

Tamil TIMES

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AYODHYA: HIJACKING THE SYMBOLS OF HINDUISM



An axe-wielding Hindu Holy Warrior
trying to reach God Rama

"I do not agree with a word
of what you say, but I'll
defend to the death your
right to say it."

— Voltaire

- The Mankulam Military Debacle
- Red Cross Protests at Bombing of Jaffna Hospital
- Rival Tamil Groups join anti-LTTE War
- *Tamil-Muslim Parties Reach Accord*
- LTTE: Now a Conventional Army
- DMK Sun Passes Through a Cloud

● People & Politics

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TENTH YEAR

TAMIL TIMES begins its tenth year with this issue. We commenced publication in October 1981 following the tragic events of that year – the burning of the Jaffna library and the July-August anti-Tamil mob violence of that year. Our aim was to focus attention on the escalating ethnic conflict and the accelerating erosion of democratic and human rights in Sri Lanka. We expected the journal to adopt a broad perspective and strike an objective balance in the presentation of news and views and serve as a forum for the serious discussion of the problems confronting the people. The intention was to assist in the formulation of informed opinion rather than manipulate opinion.

In our first editorial comment in October 1981, we declared '... we are determined to ensure that news, views and information that we publish are of general interest to all Sri Lankans be they Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims or Burghers. While we will not hesitate to comment on political questions, we are resolved to remain unaffiliated to any political party. While we would endeavour to give as wide a coverage as possible to news and information, we are determined to make the *TAMIL TIMES* the standard bearer for the defence of democracy and human rights and a forum for serious discussion of political, social, economic and cultural matters. ... We are dedicated to the much cherished maxim: Facts are sacred, comment is free'.

On the issues relating to the ethnic conflict, we commented in the same editorial as follows: 'The trials and tribulations of the Tamil speaking people of Sri Lanka for the last 33 years, the series of tragic and traumatic experiences they suffered as a consequence of frequent communal violence culminating in the recent reign of terror unleashed upon the Tamil people of Jaffna and the contribution of the state apparatus towards the destruction and devastation of their cultural institutions, the latest round of violence directed at the Tamils in the rest of the island rendering thousands destitute and homeless should have by now convinced those in authority and others that the Tamil national question would not simply disappear. Resolute, positive and meaningful steps by way of appropriate and just political and constitutional arrangements are vital for the effective solution of this vexed problem'.

We have tried our best to adhere to the commitment and position we adopted in our first ever editorial. In the context of the highly polarised and violently divisive

atmosphere that has prevailed between and within the major communities, the task of maintaining an objective and balanced stance on the major issues that affected the people and country has been a difficult one. We have had to, on the one hand contend with the ever mounting pressure from some sections within the Tamil community to adopt a partisan stance of favouring one group or the other, and on the other hand the hostility from those in governmental authority who at one time even went to the extent of publishing and circulating a counterfeit exact replica of *TAMIL TIMES* containing propaganda material in their favour.

Our opposition to the government's effort to seek a military solution to the ethnic conflict and its repressive methods has continued to be uncompromising. We have sought to focus attention on and place the responsibility upon the government for the grave violations of democratic and human rights that have occurred over the years.

Our commitment to defend the democratic rights of the people, including the right to self determination of the Tamil speaking people, was accompanied by an equal concern for internal democracy, political pluralism and observance of human rights within the Tamil community itself. It is in this context that we have not hesitated to denounce politically motivated assassinations and arbitrary killings, proscription of one group or party by the other, internecine armed conflicts among groups, forced recruitment of young Tamils and suppression of the rights to free expression and association. We subscribe to the view that the aim of any liberation struggle must be to enhance the democratic and human rights enjoyed by the people, and not to deprive them of even the limited ones to which they have already been accustomed.

While party or group loyalists, adherents and advocates of particular parties or groups may legitimately have their own interests to serve, we have tried to advance the cause of the people in a broader context. Our record has been one of standing up for the people's democratic rights including the right to life, right not to be tortured, right to freedom of expression and the right to freedom of association. We remain committed to the belief that the people collectively and individually are entitled to the full and unfettered realisation and enjoyment of these internationally recognised rights.

MILITARY DEBACLE AT MANKULAM

— Colombo Newsletter —

If the overrunning of the strategic northern Mankulam Army Camp produced one of the most noteworthy battles won by the LTTE during its 'Great Heroes' week ending on Prabhakaran's birthday (26 November), it also turned out to be the bloodiest battle fought by the Sri Lankan army since the beginning of the conflict as one senior army official put it. The military debacle at Mankulam has left the army with over a hundred of its men and officers dead or unaccounted for. The rest of the men together with their Commander escaped by abandoning the camp and retreating through dense jungles relentlessly pursued by the Tigers. After overrunning and demolishing the Camp, the Tigers got away with a large quantity of weapons, ammunition, communication equipment and military vehicles. To describe this massive defeat as a mere military 'reversal', as has been done by the State Minister of Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne, is to indulge in a self-defeating exercise in self-deception.

The Mankulam army camp was located at a strategic junction where two important roads meet, one leading to the north towards Elephant Pass — the gateway to Tiger-controlled Jaffna peninsula — and the other eastwards to Mullaitivu. The camp was manned by 312 men and officers belonging to the Gajaba and Wijayaba regiments and commanded by Major Daulagala.

The Tigers began their attack during the night of 22 November with rocket propelled grenades, mortars, and powerful machine guns. They attacked the northern, southern and eastern flanks of the camp with their own 3 Pazilan (Baba) 2000 mortars which have a firing range of 400 to 500 yards. The attack continued till the early hours of 23 November. The Tigers, estimated at about 1500, having surrounded and virtually cut-off the camp from receiving reinforcements by occupying all possible approach points, also ensured that reinforcements or air cover was not available by helicopters, and this was done by building bunkers in adjoining jungles from where they were able to fire at any helicopter which attempted to land on the helipad of the camp or nearby.

By the morning of 23 November, the LTTE had captured eight of the army trenches entirely overrunning the north and south of the camp. However, in a major counter-offensive, in which a considerable number of Tigers were killed, the troops re-took the south.

Although the State Minister of Defence claimed that radio contact with the camp was lost within a few hours of the attack because the antenna had been fired at and damaged by the Tigers, there is evidence to suggest that the radio communication remained unaffected until 4pm Saturday 24 — in fact the northern Commander of the army Major Gen. Denzil Kobbe-kaduwa was in contact with Major Daulagala until that time when all of a sudden radio contact was lost. Up until radio contact was lost, several desperate radio messages were sent by the besieged troops at Mankulam begging for air support and for helicopters to evacuate 70 soldiers who had been wounded, but their pleas would appear to have fallen on deaf ears.

When questioned as to why adequate air support was not provided to the besieged troops, the State Minister of Defence explained that helicopters could not fly in the vicinity of the camp due to bad weather and heavy rain.

But it is now established that most of the military helicopters were being used in connection with President Premadasa's visit to Jaffna — four of them were being used for non-military civilian transport and one was standing idly at Katunayake airport and another at Palaly airport. In Parliament, the leader of the opposition Mrs. S. Bandaranaike complained, 'We have repeatedly stressed the vital importance of placing all helicopters exclusively at the disposal of the armed forces and begged of you to discontinue the use of helicopters by VIPs for civilian purposes. . . It is surely a crime of the highest order to spend billions and billions from our poor nation's coffers on defence and the purchase of military aircraft and thereafter deny the use of such aircraft to save the lives of our young soldiers bleeding for our country's life'.

Denied adequate air support or reinforcements and overwhelmed by the sustained fire power of the Tigers, troops and officers who had survived the LTTE onslaught decamped during the evening of 24 November unnoticed by the Tigers and trekked nearly six miles through dense jungles in the direction of Vavuniya. The Tigers recommenced their attack on the camp during the night 24 November but there was no return fire. On the morning of 25 November the Tigers entered the abandoned army camp. During the following three days, the Tigers pursued the retreating troops in the thick jungles and in the ensuing gun battles,

there were many casualties on both sides. The troops divided into three groups and took their separate escape routes towards Nelikulam, Puliyanikulam and Vavuniya.

The Minister of State claimed at a press conference on 28 November that 273 men and officers had left the Mankulam camp on 24 November. But by 30 November only 117 of the 312 originally at the Mankulam army camp had returned. The official death toll still stands at 32 and the balance 163 still 'missing'.

Although the government has denied that 'unofficial talks' with the Tigers have been initiated in London there is a strong unofficial lobby working behind the scenes to pressurise both sides to get back to the negotiating table. With everybody agreed that only a political solution can resolve the issue it seems strange that the military option continues. What has taken on a frightening prospect is the fact that Tamil militant groups who shed their militancy opting for democratic politics, have been handed back their guns. Hundreds of cadres from the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP), Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) and People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) are now in the field engaged in military operations with government forces to 'wipe out the Tigers', how successful they are going to be remains to be seen.

