relief troops have been withdrawn by the navy to an island just south of Jaffna.

However, the Tigers say the government forces were forced to flee. Whichever version proves to be more accurate the whole town is now effectively under rebel control.

Sri Lanka's Deputy Defence Minister, Ranjan Wijeratne, said yesterday that the government was

withdrawing its troops for humanitarian reasons, and that it hoped that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) would take over the running of the fort, and reopen the main Jaffna hospital, less than a mile away.

Mr. Wijeratne said he had assured the ICRC that air raids in the area would be halted, although Tamil Tigers who tried to enter the fort would be removed by the army.

Air force planes have carried out daily bombing raids in the Jaffna peninsula in the last few months, causing many casualties. The Tigers say the fort area is again under heavy aerial bombardment.

The government previously said that its aim was to advance from the fort and take control of a larger area around the hospital. However, the Tigers have continued to launch attacks with mortars, and are thought to have built a formidable network of defensive fortifications in the town centre. Any army attempt to break through the rebel defences would have led to very heavy casualties.

Courtesy The Guardian, 27.9.90

Opposition Demands Halt to Bombing

'We demand that the killing of civilians by indiscriminate aerial bombing be halted forthwith, a Press release signed by the leaders of five Opposition political parties stated.

The signatories to the release are Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike (SLFP), M. M. Ashroff (SLMC), Ataуда Seneviratne (USA), Dinesh Gunawardene (MEP) and Mavai S. Senathirajah (TULF).

The release stated:

'We, the Members of the Opposition in Parliament are alarmed at the killings and disappearances of innocent civilians of the country. We are disturbed that the aerial bombing carried out on the direction of the Government has caused the loss of so many innocent lives and damage to civilian houses and properties.

We are perturbed at two statements made by the State Minister for Defence in Parliament in the course of two emergency debates viz:

(1) That for the safety of the innocent civilians they should evacuate and go on a mass exodus to Vavuniya where he would give 'facilities'.

(2) The alternative for the civilian Tamils is to destroy the LTTE.

'We wish to remind the government that indiscriminate killings of this sort as a means to an end is an inhuman action against the people of our own country and unfair by our Armed Forces who are compelled to follow orders.

We demand that the killing of the civilians by indiscriminate aerial bombing be halted forthwith.

TULF ALARMED & CONCERNED ABOUT N-E SITUATION

The TULF delegation that met with President Ranasinghe Premadasa on 22nd August at the Presidential Secretariat, expressed alarm and serious concern at the tragic situation in the North and the East.

According to reliable figures, there are more than 600,000 refugees in the North and East. Several persons have literally walked across the island for almost two months as destitutes, begging for food and in a state of physical and mental exhaustion a press release by the TULF stated.

60,000 refugees moving from Mannar, proceeded to India. Many of them sold their meagre possessions to make the hazardous journey to India. Most of these camps were afflicted by diseases and starvation.

There is an acute shortage of food and medicines. Within the Jaffna Peninsula itself, the monthly food re-

quirements were about 50,000 tons. Only a small fraction of this amount has been despatched to these areas and distributed. The outbreak of cholera and dysentery have resulted in the deaths of several infants and refugee children. There are some refugees subjected to criminal assault and other forms of indignity, the release added.

It further said: The delegation pointed out that many villages in the Eastern Province and parts of the Northern Province have become totally deserted. Several civilians, particularly in the Trincomalee District are continuing to hide in jungles in fear. Many of the villages have been deserted, properties destroyed and there has been large scale looting. The property of Tamil villagers such as electrical goods, motor cycles, cycles and even their goats and cattle were systematically located and loaded into lorries. The delegation urged the government to take serious note of the magnitude of the crisis affecting the civilians of the North and the East.

Firstly, massive international effort needs to be mounted so that humanitarian relief in the form of more food and medicine and other support services are made available to the refugees. Existing humanitarian organizations such as UNHCR and ICRC resources are far too limited and efforts should be made to augment their resources and to enhance their effectiveness. Secondly, a progressive programme of demilitarization should be instituted with the assistance of the International Committee of the Red Cross so that areas such as hospitals, refugee camps and civilian concentrations should be insulated from the conflict.

'Army Using Civilians as Human Shields' - London LTTE Leader

MADRAS, Aug 30.

The LTTE leader, Mr. Sathasivam Krishnakumar, alias Kittu, today accused the Sri Lankan Army of using Tamil civilians as human-shields while advancing from the Kayts island to Mandaitivu in an effort to capture the Jaffna Fort garrison. 'The Sri Lankan Army commandeered Tamil civilians from two villages between Kayts and Mandaitivu and used them as human-shields while fighting the LTTE. Twenty-six of these civilians were shot dead by the soldiers', he said.

Mr. Kittu in an interview with *The Hindu* from London said that heavy fighting was raging between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan Army outside the Palaly Army and Air Force base in the Jaffna peninsula, Kankasanturai, the army camp at Mullaitivu in the North. The Army had shot dead more than 300 Tamil civilians in its operations in the last two days in the islands out-

lying the Jaffna peninsula he said.

Heavy aerial bombardment accompanied the Sri Lankan soldiers attempt to come out of their barracks at Palaly and advance towards Jaffna town on a three-axis front. The axes were towards Kankasanturai, Vasavilan and Kattuvan. 'Heavy fighting is going on there. To help the soldiers advance, aerial bombing is under way', Mr. Kittu said.

The soldiers who had left their camp at Kankasanturai ran into a minefield laid by the LTTE. The soldiers fled back to their camp when 30 of them had their legs blown off. Again, as the soldiers tried to advance from the Naval base at Karainagar in the Jaffna peninsula towards Karainagar town, the LTTE men intercepted them and launched a sustained attack on them, the LTTE leader said.

The Army also pressed into operation armoured cars called 'Saladin', fitted with cannons between Karainagar and Kayts. The armoured cars had now advanced to Mandaitivu, Mr. Kittu said.

Asked whether the Army would capture the Jaffna Fort, Mr. Kittu said, 'The fighting in the next three days will decide that. They said they would capture the Fort in two days. But they have taken more than a month. The soldiers have entered Mandaitivu. Our boys have surrounded them. We have fully destroyed the Pannai causeway leading from Mandaitivu to Jaffna Fort. We will not allow the soldiers trapped inside the Jaffna Fort to come out. Even if we lose the Fort, it will not be a big loss for us. It is situated only in a corner'.

C.M.'s proposal welcomed: Answering a question on the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's speech in the Assembly that the Government of India should play the role of a 'neutral guarantor' in forging a ceasefire between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan Government and helping them to start negotiations, Mr. Kittu said: 'Mr. Karunanidhi's suggestion should be welcomed and appreciated. But we would like to have a permanent solution to the Tamil problem. We do not want temporary solutions. Our fighting is for the Tamils to live in permanent peace and security. India should go for it (permanent solution) because the Tamils are being decimated for a long time. As far as Mr. Karunanidhi is concerned, his efforts console us. After all, we are of the same blood. Affinities will not fade away'.

Asked whether the National Front Government had done anything so far to find a solution to the Tamil problem, the LTTE leader said: 'The problem is such that it may not be able to take any immediate decision. The IPKF has just returned. But India should understand the Tamils' standpoint. We have

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said several times that we are not against India's interests and objectives. It may take some time for India to understand this. Besides, there are problems in Delhi. So it may take some time for Delhi to act'.

Diplomatic status: On whether the Government of India had exerted any 'diplomatic pressure' on Colombo to solve the Tamil problem, Mr. Kittu said the Government of India should accord diplomatic status to the LTTE just as it had done for the PLO and the ANC (African National Congress). 'We should be given the same status. The PLO has been allowed to set up an embassy (in Delhi). Our desire is that India should give us the same status. We have expressed the desire to India that it should officially invite us for talks'.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL ABANDONS CASE OF JOURNALIST'S MURDER

Christopher Morris in Colombo

Sri Lanka's Attorney-General submitted yesterday that there was insufficient evidence to take steps against a senior policeman who was identified by the mother of a murdered journalist as one of the men who abducted her son.

Richard de Zoysa was taken from his mother's home last February by a group of armed and uniformed men, and his mutilated body washed up on a beach south of Colombo a few days later. His mother, Dr. Manorani Saravanamuttu, has since led a campaign to bring those responsible to book.

In a magistrates' court yesterday, state council for the Attorney-General applied to have the investigation suspended which would mean it was still sub judice. But the lawyer acting for Dr. Saravanamuttu argued successfully that proceedings should be discontinued, and now hopes to have the case raised in Parliament.

The lawyer, Batty Weerakoon, handed a written submission to the court that the murder of Richard de Zoysa was a politically motivated police killing.

Mr. Weerakoon said yesterday that he regarded the investigation into the case as a cover-up. The magistrate had ordered the arrest and appearance in court of the suspect, but was overruled at an earlier hearing by the Attorney-General.

The case has received widespread international publicity, even though it is only one among many. Thousands of people were killed in Sri Lanka last year during an uprising by an extreme nationalist movement known as the JVP, or People's Liberation Front, which was crushed by the security forces in a widespread atmosphere of terror.

Richard de Zoysa, however, was not just another anonymous tragedy. He was a well-known television presenter who also worked for an international news agency. He was known to have been collecting information on human rights violations at the time of his death, and had been due to go to Lisbon to take up a new post. The news agency later named him posthumously as Journalist of the Year, and his mother is due to collect the award next month.

After he was killed, the state-run media published police reports that Richard de Zoysa was a JVP sympathiser. His friends deny the charge, but it is one which gives Mr. Weerakoon little confidence in the ability of the police to conduct an impartial investigation. He now wants an independent inquiry to be set up, which can be appointed only by the President.

(The Guardian, 31.8.90).

'India Must Act' MPs Urge Govt.

NEW DELHI, Aug. 29.

Members in the Rajya Sabha today urged the Foreign Minister to visit Sri Lanka to take stock of the situation and discuss with the island Government measures required to defuse it.

Participating in a short duration discussion on the situation in Sri Lanka raised by Mr. V. Gopalaswamy (DMK) and 20 others, the members felt that an impression had gained ground that the government of India has been reduced to the position of a silent spectator after the withdrawal of the Indian Peace-Keeping Force.

Among those who participated in the inconclusive discussion, besides Mr. Gopalaswamy, were Mr. V. Narayanaswamy and Mrs. Jayanthi Natarajan (Congress-I), Mr. A. Nallasivan (CPI-M) and Mr. Yashwant Sinha (JD).

Barring the 30 minute wrangle between the treasury and opposition benches over the references of Mr. Narayanaswamy to the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, all the members were unanimous in their assessment that the situation in Sri Lanka was very serious and that the interests of Tamils in the island nation were in jeopardy. They said while they were for the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka, conditions should be created for a peaceful, dignified and honourable life for the Tamils.

'Sinister design': Mr. Yashwant Sinha, who through a special mention in the House last week had demanded the immediate intervention of the Indian Government to stop the 'genocide' in Sri Lanka, said the Government must ensure immediate cessation of hostilities and send all help to end the sufferings of the Tamils. The 'sinister design' of uprooting the Tamils must be stopped.

'The Indian Government must ensure a dialogue between the warring groups, it cannot be indifferent and leave the matters to the Sri Lankan Government alone. All possible options must be considered and exercised it cannot be a silent spectator', he said amidst thumping of desks.

Mr. Sinha defended the decision of the National Front Government to withdraw the IPKF and said it was not taken either in a huff or hurry. The tragic manner in which the IPKF had to take on the very people it had gone to protect weighed the most in taking the decision. While agreeing that the withdrawal should have been preceded by fulfilment of certain conditions, Mr. Sinha said it should not be forgotten that the IPKF was deployed at the request and invitation of the Sri Lankan Government.

'Policy of Genocide': Mr. Gopalaswamy (DMK) accused the Sri Lankan Government of pursuing a policy of genocide and pleaded with the Indian Government to take up urgently the issue with the island Government. Life in the Tamil dominated areas of the country had been completely dislocated and there were conditions of starvation.

In the wake of the serious situation in Sri Lanka, over 80,000 refugees had reached the Indian shores and the figure was likely to cross the one lakh mark in the next few days. Over five lakh Tamils had become refugees in their homeland. He accused the Premadasa Government of actively promoting hostility between Muslims and Tamils to gain political support from the Islamic countries.

Mr. Gopalaswamy said that unfortunately a signal had gone that the Indian Government was watching the situation helplessly even as the interests of the Tamils and the geopolitical interests of India were seriously affected by the policies of the Sri Lankan Government. Mr. Gopalaswamy said the problem was not an internal issue of Sri Lanka but a human rights problem.

'Free hand': Mr. Narayanaswamy said the present government had not shown any interest and had not bothered to react to the situation. The withdrawal of the IPKF without fulfilling the conditions in the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord had given a free hand to the island Government to launch an offensive against the Tamil population.

He said the National Front Government had no policy of its own on the Sri Lankan issue after the withdrawal of the IPKF. He urged the Government to respond immediately to the situation in the island. Wondering whether the Indian Government was prepared to warn the Sri Lankan Government on the situation, he said efforts must be made to remove all the foreign forces in Sri Lanka. He also suggested

sending a parliamentary delegation for a first hand assessment of the situation.

Mr. Nallasivam said the continuing annihilation of Tamils was on account of the withdrawal of the IPKF without the implementation of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord. The Government of India should immediately get down to the task of effecting a ceasefire and a negotiated settlement between the Sri Lankan Government and the warring factions.

Mrs. Jayanthi Natarajan said the present situation in Sri Lanka was on account of the wrong assumptions of the National Front Government on the basis of which it withdrew the IPKF.

INDIAN MP's TEAM TO VISIT N-E SRI LANKA

NEW DELHI, Aug. 30

An Indian Parliamentary delegation will soon visit Sri Lanka to assess the situation in the North-Eastern province of the island nation in the wake of the ethnic violence, the Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. Hari Kishore Singh, announced in the Rajya Sabha today.

Replying to a short duration discussion on the 'situation in Sri Lanka' raised by Mr. V. Gopalaswamy (DMK) and 20 others the Minister said all arrangements were being made for the visit. The members who participated in the debate cutting across party lines had urged the Government to send such a delegation.

The moment Mr. Singh finished his eight minute reply, read out from a written statement, several members rose in protest and complained that the Government was treating the Sri Lankan issue very lightly. They complained that the reply of the Minister did not answer any of their points made during the five-hour long discussion. Not satisfied with the reply Mr. V. Narayanaswamy (Congress-I) staged a walk-out.

Sensing the mood of the members who persisted with their demand that the Government should spell out its policy on Sri Lanka and indicate the concrete steps it proposed to take to defuse the situation, the Deputy Chairman, Mrs. Najma Heptullah told the Minister that it was the consensus of the House that the Government should take greater initiative to protect the interests of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Mr. Singh appealed to both sides in Sri Lanka to sit across the table and find a solution to the ethnic conflict. The Union Government was seized of the matter raised through a telegram from the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and it had taken up the issue of aerial bombardment of Tamil areas in Sri Lanka.

The Minister said the Government

shared the anguish of the members over the plight of Tamils and was pursuing the various issues relating to Tamils with the Sri Lankan Government. The remark of the Minister that it should not be forgotten that Sri Lanka was a sovereign nation and certain actions suggested by members however desirable could not be taken provoked angry reactions from Congress-I members.

Mr. Singh said de-induction of the IPKF from the island had been in fulfilment of the National Front election manifesto and it was hoped that Sri Lanka would realise the futility of an armed conflict. The hopes have been belied with the hardening of positions on both sides and intensification of violence resulting in untold misery and suffering. The interests and rights of Tamils in Sri Lanka have become the casualty of the present conflict.

Expressing serious concern over reports of heavy casualties and communal discord in the North-Eastern Province, the Minister said India had conveyed its anguish over the situation to Sri Lanka and urged it to ensure cessation of hostilities. The growing insecurity of ordinary citizens in the Tamil dominated areas was evident from the steady influx of refugees into India. With the arrival of 85,000 odd refugees to Tamil Nadu after the withdrawal of the IPKF from Sri Lanka, their numbers had swelled to over 1.75 lakhs.

Mr. Singh said there was an urgent need for creation of conditions where refugee camps could be set up in Sri Lanka itself under the supervision of the U.N., other international agencies and the Red Cross. The Sri Lankan Government had responded positively to a suggestion of the Indian Government in this regard. The cooperation of the LTTE was required in the establishment of such camps.

The only durable solution to the ethnic problem would be within the framework of the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka. Neither a military nor armed conflict would help defuse the situation. The July 1987 Accord provided a great deal for devolution of powers to Tamils and the framework must be concretised.

SLMC Calls for N-E 'Interim Council'

Leader of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, M.H.M. Ashraff has in a letter to President Premadasa called for the immediate setting up of an Interim Council to administer the North and East.

The letter further states, Your Excellency is aware of the helpless situation in which people belonging to all communities are placed in the North

and East as a result of the political vacuum that has been created specially after the dissolution of the North and East Provincial Council.

There is no likelihood of holding elections to the North-East Provincial Council in the near future in view of the on-going war situation and the fact that thousands of people have deserted the North and the East.

The non-use of the political powers that have been devolved on the Provincial Council has resulted in a standstill of the Political machinery in so far as the areas of devolved subjects of powers are concerned. The Political machinery cannot be expected to be set in motion without the political representatives.

In addition to facilitating the working of the North East Provincial Council this Interim Council may also help in arriving at a national consensus for an everlasting peace.

In the interests of the well being of all the three communities in the North-East whose day to day life is affected by the present political vacuum, it is my duty to bring to your notice the urgent necessity for the immediate establishment of the Interim Political Administration to work the existing Provincial Council Political machinery.

I wish to suggest that the said administrative council could be constituted with representatives of Political Parties that constituted the North Eastern Provincial Council and representatives of Political parties in Parliament of the North and East.

A seat can be reserved to the PFLT as well to enable them to join this interim administration, if and when they decide so.

'JAFFNA ON THE BRINK OF STARVATION'

TULF MP, Mr. Mavai S. Senathirajah said that beleaguered Jaffna citizens were on the brink of starvation and lining up in large numbers in the coastal areas in an attempt to escape to Tamil Nadu as government troops made headway to the Jaffna Fort killing 150 militants.

Mr. Senathirajah said that poor people could not afford to live in the peninsula. 'A kilo of sugar costs Rs. 65-100, a kilo of flour Rs. 32.50, a bottle of petrol Rs. 180-200, a bottle of diesel costs Rs. 150-200, a bottle of kerosene Rs. 60-100 and a kilo of rice Rs. 30-40. There is no milk or baby food', he said.

'After imposing curfew in the peninsula on the 22nd of this month, a ship load of food that was sent to Point Pedro was turned back. Lorries and trucks carrying food supplies have also been held in Medawachchiya. The poor

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'Northern Situation is Precarious'

The following is a 'Situation Report for August 1990' by the Jaffna Diocesan Human Development Centre, Bishop's House, Jaffna, in northern Sri Lanka:-

The situation in Jaffna, Kilinochchi & Mullaithivu districts is very precarious. The squadron of planes, bombers and helicopter gunships has been boosted by the addition of a 4 engined 12 Chinese bomber that carries fragmentation bombs of more than 300 Kgs which tear to pieces the buildings within a radius of quarter of a mile. These bombs have created huge craters of more than 20 feet wide and 10 ft deep in certain places. This huge bomber has been seen in action from the 4th of August 1990.

So many of these fragmentation bombs have been dropped in the Jaffna town areas, destroying houses, property and shops. Bishop's House, St. Patrick's College, Holy Family Convent, HUDEC Centre have been some of the targets of these bombs.

Any vehicle on the move, be they carrying the injured, sick, dying, aged, medical aid, essential provisions, emergency assistance, or passengers, are shot at by the bombers and helis. Boats plying between the islands taking provisions or refugees are targets for the bombers.

The authorities do not understand

that vehicles/boats are needed to serve the people to attend to various needs. How could the people stock enough provisions needed for more than two or three months when these are in short supply? What is the mode of transport of provisions to the refugee camps? How are people expected to remove their goods from the houses destroyed by the bombings? How can the people move over to safer areas taking a few of their belongings? The fuel embargo, blockade of the Elephant Pass and Pooneryn entry points into the Jaffna Peninsula cause untold difficulties to the public.

The flow of essential items (food stuffs) should be in the region of 5000 M. Tons of rice, 3000 M. Tons of flour, 2000 M. Tons of sugar or 40 lorry loads daily for Jaffna alone. Only 5% of the people in Jaffna are served by the supply at the moment. People are already starving. Infants are dying due to want of milk powder.

Medicine is in short supply and medical aid is very minimum. Most of the base hospitals in Jaffna, Kilinochchi and Mullaithivu have been bombed and do not function.

Some medical facilities were made available at Manipay but that hospital too was bombed. Hospitals and dispensaries do not have refrigeration facilities to store drugs and perishable medicines. The travel and transport of patients is a very major difficulty.

There is no electricity supply from the main grid. The local power house was able to supply electricity for one hour a day on a revolving basis to the villages in Jaffna. The power house at Chunnakam had been bombed destroying 32000 litres of diesel along with the machinery and the distribution room. No petroleum products (fuel of any type) are allowed into the Peninsula. Hence, no kerosene is available for the water pumps or even the household lamps. A lamp has been made that burns for four hours on four spoonfuls of kerosene. No batteries are allowed to be transported into Jaffna. The torch lights and radios cannot be of use to the people. All facilities and services that depended on electricity have come to a halt including the supply of water to the Jaffna town area.

The situation of the refugee camps is very pathetic. The refugee camps and their surroundings have been bombed very often killing few people. Many are dying of hunger and disease. The overcrowded refugee camps report of infectious diseases particularly diarrhoea and skin ailments. Sanitary and toilet facilities are woefully inadequate. The fortnightly government ration of food had been given only twice during the last two months and that too had not reached all the refugee camps.

The NGOs are stretched to the maximum in providing relief. No water could be supplied to the refugee camps since the bowlers are being bombed. Our visits to the camps are curtailed due to the shortage of fuel and fear of the bombers which attack vehicles. Refugees are on the move due to aerial attacks. There are now over 327,000 persons in 396 refugee camps in the Jaffna district. People are also pouring into Jaffna from the districts of Trinco/Batticaloa, Kilinochchi and Mullaithivu districts have their own quota of refugees, about 30,000 families. Due to the lack of normal facilities the whole of the Jaffna population could be considered refugees, 87,000 refugees have reached India.

The very sight (hearing of the drones) of an airborne object sends the people into the protective bunkers now seen all over the place. Bunkers and underground rooms are a sine qua non for our people.

Artillery, mortar shells, bombs, grenades and gun shots are directed towards the civilian population from all sides and sources.

Bunkers seem to be the only means

THE DESTRUCTION OF JAFFNA

Destruction and severe damage to property have been caused by aerial bombing in Jaffna district. It includes installations and institutions that serve the public in the whole of the District of Jaffna and neighbourhood. Places of Worship, Schools, Convents, Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Banks, Jetties, Refugee Camps have not been spared. A few of these are enumerated below.

- Thermal Power Station at Chunnakam (the only one for the Northern Province-Electricity supply remains cut)
- The Jaffna Railway Station.
- The Jaffna Bus Stand.
- The Jaffna Market.
- The Cathedral Church, Jaffna.
- St. Patrick's College, Jaffna.
- Central College, Jaffna.
- Jaffna University Campus.
- St. Johns College Cathedral, Jaffna.
- Town Hall, Jaffna.
- The Courts Complex, Jaffna.
- Jaffna Hindu Ladies College.
- Refugee Camp at Colombogam, Jaffna.
- Tamil Maha Vidyalayam, Passaiyoor.
- St. Antony's Church, Passaiyoor.
- St. Antony's College, Kayts.
- St. Joseph Church, Kayts.
- Thurka Amman Temple, Tellipalai.
- Jaffna General (and teaching) Hospital.
- Green Memorial Hospital, Manipay.
- Moolai Hospital.
- Petroleum Corporation Bulk Supply Station, Jaffna.
- Sangupiddy & Karinagar Jetties.
- Elephant Pass & Poonakary Causeways.

- Strangulation of Transport and Communications.

- Boat Services to Islands off Jaffna at stand still.

- Moving vehicles whether carrying passengers or affording relief are bombed.

- Numerous houses of every type-lives not mentioned.

Apart from aerial bombing and strafing by helicopter gunships Jaffna town is shelled blindly from as far away as Palali, 18Km distance. The Karainagar Military camp shells into Kayts and beyond at blind targets.

People are:-

Unable to move about on daily chores.

Unable to obtain provisions.

Starving.

In terrible fear of life.

Living in bunkers.

Becoming deaf due to earpiercing thunder of bombs.

No lights.

No post.

No banks.

No food.

No medical facilities.

Yes, death and destruction everywhere.

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'An Appeal for Humanitarian Ethics'

by Justice, Peace & Development Commission

The following is the text of an appeal dated 2 August, made to President R. Premadasa by Rev. Fr. M.E. Pius and Mr. A. Santhiapillai, President and Secretary respectively of the Jaffna-based Justice, Peace and Development Commission:-

The present confrontation between the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE has lasted already 7 weeks but an end does not appear to be anywhere above the horizon.

In the meantime masses of ordinary innocent peace loving and helpless civilians of all categories are suffering immensely for want of all necessities of life be it food, medicine, shelter or even rest. The Government insists that the present war is only with the LTTE and not with the Tamil civilians.

The food situation in the North has reached danger level. All the provisions already sent in from Colombo was insufficient for one week even at low rations. Hardly anything is available in the private sector because of the destructions caused by the bombings, fuel embargo and the blockade of Elephant Pass and Pooneryn entry points into the Jaffna Peninsula.

Since all the major Government hospitals are closed down and no transport is available, many sick and injured are forced to resign themselves to Providence.

The aerial bombings that take place quite often here, frequently with 4 to 10 aircraft taking part simultaneously have made a large number of families permanently homeless as over 1000 buildings have already been destroyed or extensively damaged. This bombing purported to be aimed at destroying the bunkers and hiding places of the LTTE around the Dutch Fort is clearly aimless as St. Joseph's home for the aged (over 3 km away from the Fort) and the Jaffna Cathedral Church (over 1½ km away) and many other places of worship, schools, convents, banks, hospitals and nursing homes are among those hit. One can partly understand the missing of the mark, if there were any, as some of the parcels dropped with great care and from much lower altitude to fall within the large Dutch Fort area are still reported to be falling outside. We cannot understand why foul smelling, polluting agent sewage matter packed in large fragile containers was dropped from aircraft over the Jaffna town at about 20 points on two consecutive days.

Shelling and bombing are reported to be forms of attack on enemy territory. But here, shells are being directed even into Jaffna town from as far away as Palali, 18 km away causing blind and massive destruction to life and property.

It is clear that over 99% of the bombings and shelling done at such

great expenses to the Government and causing colossal loss to the citizens and therefore to the Nation has produced negative results from the war point of view and great antipathy among all the Tamils and even other peace loving citizens.

The refugee situation has already been given wide publicity. Now there are 314430 refugees in 352 camps in the Jaffna district alone.

We therefore appeal to you Honoured Sir, burdened by the Gods with the responsibility of justly governing and caring for all citizens of this country, and to all peace loving Sri Lankans and others to take actions:

1. To declare an impartially or internationally supervised CEASE FIRE.
2. To arrange to appoint a team of impartial and eminent persons (including foreigners if necessary) acceptable to all parties, as a COMMISSION, to study the Ethnic question both from the past records and from the new representations by all interested persons or groups and to make viable proposals for a solution since all the past efforts by political parties have prolonged and not brought about a consensus due to various reasons.
3. To halt aerial bombing, shelling and random helicopter strafing.
4. To arrange quickly for much more copious supply of food stuffs, medical supplies and other essential commodities by sea.
5. To ensure safe land transport of

persons and goods between Colombo and Elephant Pass/Pooneryn.

6. To ensure flow of necessary fuel and prevent haphazard aerial attacks on vehicles.

7. To insist and ensure that even in times of war as at present, HUMANITARIAN ETHICS be adhered to by all parties including the State forces. E.G.