Meanwhile two Muslim and six Tamil political parties have come together agreeing on a broad framework for power sharing in a merged North-East Province. Sri Lanka Muslim Congress President A.M. Ashraff who spearheads the Muslim lobby for equal status with the Tamils in the merged provinces is determined to wrest as much as possible from the Tamil groups. In sharp contrast is the campaign mounted by Speaker of the Sri Lanka Parliament, M.H. Mohammed for the de-linking of the multi-ethnic Eastern Province from the Tamil dominated Northern Province.

Mohammed argues that a merged North-Eastern Province would spell the first step to a division of the country. No durable solution to the North-East problem is possible says Mohammed without consulting the Sinhalese in the Eastern province who are in a minority of 26 percent as against the 33 percent Muslims and 41 percent Tamils. Mohammed is for the three communities in the East together deciding whether they would like to remain linked, with the North as they now do under the controversial Indo-Lanka Accord, or de-link. Mohammed is also not for the holding of a referendum to decide the issue but for de-linking of the provinces through parliament. Ashraff shrugs off Muslim

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Govt. Deploys Rival Tamil Groups Against LTTE

Security forces have been asked to deploy PLOTE, EPDP and TELO cadres to protect Tamil villages in 'secured' areas of the North-East. A large number of Tamil refugees still lingered in camps in areas like Thirukkivil fearing to return to their homes because of Muslim home guards. The Special Task Force (STF) operating in that region had been told to induct more TELO members to protect those Tamil hamlets and instil confidence into the people so that they would go back to their homes, Plantation Industries Minister and State Minister for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne disclosed.

Addressing journalists at the weekly cabinet news conference in Colombo, the Minister said that there were in fact small anti-LTTE groups working with the government to combat the Tigers. But it had now been decided to use such cadres on a more extensive scale to provide protection to Tamil villages. 'When I visited Thirukkivil, which is a predominantly Tamil area, recently I saw a number of Tamil refugees who had streamed in from the Weeramunai region, still in camps. They feared to return because of Muslim home guards. I told them that the security forces would ensure that the Muslim home guards conducted themselves properly', Mr Wijeratne said.

Q: PLOTE, EPDP and TELO members are also

working with the government?

A: Yes, they are with us.

Q: The EPDP is in Colombo?

A: They are protecting their headquarters.

Q: They are armed?

A: Yes.

Q: Earlier, it was decided not to arm these groups? Why has that been changed?

A: They know the LTTE guys. I don't want Muslims to identify innocent Tamils and put them in trouble. They should not be used for that purpose. We are using TELO and other anti-LTTE groups to identify LTTE cadres.

Q: Isn't the EPRLF cooperating with the government on this?

A: They are not cooperating but instead attacking me verbally.

Q: But that's mutual...

A: Naturally. You thought I will keep quiet when they attack?

Q: Were TELO cadres in South India also brought back?

A: No, but they are clamouring to return. They had still not been able to do so.

Q: How many LTTE members are under detention?

A: I can't give the figure just now.

Q: So arms had been issued to anti-LTTE groups?

A: They have arms to protect themselves. If they go to the front we will give arms.

PLOTE TO HELP ARMY

As army units backed by air support probed the dense Wanni jungles to hunt down the LTTE groups which overran the Mankulam army camp, the Government has moved swiftly to strengthen the deployment of rival Tamil militant groups in the north-east with a view to assisting the army.

The People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) has agreed to strengthen its presence in the Wanni area with a view

to assisting the army and at the same time protect the Tamil civilian population, militant sources said.

Militant sources in Colombo claimed that the Government had indicated its willingness to allow the PLOTE 'forces' operating in the Wanni areas to step up activities and further expand deployment of their cadres. Security officials confirmed the deployment of PLOTE cadres and plans to send more to the north.

PLOTE has deployed a substantial number of men in the Wanni areas to assist the army and carry out rehabilitation work. Recently nearly one hundred PLOTE cadres were sent to Batticaloa where they supported government operations against the LTTE, sources said. These sources further said that the PLOTE could further strengthen its Wanni deployment following the arrival of hundreds of men who sought protection in south Indian refugee camps when the LTTE crushed the Tamil National army (TNA).

Hundreds of PLOTE cadres were among mem-

bers of other Tamil groups who fled to south India when the Indian Government withdrew its last contingent of forces in May last year.

Meanwhile sources said that discussions were continuing in Colombo to allow over fifty cadres of the PLOTE to be repatriated from Male. The Maldivian Government has agreed to release all PLOTE cadres who took part in the abortive coup attempt there.

Sources indicated that the PLOTE leadership could deploy more men in the north if cadres now in Male and south India returned.

- The Island.

Tamil and Muslim Parties Reach Accord

Five Tamil parties and three Muslim parties announced that they have reached a general agreement to satisfy the aspirations of the Muslims in the North and East through a constitutional arrangement to establish a Muslim ethnic council and a Tamil ethnic council with equal status and powers within a merged North-East Province.

The parties also agreed the North-East Provincial Council should consist of two chambers having weighted representation for the minorities.

They added that the question of the Sinhalese in the North-East will be discussed with all other political parties.

Here is the text of the joint press release issued by the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTCF), All-Ceylon Muslim League (ACML), Democratic People's Liberation Front (DPLF), Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), Muslim United Liberation Front (MULF), Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), and Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF).

'President Ranasinghe Premadasa observed at the APC that he could see the emergence of a consensus within the framework of a North East Province provided that the concerns of the Muslims and the

Sinhalese community are satisfactorily resolved. Consequently, the APC requested the Muslim and Tamil political parties to examine firstly how the interests of Muslims could be safeguarded within the North-East Province.

'The Muslim and Tamil Parties engaged in the APC reached a general agreement on how the aspirations of Muslims could be satisfied within the framework of a merged North and East. This was to be achieved by constitutional arrangements for establishment and devolution of power to one Provincial Council for the North-East Province and the establishment of a Muslim ethnic council and a Tamil ethnic council with equal status and powers for the North-East Province. It was also agreed that the Provincial Council should be a bicameral legislature, with the second chamber having weighted representation for the minorities of the region.

It was further agreed that the Muslim ethnic council and the Tamil ethnic council will have under their jurisdiction all the Muslim and Tamil majority AGA divisions (Pradeshiya Sabhas) in the North and East respectively.

'The creation of an ethnic oriented AGA division (Pradeshiya Sabhas) would require adjustments to existing AGA divisions, hav-

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ing regard to the ethnic structures and the need to include land areas belonging to the respective communities according to their legitimate share. The Muslim and Tamil political parties reached broad agreement on the territorial limit of each of the ethnic councils, the structure, the subjects, functions and powers to be devolved, including finance. The details of the agreement

MUSLIM-TAMIL ACCORD WELCOMED

'Muslims must not precipitate a situation that will keep the Tamils and Muslims or Muslims and Sinhalese in any state of confrontation forever. The consensus that has been reached must be viewed as a historic achievement of great magnitude. Notwithstanding certain drawbacks or difficulties, every effort must be made to implement these proposals to achieve peace and harmony', the Sri Lanka Katheeb's Federation stated in a press communiqué.

The federation, welcoming the understanding and consensus reached between the Tamil and Muslim parties on devolution of power to a Muslim Provincial Council within a combined Northern and Eastern Province as a positive contribution towards achieving peace between the two communities, states that for nearly five years, the Tamils and Muslims of the Northern and Eastern provinces have been living in fear, suspicion and in a state of confrontation following mili-

would be presented to the APC in the form of a report.

Both parties would work further towards strengthening the Provincial Council system by substantially improving the powers and the financial base of these Councils and by significantly adding to the subjects devolved.

'The question of the Sinhalese in the North-East will be discussed with all other political parties'.

tant activities directed against the Muslims during this period

'We are glad that following the request of President R. Premadasa, the Muslims and Tamils were able to reach a consensus based on mutual respect for the aspirations of each other.

'We are certain that this will put back for ever, years of disillusionment and agony that the two communities has been undergoing and will be welcomed by all peace loving people.

'The Sri Lanka Katheeb's Federation expressed confidence that the government will accept the present consensus reached after more than one year of discussion as the best solution to the ethnic crisis that has entangled this country.

'Muslims in the North and East have to live together with the majority Tamils in these two provinces in peace and harmony as much as the Muslims in the South do live in peace and amity with the Sinhala people elsewhere in the country.

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS TO BE STRENGTHENED

The seventeenth amendment to the constitution, expected to be taken up in parliament shortly, has now been gazetted.

The changes proposed, which are wide ranging and strengthen fundamental and other rights of the subject, relate to articles 12, 17, 121 and 122.

Articles 12 and 17, are being replaced, further:

(1) guarantee personal right of access to institutions for the administration of justice;

(2) reinforce the right to freedom from arbitrary arrest by requiring that a person arrested shall be informed in a language which he appears to understand, of the reasons for his arrest, his right to remain silent, his right to retain an attor-

ney-at-law and that any statement made by him in the presence of such attorney-at-law will be admissible in court;

(3) recognise a person's inherent right to life and his right to liberty and security of person;

(4) recognise a citizen's right to freedom of information;

(5) extend the rights conferred by articles 12(2) and 14 to persons who are not citizens of Sri Lanka and to whom the Indo-Ceylon Agreement signed on October 30, 1964 apply so long as they are ordinarily resident in Sri Lanka; and to issue of such persons, so long as such issue are ordinarily resident in Sri Lanka;

(6) limit the ground on which restrictions may be placed by law, on the exercise and operation of the fundamental rights declared by the chapter on fundamental rights;

(7) enable a body of persons to make an application under Article 126 on behalf of a person whose fundamental right has been infringed and who suffers from any social, physical or economic disability.