- a. Respect of medical institutions.
- b. Temples, Mosques, Churches and refugee camps be treated as sanctuaries.
- c. Social and humanitarian institutions such as orphanages, homes for the aged and schools be avoided from attacks.
- d. dignity of human life to be carefully respected even at the actual war front.
- e. All persons including combatants taken into custody be humanely treated accounted for and their humanitarian rights respected.
- f. Avoid taking of persons as hostages for any purpose.
- g. Respect the property of civilians by not burning, damaging or stealing them.
- h. Facilitating NGOs to perform humanitarian tasks and relief work by ensuring safety of persons and availability of urgent requirements of food, fuel and medicine.
- i. Ensure reopening and safety of Pooneryn ferry service and boat services to the Islands off Jaffna.

Continued From Page 9

of survival during such attacks. Hence, the sight of a bunker should not be taken as a sign of the presence of or support of militant movement. It is the presence of the bunkers that had minimised the civilian casualties in spite of the heavy and indiscriminate bombing of the Jaffna peninsula.

Now that curfew has been declared since the 22nd of August in the districts of Jaffna, Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu, people on the move towards safer areas because of the bombings can be easy prey to the attacking helicopter gunships and bombers. The curfew imposed by the dropping of the leaflets from planes can be supervised only from the bombers and helicopters. The declaration of curfew is an open licence to kill civilians at will from the aircraft. The main mode of transport next to legging is the bicycle. People travel 60 to 90 miles to bring or sell or

procure food to the starved population in the Jaffna Peninsula.

Thousands of bicycles are on the move in and out of the Peninsula day and night through the available entry and exit points. Each bicycle reports back with a bag (sack) of provisions. Even these cyclists have been attacked by helicopter gunships and hundreds have been killed. The will to survive urges them on even after such misadventures. The curfew poses very grave problem, since the transport of food to refugee camps will be restricted.

There are four categories of the affected:

- a) Those living in camps.
- b) Refugees living in the premises of private houses.
- c) Those without any means of income.
- d) Those unable to buy provisions with their normal salary.

THE 'EELAM' STRATEGY AND ITS VIABILITY

— Amita Shastri —

Previously, the greatest weakness in the Tamil argument for a separate state had been its lack of a viable economic base. The North and East were 'peripheral' or 'backward' compared to the 'forward' southwest of the island. This shortfall seems to have been overcome by the early 1970s. The rural areas of the north and particularly the east had emerged as important paddy producing regions. The smallholders in the Jaffna region had emerged as important producers of chillies and onions. Indeed, the locus of development in agriculture had shifted to the Dry Zone, and by the beginning of the 1970s Trincomalee was recognised as holding the key to the next stage of industrialization, which would be export based.

As the leading and most public proponent of the separate state of Eelam at the time, the Secretary-General of the TULF, A. Amirthalingham, argued in an interview with the author in 1981, the Tamil areas had paddy, fish, and — given suitable policies — various subsidiary crops for consumption and for trade. He asserted that the traditional lack of modern industry in the north and east was no longer an insuperable hurdle to modern statehood. It could be overcome by developing an industrial processing zone at Trincomalee, which would offer avenues for investment to local capital derived from agriculture and existing business and trade. The Tamils were already highly skilled and well entrenched in business and trade, and their talents and capital would be available and able to develop in the new state. Their highly skilled and educated youth would find lucrative employment not only in managing the new industries but also in administering the new state. Foreign capital, foreign technology, and expatriate capital from the substantial Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in the advanced industrial countries would help to set up not only the industries in the processing zone but also the advanced infrastructure like telecommunications and airports that were required to run a modern state. Most important, the new government would be free to mobilize revenue and direct expenditure for the benefit of the local region and its population. Equally important, it would be free to negotiate with and procure funding from foreign sources as an independent state.

Thus derived from material conditions, the concept of Eelam had developed until it seemed economically viable to its proponents. The scope of support for the establishment of

Eelam, however, varied within the region, and the Batticaloa district in the EP, which had the largest concentration of Tamils and had seen the least expenditure of government funds, formed strongholds of support for the separatist cause. Its most adamant and vehement supporters, symbolized by the militants, were drawn from Jaffna lower-middle-class youths, who had the least to lose in economic and political terms in a struggle for the proposed state. They also advocated a more 'socialist' equalitarian model for the new state (LTTE 1983 and 1984). Backing them with some ambivalence were the Tamil upper and middle classes in the north and east: lawyers, landlords, businessmen, and professionals who backed the TULF, they had to be pushed by the radical-youth wing to demand a separate state and consistently sought to effect a compromise sort of separation — in effect, they sought to use the threat as a bargaining level with the central government. Despite their differences, however, they continued to speak publicly for and be identified with the separatist demand and did not disown their association with the militants. A significant segment of the Tamil lower classes, 'minority' castes, and estate Tamils in the NP also supported Eelam in 1977. As in all nationalist movements, popular discourse and rhetoric welded the various groups by emphasizing the discrimination they experienced as Tamils and the 'honour' that would be theirs in a separate state of their own.

To a nonpartisan but knowledgeable observer, the conception of Eelam involved various economic and political problems, and it is not being propagated or justified here. The lack of a clear geographical boundary between the proposed states would make the establishment and defense of an international boundary a contentious issue. Another problem was the location of the river heads and reservoirs required to supply the irrigation needs of the proposed state: they would lie outside the central highlands. The intermixture of ethnic populations posed another formidable problem. A quarter of the Sri Lankan Tamil population lived in Sinhalese areas, and the EP had a significant population of Sinhalese and Muslims. The estate Tamils were concentrated in the central highlands and in Colombo. The migration and exchange of populations between the two states, once Eelam was formed, would carry a heavy price tag in the extant environment of

ethnic hostility and violence. Whether the minority populations that chose to remain in each of the states could attain justice was another open question. Muslims in the EP were sympathetic to the demand for greater regional autonomy but not sanguine about acquiring it under the hegemony of Tamils, despite the latter's assurances. Above all, as events have proved, the success of efforts to translate Eelam from ideology to reality would depend on a different and wider set of factors: the relative strengths of the proponents of the concept and their opponent (the Sinhalese-dominated government at Colombo); regional geopolitics; and the larger play of power in the international arena. The Tamils have had strong support from the neighbouring Indian state of Tamil Nadu and from the government of India for their attempts to achieve greater justice and autonomy for the Tamils in Sri Lanka. However, belonging to the international community and sensitive to fissiparous movements within its own borders, India has consistently stopped short of support for a separate state. Under the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord in 1987, India attempted to implement just such a policy and posed a mortal threat to the most militant of the separatist groups (the LTTE) in the process.

What needs to be noted, however, is that the concept of Eelam was intimately rooted in both the development and the discrimination experienced by the region and its population. The development of the region demonstrated to Tamils its potential for economic growth and opportunity. The manner in which that development was being effected, through the instrumentalities of the unitary state and majority rule consolidated in ethnic terms, made them acutely aware that they would not be shareholders in this development but would be its casualties. Although their declining stake in the system explains their alienation from it and their acceptance of the separatist option, the region's perceived potential for development provided a strong, intense motivation to struggle for the goal of a separate state.

The otherwise inexplicable insistence of Tamils on a unification of the NP and EP in any scheme becomes understandable once the topography, trends, and productive potential of these regions are understood, intertwined as they have been until now with the concentration of power in the unitary centre. From the Tamil point of view (as articulated primarily by middle-class Jaffna Tamils), much of the EP would have to be administered jointly with the NP if any regionalization of power and status were to be economically viable and safe from tampering by the Sinhalese majority.

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Such a unit would assure a viable economic space for the continuation of Tamil language and culture and be significant enough to influence the government at Colombo. Consequently proposals that offered a devolution of authority to the Tamils in the NP but left its long-term relationship with the EP undecided, as the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord did, fell short in the view of core Tamil militants. Any lasting settlement on the issue will have to take this view into account.

To return to theoretical matters, although the region itself remained agricultural and 'backward' in relation to the more industrialized, economically active, and 'forward' southwest, the characteristics and dynamics governing this 'backwardness' were no longer the same. It was suffused with a quickening pace of change and development. The situation provided the potential for this region to become a 'forward' one - in which members of the 'forward' elite of Jaffna could find avenues for employment and mobility

commensurate to their potential and aspirations. This demonstrated potential for a 'backward' region to become a 'forward' one if freed from unfavourable asymmetries in the instituted structure of power formed a critical element in the process of positive counter-identity formation in the secessionist movement.

(The author is Associate Professor of Political Science, San Francisco State Univ.)

- Courtesy: Lanka Guardian, 15/8/90

ON MAN-HUNTS AND MASS MURDERS

- S. Sivasegaram -

The case for human rights and democracy does not altogether reject the struggle against oppression. To condemn violent struggle unconditionally is to condone oppression. This does not, however, mean that violence and armed struggle are ends in themselves. They are justified when they are carried out in the course of achieving social justice by ending oppression, but destruction of human life should be avoided as far as possible, even in the course of the bloodiest struggle for social justice. People who quote Lenin and Mao Zedong to justify killings often forget that Lenin denounced violence directed against individuals as a means of achieving political ends and that Mao believed in winning over not only soldiers but also generals who fought for the enemy.

It is true that society has to protect itself against anti-social forces such as criminals, and societies have devised ways of isolating such elements from the mainstream of social life. Imprisonment, perhaps, is a more humane way of dealing with criminals than a death sentence, and the right of a society to protect and defend itself cannot be denied. Of course, what constitutes a crime and what does not are matters for the society to decide and these decisions depend on the nature of the society. Many societies use the death sentence as a deterrent against crime. Although the validity of this practice and the use of other severe punishments as deterrents is disputable, there are situations in which such practices, although undesirable, are unavoidable. Revolutionary struggles for liberation and social transformation are among such situations. It is nevertheless important to recognize that a revolutionary struggle cannot be the pretext for arbitrary killings and mass executions ordered by a handful of individuals in the name of the cause, however just. It is also true that mistakes are often made in the course of a revolutionary struggle, and

suspensions and fears about enemy infiltration and espionage, rivalry between movements and struggles for political domination lead to the killing of a large number of innocent people. Such events do not necessarily mean that the revolutionary cause and the revolutionary struggle should be condemned unconditionally, but the failure to criticise these mistakes will encourage more mistakes and even establish them as the norm. These matters have become particularly important in the context of the violation of human rights in Sri Lanka and the unhealthy attitude of some intellectuals towards the violation of the right of human beings to exist.

I have recently heard people defend the killing of individuals on the basis of the justness of the cause, on the basis of precedents in the revolutionary struggles of the past and in other parts of the world, and on the basis of the wisdom and infallibility of a leadership. There have also been attempts to defend political killings and other crimes by quantitative comparison with criminal acts by opponents and rivals. The attempts to explain and, often, to defend such actions deserve as much contempt as the deeds they seek to defend, if not more.

Movements for liberation and social transformation justify their existence in terms of the needs of the masses for whom and in whose defence they fight and to whom they owe their very existence. If any movement would consider itself to be above scrutiny by the masses and its actions unquestionable, it forfeits the right to speak on their behalf. Past deeds however glorious and sacrifices however great cannot justify trampling on the basic rights of fellow human beings. The need to take military action, levy taxes and punish offenders arises in the course of struggles. It is unrealistic to deny this right to a liberation movement or to a revolutionary organisation and even unfair, in the context of the need to

confront a stronger and well armed enemy. The question is not whether a popular movement has the right but how it exercises the right and concerns the way in which the movement expresses the wishes of the masses it claims to represent and the way in which it articulates their just demands and aspirations.

When a movement assumes that consultation with the masses and expressing their wishes are either unnecessary or irrelevant, it shows contempt towards the masses and isolates itself from them. When it not only refuses to listen to their views but also chooses to punish people who fail to obey its commands uncritically, it turns its guns against the masses and, in course of time, becomes the enemy of the masses. Great revolutionary movements the world over have made such mistakes and have harmed themselves and the masses. It is important that we learn from history through studying the mistakes of the past and not by repeating them ourselves.

Taking away a human life is a serious matter. An error of judgment in killing a person can never be put right. This is why all civilised human societies consider unlawful killing to be a criminal offence and punishable in the severest manner. No civilised society can afford to delegate the responsibility of passing death sentences to a handful of individuals simply because they wield political or military power. Death sentences are not treated lightly by legal systems and even the most reactionary of dictatorial regimes seek to give a semblance of legality to death sentences on its opponents. It is therefore tragic that movements which call themselves mass liberation organisations pass sentences in secret and carry them out in the most cowardly fashion. If these movements are genuine mass movements, they have the duty to explain to the masses what the offences of the 'convicted' individuals are and try them in public. Death squads, irrespective of whom they represent, are death squads, and an unlawful killing, however well explained, is homicide. It is therefore important that the masses know who the offenders are, what their offences

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

SRI LANKA

AN UPDATE ON HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS

The worldwide human rights organisation, Amnesty International has accused the Sri Lankan Government of backing terror tactics used by its security forces to suppress armed opposition.

In its latest report issued on 19 September, AI states that thousands of people have 'disappeared' or been killed at the hands of security forces in recent years in the south and hundreds more have fallen victim to this violence in the latest wave of repression in the northeast.

Since 1987 the security forces have killed under many guises – in uniform, in plainclothes operations attributed to 'vigilantes', and in death squads that were sometimes directly linked to members of the ruling United National Party.

People have been shot in their homes and in captivity, bodies have been openly dumped on roadsides, in fields and in rivers, and others have been burned, mutilated or moved to other areas to avoid identification.

Entire communities have been attacked in retaliation for opposition violence and many people have been arbitrarily rounded up, and sometimes killed, on the basis of anonymous accusations of subversive involvement.

'The government has fuelled this violence over the years by handing the security forces extraordinary powers and in effect sending the message that those powers could be abused', Amnesty International said.

The following is the full text of Amnesty International's Report:-

Introduction

Grave human rights violations have been committed in Sri Lanka for several years in a context of government measures to suppress armed opposition movements. In the south, a campaign of counter-terror was launched by the security forces from 1987 to 1990 in the face of rising violence by the opposition *Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna* (JVP, People's Liberation Front). The JVP had terrorized political opponents, killing several thousand people, and had murdered the families of members of the security forces. In the government's campaign, thousands more people were extrajudicially executed by the security forces, 'disappeared' or were tortured and killed in custody. Security forces operations were conducted by uniformed officers in some cases, but in others men driving unmarked vehicles and wearing civilian clothes – recognised in some instances as security forces personnel – were responsible. Bodies appeared in public places in large numbers, but many could not be identified because they were mutilated, burnt, or had been transported from other areas. The thousands of extrajudicial executions and 'disappearances' committed in the south marked an escalation in the use of tactics of terror by the security forces, but the pattern was not new to Sri Lanka. In earlier years in the northeast, where Tamil separatists have waged an armed campaign for independence since the late 1970s, members of the Sri Lankan security forces had also committed hundreds of extrajudicial executions and 'disappearances', and the cycle of violence had escalated. After the Indian Peace Keeping Force took charge of the security of the northeast in July 1987, it too became the subject of complaints about human rights violations, including extrajudicial executions, 'disappearances' and torture. Amnesty International's con-

cerns from mid-1987 to June 1990 have been published in *Sri Lanka: Extrajudicial Executions, 'Disappearances' and Torture, 1987 to 1990* (AI Index: ASA 37/21/90, September 1990). This report updates Amnesty International's concerns in Sri Lanka from June 1990.

Although reports of extrajudicial executions and 'disappearances' in southern Sri Lanka diminished after March 1990, they did not cease, and intimidation and death threats by government forces continued. In the northeast heavy fighting broke out in June between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and government security forces after the LTTE captured numerous police stations in the east. The LTTE took prisoner hundreds of policemen who had surrendered, and then summarily killed many of them. The full number of captives killed by the LTTE has not been confirmed but is thought to be in the hundreds, most of them local policemen. As government forces regained control of areas of the east, reports began to be received of hundreds of extrajudicial executions and 'disappearances' of civilians committed by government forces in apparent reprisal for the actions of the LTTE. Hundreds of thousands of people fled their homes as fighting intensified: in early August there were over 300,000 refugees in Jaffna District alone, many more in other districts, and fears of food shortages.

Amnesty International fears that the pattern of widespread extrajudicial executions and 'disappearances' which had been experienced in the south in recent years is now being repeated in the northeast. At the same time, the LTTE have also been accused of committing numerous abuses, including the killing of hundreds of Sinhalese and Muslim civilians in the northeast.

The Northeast

Indian troops had completed their withdrawal from Sri Lanka by the end

of March 1990 and, following heavy fighting with rival Tamil groups, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) took effective control of North-eastern Province. The LTTE continued its negotiations with the Government of Sri Lanka on the future administration of the northeast until June, when they captured numerous police stations in the east and took prisoner hundreds of policemen who had surrendered. Tamil policemen among them were released, but many others were killed. Amnesty International condemned these killings.

In May, Amnesty International had called for an immediate halt to incommunicado detention and extrajudicial executions in northeastern Sri Lanka by forces of the LTTE. The organization has also recommended that the International Committee of the Red Cross, which had been active in southern Sri Lanka since October 1989, be granted access to all places of detention in the northeast. LTTE members had reportedly seized dozens of young people, including many former members of the Tamil National Army (TNA), an unofficial force recruited by Tamil groups which opposed the LTTE. The TNA had been backed by the Indian troops and fought the LTTE when the Indian troops began to withdraw from Sri Lanka. The LTTE reportedly screened former TNA members to establish whether they had volunteered for the TNA or had been forcibly recruited. Those who had been forcibly recruited were released, but those who could not prove this were reportedly kept in detention centres in private houses or in LTTE bunkers and camps in jungle areas of Mullaitivu District. Other prisoners were held by the LTTE because they were candidates in the February 1989 parliamentary elections, which the LTTE had boycotted. The LTTE did not permit relatives to visit the prisoners, but set

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up a central office in Jaffna to register inquiries.

The LTTE also reportedly killed numerous defenceless members or presumed sympathisers of Tamil groups which had allied with the IPKF. In January 1990 a member of the North-eastern Provincial Council for the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress was killed by gunmen – reportedly LTTE members – who stormed his house at Sammanthurai, Amparai District. A few days later, several other defenceless civilians were reportedly killed by the LTTE, including five Muslim patients in Kalmunai hospital.

The LTTE also reportedly took several people hostage, demanding large ransom payments from relatives, some of whom live abroad. It also reportedly carried out summary executions of purported common criminals and held its own tribunals to adjudicate disputes. Amnesty International urged that no sentences be passed by any body other than a regularly constituted court in proceedings which accord with internationally recognized judicial guarantees for fair trial.

After the capture of police stations in the east in June, heavy fighting ensued between government forces and the LTTE, and government forces began to regain control of major towns in the area, except on the Jaffna peninsula. In several cases, reports indicated that the LTTE had vacated the towns before government forces arrived, and moved into the surrounding scrub jungle.

At the time of writing, the LTTE remained in control of the Jaffna peninsula, where about 200 members of the Sri Lanka army and police force remained besieged in Jaffna Fort. The area around Jaffna Fort, in particular, was subject to regular bombing by the security forces. Although government security forces were present in other areas of the northeast, these areas were not firmly under the control of one side or the other. Other armed groups were also active in some areas of the east, including armed Muslim groups in the east area who reportedly killed dozens of Tamil civilians in August, apparently in retaliation for the murder of Muslims by the LTTE. According to reports, these armed Muslim groups acted in some instances with the acquiescence of the Sri Lankan security forces.

There were reports of numerous abuses on both sides as the conflict continued: the Sri Lankan press gave great prominence to the murder of Muslim and Sinhalese civilians by the LTTE, but reports from other sources indicated that the security forces also committed widespread grave human rights violations. Victims of security forces violations were mostly young Tamil men. Shortly after government

forces had regained Vavuniya from the LTTE, they reportedly shot and killed several defenceless civilians. About 15 bodies were found on the road. Among those killed were a public health inspector named Anthony Pillai and his wife and son. Similarly, in the last week of June, Sri Lanka Army and police personnel reportedly killed 15 people in Vellavelli village, Batticaloa District, including a school teacher whose body they burnt.

Hundreds of extrajudicial executions and 'disappearances' were reportedly committed by Sri Lankan security forces in late June and early July in the east. In Kalmunai, over 70 people were reportedly detained by soldiers and then 'disappeared'. Among those who 'disappeared' were Mr. Anurachelvam, John Patrick Asirwathan and the chairperson of the Kalmunai Citizen's Committee, Pandiaram Kanapathipillai, and his two sons. Other residents of the town were reportedly shot in their homes, including Mr. Thiyagarajah. According to reports, on 22 and 23 June 1990 soldiers had rounded up men in Kalmunai between the ages of 16 and 30, lined them up blindfolded and stabbed them to death with bayonets. They had then thrown the bodies into shops owned by Tamil residents of the town and set them on fire. Over 30 bodies were found in one burnt-out shop in Kalmunai, including the body of 23-year-old Chandrikumar, who had earlier been detained by the security forces. Another six bodies were found outside the Kalmunai hospital, including the body of a Tamil policeman who had earlier been captured and released by the LTTE. On 8 July 1990 a further six burning bodies were found on the roadside in Batticaloa, about 20 miles north of Kalmunai. Scores of burnt bodies believed to be victims of extrajudicial executions by the security forces were also reportedly found in other locations in the east in late June and early July, including at Veeramunai, Sammanthurai, Nintavur and Karativu. Local people complained that they were unable to trace relatives who had 'disappeared' after being detained by the security forces: inquiries from the military authorities have yielded no results, and the names of prisoners held in custody have not been made known.

The LTTE also reportedly abducted civilians: as they withdrew from Kalmunai they reportedly abducted five Muslim residents who had refused to give them money. The whereabouts of these men – named Latif, Farloon, Salim Khan, Rahim and Akram – is not known.

Members of a Tamil group which opposes the LTTE reportedly aid the government security forces in identifying LTTE suspects at checkpoints.

The government repeatedly stated

that security forces action was intended to destroy the LTTE alone, and was not an assault against the Tamil population as a whole. The government also said, however, that it would deal with the LTTE in the same manner as it had dealt with the armed opposition group, the JVP in the south. Although the government had claimed that its forces killed only in combat in the south during the campaign against the JVP, thousands of defenceless people were killed or 'disappeared' following widespread arbitrary detentions by the security forces. This pattern appears to be being repeated in the northeast in the fight against the LTTE: reports indicate that hundreds of defenceless civilians may have been victims of extrajudicial execution or 'disappearance' by the security forces. Indeed, the government appears to condone the summary killing of suspected LTTE members instead of arresting them, establishing their guilt by bringing them to trial and imposing punishments according to law. Thus, Minister of State for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne, told parliament on 7 August 1990 that 'the government will show no mercy to these Tamil terrorists, criminals who do not deserve to live' (quoted by *Associated Press*, 7 August 1990). Amnesty International fears that such statements may encourage the security forces to commit extrajudicial executions with a sense of impunity.

The South

Compared to the period from August 1989 to February 1990, there have been significantly fewer reports of extrajudicial executions and 'disappearances' in southern Sri Lanka, but these violations have not been halted. In addition, intimidation continued, and death threats were made to several people, including members of parliament. There were few reports of killings by the armed opposition group, the *Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna* (JVP, People's Liberation Front), but in late July the murder of 15 people in Matara District was attributed to the JVP. According to press reports, most of the victims belonged to three families whose members had been active in a village 'vigilance committee', which reported on suspected subversives to the security forces.

Among those reported to have 'disappeared' after being detained by government forces was H.D. Lalith Padmasiri (also known as Lal). According to reports, he was abducted by unknown people at Madurankuliya in Puttalam District on the morning of 30 June 1990, and then seen at Negombo police station. However, the police denied that he was in their custody and his present whereabouts are unknown. Another 'disappearance' reported from Negombo District in June was that of Seneviratne Dissanayake. His elder

brother had been detained as he returned home from the Free Trade Zone on 27 June 1990 and taken blindfolded, to his mother's home. She, too, was detained, blindfolded and asked about the whereabouts of her younger son, Seneviratne Dissanayake. The mother and elder son were then taken in a van to Seneviratne Dissanayake's home, and he too was detained. All three were reportedly held in a two-storey house. The mother and elder son were released, but the whereabouts of Seneviratne Dissanayake since then is not known.

Hundreds of young Tamil men were detained in Colombo and other southern districts in June after the LTTE attacked police stations in the east. The young men were screened for connections with the LTTE. Some were released, and others remained in detention. Several, however, have reportedly 'disappeared'. Letchumanan Sivakumaran was reportedly detained at the Jinthupitiya Murugan Temple in Colombo on 22 June 1990 by members of the Sri Lanka Army. Inquiries to establish his whereabouts yielded no results. Thuraiappah Surendran was taken from his home in Chilaw at 12.45pm on 23 June 1990 by a group of men in blue uniforms driving a vehicle without number plates. They are believed to be from the security forces. His whereabouts have also not been established, despite inquiries. Bala-sunderam Dayalesswaran was detained by army personnel at Palampoddaru on 19 June 1990 at about 10.15am, when he was returning to Colombo from Trincomalee. His relatives have also not been able to establish his whereabouts.

Reports of possible extrajudicial executions also continued to be received. On 8 July the Sri Lanka Government was reported to have issued shoot-on-sight orders to police in the south in response to fears of a renewal of subversive activity by the JVP. Scores of bodies of victims of suspected extrajudicial executions had been found dumped in southern Sri Lanka during the preceding two weeks, and there were fears that the shoot-on-sight orders would result in further extrajudicial executions of unarmed civilians, as had been the case in the past. Some of the bodies were reportedly found close to army camps which had been closed when troops were moved to the northeast, including at Diyagama in Gampaha District, Bandaragama in Kalutara District, Embilipitiya in Ratnapura District and Suriyawewa in Hambantota District. On 19 July 1990, Minister of State for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne, responded to parliamentarians' complaints that dead bodies were again being found dumped in various places by saying that officers-in-charge of police stations would in future be held responsible for bodies found in their areas of jurisdiction.

Nevertheless, bodies continued to appear: for example, the bodies of six people suspected to be victims of extrajudicial executions were found in Beliatta, Hambantota District, in August.

Death threats continued to be received by opponents of the government. Five opposition members of parliament complained to the Inter-Parliamentary Union in May that they had received death threats at their homes and by telephone. In July, another member of parliament complained that he had received a letter threatening to kill six named members of parliament, including himself.

Detentions of JVP suspects, and of people who were effectively held hostage against the actions of relatives, continued to be reported. In late June or early July, I.M. Herath Banda, Kurunegala District President of the recently formed Organization of Parents and Family Members of the Disappeared was detained by Maho police, who demanded that his son be produced before Herath Banda would be released.

By 10 July 1990, 1,474 people had surrendered to the Independent Surrender Committee set up in late April 1990, and it was announced that people could continue surrendering to the committee until 20 August 1990. After that date, they would have to surrender to the security forces. Later in July, it was announced that the release of detainees held under Emergency Regulations against whom there was insufficient evidence to justify their continued detention would be halted, because the government feared a renewal of JVP activity in the south.

There were continuing fears for the safety of prisoners, with reports of continuing deaths in custody and ill-treatment. According to a press report, in mid-June the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) visited a detention centre in Naula, Matale District, and examined about 60 Tamil detainees, 45 of whom were found to have been ill-treated. The head of the ICRC delegation was also reported to have said that after their visit to the centre the detainees had been beaten. Seventy out of 200 prisoners at the centre had been in detention for over 6 months (*Sunday Times*, Colombo, 29 July 1990). Sinhalese prisoners were also reportedly victims of torture and death in custody. In August, for example, two of a group of three people detained by police in Moneragala District were reportedly killed: one at the place of arrest and the other at a police station.

There was little further information on the criminal cases pending against security forces officers for various crimes, and none of the pending cases outlined in *Sri Lanka: Extrajudicial Executions, 'Disappearances' and Tor-*

ture, 1987 to 1990 have yet been completed. Eight of the 14 police officers arrested in connection with the murder in February 1990 of 12 prisoners in Nittambuwa were discharged on 27 July 1990 on the instruction of the Attorney General. The Attorney General held that there was insufficient evidence to bring charges against them. The remaining six officers were remanded to custody, and at the time of writing it was not known if charges would be brought against them.