Clause 3 amends article

121 of the constitution and the legal effect of this article as amended -

(1) to enable a person to challenge a Bill within two weeks of the publication of the Bill in the Gazette; and (2) to require the Supreme Court to make its determination on a Bill within one month of the filing of a petition challenging such Bill.

Clause 4 amends article 122 of the constitution and the legal effect of this article as amended -

(1) to prohibit the use of the urgent Bill procedure in respect of Bills for the amendment of the constitution;

(2) to require the Supreme Court to give its determination on the validity of an urgent Bill within 72 hours or such longer period not exceeding eight days as the President may specify.

Clause 5 amends article 126 of the constitution and the legal effect of this article as amended enables a person whose fundamental right is infringed to make an application for relief to the Supreme Court within four months of the infringement and not within one month as is the case now.

Bar Assn. To Take Up 800 Detention Cases

The Bar Association would shortly file 800 fundamental rights applications, in the Supreme Court, on behalf of detainees of the Boosa Camp, a spokesman for the Bar Association said recently.

Already 47 such applications have been filed by the Human Rights Committee of the Bar Association.

Lawyers, who were members of the Human Rights Committee, had interviewed these detainees, and prepared affidavits, which bear substantial material for filing of rights violation applications, the spokesman explained.

Earlier these detainees had written to the Supreme Court, and had appealed to court, to investigate whether there are any charges against them, to keep them under detention, and if there are no charges framed against them, to dis-

charge them from detention.

Upon receipt of these letters the Supreme Court, sought the assistance of the Bar Association, to help court in this matter.

Court advised the Bar Association to interview those detainees and to see whether, what was stated in the letters, was substantial enough to prepare affidavits on behalf of detainees.

The Bar Association, had followed that direction, and interviewed the detainees, and application for rights violation pleas had followed, the spokesman said.

The allegations cited in these 800 applications would be mainly illegal arrest and illegal detention, citing service personnel as respondents, the spokesman added.

The relief sought would be mainly release from detention, rather than compensation, he said.

Over 80,000 to be Made Redundant

Eighty to ninety thousand public servants are in excess of the required cadre, according to a top Government study.

The Administrative Reforms Committee which looked into the problem of overstaffing in the public sector has estimated that out of about 500,000 people employed by the Government in 26 Ministries, 20 per cent could be reduced without any effect on the quality of the service.

ARC has also recommended the reduction of the number of Central Government Ministries to about 16. In 1988 the government reduced the number of Ministries from 45 to 26.

In implementing some of their recommendations at least five government departments would be scrapped in the future.

It is reliably learnt that the newly-created Policy Division of the Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Home Affairs has already identified 46,000 Government employees as redundant.

During the current year alone, sources said Government has set a target to reduce the civil service by 15,000 to 20,000.

This includes an estimated 10,000 to 12,000 public servants reaching retirement age this year. Of this only about 5,000-8,000 are likely to be declared redundant and compensated, sources said.

Meanwhile, aid agencies have warned the government that the problem of over staffing should not be solved merely by transferring them to newly formed Provincial Councils.

MAHARAJAS SEEK GREEN LIGHT FOR PRIVATE TV

The Maharaja Organisation, one of Sri Lanka's largest conglomerates is to seek government approval to launch a new TV channel despite opposition from state-run Rupavahini, it is reported.

If all goes well, Topaz channel seven, will be on the air in Sri Lanka come December.

State Minister for Information, A.J. Ranasinghe told the Sunday Times this issue would be taken up at the discussion on liberalisation of the media, at the next All-Party Conference.

When questioned on Rupavahini's attitude, Mr. Ranasinghe said, 'Let them protest. Rupavahini won't be allowed a monopoly. The people will decide and switch on to the channel they want'.

Rupavahini chairman T. Kariyawasam confirmed the move to set up a new channel by the Maharaja Organisation but said Rupavahini was prepared to meet the challenge in the spirit of healthy competition.

The reason for Rupavahini's protest is the claim that

the channel allotted to Topaz was one meant for SLRC.

Officials said the new channel's transmission would initially reach viewers in Colombo and its suburbs and would expand to provide all-island coverage in three months time.

To tune to the new channel, viewers would be required to rent a decoder, an electronic device, from the Maharaja Organisation. The rental is believed to be in the region of Rs. 1,000.

Critics said this channel would only cater for the affluent.

Despite Mr. Ranasinghe's exhortations on press freedom, there will be a tight rein on the new channel.

'The government will have a say in it. Definitely, the government will appoint members to its board. We will insist that they show local programmes and that local people are employed', he said.

However, he added that a detailed media policy was yet to be drawn up.

Mr. Ranasinghe said there would be careful screening of all programmes

to be telecast.

'They will not be able to show everything they want to. All programmes will be monitored by a committee'.

The new TV channel would have its own news programme, but this too

would be subject to the committee's approval. In addition, the channel which would have a substantial volume of foreign material fed by satellite at their disposal would telecast a film a day among other footage.

Unions Call For Judicial Inquiry

The question of disappeared persons will be a major topic at the two-day workshop the Joint Trade Union Council (JTUC) has organized for 15 and 16 December 1990 in Colombo to discuss the character of demands the JTUC has put forward to the government, the JTUC stated in a press release.

The release stated: The JTUC, the umbrella body comprising 29 trade union centres in the state, corporation and private sectors, feels that the sudden disappearance under mysterious circumstances of political and trade union activists as well as those who hold political views different from those of the powers-that-be is a matter of grave concern not only to their immediate families but, above all, to the entire people of

this country, especially, the working class movement, as it affects the democratic freedoms of our people.

Several hundreds of persons, including scores of trade union activists, have disappeared overnight from their homes or workplaces or have been abducted in broad daylight over the past few years. Despite persistent calls by local and international human rights bodies, the government has, unfortunately, not taken any meaningful and effective action so far either to check and bring to a halt these unlawful activities or to find out the real culprits responsible for these operations. People know the identity of the so-called vigilante groups and men in civilian clothes who carry out these operations.

1987 JVP 'HARD-CORE MEN' IDENTIFIED

The Jayalath Committee appointed to screen subversive suspects has identified 1,987 as hard-core activists heavily involved in a revolt against the Government since 1987.

The Committee is of the view that the Attorney General will have to decide on whether indictment should be filed against the suspects.

An official of the Attorney General's Department said filing of indictment or recommending of charges against these suspects would depend on whether there was sufficient evidence available. Many indictments against subversive suspects had already been filed, the official added.

Meanwhile, the Jayalath Committee has also recommended 6,512 persons for rehabilitation to the Commissioner General on the grounds that these persons

have not been fully involved in the revolt against the Government. They are to undergo training in vocational trades in special camps set up for the purpose.

Informed sources however, said these very persons who were undergoing vocational training might also be indicted if the Attorney General's Department found sufficient evidence against them.

It is also learnt that the Attorney General's Department from time to time informs the Jayalath Committee of cases where there is no evidence.

The Jayalath Committee has recommended that 2,885 persons held in custody should be released on the grounds that these persons had not been involved in subversive activity.

Bombing of Jaffna General Hospital – ICRC Protests

The Jaffna General Hospital which had remained closed since the outbreak of the present 'war' in June, was reopened on November 8 under the control and responsibility of the International Committee of the Red Cross. A 350 metre security zone was also declared around the hospital to ensure that the hospital functioned without being affected by operations by the military or Tamil militants.

'On the following day, 9 November, the Sri Lankan Airforce planes carried out bombing operations in Jaffna which left parts of the hospital damaged. Mr. George Patterson, leader of the ICRC team in Jaffna issued a press statement concerning the incident:-

'Around 7.45am an Air Force plane circled a number of times over the areas around the Jaffna Teaching Hospital and dropped a bomb in the South Eastern Corner of the Hospital premises near the Hospital Street – Point Pedro Road Junction. The Hospital was well marked out by the ICRC sign.

Again the same plane circled a number of times and dropped another bomb very close to the hospital and well within the Security Zone area, clearly and visibly marked out by ICRC signs. In this incident a person who was within the ICRC protected Hospital premises sustained injuries. The roofs of as well as windows of four hospital buildings were blown off by this bombing.

'The ICRC officials in Sri Lanka contacted the Sri Lankan authorities immediately to express their strong objection and to obtain assurances against a repetition of such serious violations. The ICRC Team would like to remind that it could continue to carry out its humanitarian activities in the re-commenced Jaffna Teaching Hospital only if the parties concerned respect the Hospital premises and the Security Zone around the Hospital'.

Releasing the above statement, Mr. Patterson also answered questions put to him by the local press. He said that the Government of Sri Lanka had violated the international norms by dropping bombs within the hospital security zone. He also said that without any provocation these bombs have been dropped in places occupied by civilians. 'We are actively supervising the Security Zone around the hospital. There are no military bases or camps within this area. Hence the ICRC regards this as a serious violation.