The difficulties faced by Richard de Zoysa's mother, Dr. Manorani Saravanamuttu, in seeking justice for the murder of her son, illustrate the continuing intimidation facing those who attempt to press cases against members of the security forces, and the difficulties involved in seeking redress. The Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) named by Dr. Saravanamuttu as having been among those who abducted her son in her presence in February 1990 remained on active duty at the time of writing, and charges had not yet been brought against him. Richard de Zoysa was abducted from his home in the early morning on 18 February by six armed men believed to have included police officers. His naked body was retrieved from the sea by fishermen the next day. His mother insisted on pursuing a full inquiry into his murder: on 16 May an anonymous death threat was sent to her, and on 1 June her lawyer, Batty Weerakoon, also received a death threat. Batty Weerakoon then accepted from President Premadasa the offer of armed guards to protect him. On the morning of 22 June two of his police guards themselves received threats addressed to them by name, warning them to leave Batty Weerakoon or face death. The fact that Batty Weerakoon had received police protection had been publicized, but the names of the officers guarding him had not been published. They remained on duty as his guards despite the threats.

At the time of writing the inquiry into Richard de Zoysa's death had been subject to several delays. The police had failed to carry out the magistrate's order to produce the SSP in court on 11 June, and the case was postponed. The magistrate referred the case to the Attorney General to decide whether there was sufficient evidence available for the SSP to be arrested. A decision had not been reached at the time of writing.

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the North-East and outside it as well, the Government is faced with a tremendous food bill of rupees 30 million a day to meet the needs of the refugee population. Added to the refugees in the country an estimated one hundred thousand are said to be sheltering in Tamil Nadu.

India has offered funding for three main refugee camps in Mannar Island, Madhu Church Camp and Vavuniya. The intention is not only to draw in refugees fleeing the war-torn region but to induce Sri Lankans who have fled to India to return. Refugees returning from India seems the most unlikely scenario in the face of the on-going conflict.

In spite of news reports in the local press of infighting in the LTTE leadership and disillusionment among the rankers, the forces are going to find it tough going stepping into Tiger territory in the North. Defence Secretary General Cyril Ranatunge told newsmen on the day the troops moved into the Fort that opening the Jaffna Hospital to the civilian population was the Government's first priority.

Wresting control of the hospital complex from the LTTE is going to be quite a feat considering that it is a heavily built up area and could lead to civilian casualties although most of the civilians have fled the area.

Meanwhile as the fighting continues the political parties conference has been discussing the devolution of powers to provincial councils. The Sri Lanka Freedom Party accused of being, with the exception of a few, a party essentially of Sinhala Buddhist chauvinists has in response to a questionnaire on devolution sent out by Secretary to the All Party Conference, Baradman Weerakoon, prepared its own document. According to SLFP sources the party is not against substantial autonomy to the Northern Province but feels very strongly that the Eastern Province must be looked at differently in view of its multi-ethnic composition. It is also the view that the south does not need provincial councils arguing that it is duplicity of work and unnecessary expense.

It is on the controversial issue of the permanent merger of the North-East Provinces that both the United National Party and the main opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party will demand that a referendum be held, a position that all the Tamil parties argue against.

A special meeting of the All Party Conference scheduled for October 7 presided over by President Premadasa will review the recommendations of the party leaders committee on the devolution package.

What seems significant is not a political solution worked on paper but effectively implemented on the ground.

Teenage Gunmen and Gunships Rule in Jaffna

JAFFNA (AP) — As the shadows of two helicopter gunships loomed over the city, people ran for cover shouting 'Heli, heli' to warn their neighbours.

Minutes later, high-calibre machine guns opened up from the sky. Bullets thudded into walls, shattered the few remaining glass panes and ricocheted off tile roofs. Then came the bombers. Ten aircraft dropped bombs over densely populated Jaffna, powdering the debris of already devastated houses.

Despite the intensity of the Sri Lankan air force attack on the town held by Tamil rebels, there were few casualties. 'We are like rats', said Sathasivan Krishnamurthy, 60, a newspaper seller. 'They can't kill us because we go into the ground'. His house has a trench dug into its floor, but no roof.

In the three months since Tamil rebels resumed their war against the government, Jaffna, a town of 60,000 people, has come under almost daily bombardment. Its main market, on an open square in the centre of the town, is a heap of rubble. So is the bus terminal. The railway station is a mass of twisted lines and concrete and the 1,200-bed Jaffna hospital is empty, shot full of bullets. Mongrels lie in the corridors, and stray cattle graze on the unkempt lawn.

The Tamil Tiger guerrillas who hold the town say the government has killed at least 4,000 civilians in the Jaffna Peninsula and other districts of north-eastern Sri Lanka since the fighting resumed in June. Military officials say there have been civilian casualties, but refuse to give a number. No one is sure of the real toll.

Ponniah Balasingham, a member of Jaffna's municipal corporation, estimates damage to his town at more than £2m. 'I don't know how we can get people to pick up their lives again', he said. 'The situation is hopeless'.

Perhaps for the first time in the seven-year war for an independent Tamil homeland, public opinion is turning against the rebels who patrol the streets with automatic rifles. Many people express resentment at being ordered around by teenaged cadres. Others fear extortion.

Yogaratnam Yogi, one of the senior leaders of the Tamil Tigers, says taxes are levied on those who wish to leave the city for safer areas and those who have relatives working abroad. 'We want each family to give us two gold sovereigns (about £135)', he said. 'It is part of the war effort'.

Residents said this amount, usually in the form of jewellery, has been collected from every family, whether or

not they want to leave or receive money from abroad. The Tigers issue receipts, which allow residents to obtain passes for moving around the city, the residents said. People who don't have passes are often shot, they said.

Besides the attacks, lives are imperilled by a drastic shortage of food. Mr. Yogi said at least 150 to 200 Tigers had died in the fighting, including at least 100 in the bid to capture Jaffna Fort, the only government garrison in the town. The government says about 1,000 rebels have been killed.

More than 200 policemen and soldiers are stranded in the star-shaped seventeenth-century garrison, subsisting on occasional air drops of food. Around the fort is a no man's land. The air force has levelled buildings facing the fort to deprive the rebels of cover for an advance.

Two hundred yards away, the Tiger fighters are dug into a maze of underground bunkers. By the government's count, Tiger snipers have picked off 13 of the fort's defenders, who numbered 250 before the siege.

Before 11 June, the Tamil war had killed at least 11,000 people. Jaffna, the largest town on the northern peninsula of the same name, is part of the region the Tamils claim as their homeland.

It has always been at the forefront of the fighting between Sri Lanka's Tamil minority and the Sinhalese who control the government and army. The Tamils allege discrimination by the Sinhalese, who comprise 75 per cent of the population.

(The author is a Sri Lankan journalist who recently slipped into the Jaffna Peninsula, virtually cut off from the outside world. He wishes to remain anonymous.)

— The Independent, 13.9.90

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Tamils Flee Across Palk Strait to Safety

TALAIMANNAR (Sri Lanka), Aug. 27
Thousands of Tamils have fled by boat to south India from this island village off Sri Lanka's northwest coast to escape fighting between Tamil separatist rebels and security forces.

'We have no choice. If we do not leave, we can get caught in crossfire', said farmer Muthusamy Nadarajah, 45, who with his family hitched a ride to the coast on a tractor from his home in Maharambaikulam, 130 km (80 miles) away.

Nadarajah and his family are typical of Tamils who trek to Talaimannar, a fishing village at the western end of Mannar Island, 360 km (225 miles) from Colombo, awaiting the first boat that will take them to safety in south India.

They must take to the water twice. The bridge linking Mannar Island to the mainland was blasted by rebels, and refugees who reach the coast must be ferried across.

A further 28 km (18 mile) stretch of water separates Talaimannar from India's southern Tamil Nadu state whose 50 million Tamils have close ties with Sri Lankan Tamils.

The strait is patrolled by Sri Lankan navy gunships but refugee boats are usually able to cross without being spotted.

Refugees say they have been harassed by the Sri Lankan army or the rebels and prefer to go to India which has set up special camps for them.

C.K. Gariyali, director of rehabilitation in Tamil Nadu, has said 87,000 Tamils have fled Sri Lanka to the south Indian state.

She said the state government expected the figure to rise to 100,000 and was embarking on a crash programme to build temporary accommodation for them. The state government had borrowed some of the 20,000 tents needed from the Indian army, she added.

The exodus began after Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam guerrillas resumed their separatist revolt in June.

The Tigers, most powerful of Tamil guerrilla groups, want a homeland in the north and east for the island's 2.5 million Tamil minority community.

In June, they broke off year-long peace talks with the government and launched a campaign of violence with attacks on police stations.

More than 2,500 rebels, security men and civilians have died in the fighting so far.

Boatmen taking refugees across the strait charge 600 rupees (15 dollars) per adult and nothing for children.

Some boats have been seized by the

navy while two sank with most of their passengers, islanders say. Two hundred refugees have been detained by the navy.

Village residents say the boats carrying about 25 people each leave after dark to avoid navy patrols. About 70 to 100 vessels leave at a time.

Tiger gunmen, who virtually control the 32-km (20 mile) long Mannar island where Talaimannar village is located, ensure that there is no overloading.

Boatmen say the journey takes about three to four hours but could be longer if there are gunboats. 'There are certain routes the navy ships can't use because of their size', said one man who declined to be named.

On tractors, in small vans or bullock carts, refugees embark upon their journey to Talaimannar from as far away as Vavuniya to the southeast on the mainland, Killinochchi to the north, and Mullaitivu on the northeast coast.

Many rest at a Roman Catholic church in Madhu village halfway between Vavuniya and the coast. On a recent Friday night there were about 5,000 people heading for Mannar.

Once on Mannar rebels help the refugees thread their way across the island along roads they know to be safe.

An army camp is located about five km (three miles) away from Talaimannar but troops find it difficult to get near because the roads have been mined or booby-trapped.

Suresh, the 26-year-old Tigers' political leader for Mannar, said the Tigers would not lay down their arms if the government wanted a ceasefire.

'We are prepared to consider an unconditional ceasefire with international mediation', he said, surrounded by heavily armed men.

The rebel leader spoke at a small camp on Mannar island as about 25 young armed men, between 14 years and 17 years, prepared to go on a mission.

The Colombo government has said a ceasefire and renewed talks were possible only if the rebels surrendered their arms. — **Reuter.**

ON THE BOMBING OF JAFFNA'S MODEL MARKET: JULY 1990

By

Professor Kopan Mahadeva

*We built a market for our people twenty years ago;
Now we hear that Lanka's Air Force has made it an eye sore.
We built it with our will and sweat and love for Jaffna's lot —
Not only with stone and sand, cement mix and strong steel rods.*

How would we feel? How should we feel? How would anyone feel?

*We spent three long years in heat and dust and damp atmosphere;
Fought successive politicians and extortionists there.
We slept at site on sweaty nights on wooden planks with fleas
In rancid air for days and months near dirty lavatories.*

Still we built it. Still we did it. And now, how would we feel?

*We built it with our will and sweat and love for Jaffna's lot —
Not only with stone and sand, cement mix and strong steel rods.
Now we hear that Lanka's Air Force has made it an eye sore —
The market we built for our own people twenty years ago.*

How would we feel? How should we feel? How would anyone feel?

*It had stalls and halls, shrine rooms and terrazzo corridors,
Shady trees, show cases and solid-made satin doors,
Water points from overhead tanks, modern conveniences,
Electric lamps, vehicle parks and temple frontages.*

That is just how we built it. That is how sound we built it.

*MITE built it with our will and sweat and love for Jaffna's lot —
Not only with stone and sand, cement mix and strong steel rods.
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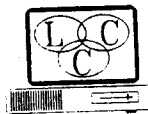
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Continued From Page 7

people are starving now', said Mr. Senathirajah.

He claimed that aerial bombing has destroyed several buildings in Jaffna. A minimum of 22 to 25 people die daily due to the bombings.

'I blame both the LTTE and the government forces for the situation in the North and East. There's no point in fighting. They should have talked and sorted out their problems', he said.

'Both opposition parties and the government are not interested in meeting the aspirations of the Tamil people. They are just shouting about everything and doing nothing', he added.

'I am against the involvement of political parties in setting up of home-guard units. They only bring in people with political motives to the front'.

He appealed to the government forces to give security to all the people including Tamils.

NGO's Prevented from Supplying Food Relief

The military action conducted in the name of destroying the LTTE, in reality, amounts to actions directed to destroy the Tamil speaking people in the North.

In this situation, it is shocking that even Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have been deprived of the opportunity of supplying the suffering people with foodstuffs and medicines, states a press release by the Joint Plantation Trade Union Committee, comprising 9 plantation sector trade unions.

The release added: The Joint Plantation Trade Union Committee views with grave concern the situation that has arisen as a result of the war raging in the North and East.

Since the war erupted in June thousands of innocent people have lost their lives. Hundreds of thousands of people in the North and East have been transformed into miserable refugees. Nearly 100,000 people have fled to India seeking refuge for themselves. Due to the prevailing famine conditions in the North and East people are confronted with starvation and death. In effect, the government's ban on people carrying foodstuffs and even essential items such as candles and boxes of matches has caused great distress among the people.

It is sad to state that due to indiscriminate aerial bombing even schools, temples, churches and hospitals have suffered destruction. Some towns have been razed to the ground.

The JPTUC calls upon both the government and the LTTE to ceasefire immediately and put an end to destruction of people and property.

The JPTUC also calls upon the gov-

ernment to stop immediately the aerial bombing in the North and supply the people with foodstuffs and medicines and permit the N.G.O.s to also assist the people with essential items, and to evolve a permanent solution to the ethnic problems by granting the basic rights of the Tamil speaking peoples.

INDIAN PM CALLS FOR END TO HOSTILITIES

NEW DELHI, Aug. 27

Indian Prime Minister, Vishwanath Pratap Singh, today appealed to the Sri Lankan Government to immediately cease hostilities and resume negotiations to end the ethnic conflict.

A worried Mr. Singh said: 'We are deeply concerned at the sharp escalation of conflict in Sri Lanka over the last few days'.

He said reports from Sri Lanka mentioned 'indiscriminate attacks on heavily populated areas, which are causing civilian casualties and rendering thousands homeless'.

'As a result, the flow of refugees from the island into Tamil Nadu has increased and is placing a heavy burden on India', Mr. Singh added. 'The Lankan Government must take urgent steps to stem the inflow of refugees into neighbouring India', he pointed out.

The Indian Prime Minister said: 'We appeal for an immediate cessation of hostilities in Sri Lanka and a return to negotiations. A durable solution to the ethnic conflict cannot be found by military means or violence'.

He further said: 'It can only be found through a dialogue for meeting the legitimate Tamil aspirations and concerns within the framework of Sri Lanka's unity and integrity'.

Thondaman Urges Govt.-LTTE Talks

CWC President and Minister of Rural Industrial Development Thondaman who met Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi recently in Madras has told the latter that somebody who was really interested in the Tamil people should take steps to bring peace.

According to the Madras based *The Hindu* newspapers, Mr. Thondaman speaking as the CWC President and not as the Sri Lankan Minister for Rural Industrial Development had told reporters after his talks with the Chief Minister that Tamil Nadu could influence Tigers into talks because there were 100,000 Lankan refugees there and the LTTE might also reciprocate.

He had said the LTTE and the Sri Lanka government would not take the initiative for talks because they had worked together and failed. Hence somebody who was really interested in

the Tamil people should take steps to bring peace.

The Hindu further said:

Mr Thondaman said the LTTE should stop the fighting which it started and begin negotiations with the Sri Lankan Government to find a solution to the Tamils' problem. 'If the LTTE stops the fighting tomorrow, the Sri Lankan Government also has no other alternative to stop it and then there will be cessation of hostilities', he said. It was much better that the LTTE start the negotiations with the Sri Lankan President, Mr. Premadasa 'instead of outside agencies coming in and getting involved'.

He said he told Mr. Karunanidhi that somebody interested should take the initiative to solve the problem.

About the Chief Minister's appeal that the Government of India should act as the 'neutral guarantor' to forge a ceasefire between the LTTE and Colombo and help start negotiations between them, Mr. Thondaman said. 'The Government of India failed last time. Under the Indo Sri Lankan Agreement, they undertook to disarm the LTTE but they could not'. Mr. Karunanidhi might have asked for the Indian initiative because as a State Government he could not directly deal with the problem.

'STOP AID TO SRI LANKA' PLEA TO WORLD BANK

The following is the text of a letter addressed to the President of the World Bank, Mr. Barber Conable, by the Tamil Welfare and Human Rights Committee of the U.S.A.:-

'We are writing to draw your immediate attention the dire plight of Tamils in Sri Lanka. The Government's so-called "all-out war" against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebel group, which was exploited by the government until March 1990 to oust the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF), has become an undeclared war against the entire Tamil population in Sri Lanka. The Christian Science Monitor of June 20 headlined its report on the situation "Government declares war on Tamils", and opined that "Sri Lanka descends into what may be the most costly war in the country's history".'

The Government's hunt for the Tigers (LTTE) in the northeast province over the last four weeks has claimed more than 1200 innocent Tamil civilian lives, rendered an estimated 80,000 homeless and caused about 600,000 to become refugees in their own land, and forcing them to overflow into neighbouring South India.

The Sri Lankan Government has been at great pains to keep international opinion on its side, and has

Continued On Page 21

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Continued From Page 19

prevented foreign news reporters from visiting the northeast province, inundating the international media with falsified reports. Please find attached, excerpts from the news reports of a handful of daring reporters who slipped through the ban.

- Naval and aerial bombardment of civilian targets, including houses, shops, schools, churches and hospitals;

- Strafing from Bell Helicopter Gun Boats;

- Burning and destruction of entire villages and towns;

- Blockade of food, fuel and medical supplies reaching northeast province;

Public records detail the occurrence of successive Government assaults on Tamil population, repeated destruction of private property and economic assets belonging to Tamils, and the use of a scorched earth policy over the last 13 years. The ruthless army attack on the Tamils since June 12 has the dimensions of a final assault, boasting some armors as well as artillery. Minister Ranjan Wijeratne is on record declaring:

"Our military machinery is committed to that... It will take time to get to the north as we want to consolidate in

the east first... There is no question of a cease fire... When we fight we fight to the end... The winner takes the lot... **We will purchase arms from wherever they are available, at the moment we have enough. We will replenish our stocks whenever necessary. Parliament has already set aside Rs.5 Billion (US \$125 Million) for buying arms. We will raise funds required without asking for aid."**

Funds are fungible and there is no doubt that funds provided by the donors are used to meet the high direct defense expenditure (Rupees 8 billion or US \$200 million in 1989) and for the supplementary budget required for special arms purchase.

If donors do not cry halt, it is certain that scarce aid funds will expedite the genocide of a virulent minority community in the country, facilitate the destruction of private property, community assets, infrastructure and institutions in the northeast and ruin the country's general economy.

Even on humanitarian grounds the donor community has a moral responsibility to stop this carnage committed by an irresponsible government. Please prevail on the donor community to act now. We appeal to you to stop aid to Sri Lanka.'

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Continued From Page 12

are, and have a say in the punishment before, and not after, punishment is meted out. To kill first and explain later is the style of terrorism and not of a mass movement.

Movements involved in armed struggle make mistakes and such mistakes do not entirely disqualify them from being mass movements. It is only when they fail to rectify their mistakes, refuse to recognise mistakes as mistakes and reject the authority of the masses that they cease to be mass movements. It is therefore the duty of all genuine supporters of the revolutionary cause or the ideal of liberation to point out mistakes when they are made and criticise what deserves to be criticised. Failure to do so is bad, but to cover up mistakes and find excuses and explanations for recurrent mistakes is worse. It is very sad when intelligent and well-informed individuals, the so-called intellectuals, indulge in such folly.

We have witnessed several instances when crimes, including mass killings, by organisations have been denied by those concerned, even when the public knows who was responsible and when intellectuals pretend not to know or are very generous with the benefit of the doubt. When evidence mounts against the offenders, the very intellectuals who admitted that the action was wrong rush to rationalise. When explanations fail to convince the public they resort to justification on the basis

of precedents and on the basis of comparisons with criminal acts by rivals and by the enemy. Some even tend to see selective killings as more forgivable than mass killings, and fail to recognise that both kinds of killings are motivated by the one and the same desire, namely to intimidate critics and terrorise into submission those who fail to conform.

We also know of supporters and sympathisers who have contributed in many ways, including material and political support, to organisations and admit in private that the organisation which they supported has made serious mistakes but refuse to communicate their views to the organisation concerned. This may be due to a false sense of loyalty or simply fear, but such weakness on the part of the individual does not exempt them from guilt. These individuals fail the society for whose benefit they claim to support one organisation or the other by refusing to point out wrongs when they should be pointed out and by not exercising their moral authority by denying its existence.

My plea to intellectuals and supporters of organisations which indulge in terror against individuals and the masses as a means of establishing their authority is that they do not pretend to be ignorant when they know, that they do not seek to defend the indefensible and that they do not give unqualified support to any organisation which cannot take their criticism into account. One never knows when the bullet for

which one paid his money, the murderer whom one defended and the killing which one condoned in silence will be the bullet which took the life, the killer who carried the gun and the slaying of someone near and dear.

S. Sivasegaram.

London SW20.

THE BROKEN PALMYRA**The Tamil Crisis in Sri Lanka
- An Inside Account**

By

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NEWS ROUND-UP

● **FIERCE FIGHTING** between LTTE cadres and government forces broke out on 21 August when LTTE cadres mounted an attack on the Mullaitivu army camp. A constable was killed and a soldier injured during a mortar attack by Tigers on the Jaffna Fort.

● **THE CLAIM** by the LTTE that the Tamil militant group Eelam Revolutionary Organisation (EROS) and its political wing Eelavar Democratic Front (EDF) have been dissolved by General Secretary, V. Balakumar, and that he had asked all members to join the LTTE, have been strenuously denied by leading members of these organisations in Colombo, Madras and London. Most of the Members of Parliament belonging to EROS/EDF who had resigned their seats have reportedly gone abroad in fear of their physical security and sought asylum.

● **SEVEN BUSES** proceeding from Batticaloa to Colombo were stopped near Punnanai Army Camp on 21 August and 32 male and 3 women (undergraduates) passengers were taken into custody and detained by soldiers. Government forces surrounded the villages of Mandoor, Sunnamalai and Navithan Veli in Batticaloa district and took away about 300 persons to the army camp. Security forces claimed that nine alleged Tigers were killed in two separate clashes in the Batticaloa district on 21 August. In the first incident 7 were shot dead by soldiers in Unnichi and in the other two were killed at Wellaweli.

● **AIR LANKA** stands to lose an estimated Rs. 398 million in revenue if a prolonged Gulf crisis prevents resumption of flights to Kuwait for the rest of 1990 and the country's tourism also will be severely affected, according to the airline. It also warned that a further increase in air fares was inevitable due to rising fuel prices caused by the Gulf crisis.

● **IN A POLICE** raid on an alleged JVP/DJV camp at Delwala in the Galle area on 22 August, Fernando Mahathaya alias Indika Mahathaya, a suspected provincial JVP leader and four others were killed.

● **AIRFORCE FIGHTER** planes and helicopter gunships bombed and strafed many parts of the Jaffna town on 22 August in what appeared to be the prelude to a major assault in the north by government forces. Two army battalions numbering about 2000 men were airlifted or ferried by ships to Karainagar naval base on Kayts island from where the forces were expected to launch a major offensive in the Jaffna area in a bid to break the Tiger siege of the Fort army camp. The Jaffna peninsula was also subjected to an indefinite round-the-clock 24 hour curfew. As the airforce began heavy bombing at 7 am, the navy opened artillery fire directed at the town from the sea. Although the government claimed that the attacks were directed at Tiger positions, bombing was so indiscriminate that it resulted in several civilian deaths and innumerable buildings and homes being reduced to rubble. A few hours before the bombing, leaflets were dropped from the air announcing an indefinite curfew and warning the 850,000 civilians that government forces would commence air strikes.

● **MINISTER** of State for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne told a meeting of Colombo diplomats on 22 August that 526 service personnel had been killed and 457 were missing, presumed killed, since fighting broke out between government forces and the LTTE.

● **KAYTS ISLAND**, situated 4 miles off Jaffna town had been cleared and was now in the hands of the troops. Ranjan Wijeratne told a press conference in Colombo on 23 August. Several bodies were seen burning near Alles Gardens in Trincomalee.

● **FIVE HUNDRED** Muslim youths have been recruited as 'home guards' to provide security to Muslims in the Kalmunai area. 150 youths are already being trained in the handling of firearms at the Kalmunai Zahira College grounds.

● **TULF MP** for Batticaloa District, Govindan Karunakaran, told parliament on 23 August that what was going on was a war against the Tamil people. At Valachchenai 15 youths were taken from a refugee camp and brutally murdered. There were Muslim organisations which were armed. They had killed innocent Tamils in retaliation against the massacre at Kattankudy. About 140 Tamils including women and children were brutally killed. Even refugee camps were attacked. After the Eeravur massacre of Muslims, Tamils were killed at Weeramunai. Seven patients at the Eravur hospital were also murdered. The Tamil community could not be blamed for the atrocities of one particular Tamil group. It was so with the Muslim community. There were Muslim terrorists committing atrocities and the entire Muslim community could not be blamed for that.

● **SLFP MP**, Jeyaraj Fernandopulle told parliament on 23 August that the killing of innocent youth had started again in the south.

They were being abducted, tortured and killed. Their bodies were being burnt. The 'tyre pyres' had started again. Now bodies of youth tortured and killed were being taken in boats and dumped into the sea. All that was being done with the knowledge of the government.

● **THE GOVERNMENT** had committed a grave error in bombing areas in the north as that would make the Tamil people and the world community back the LTTE; and there was no assurance that the bombs would not hit civilian targets like hospitals and temples; instead of protecting the innocent Tamils, the government were penalising the civilian population for the actions of the LTTE. Vasudeva Nanayakkara, MP belonging to the USA said in Parliament on 23 August.

● **THE GOVERNMENT** of India is deeply anguished at reports of indiscriminate aerial attacks on heavily populated areas of Jaffna, a foreign ministry spokesman said on 24 August. He said 'large numbers of civilian casualties' had resulted from the Colombo government's attacks on Jaffna, a major centre of its minority Tamil population. A boat in which several Tamil refugees were fleeing to south India from Colombothurai in Jaffna came under attack from airforce helicopters. A number of persons died in the attack including Akilan (22), Selliah Supothiran (14), Nagalingam Thiyagarajah (25) and Kalimuthu Surenthirani (13). Seven persons including Alphonsus (3), Rajakone Bharat (3), Kunamani (24) and Selliah Kavithas (8) were seriously wounded.

● **THE CLAIM** by the government that its forces had killed about 150 Tiger rebels riding motorcycles and bicycles defying the curfew at Kopay in northern Jaffna on 24 August in air attacks was promptly denied by the LTTE as a pure invention. However, reports indicate an undisclosed number of civilians falling victims of strafing by helicopter gunships. The government admitted that four soldiers were killed and 16 wounded by landmines in their attempted push towards the peninsula from Kayts. An LTTE statement charged that 'indiscriminate aerial and naval bombardment on heavily populated areas in the whole of the Jaffna peninsula was claiming many civilian lives'. Manthikai and Moolai hospitals in the heart of the peninsula were hit. In bombing operations in Jaffna: 9 persons were injured at Punnalikadduvan; Illankovan (30) was killed in Chunnakam; Jaffna Central College student Krishnapillai Satheeskanthan (20) was killed.

● **TIGERS ATTACKED** and damaged a transformer at Vantharamoolai near the Batticaloa university on 24 August. Both Paranthan and Elephant Pass army camps in northern Sri Lanka came under Tiger attack with mortars and 'Arul' grenades. At Kallar in the Amparai district, a Tiger leader identified as Thiyagarajah was killed when troops opened fire at an alleged LTTE group.

● **SECURITY SOURCES** claimed that Ibrahim alias Khalid, a key leader of the LTTE in the eastern province and who figured in the Government-LTTE talks, was killed in an operation by the Special Task Force at Addalaichanai on 25 August.

● **N. SRI KANTH** leader of the Tamil militant group TELO told newspapers on 25 August that people in the north-eastern areas were starving without food. At Vantharamoolai in Batticaloa, a father and mother had given poison seed powder to their children and consumed it themselves because they did not have any food to give their children. Two of the children had died but the couple and one child had survived. At Kilinochchi also there had been a similar case where three children had been given poison by their parents due to lack of food.

● **GOVERNMENT SOURCES** claimed that security forces had advanced from Kayts and got control of the island of Mandaitivu on 25 August. At Mandaitivu, which has a population of 7000 people heavily armed troops with cover provided by Israeli-made Dvora gunboats moved into the SLBC transmitting station building. Before gaining control of the islands of Kayts and Mandaitivu, there was fierce fighting between government forces and the LTTE with casualties on both sides. The LTTE conceded that 47 of their men were killed in the two-day fighting at Mandaitivu. The LTTE accused the government forces of using the people as human shields as they advanced.