'This is a serious violation against the ICRC and country, contrary to international norms by the Government of Sri Lanka'.

Mr. Patterson further said that the Government at no time objected to the map of the Security Zone prepared by the ICRC and the terms and conditions of the agreement submitted by the ICRC for the re-opening of the Jaffna Teaching Hospital. On the contrary the Minister of State for Defence, Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne has publicly stated that he would give full cooperation to the efforts of the ICRC and to conform to the agreement in connection with the functioning of the Hospital.

'Still such violations have taken place and we cannot ignore such violations. If violations of the regulations relating to the functioning of the Hos-

pital continue we shall have no alternative except to unilaterally withdraw from this function', said Mr. Patterson.

'We are not concerned whether this incident is accidental or deliberate. We are concerned that the Agreement has been violated', added Mr. Patterson.

Answering a question that if the Government denies altogether the incident what he had to say, Mr. Patterson also said that the ICRC contacted various government officials at various levels including the Defence Ministry and the Presidential Secretariat. He further said that consequent to the contact made by the ICRC an order had been given to the Military Command in the North by the Joint Operations High Command Office. According to that order the Security Zone area around the Hospital should not be subjected to aerial attacks.

'It is clear from this order that the Government had accepted the violation of the Agreement. We shall give a chance to carry on the functioning of the hospital without closing it down', said Mr. Patterson in answer to another question.

Jungle Law in Batticaloa

In Batticaloa District, there is mounting concern for 60,000 refugees who fled to Paduwankarai, west of the lagoon after a Tiger communique closed Vantharumoolai camp in September. Many are camped in the jungle and the rains have brought sickness and snakes. Some ten people have died of snakebite at Mylawattavan said local people who brought 20 malaria cases to Batticaloa hospital by tractor in mid-November.

Transport is a continuing obstacle to effective relief. Drivers refuse point blank to venture into Tiger territory west of the lagoon or to stop at communal flashpoints such as Kattankudy and Eravur without massive cash inducements. Government Agent K. Yoganathan says over half of Batticaloa's 400,000 population are now refugees and dry rations are reaching people only one week in three.

Batticaloa town remains tense. Muslim merchants are escorted in and out of Kattankudy and trading finishes by noon and the streets deserted. The Tigers move around the town with impunity, triggering incidents and vanishing. Seven police and 11 civilians were injured when a hand grenade was thrown at Batticaloa police station on 7 November and sniper attacks result in immediate reprisals.

Citizens Committee sources say 1,100 people have disappeared in Batticaloa District since the June war and another 800 in Amparai. Tiger sources say 30 men rounded up from villages

between Kallady bridge and Kirankulam were tortured and burnt alive at Arayampathy Army camp in late October. Over 150 men were rounded up in a *Special Task Force* operation in Karativu in Amparai District on 18 November but after the local Peace Committee interceded only six were detained.

West of the lagoon is Tiger country where Army patrols tread warily. many are now led by cadres from Tamil group TELO and several soldiers and local TELO commander *Ravichandran* were killed in an LTTE ambush at Manmunaithurai in early November.

– Sri Lanka Monitor.

Jaffna Pensioners on Verge of Starvation

Pensioners in the Jaffna district are on the verge of starvation as they have not been paid their pensions since July 1990. The worst affected are those who opted to draw their pensions through Rural Banks in the district. The money circulation in Jaffna has reached the lowest ebb and as a result the bank vaults are practically empty. The Government Agent of Jaffna has announced through the local press that he cannot pay the pensions unless he gets the normal remittance from Colombo. The poor pensioners are being penalised for no fault of theirs, a pensioner states from Jaffna.

People & Politics

★ HUMAN RIGHTS PRIZE

THE Civil Rights Movement of Sri Lanka has been awarded the prestigious fifth annual Carter-Menil Prize for Human Rights in recognition of the CRM's outstanding contribution to the protection and promotion of human rights in Sri Lanka. Mrs. Suriya Wickremasinghe, Secretary of the CRM was presented with the prize at a ceremony in New York University on World Human Rights Day, 10 December, at which the former President of the USA Jimmy Carter delivered the annual state of human rights address.

The Carter-Menil Foundation for Human Rights was established in 1986 by former President Jimmy Carter and Dominique de Minil, founder and president of the Rothko chapel in Houston. The £1,000,000 prize was divided between the CRM and Comminidades Ethnicas Junam of Guatemala. Many have hailed the award to the CRM as a tribute to the valuable work of the CRM over a period of twenty years.

The CRM was formed following the ill-fated JVP insurrection of April 1971 and the government's repressive response including the enactment of a retroactive law called the Criminal Justices Commission Act. A few left-inclined English educated intellectuals, who were disturbed by the turn of events, gathered together to discuss the situation. The leading lights of this group were Suriya Wickremasinghe, Kumari Jayawardene and Reggi Siriwardene, and they were shortly to be joined by two well knowns – Bishop of Kurunegala Lakshmen Wickremasinghe and Prof. Edirweera Sarachandra.

The CRM was formally established with Prof. Sarachandra as President and Reggie Siriwardene as Secretary. Later to join the CRM were many prominent personalities – Bishop Leo Nanayakkara, S. Nadesan QC, Desmond Fernando (presently President of the Bar Association), Prins Gunasekera, D.C.R. Gunawardene, Raja Goonesekera (former Principal of Law College) Neville Samarakoon who later became Chief Justice, etc. The role of the late S. Nadesan QC as lawyer for the CRM in many celebrated civil rights cases deserves special mention. The heavy weights in the left movement did not find the enthusiasm to join the organisation – the main reason being that the LSSP and CP were partners in the coalition government of Mrs. S. Bandaranaike.

In its early days, CRM played a leading role in challenging the validity of the Criminal Justice Commissions Act, the 1972 Constitution imposed by the United Front government and the

Press Council Law which provided for the state take-over of the Lake House Group of newspapers. In subsequent years, when the ethnic conflict became intense and following the enactment of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the CRM took a forthright and non-sectarian stand on the basis of an abiding commitment to democratic and human rights.

★ LTTE – GOVERNMENT TALKS

THE government and the LTTE have been 'talking', true or false? A number of LTTE spokesmen, including its London leader Krishnakumar, better known as Kittu, and its Paris-based spokesman Lawrence Thilakar, have strenuously denied any suggestion that there have been behind the scenes discussions. Having described the present conflict as the 'ultimate war of liberation until Eelam is achieved', it is impossible to contemplate that discussions have been taking place. But Anton Balasingham, the chief advisor to the LTTE leader V. Prabhakaran in a recent interview did not rule out the possibility of discussions on a 'federal solution' while the fighting went on.

The government through its main spokesman, the State Minister for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne has also taken up the position that this is a 'war to the finish', and denied any suggestion of secret talks with the LTTE.

Despite the denials, the speculation of behind the scene talks is widespread. In the meantime, 'The Sunday Island' of 2 December reports that a founder former member of EROS, Mr. Arulanantham (Arular) had visited Jaffna and discussed matters with the LTTE leadership, and with their consent met President Premadasa's International Affairs Advisor, Mr. Bradman Weerakoon recently and held discussions. Mr. Weerakoon has confirmed that the discussions took place, but they related only to the plight of civilians in the north.

It would seem, according to Arular, that the Tiger leadership was prepared to join in the creation of an interim council for the North-East and negotiations with the Sri Lankan government if India took the first step in that direction. Further, the LTTE had expressed willingness to accommodate the EPRLF and ENDLF in the interim council although the control should remain with the LTTE.

Mr. Weerakoon has denied that his discussions with Arular covered the question of the creation of an interim council. A spokesman

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several cases of smuggling fuel, clothes and cigarettes; the confiscated boats of the smugglers were handed over to the Customs Controller and the individuals to the police; and about a hundred of those who were handed over during the last two months had been later set free by the State authorities.

On November 7, during the debate on the vote of confidence on V.P. Singh's government, Congress(I) leader Rajiv Gandhi accused the central government of turning a blind eye to DMK's links with the LTTE. On a later date, he alleged that the Tamil Nadu government was 'under the influence of the LTTE'. Recently Tamil Nadu Congress(I) leader Vazhapadi Ramamurthi charged that over one thousand LTTE cadres had infiltrated into Tamil Nadu 'to create confusion in the event of political changes here'.

Hitting back at Rajiv Gandhi, Mr. Karunanidhi told news reporters that it was Mr. Rajiv Gandhi who gave crores of rupees to the LTTE to buy arms and also gave them training camps located in Tamil Nadu. Mr. Gandhi turned against the Tigers because they would not surrender and be his slaves.

Mr. Karunanidhi has also strongly refuted the allegations against his government at a recent meeting with the new Prime Minister and assured him that he and his government would take appropriate measures to maintain law and order in Tamil Nadu. However, the PM's reference in Parliament about the 'deteriorating law and order situation in Tamil Nadu' and his comment that 'if the State government did not control the situation, the central government would not remain idle' are being interpreted as an oblique threat aimed at Mr. Karunanidhi's administration.