● **A.C.S. Hameed**, the Justice Minister, who participated on behalf of the government in negotiations with the LTTE before the fighting broke out in June, in an interview datelined 26 August with the New York Times, said that despite the hostilities, the government was ever ready to reopen talks with the LTTE at any time even while the fighting continued. 'The government of President Premadasa had already granted the rebels de facto rule in the north-east, pending regional elections, in the hope of ending the seven-year-old civil war. With the LTTE effectively controlling every aspect of life in the north and east, the million-dollar question is, why did they choose to break away from the talks and take to arms? ... The Tigers' decision to resume fighting was suicidal for

the Tamil cause. Who made the blunder? As far as they are concerned, it is suicidal. As far as Sri Lanka is concerned, it is a national tragedy, because this is the closest that we had come during the last half century to resolve this problem. . . The biggest battle that the LTTE faces today is to explain to its own rank and file why it has led them into this present crisis. Why, when they had everything on a platter, they threw it away? It's absolutely like throwing the bread into the waters hoping it will come back buttered'.

● **SECURITY SOURCES** claimed that advancing troops from Kayts towards Jaffna had killed about 86 alleged Tigers at Allapiddy on 26 August. However, reports from there indicated that most of those killed were civilians. In consolidating the takeover of the islands of Kayts and Mandativu, several civilians were hacked to death by service personnel. In the Pothuvil district in the east, the whereabouts of about 150 persons taken away by security forces remain unknown.

● **AS GOVERNMENT** forces were reported to be making slow progress towards the Jaffna Fort, the Tigers in a diversionary move attacked and tightened their grip around the Mullaitivu army camp where three soldiers were killed and 30 more were injured on 27 August. Nine service personnel injured in the course of Tiger attacks on the Jaffna Fort were evacuated by a helicopter. Government sources claimed that 19 Tigers among whom there were 16 Muslims in the Amparai district surrendered with their weapons to the security forces. Two persons were killed and five more were injured when government forces opened fire upon a passenger bus proceeding from Eravur to Polonnaruwa. In Kalmunai in the east, a person identified as Kopalan Poopalappillai was hacked to death.

● **FIERCE CLASHES** occurred between LTTE cadres and government forces on 28 August in the Central Camp area in Amparai. Army sources said that one soldier was killed and five were injured and 20 LTTE men were killed in the encounter. Helicopter gunships were brought into action to beat back the attacking LTTE cadres. In the Jaffna peninsula, the advance of government forces to the Fort was hampered by mines, ambushes and the blowing up of the Pannai causeway which connects the mainland with Kayts. Frustrated in their progress, the forces in Mandaitivu used artillery to shell buildings in mainland Jaffna. When forces tried to spread out into the Vasavilan and Kadduvan areas accompanied by aerial bombardment, one airforce man was killed and four others injured in a fierce clash with LTTE cadres. The attack on the Mullaitivu army camp by the LTTE continued unabated.

● **THE LTTE** stepped up its assault on the Mullaitivu army camp on 29 August and as the fighting raged an unofficial curfew was imposed in the area. To relieve the nearly besieged soldiers in the camp, the airforce carried out extensive bombing operations around the area of the camp. Government sources stated that five soldiers were killed and 40 more were wounded in the continuing clashes. The Eravur police station in Batticaloa district came under heavy attack by the LTTE.

● **A POLITICAL** solution is the only course of action left to settle the present conflict between the government and the LTTE. The present war is one of the government's own making, the Leader of the Opposition, Mrs. S. Bandaranaike said at a public meeting held on 29 August.

● **FORTY-TWO** injured security service personnel were evacuated on 30 August by two helicopters from Mullaitivu military camp which had been subjected to continuous attack by the LTTE for several days. At a press conference in Colombo, State Minister for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne claimed that at Mandativu island off Jaffna, government forces had killed around 150 LTTE men, captured 30 including two 12 and 14 year old boys and recovered a large quantity of unused 'Johnny mines'. In Kangainodai, Palamunai and Mannmunai in the eastern province 6 mosques and 46 houses were set on fire by an unidentified gang.

● **THE LARGE** refugee camp which has been set up at the Tamil Maha Vidyalaya in Vavuniya would be taking in people from other areas; about 5000 would be taken for a start; it can be expanded, and now tents were being put up and food would be distributed free, Defence Secretary, General Cyril Ranatunga told a press conference in Colombo on 30 August.

● **THE 1991 BUDGET** has been estimated at Rs.139 billion with a record deficit of Rs.67 billion which would have to be financed by loans, foreign aid and other borrowing sources. The recurrent expenditure in the budget to be presented on October 12 is estimated at Rs.75.5 billion while capital spending is Rs.63.5 billion. The total revenue is expected to be Rs.72 billion.

● **NEARLY 100,000** Muslims are trapped in the Mannar and Trincomalee districts of the northern and eastern provinces unable

NEWS ROUND-UP

to leave the areas of violence, a survey conducted by the Federation of Assemblies of Muslim Youth revealed.

● **FOUR SOLDIERS** were killed and five others wounded in the Mandativu island on 31 August in a landmine explosion. One of the soldiers had stepped on an LTTE's 'Johnny mine'. Two Tamil women were killed and two other women were injured in an attack by an unidentified armed gang at Eravur in the Eastern province. Rajkumar, a boy aged 3 was killed when a shell fired by government forces hit his residence. In Muthur in the Trincomalee district, 126 people were reported killed and 81 persons were reported to have been taken into custody by government forces.

● **A PROPOSAL** for the formation of an interim administration in the North-East to ensure that adequate food and medical supplies reached the people and help the government in its effort to restore peace and law and order in the region had been placed before President Premadasa by the Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front (ENDLF). The ENDLF had stated that the proposed interim administration should consist of representatives of the EPRLF, ENDLF, UNP and SLMC which were the four political parties which had representation in the now defunct North-East Provincial Council.

● **A HIGH LEVEL** investigation has been launched to ascertain whether an official in the Surveyor General's Department had knowingly allowed certain sensitive maps which are not normally sold to the public to fall into the hands of the LTTE recently. These maps had apparently helped the LTTE to accurately hit security forces' targets from distances with their field guns as the maps gave detailed descriptions of the terrain of the North-East province including relative elevations of the land.

● **THE MULLAITIVU**, Kilinochchi, Vavuniya and Mannar districts were placed under indefinite curfew on 1 September as fighting raged between government forces and the LTTE in many parts of the North-East. The public in the four districts were warned that curfew violators would be treated as 'terrorists' and accordingly dealt with. Five soldiers were killed on the Allai-Kantalai road in the Trincomalee district when troops were ambushed by the Tigers. The government claimed that its forces had killed about 20 Tigers in the Mullaitivu area. Two mosques at Kangayanodai, two mosques at Palamunai and one mosque at Mannmunai in the Kalmunai area were set on fire.

● **A DIPLOMAT** attached to the Sri Lanka mission in Madras was recently detained for a day on the grounds of 'suspicious movements' by south Indian police and later released. A similar incident involving another Sri Lanka diplomat took place a week earlier.

● **GOVERNMENT** sources claimed that over ten Tigers were killed on 2 September when the army ambushed a group of about 100 Tigers at Palampatar in Trincomalee district. Following security forces reinforcements of two battalions which were landed on the Mullaitivu beach, government claimed that the LTTE which had laid siege and mounted attacks for several days previously had been beaten back with severe casualties. Because of the violence and continuous bombing operations, most of the people of Mullaitivu had fled the area. A cache of arms, army-type uniforms, photographs of police and army personnel, a typewriter, two duplicating machines and some fuse wire were recovered in a raid on an alleged JVP hideout in the jungles of Dabarelola in the Galle district; the haul was buried in two huge plastic barrels.

● **GOVERNMENT** sources claimed that four LTTE men were killed and another captured by a police party at Kannimaduwa off Galenbidunuwewa. In a gun battle lasting fifteen minutes 3 were shot dead and another climbed a tree, swallowed poison and died. Selladurai, aged 15 was captured. 'Home Guards' operating in the Trincomalee area are reported to be engaged in committing widespread atrocities including chasing away Tamils, looting, and setting fire to their houses, shooting and hacking people. Muslim Home Guards from Eravur have resorted to looting and setting fire to Tamil homes in Chenkaladi.

● **MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT** Vasudeva Nanayakkara told parliament on 5 September that in the south of the island some persons who had voluntarily surrendered to the Independent Surrender Committee had been abducted and killed. Some surrenderees had been released after inquiry and upon certain conditions and directed to a certain place to sign documents and on their way they had been abducted and killed. There was reasonable suspicion that there were shady groups operating with the knowledge of the government.

READERS FORUM

DUTY OF TAMILS LIVING OVERSEAS

SOME TAMILS left Sri Lanka due to racial riots to better their prospects while many others left for safety because of the armed conflict and are able to lead a happier life and better their prospects. They were able to leave the Island because they had the facilities and the means and are now helped by the continuing conflict. Recently some had sought refuge in India whilst some others are moving from one place to another in the Tamil areas. These unfortunate kith and kin who did not have the facilities and the means to come and those who did not want to come due to patriotism are suffering without food, clothing, medicine and satisfactory shelter. Some of them including teenaged girls and boys have taken up arms and are fighting with capsules in their necks because they too want to better their prospects without being subservient to the Sinhalese or sacrifice their lives for the betterment of the incoming generation.

In 1930 the Tamils of the Northern and Eastern provinces totally boycotted the parliament as the Donoughmore Constitution did not provide adequate safeguards to the minority Tamils. But from 1935 the Tamils got divided and contested the parliamentary seats. All of them promised to win the rights of the Tamils. But a small group of Tamil MPs joined with the Sinhala majority party and ruled the entire Tamils when the majority of the Tamil MPs sat in the opposition. Thus the basic rights of the Tamils were gradually withdrawn.

But the late Mr. S.J.V. Chelvanayagam, Q.C., refused to co-operate with the Sinhalese unless the rights of the Tamils given in the Bandaranayake and Chelvanayagam pact (B/C pact) was implemented. Having failed to achieve this, the late Mr. S.J.V. Chelvanayagam, Q.C., as the leader of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) and the father of the Tamil nation was responsible for passing the Eelam resolution and stated categorically in parliament that there is no other way but for the Tamil youths to take up arms to win their rights.

Accordingly the youths have taken up arms and even these youths are divided in the same way that our past MPs were divided proving that we are not united and fit to rule ourselves. This division will once again encourage the Sinhalese to rule the Tamils according to their whims and fancies.

The Tamil youths cannot be divided and exist as a force without the support of the Tamil people. Therefore it is the bounden duty of every Tamil to sink his or her differences and support the Tamil Tigers (LTTE). They have proved to the world that they are not terrorists but they are a democratic force representing the ethnic minority Tamils in Sri Lanka. Now they are able to hold the Sinhala army in the ground as they are getting maximum support from the Tamil people in the Northern province. Is it not our duty to do our utmost to save our kith and kin from the aerial bombing, which if successful, will not only give a better living to them but also enable the Sri Lankan Tamils living overseas to be proud of having a Tamil Homeland for holiday trips and permanent stay in retirement.

Muththu

Vicars Moor Lane,
London N21.

A RETRACTION

IN REPLY to Sach Sri Kantha's letter (*Tamil Times* August 1990), I would like to apologize to him for any (unintentional) misrepresentation I made of his status in the U.S.A.

I am grateful to him for clarifying some of the points he raised in his earlier letter of March 1990. In particular I agree with him that Organizers of Socials could explicitly state the motive of the functions and the 'destination' of any profits made.

B. Skantha Kumar

Russel Square,
London WC1.

DIVISION, THE ONLY SOLUTION

WHEN I READ Jehan Perera's persuasive article entitled, 'The North-East: Getting Back to Fundamentals' (*Tamil Times*, Aug. 1990) calling for 'a new attitude of mind', I could only think of one of the gags featured in the 1919 silent movie *The Kid*, starring Charlie Chaplin. The tramp character played by Chaplin employs a dirty trick to earn his living. He befriends a street urchin who was also starving for food and without shelter. The tramp suggests to the urchin to damage the house windows in the neighborhoods by pelting with stones. After that when the urchin makes his exit, the tramp enters and receives the window-repair requests. Both the tramp and the urchin work street by street like this and at the end of the day, share the same meal from the money earned from window repairs.

Since independence, the Sinhalese politicians, populists, journalists, and intellectuals (with the exception of a few determined leftist leaders like Edmund Samarakkody and Wilmot

Perera) have employed Chaplin's 'window-repair trick' to earn their living at the expense of the Tamils. Only gullibles will deny this mistreatment. This is one important reason why the younger generation of Tamils have opted to fight for a separate state. It would be wise for Jehan Perera to understand this simple fact, rather than asserting with charming verbiage that 'Division would be no solution'. Many Tamils (especially of the younger generation) irrespective of whether they support the LTTE or not, have come to believe that 'Division is the only solution'.

Jehan Perera writes unabashedly that 'setting up a separate state can violate the human rights of other people. Especially so in Sri Lanka which, is a very small country'. This half-truth that Sri Lanka is a 'very small country' is one that has been employed by agents of colonialism and is a distortion of contemporary geographical facts. At present there are at least 38 recognized countries and territories with areas smaller than Eelam (consisting of a joint North-East province of Sri Lanka). The total area of Eelam would be 18,323 sq.km. Those countries smaller than Eelam (in decreasing size) are as follows:

Fiji, Swaziland, Kuwait (until recent annexation by Iraq), Vanuatu, Jamaica, Bahamas, Gambia, Lebanon, Qatar, Cyprus, Brunei, Trinidad & Tobago, Cape Verde, Western Samoa, Luxembourg, Comoros, Mauritius, Hongkong, Tonga, Sao Tome & Principe, Dominica, St. Lucia, Bahrain, Singapore, Andorra, Barbados, Seychelles, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Vincent, Grenada, Malta, Maldives, Antigua-Barbuda, Liechtenstein, San Marino, Tuvalu, Nauru and Monaco. *Nineteen of these countries (represented in the United Nations) are each made up of territory not larger than that of the district of Jaffna, which has a land area of 983.6 sq.km.* What is interesting is also the fact that San Marino, Tuvalu, Nauru and Monaco are in the same size range of the eight inhabited islands which cluster around the south-western region of the Jaffna peninsula.