★ TIGER HUNTING

THE activities in Colombo of the government's newly found ally among Tamil militant groups, the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) led by Douglas Devananda who was expelled from the EPRLF in 1986 when he was functioning as its Military Commander in Jaffna, have raised serious concern among many political observers. It seems that government is not only using the EPDP in its 'war effort' against the LTTE, but also has given it a free hand to operate in Colombo.

On the night of 22 November, members belonging to the EPDP raided a lodge in Colombo and apprehended seventeen Tamils. No reasons were given for the EPDP's action. On the same day, EPDP cadres are alleged to have interfered with and stopped a group of clergymen from distributing

food and other essential items to Tamil refugees at the Saraswathy Hall, Bambalapitya in Colombo. On the previous day, armed EPDP cadres had detained two women from Batticaloa at the same Hall and removed the identity cards of nine other women for what they described as 'further investigation'. Knowledgeable circles are of the view that this is part of the 'Tiger hunting' duty that the government has allocated to the EPDP.

★ MEDICAL CENTRE SET ON FIRE BY ANGRY MUSLIM MOB

THE building housing a Medical Centre in Kotahena in Colombo run by Sri Muthukrishna Swami Mission Trust was set on fire on 23 November by an angry mob of Muslims armed with swords and clubs within minutes after the centre was declared open by the State Minister for Hindu Affairs P.P. Devaraj. Hundreds of Tamils who had gathered at the free Medical Centre for the opening ceremony were violently attacked and chased away.

About 2000 Muslims, mostly youths, had gone in a procession shouting slogans and carrying banners denouncing attempts 'to build a hindu kovil' in the area, and converged on the building after Jumma prayers and stormed it. A large number of persons mostly Tamils were wounded in the attack. The building was located very close to the Hameed Al Hussein Muslim school.

In a statement issued after the violent incidents, Sri Muthukrishna Swami Mission trust alleged that the police had failed to prevent the attack and provide protection even though advance warning had been given to the Officer in Charge of the Kotahena police station that a group of Muslims were preparing to take out a procession and attack persons at the Medical Centre.

The statement added that a large group of Muslims wearing white caps and carrying placards approached and attacked the Free Medical Centre using knives, steel rods and petrol bombs. Several of the volunteers of the Mission were cut with knives and sustained serious injuries. Four of them were warded in the hospital in a critical condition. After attacking the volunteers, the crowd set fire to the building which had been put up temporarily pending the construction of the fully fledged hospital at the site to provide free treatment to all patients in the area. They also set fire to a hut where the religious ceremony to sanctify the site had been performed a few days earlier. Five motor vehicles parked inside the

RIDERS ON THE STORM

There are four horsemen who ride the Sri Lankan apocalypse in the North-East. The first supervises the daily indiscriminate bombing of defenceless civilians in the Jaffna peninsula by the Sri Lankan Air Force. The second is with the Army in the East applying the same terror tactics that smashed the JVP in the South - routine extrajudicial killings and wholesale disappearances.

The third rides the Tiger military maxim of *adi* - the diversionary strike designed to provoke first chaos and then retaliation - the massacre of unarmed Sinhalese villagers in border areas, the killing of hundreds of Muslims at prayer in the East in August, the expulsion of 50,000 Muslims from the North last month. Its aim is to inflame and polarise. It is the Tamil civilian who reaps the harvest of retaliation and is reminded why he needs the Tigers.

The fourth is silent. He is the eternal onlooker, the Colombo intellectual, the clergy, the journalist, the NGO protecting project work, the foreign government protecting its investments - the participants who claim to be observers. The letters smuggled out of Jaffna are full of anguish. 'You must tell the world what is happening to us. What are you doing to help us?'

Earlier this month, Sri Lankan Defence Minister Ranjan Wijeratne gave one of his regular casualty updates for the June war. Some 756 security personnel have been killed and 457 reported missing. Another 1,663 have been wounded. Around 1,642 LTTE cadres had been killed said the Minister and 429 injured. No mention was made of civilian casualties, but for every combatant casualty there are at least two civilians killed or injured, giving total casualties of almost 10,000.

It is difficult to see the bombing of the Jaffna General Hospital this month as an accident when the Air Force has dropped bombs close enough to four other Jaffna hospitals in the last three months to set the occupants fleeing in terror. Expectant mothers miscarry, children marooned on ampu-

tated limbs lie screaming in the dark. What happens to those who cannot run, the old, the sick, the deranged?

Away from the hospitals the destruction is indiscriminate. A World Council of Churches delegation visiting the North this month likened central Jaffna to 'London during the blitz'. Anything moving is a target sanctioned by airdropped leaflets declaring indefinite curfew. But buildings do not move. Bombers flying at 5,000 feet do not know what they are looking for. The Tigers to not advertise their positions. The aim is to bomb the civilians out of the peninsula and trap the Tigers in a free-for-all fire-zone. To build a theatre of war by tearing down Jaffna. A theatre of cruelty.

In the East the Army rides the momentum of their macabre success in the South last year where 30,000 died in the abortive JVP insurrection. 'If we were willing to kill our own people do you think we are worried about a few Tamils?', they will tell you.

Over 100 bodies were burnt outside Kalmunai when the Army arrived in early July. Over 150 refugees taken from the Vantharumoolai camp in September, allegedly released by the Army are still missing. Over 100 villagers taken to the Sathurukondan Army camp outside Batticaloa were shot dead according to one man who escaped with injuries.

A pile of 32 headless bodies was found on the beach at Akkaraipattu in Amparai District, last month. Their heads were taken off with a chainsaw. Amparai is the fiefdom of the police commando *Special Task Force*.

For the Tigers, the Army's excesses are heaven-sent. The LTTE will continue to attack Sinhalese villages in the dry zone and pick off Army patrols in the hope of further reprisals.

After the Tigers drove 50,000 Muslims from the North last month and the killings at Eravus and Kattankudy in August, the Muslims may never trust the Tamils again. They will not forget the baby who slipped from her mother's arms into the sea as thousands of Muslims fled by boat from Mannar to Kalpitiya. They will not forget the hundreds gunned down at prayer in Kattankudy. Such is the philosophy of *adi*.

'Let The Thousand Herbal Flowers Bloom'

V.I.S. Jayapalan

Recently some of the National weeklies have published many articles on the complex ethnic question. Frank discussion between various ethnic groups in a free and healthy atmosphere has been absent in this country since independence. This led to the growth of narrow Sinhalese, Tamil and later Muslim nationalism. Sinhalese, Tamil, and Muslim 'national identity' never developed progressively as a component of greater Sri Lankan nationalism. 'Let the thousand herbal flowers of genuine inter-ethnic dialogue bloom to heal the ailment of our Motherland' should be our cry today.

All ethnic groups tend to unite. Ethnicity produces the strongest and largest social organization of a particular group, influenced by its socio-economic and cultural development. This historical process cannot be prevented, if a particular ethnic group has been fortified with geographic contiguity. It may then develop in the direction of Nationhood. This process of development in a multi-ethnic country leads to the demand for Regional autonomy. Some countries respond positively and make necessary constitutional and institutional arrangements to accommodate these developments. A good example is the recent history of Canada. Any attempts to turn the wheel of history will lead to violence and ultimately to the division of the country. The creation of Bangladesh in South Asia is a recent example of this phenomenon.

This process started in Europe during the 19th century when society was in ferment after the Industrial Revolution. With capitalist development, Europe started to shrink. Languages played a major role as the agents of unity of the people, subdivided by feudal administrative boundaries of various kingdoms. The linguistic social groups which had geographic contiguity emerged as nations. Since then the creation of nation-states or federal states became the formula to solve the ethnic problems in multi-ethnic countries. The German people scattered among various feudal kingdoms united and became one nation. The former kingdom of Sweden divided peacefully on ethnic grounds into Sweden and Norway. Switzerland became a Federal State. The experiences of the 19th century Europe is helpful to understand what is taking place in some Third-World countries with a multi-ethnic character, such as our own Island.

Ethnic structure in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka two major languages are spoken by four major ethnic groups namely – Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and up-country Tamils (Indian Tamils). Among them Sinhalese and Tamils enjoy greater geographical contiguity. This is the secret of the emergence of strong Sinhala and Tamil nationalism and chauvinism here.

Sixty percent of Muslims and most of the up-country Tamils are spread out in the Sinhalese-dominated provinces. The rest of the Muslims and up-country Tamils are spread over in the Tamil-dominated North and Eastern provinces.

Around 40 percent of the Muslims are in the Northern and Eastern provinces. In the coastal regions of the Amparai district and again the coastal region of the northern most Puttalam district (Puttalam and Kalpitiya A.G.A. Divisions), Muslims have the social and geographic background to develop their own strongholds. Even in the coastal regions of Amparai district, Muslim regions are cut into two by the Tamil A.G.A. division of Thirukovil.

Co-ordinating and organising Muslims under 'Common Fronts' to defend their common interest becomes a difficult task because of the geographic distribution, coupled with their 'dependent' economic activities. This situation has made them compromise with the then growing Sinhala nationalism, after the Sinhala-Muslim riots of 1915.

The up-country Tamils are recent migrants to North-East Provinces. This migration started after 1970 and concentrated in the mainland regions of the Northern province. Where they are living mostly in their own enclaves with a much lower level of integration with native Tamils. They are also unable to retain their Indian-Tamil identity in the context of a strong Tamil nationalism.

Up-country Tamils are both the most organized and most victimised ethnic group in Sri Lanka. The situation created by the implementation of the Srma-Shastri pact of 1964, increasing physical attacks against the Estate Tamil population following the implementation of the Land Reform Act of 1972, major and minor communal riots which took place – mainly in the isolated low-grown and mid-grown tea areas led to a three pronged migration of the up-country Tamils (1) towards high-grown tea areas centered around Hatton high-lands, (2) towards

South India (3) towards Northern and Eastern provinces.

Because of these trends the up-country Tamils concentrated mostly in the high-grown areas have developed better territorial contiguity.

Up-country Tamils being the

tua's and elite leadership took this decision even after the creation of Pakistan. They had the courage and foresight to read the lessons of history. But in some Third-World countries which have no similar experience of violent division the intelligentsia and the politicians belonging to the ethnic majority, panic when they hear even the word 'federation'. They try to take their countries away from history. This is what happened in Pakistan which led to division and Bangladesh. For us too these lessons from the South Asian historical experience are important.

The possibility of Sinhalese and Tamils getting together to exploit other ethnic groups also cannot be neglected. This took place in 1947 in Sri Lanka against the interests of Indian Tamils. History proves such attempts counter-productive.

Consider Yugoslavia. The ethnic groups of Yugoslavia got together and accepted the federal system as the basis of unity. But they left the Albanians at the mercy of the Serbians and they were subsequently oppressed. 'Unity' with this type of double-standard arrangement is not the 'Unity' built on firm foundations. The present problems of that country and growth of greater Serbian chauvinism are striking examples.

(The writer is a well-known Tamil poet and intellectual).

(Lanka Guardian)

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The LTTE Is Now a Conventional Army

— by Taraki —

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

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

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

Propagation

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

In the first issue of their official paper 'Viduthalai Pulihal' they even decided to carry an article by a Stalinist Sinhala 'revolutionary'— who has now become an arch promoter and apologist of perestroika— on the merits of guerrilla warfare. But the latest issue of the 'Viduthalai Pulihal' claims that after 15 years of guerrilla war the Tigers have now become a conventional army. 'The ambition of our leader Prabhakaran has been to build up a powerful Tamil National Liberation Army. He wants to strengthen and modernize it as much as he can'. The lengthy discussion, accompanied by maps, on the Fort operation is, it is clear, informed by principles and concepts which belong in discourses on conventional warfare. That this extensive discussion is quasi-scientific does not diminish the validity of the transformation that has taken place in the Tiger's perception of achieving its goal through military means.

Guerrilla group

The LTTE which began the war in June this year is no more a guerrilla

group. It is not only functioning as a conventional force in the north but is also thinking and devising strategy as one.

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

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

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

Principles

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

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

Contingencies

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

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The Ram Janmabhoomi temple issue brought about the downfall of V.P. Singh's National Front government. The Bharatiya Janatha Party has promised to continue its campaign on the temple issue which is threatening the very existence of India as a secular state. There is no archaeological or historical evidence to prove that Rama was born in the disputed spot or that Babar built the mosque. According to Valmiki, the author of the Ramayana, Rama lived 1,000 years before the start of Kali yuga in 3200 BC! Nothing found at Ayodhya indicates so old a civilisation.

THE RAMA TEMPLE CLAIM AT AYODHYA, A HISTORICAL ABERRATION

Debashish Mukerji

At the heart of the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute lie two basic questions. First: if indeed Lord Rama existed, was he actually born at that very spot where the disputed shrine now stands? Second: had a temple in his honour actually been built there – reportedly by Vikramaditya, the greatest of the Gupta kings – and was it in fact demolished in 1528 by Mir Baqi, a commander in the army of Babar, the first Mughal emperor, on the latter's orders, and the present mosque built in its place?

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and its allied organisations have no doubt that the answer to both questions is in the affirmative: it is this historical wrong perpetrated by Babar which they want to correct by building the new Rama temple. But what do historians and archaeologists say?

The rational answer to the first question was succinctly put by Madhu Limaye: 'Only Maharani Scindia and Balasaheb Deoras seem to know the exact spot where Rama was born since, no doubt, they were the midwives who assisted at Rama's birth'. And in fact historians unanimously concur that it is impossible to pinpoint the exact location where a personage who lived so long ago came into the world. Archaeologist H.D. Sankalia, one of those convinced of the historical truth of the events described in the Ramayana, has nevertheless asserted that 'it is not possible' to pinpoint Rama's birthplace.

Similarly, in their recently published booklet, historians Romila Thapar, S. Gopal and Bipan Chandra relate the experience of Emperor Ashoka, who, just 200 years after the death of Gautama Buddha, installed an inscription at Lumbini, marking it as the Buddha's birthplace. He also reduced taxes in the village. But even Ashoka failed to locate the exact spot where the Buddha took birth.

Indeed the VHP and its supporters have not yet succeeded in unearthing even a single piece of historical evidence to support their contention on this point. Even their sole argument that the people of the region firmly

believe that the disputed shrine stands on Rama's birthplace has been questioned. In his investigations, historian R.S. Sharma discovered that 'there are at least 15-16 *mandirs* in Ayodhya the pujaris of which claim that their temple is the real birthplace of Rama'.

An IAS officer, Sher Singh, and historian Sushil Shrivastava of the University of Allahabad, both of whom have done much work on the subject, were invited to undertake a field survey of Ayodhya to establish Rama's *Janmasthan*. Carried out over three days in April 1988, the survey found that 'seven different places turned out to be the *janmasthan*s of Rama, no two of which meet each other and not even one touches the site of the Babri Masjid'.

Further evidence demolishing the VHP contention comes from the massive 'archaeology of the Ramayana sites' project carried out by the Archaeological Survey of India in the mid-seventies. The project, initiated by the former ASI director B.B. Lal, undertook extensive excavations in five towns connected with the Ramayana – Ayodhya, Srinagar, Bharadwaj Ashram, Nandigram and Chitrakoot – so as to cast fresh light on the historicity or otherwise of the events described in the Ramayana.

In Ayodhya itself 14 sites were dug up, including one spot just behind the disputed shrine where the earliest evidence of civilisation, pieces of earthenware, were found dated from the 7th century BC. Some kilometres away however evidence of an urban settlement from that period was discovered in the form of brick-built reservoirs with filters attached, revealing some knowledge of hydraulic engineering.

If it could be conclusively established that Rama was born in the 7th century BC or later still, those ruins might have indicated the location of King Dasaratha's (Rama's father) palace. (Obviously, the palace would have been situated close to the reservoir). But that too is a difficult task. According to Valmiki, Rama lived in *reta yug* or 1,000 years before the present *kali*

yug began. And *kali yug* is calculated to have started from 3200 BC! Certainly nothing has been found at Ayodhya to indicate a civilisation going that far back in history.

Another widely held belief is that the Ramayana predates the Mahabharata. Excavations by B.B. Lal around the Mahabharata sites have established that the events described in the epic took place between 800 and 1100 BC. In that case even the water reservoirs would have no relevance to the Ramayana. But there are experts – Lal among them – who argue that in fact it was the Mahabharata's incidents which occurred first. In any case the evidence uncovered at Ayodhya indicates that the first inhabitants there were a simple, almost backward community: unlikely to inhabit the highly developed city of Ayodhya that Valmiki so eloquently describes.

It is this last feature which has led historians like Romila Thapar to speculate that perhaps the 'Ayodhya' mentioned in the epic and the present Ayodhya are two different places altogether. In Buddhist texts, the two principal cities of the Kosala kingdom to which Rama is believed to have belonged – were Shravasti and Saket. Ayodhya is not mentioned.

There is an amusing local folk tale, recounted by Thapar and the others in their booklet about how Vikramaditya discovered Ayodhya which had disappeared soon after *reta yug* ended. Vikramaditya met a holy man who showed him where Ayodhya had been located; the king marked the spot but later could not find it again. He was then advised to let loose a cow and a calf and follow them: as soon as they reached Ayodhya milk would spontaneously start flowing from the cow's udders. And sure enough, at a particular spot, the miracle occurred: he decided this spot was the Ram Janmabhoomi. 'Thus it is possible that a place which earlier had no historical or religious significance now acquired a religious halo', the historians point out.

On the question of whether a temple was demolished to build the present mosque, the Hindu militant organisations are on slightly firmer ground. The VHP did in fact submit a set of 13 legal-historical documents to Buta Singh in 1988 which reinforced their claim. And even a cursory look at the disputed shrine reveals some curious features, the most striking among them being that this seems to be the only mosque in the world which has no minarets. Minarets are an essential part of any mosque, since it is from these that the *muezzin* gives his regular call for *azan* (public prayer).