I wish to challenge Jehan Perera to show a State which originated in the past two centuries without violating 'the human rights of other people'. USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, Indonesia, China, Philippines, South Africa, Israel, Peru, Mexico, Brazil - all were established in their present form by violating the human rights of many powerless ethnic groups. So, what is this nonsense of hypothetical idealism of non-violation of the 'human rights of other people'?

Sachi Sri Kantha

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MATRIMONIAL

Sister seeks partner for Jaffna Hindu sister, innocent divorcee, 33, 5'4", permanent visa, working in civil service. M 421 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Tamil Hindu parents seek groom for very successful accountant daughter, 30, resident in U.K. since 1977. Reply with full details to M 422 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents seek educated, good looking bride for son, 30, tall, handsome, teetotaler, non-smoker, holding sober simple values, M.Sc. Engineering (USA). Family details, horoscope essential. M 423 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents seek suitably qualified partner for attractive daughter, 24, M.Sc., employed as Computer Systems Analyst in U.S.A. Please reply with horoscope, details to M 424 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu seeks groom for sister, 38, slim. Librarian Sri Lanka University, B.A. (Hons.), M.L.I.S. M 425 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents wish to hear from decent man for attractive graduate, single, daughter in Australia, 34 plus, innocent divorcee, no children involved. M 426 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents seek professionally qualified partner, 32-36, preferably doctor for doctor daughter in U.K. Reply with details. M 427 c/o Tamil Times.

WEDDING BELLS

Michelle Ananthi daughter of Mr & Mrs S. Anantharajah of 40 Sunnybank Road, Potters Bar, Herts., U.K. and grand-daughter of the late B.K. Somasundram of Jaffna College, and **Daryn Ingrey** of Hatfield on 28.7.90 at Evangelical Free Church, Potters Bar.

Vasuki daughter of Mr & Mrs N. Vamadevan of 1 Sterry Drive, Thames Ditton, Surrey, U.K. and **Viranjan** son of Dr & Mrs N.T. de Silva of 11 Caroline Close, Croydon, Surrey on 31.8.90 at Wandsworth Town Hall, London SW18.

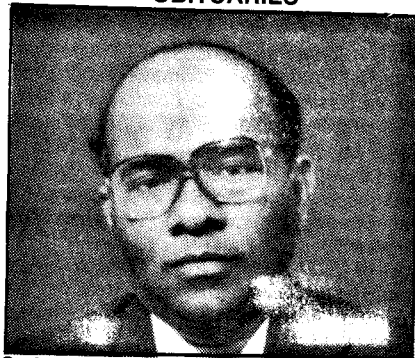
Ananthi daughter of Mr & Mrs R. Paskaralingam of 70/2 Ward Place, Colombo 7 and **Kumar** son of Mr & Mrs S. Sivayogan of 8 Oakham Drive, Bromley, Kent, U.K. on 1.9.90 at The Mount Royal Hotel, London W1.

Shivajini daughter of Mr & Mrs K. Gnanasoorian of 72 King Edward Road, London E17 and **Gunasekaram** son of Mr & Mrs G. Jeyasingam of Old Dispensary Lane, Vaddukoddai, Sri Lanka on 2.9.90 at Highgate Murugan Temple, London N6.

Anasuyah daughter of Mr & Mrs M. Perairavan of 714 - 20 Wade Avenue, Toronto, Canada and **Vignarajah** son of Dr & Mrs V.S. Ahamparam of Rani Mahal, Kokuvi West, Sri Lanka on 3.9.90 at the Sri Ganesha Temple, Ontario, Canada.

Maharani (Jaya) daughter of Mr & Mrs S. Sivananthan of 6 Jalan 11/15, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia and **Dr Rajasundaram** son of the late Mr & Mrs K. Sittambalam of Colombo on 14.9.90 at the Kalamandapam, Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

OBITUARIES



Satkunam of Zesco Zambia, formerly of National Paper Corporation passed away in Zambia on 16th August 1990. The cremation took place in Lusaka on 18th August. He leaves behind his beloved mother Mrs Rajaratnam (Australia), wife Malini, daughters Uma and Radha, son-in-law Rajagobalan, brothers Dr Natkunam and Nitkunam.



Mayuran (4), beloved son of Mr & Mrs R. Sachithanathan passed away under tragic circumstances by drowning near the Morden Marriage Registry on 29.8.90 - 44 Fountain Road, London SW17 0HQ. Tel: 081 767 6346.

IN MEMORIAM



In loving memory of **Sivakumaran (Bhojan)** formerly of M/S Samuel & Sons Ltd., Kilinochchi, on the first anniversary of his passing away on 3.9.89.

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his beloved wife Kamalambika; daughter Sivajanani; mother Mrs Sivagnanam (U.K.); brothers Sivarajan (New Zealand), Dr Sivapalan, Sivakanthan and sister Mrs Sivatharini Sahathevan (all of U.K.) - 54 Byworth Walk, Sussex Way, London N19 4BN.



Mayilvaganam Velummayilum J.P. U.M., Attorney-at-law and former Chairman, Urban Council, Point Pedro, Sri Lanka whose first anniversary of his passing away was on 31.8.90. Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his loving wife, children Thayanandarajah (U.K.), Nithyanandarajah (New Zealand), Mayilvaganarajah (U.K.), Chitra, Anandarajah, Krishnarajah and Jayanthi (All of Sri Lanka); in-laws, friends and a host of constituents - 68b Grove Road, North Finchley, London N13 9DY.



In loving memory of **Mrs Rasamalar Kandiah**, Retired teacher, Mahajana College, Tellippalai, Sri Lanka, on the second anniversary of her passing away on 26th of September 1988. Sadly missed and lovingly remembered by her children Sriskandarajah, Sriravikulan, Varathadchayani, Vanithamany, Verlkumar, Thulasibai and Anandanadesan; daughters-in-law Chandra, Theiva, Ranjani and Bhavani; sons-in-law Kanagabhavan, Sri Murugadas and Manohara and grand-children Thanuja, Shusha, Narayani, Thileepa, Shankar, Parthipan, Narmatha, Kapilan and Mayooraan.

In Loving Memory of Our Beloved Dad
T.J. Rajaratnam
Born: 23.1.1919



Called to Rest: 15.9.81
Our hearts still ache with
sadness
Dad, the secret tears still
flow
For what it meant to lose
you Dad
No one will ever know

Sadly missed and lovingly remembered by your wife Arul, children Rohini, Renuka, Rajiv; sons-in-law Vijayan, Sriharan; grand-children Vasi, Ravi, Prathi, Jayanthi, Ajit.

IN MEMORIAM (ctd)

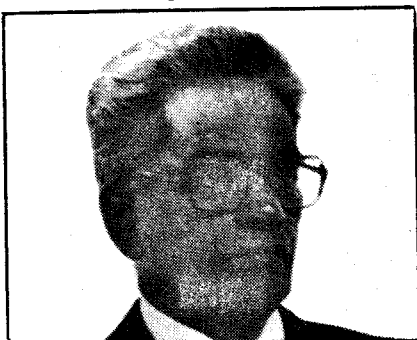


First Anniversary of the passing away of **Mrs Gnanapooranam (Nesamma) Sivasampoe** of Kokuvil, wife of the late Mr Sivasampoe of Malaysian Railways, on 23rd September 1989. Sadly missed and fondly remembered by her loving children Sivanesan, Sivapakiam, Sivasundaram, Sivagnanamah, Sivaniah & Sivasothy; sons-in-law Nagalingam, Ponnambalam & Thambirajah; daughters-in-law Rani, Sarojini & Ranji and grandchildren Bama, Ranjit, Bala, Sutha, Viji; Suresh, Suganthi, Dushi, Aruna, Ara; Balamurugan, Devaki, Sumathi, Vasuki, Gnanathepan, Prashanthi; Vathani, Easan, Kalyani, Meera and Jehan. - 9 Fallow Close, Retford, Notts. DN22 7SP, U.K.



In loving memory of **Mrs Sinnathangam Suppiah** (Retired Head Mistress, Arunasalam Vidyasalai, Alaveddy Sri Lanka) on the second anniversary of her passing away on 20.8.88.

Sadly missed and lovingly remembered by her children Sivathanan and Sivarupavathy; daughter-in-law Sivadevi; son-in-law Sivabramaniam and grand-children Kuhan, Nirupa, Meera, and Parathan - 303 Hempstead Road, Gillingham, Kent M37 3QJ.



Chelliah Kandasamy Telecommunication Engineer, who passed away on 11.9.88.

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Your compassion, love and patience

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Their cherished thoughts live on.

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by your everloving wife Pushparani; children Ranjini, Ranjan, Mohan and Raji; son-in-law Nadesan; daughters-in-law Rajarajeswari & Ranjini, brother Karthigesan, sisters Ponnimalar and Kanthimathy; nieces and nephews - 58 Magowar Road, Girraween, NSW 2145, Australia.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

October 2 7.00pm Course on Saivite Hinduism commences at British Saiva Siddhanta Centre, 72 King Edward Road, London E17. (Tel: 081 531 6435). For details. Tel: Marie Singha 071 636 8000 Ext 3840.

8.00pm Veena Recital by Arumugam Balendran at Purcell Room, South Bank Centre, London SE1. For tickets Tel: 071 928 8800.

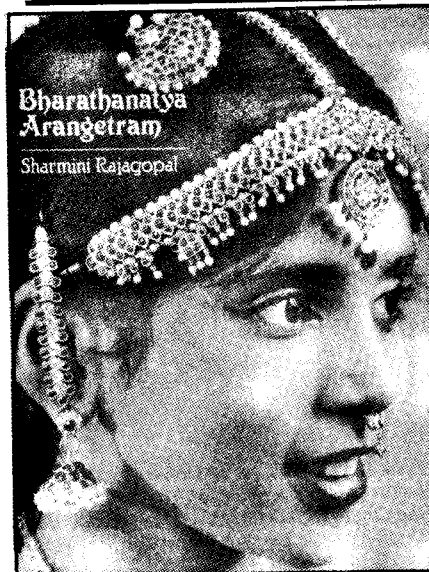
Oct. 8 7.30pm Folk Dances by a troupe from Himachal Pradesh at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 4a Castletown Road, London W14 9H1. For invitations contact Govt. of India Tourist Board, London.

Oct. 12 8.00pm Bharata Natiyam by Prakash Yadagudde at the Old Bull Arts Centre, 68 High Street, Barnet, Herts. For details Tel: 081 449 0048.

Oct. 14 3.00-6.00pm Tamil Cultural Event organised by Campaign Against State Terrorism in Sri Lanka at Church of the Ascension, Royce Road, Manchester, U.K.

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For some years now interest in Bharata Natyam among the new generation of Sri Lankan Tamils in London has gained in such an expanse that more and more week-end schools have cropped up imparting rudiments of this suggestive art of movements and mime. In spite of bubbling enthusiasm and eagerness of parents, lack of suitable venues and proficient teachers deter many students from going through a full course of training to reach the arangetram stage. In this climate it was an extraordinary experience to watch a most satisfying Arangetram by twelve-year-old Sharmini Rajagopal before a large audience in the Battersea Grand Hall, on 19th August last.

Young Sharmini fortunately has the advantage of a fully qualified guru in her mother, Ragini Rajagopal, who has had the benefit of her initial training under a Kalakshetra graduate, Shantha Ponnudurai, and later finishing under the guidance of Adyar Lakshmanan, a first generation product of Kalakshetra and a highly rated dance maestro, presently trotting around the globe with his magical Thattukkazhi conducting Nattuvangam for star performers.

Sharmini drew our interest and attention by her immaculate angasuddham and agile movements while progressing through a full Maargam consisting of the traditional Alarippu, Jatiswaram, Varnam, Padam and Tillana, with

Tamil Dance Drama

The Laxmi Arts Centre School of Dancing presents a Tamil Dance Drama titled 'Kuravanchi' at the University of London Logan Hall, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1 on 20.10.90 at 7.00pm. Kuravanchi belongs to Ancient Tamil Dramatic Literature and was revived by Rukmanidevi of Kalashetra nearly fifty years ago. The dance drama is being produced and choreographed by Mrs Selvaluxmi Ramakrishnan. For further details Tel: 081 422 7251. A scene from the dance drama appears below.



ease and understanding. The pieces were studiously chosen and appropriately blended with Tamil Varnam and Padams, and a snake charmer's dance, a la Swamamuki, thrown in for popular consumption. A novel feature in the repertoire was a piece from the Panchamoorthi Kauthuvam, a ritualistic Tandava movement used by temple dancers during Nataraja festival at the start of stepping into the prahara. This composition was by a veteran scholar Gaimuthu Pillai of Tirunelveli, the eighteenth century author of the treatise 'Natanathi Vadya Ranjanam', and a forebear of the famous Tanjore Quartet. Although in many of the compartments of Natya, Sharmini showed her technical grasp, a further understanding and perfection of the narrative Sanchari Bhava should make her a full blown artiste. A couple of long school holidays in India and under an able abhinayam teacher should do her good. She has all the signs of a star.

While Ragini Rajagopal handled her cymbals with precision and tonic variations (somewhat withdrawn, one could notice), the most effective contribution for the overall brilliance of the show was provided by the excellent singing of Mathini Sriskandaraja, a Madras University music graduate, whose range of mellifluous voice and impeccable enunciation of Jatis raised the tempo of the dance. Mathini is a rare addition to the Kamatic musical fraternity of London. In Bharata Natyam performances Mirudangam plays the leading role, and Muthu Sivaraja seems to have established for himself an accepted place in this part of the world. His playing is faultless and understanding, though at times, the P.A. system played some tricks with his mike. String instrument support on the violin was provided by the veteran star of Colombo of yester years, Rudrani Balakrishnan, and on the morsing by a younger artiste Kandiah Sithambaranathan. Occasionally a strumming on the veena strings was stealthily heard, but is it at all necessary to clutter with so many instruments in a Bharata Natyam programme where the most appropriate instruments are only the mirudangam and the flute? Finally, a word of congratulation to the father of Sharmini, Mr. E.K. Rajagopal, a well known writer and journalist who was on the staff of the Eelanadu and the Thinkaran for many years and who used to write under the pen name 'Bama Rajagopal'.

- Sivapatha Sundaram

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