The local story is that minarets were built by Mir Baqi, but such was the power of Shri Rama that they collapsed immediately afterwards. Every mos-

Continued on Page 22

For the last four months, while the rest of the world has been watching with bated breath the drama in the Gulf, the rise in oil prices, the breakdown of communism in Eastern Europe and Mikhail Gorbachev's troubles with perestroika, India's 800 million people have been making a determined bid to opt out of the 20th century.

That, at any rate, is how the intelligentsia and most foreign observers have interpreted the struggle being waged by a relatively new, militant Hindu organization, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, to pull down the now disused, 400-year-old Babri mosque at Ayodhya, a sleepy little town in Uttar Pradesh, and replace it with a spanking new temple dedicated to Lord Rama, hero of the Hindu epic, the Ramayana.

They could not be more wrong. Far from opting out, India is entering a period of struggle through which Europe passed 60 years ago, in which a vast, small-business and artisanal class that is threatened by the process of industrialization and the attendant rise of large professionally managed manufacturing and trading concerns, is making a last ditch attempt to seize political power by hijacking the symbols of Hinduism to use as means of political mobilization. Their goal, seldom stated, and not as yet fully understood, is to check the process of industrialization and postpone, if not prevent, their extinction by big business backed by modern technology.

Europeans should be familiar with this struggle, for it was more or less at this stage of their industrialization that Spain, Italy, France and Germany experienced the rise of fascism. India is facing the same threat. The fact that it has successfully allied itself with Hindu revivalism makes the threat an extremely potent one.

In their bid for power the VHP is trying to whip up Hindu chauvinism. The methods it is using are uncannily similar to the techniques of mobilization used by the Nazis in Germany 60 years ago. The Nazis exalted German Aryanism. The VHP stresses 'Hindutwa' (literally Hinduness). The Nazis resurrected the swastika, the VHP has a battery of symbols drawn from the Ramayana. For instance its activists are known as the Bajrang Dal, a reference to the army of monkeys that Rama led to defeat Ravana.

The Nazis made skillful use of the German feeling of humiliation at having lost World War I. The VHP is inciting a latent Hindu desire to avenge the defeats suffered by Hindu rulers and the destruction of thousands of temples during 600 years of Muslim rule of northern India. The Nazis converted the acute insecurity bordering on paranoia of the large German lower middle class into a hatred of the Jews. The VHP is converting the economic insecurity of the new India middle class into anger

HIJACKING THE SYMBOLS OF HINDUISM — A Last-Ditch Attempt to Seize Political Power

By PREM SHANKAR JHA

against the Muslims, and a distrust of India's effete democracy, which is conspiring with them to discriminate against the Hindu majority in a brazen competition for their votes. And just as the Nazis had their storm troopers, the VHP has its Bajrang Dal whose strength is being raised to a million men in the next few months.

The dispute over Ayodha has another flavour. For the Vishwa Hindu Parishad Lord Ram has an invaluable asset. He was a warrior king who defeated Ravana, the demon king of Lanka. He is therefore the ideal rallying point for resurgent Hindu chauvinism.

All Hindus believe, despite the lack of any convincing proof, that the Ayodha of today is the same Ayodha that was the capital of Ram's kingdom.

There is also a strong belief that the Babri Masjid stands on the site of a temple that commemorated the birthplace of Ram. From time to time, Hindus have tried to wrest control of the spot. A serious flare-up in 1855 cost 75 lives.

But throughout these decades the dispute remained a petty, local one, of which the rest of India remained oblivious. It flared up again in 1949, when some Hindus stole into the mosque in the dead of night and planted an idol of Ram exactly beneath the Imam's pulpit, claiming that it had popped out of the ground, but died down when the Uttar Pradesh government closed the mosque, barred access to it to both the communities, and sent the dispute to the courts where it languished for the next 37 years.

Everyone had forgotten about it till, in 1986, some members of the VHP managed to get a court order that enabled them to start worship of the idol in the mosque. The ensuing agitation by the Muslims was just what it needed to convert itself into a nationwide movement in defense of Ram's birthplace. It did so by announcing plans to 'relocate' the Babri mosque, and build a temple whose sanctum would be in the precise spot where the Imam's pulpit is now situated.

The VHP's first victim was the political party whose thinking was closest to its ideology, the mildly revivalist Bharatiya Janata (BJP). Formerly known as the Jana Sangh, till 1965, the BJP had been openly committed to the creation of a Hindu state and had not even accepted the creation of Pakistan. But this platform never brought it even 10 percent of the vote. As a result, in the late sixties the party changed its line and began assiduously courting the secular, conservative vote in the country.

While its share of the vote grew slowly, its acceptability among the intelligentsia, and to the other secular political parties zoomed, and in 1989, it was accepted as a part of the anti-Congress combine of parties that agreed not to field candidates against each other in the coming elections. This helped it to obtain its best-ever share of the seats in the Parliament. With 86 out of 526 members, it emerged as the third largest party in the Lok Sabha, and its support became essential for the survival of the V.P. Singh government.

The rise of the VHP began, however, to cut into its support, which came from the very same strata of society that it represented, the new urban middle class. As a result, after resisting its pressure for more than three years, in July this year, the BJP began to turn its back on a quarter of a century of secularisation, and adopted once more the virulently Hindu militant platform of the fifties and early sixties, in order to protect its power base. This led it to withdraw its support from the V.P. Singh government, and bring it down on November 7.

The VHP has already announced that it will renew its struggle to pull down the Babri mosque from December 6. Unlike in October this time it faces a weak and divided government in both New Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, and will fare better. The future does not therefore bode well for India. But despite this there is good reason to believe that India will not go the way of Germany, Spain or Italy, 60 years ago. The country is too diverse. The BJP and the VHP command little support in the south, the east and north-east, and the northern state of Punjab. These account for about half of India. Another important brake is provided by the simple majority voting system in which a party must in Indian conditions amass more than 40 percent of the vote to come to power. What is more, smaller parties get a still smaller share of the seats.

Thus to aspire to power the Hindu Right will, sooner or later, have to court the uncommitted middle voter again. Since the secular and progressive forces that are now headed by V.P. Singh will have to do the same, India is likely, over the next two elections to emerge with a two-coalition party system not unlike the two-party system in Britain. Till then the country will continue to be preoccupied with its own problems, and remain out of sync with the modern world.

(Prem Shankar Jha was information adviser to Prime Minister V.P. Singh.)

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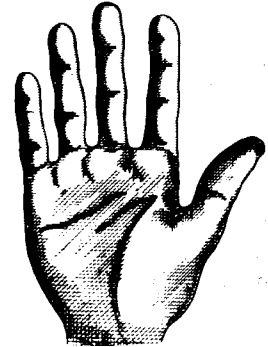
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THE FP AND THE MUSLIM VOTERS

DR. AMEER ALI's article, 'The Muslim Predicament' (*Tamil Times*, Oct. 1990) sheds a refreshing gleam of light in explaining the currently muddled Tamil-Muslim relationship (and rivalry) in Sri Lanka. I am glad that a Muslim scholar has now come forward to castigate the 'Muslim leadership which emanated perennially from the commercial and propertied classes of Colombo and adjacent districts, (which also) allied with either the UNP or the SLFP and won as much favours as possible sometimes even at the expense of the disenchanted Tamil community'. This view from Dr. Ameer Ali supports what I stated in the *Tamil Times* of May 1983 in my commentary entitled, 'Focus on the Tamil-Speaking Muslims of Sri Lanka'.

However, I wish to raise one objection to Dr. Ameer Ali's insinuations on the motives of S.J.V. Chelvanayakam's leadership.

(1) when Ameer Ali states, 'two parties' of Tamils without naming the second one, I presume that he refers to the Tamil Congress (TC). If this is the case, it should be reminded that in the post-1956 period, the TC never had any political strength in the Eastern Province. While the FP was a cadre-based party with strong organisational links in the Eastern Province, the TC remained as an individual-oriented party, after the 1947 election.

(2) The FP did its best to appeal to the Muslim voters of the Eastern Province in the 1956, 1960 (March and July) and 1965 general elections and nominated quite a number of Muslim candidates in the predominantly Muslim constituencies.

(3) Between 1956 and 1965, with the exception of a few like A.L. Abdul Majeed, almost all the notable Eastern Province Muslim MPs entered the parliament as MPs of the FP. The list included the following: Gate Mudaliyar M.S. Kariapper (Kalmunai), M.M. Mustapha (Pottuvil), M.C. Ahamed (Kalmunai) and M.E.H. Mohamed Ali (Muttur). Also, Mashoor Moulana tried to become an MP for Kalmunai by contesting the FP ticket in 1965 and in 1968 (by-election). All these Muslim politicians (after entering the parliament) then joined either the UNP or SLFP to cater their own needs of political advancement. I have already commented on this 'fence-jumping politics' of the Muslim politicians of the Eastern Province in my debate with Fr. Tissa Balasuriya on the 1977 plebiscite vote for Eelam (see, *Colombo Tribune* Dec. 31, 1977).

These being the facts, how can Ameer Ali portray the FP as the party which did not respect the political aspirations of the Muslim voters? I would state that it was the Muslim MPs who were elected on the FP ticket (and not the FP leadership itself) who betrayed the trust of the Muslim constituency of the Eastern Province.

Sincerely,

Sachi Sri Kantha

Dept. of Physiology & Biochemistry,
Medical College of Pennsylvania,
3300 Henry Avenue,
Philadelphia, PA 19129, USA.

TAMIL-MUSLIM CONFLICT

PLEASE publish my rather belated comments on the two articles, on Muslim-Tamil conflict, that appeared in the October issue of *Tamil Times*.

While Dr. Ameer Ali's analysis of Muslim predicament and Muslim point of view is well considered and well balanced, the same cannot be said about Mr. Shanmugaratnam. Mr. Shanmugaratnam has taken only one side of the story into consideration. He has not said anything about the activities of the Muslim home guards and their atrocities against Tamils in government controlled Tamil areas in the Eastern Province.

It is not clear why Mr. Shanmugaratnam ignored the Tamil side of the story. Is it ignorance or hypocrisy? I personally believe that violation of human rights from all quarters must be condemned with full force. Criticising Tamil violence while condoning the criminal activities of Muslim home guards is both cruel and counterproductive. This is a life and death problem of Tamils and we who live in the safety of the western democratic societies must utter our words with care.

I would like to refer Mr. Shanmugaratnam to LTTE's statement that when the Muslim-Tamil conflict started in the Eastern Province some Sri Lankan ministers were actually travelling in the Muslim Middle-East countries seeking military aid. Naturally Muslim-Tamil conflict would have helped them achieve their objective easily. Therefore the government had a strong motivation to foment this conflict. LTTE has further pointed out that the Muslim-Tamil conflict was only confined to Government controlled areas and did not spread to LTTE controlled areas. The Muslims who later left LTTE controlled Mannar district did so for fear that the trouble in Eastern Province will overflow into the Mannar district. These Muslims, in fact, blamed some Muslim leaders in the Eastern Province for mischief making. From the above it is clear that LTTE's statements cannot be easily dismissed.

I am not suggesting that Muslim anxieties and fears should be ignored. On the contrary I believe that Muslim anxiety and dilemma are genuine and must be addressed accordingly. By the same token, I would like to say loudly that the notion that Tamil life can be expended easily, must be deplored.

Cessation of these horrible hostilities and return of peace is a far more preferable alternative and must be pursued by all those in positions of power and influence. It is necessary to impress upon the warring sides, the benefits of a negotiated solution. Above all it is necessary to impress upon the Sinhalese people and their government that the kind of supremacy they held over Tamils, during the past 40 years since the withdrawal of the British, is temporary and cannot be continued any more because the Tamil desire to live in peace with the rest of the men and women of this world is just, legitimate and reasonable. This calls for a fundamental change in attitude and hence difficult to achieve. At the moment it seems that prayers is the best bet for peace.

R. Shanmuganathan

24 McKillop Drive
Baulkham Hills,
NSW 2153
Australia.

OIL IN MANNA.

IT WAS very interesting to read the news item (India West November 9th 1990) that India's Oil and Natural Gas Commission has agreed to begin oil exploration off Mannar on the North-west coast of Sri Lanka. India West is published every Friday at 5901 Christie Ave., Suite 301, Emeryville, California 94608, U.S.A.

ONGC struck oil on the Indian side (Tamil Nadu) of the Gulf of Mannar. We Tamils feel there is definitely oil in Mannar area which is 100% Tamil speaking area and is the traditional homeland of the Tamils in the North-East Province.

If the ONGC strikes oil in Mannar, then the Sinhalese Buddhist Government of Sri Lanka is going to colonize Mannar with Sinhalese Buddhists, like the way they have done in traditional homelands like Trincomalee, Seruwila, Manal Aru, Amparai, Vavuniya etc. They have changed the Tamil name, Manal Aru, to the Sinhalese name, Weli Oya.

Now Sinhalese Buddhists are Members of Parliament in Seruwila and Amparai. Very soon Trincomalee and Vavuniya will have Sinhalese Members of Parliament. We Tamils will have to jump into the sea as India is now not willing to admit Tamil refugees into Tamil Nadu. We Sri Lankan Tamils appeal to the 65 million

Continued on Page 23

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Book Review

THE ANGUISH OF '83'

Sri Lanka's Ethnic Crisis and the Way Out ARTICLES & AN EPILOGUE 1983-1990

By Prof. C. Suriyakumaran

Sri Lanka's ethnic problem is a melancholy tale of appalling shortsightedness, mistaken judgements and lost opportunities. It is this aspect of the matter that I wish to stress in writing this foreword to Professor Suriyakumaran's book. For it should no longer be necessary to try to convince people of the necessity of just and reasonable ways of resolving ethnic tensions by appealing only to their moral sense. After three and a half decades of conflict, the cost to the entire nation – majority as well as the minorities – in loss of human lives, loss of resources, and loss of security, stares us in the face. What should be evident now is that it didn't need a high sense of principles to avoid these disasters; prudent self-interest on the part of both rulers and ruled and farsighted leadership would have sufficed to make us take another road. Unfortunately in human history one can be unjust or wicked and not pay for one's sins; but one is never exempted from paying for one's folly.

If we are not to repeat the errors of the past, we must comprehend them and learn their lesson. Throughout the course of our ethnic conflict, there has been a persistent temptation to shuffle off responsibility for our problems on some external and malignant force – whether it was British colonialists dividing and ruling, Christian missionar-

ies favouring the minorities, imperialist powers conspiring against our sovereignty, or Indian power seeking to impose its hegemony. The great danger of these exercises is that they help us to shut our eyes to our own failures and blunders. Today it is Indian machinations that are most often blamed for our situation. Yet it should always have been apparent, with a larger power so close to our shores, that there was a danger of foreign involvement, in one form or another, if we failed to resolve our problems. Again enlightened self-interest, even in the absence of a concern for justice, should have convinced us that we needed to protect our unity and sovereignty by removing the causes of divisiveness among ourselves. Yet grievances and resentments were allowed to accumulate, promises were made and broken, non-violent appeals were met with violence, until the inevitable followed – separatism, foreign intervention and armed insurgencies in both North and South.

It was not for lack of warning. At each stage of this tragedy there were always voices proffering counsels of sanity and wisdom and predicting the consequences that would follow if they went unheeded. As the articles collected in this volume will show, Professor Suriyakumaran was consistently among their number during the last seven years. In re-reading these arti-

cles (most of which I had already encountered on their first publication) I have been struck by the frequency with which his prophecies and warnings had been borne out by the subsequent course of events. But I do not think the author has brought these pieces together for the satisfaction of saying 'I told you so'. The issues discussed in them are still live ones, many of the problems he engages are yet unsolved, and there are ideas and proposals in these pages that are relevant to current matters of debate.

We are not yet out of the wood, as far as the ethnic problem – and the other conflicts that it has brought in its train – are concerned. What we have to show today – after three decades, an uncountable number of deaths, and an immense volume of destruction – is the skeleton of an answer – provincial councils and two official languages. We have still to clothe this skeleton with real flesh and blood. The history of the past is not encouraging; there have been so many attempts at resolution of the problem which failed because proper will was lacking. Will this history be repeated, or will the new decade be a turning point towards a more hopeful future? Professor Suriyakumaran's book is a contribution towards the constructive thinking that can guide us towards the latter alternative.

– Reggie Siriwardena

The Anguish of '83'

This is a unique book, written by a highly informed and qualified person, on the Sri Lankan crisis that unfolded in '83.

Unlike those undertaken with the benefit of hindsight, this book is essentially on events as they took place – what was behind them, what could have been done to prevent them, and what should be done to mend them.

The Author was one of Sri Lanka's senior most United Nations International Civil Servants, and later Visiting Professor at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Earlier, while in the (then) Ceylon Administrative Service, he was connected closely with S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike's ideas on Regional devolution and, specifically, the 'B-C' Pact of 1957. In this book, he brings to

bear both his national experience and his international outlook.

Never attacking persons, but only problems, he –

★ warned of the holocaust of '83
★ predicted, that 'Once we allow our problem to get externalized... that condition will never disappear. We could only be witness thereafter, and it is a matter of historic opportunity for our problem to get resolved, no doubt to the loss of all of us, from outside'.

★ declared, that if we go on as in the past 'the militants will not win, but the Sinhala people will lose, and all will lose thereby'.

In one analysis of requirements, he points out that 'the degree of Devolution required in Regional government, is an inverse-co-efficient of the degree of true participation in Central government'.

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DMK SUN PASSES THROUGH A CLOUD

Centre's threat to sack Karunanidhi recedes but it signals an end of his happy days in power

It could be an irritable summer for the DMK government of Tamil Nadu. The winds of political change sweeping Delhi have had an unsettling effect on the hitherto smooth reign of M. Karunanidhi. The doomsdayers got to work the day V.P. Singh, with whom Karunanidhi had a perfect rapport, was voted out of office. The anti-DMK forces even began believing that Karunanidhi's ouster was now a mere formality.

The initial guarded response to the topple talk soon gave way to genuine apprehension in the DMK when Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar made a terse reference to the 'law and order situation' in Tamil Nadu. Shekhar, who has no love lost for Karunanidhi for having staunchly stood by arch rival V.P. Singh, warned the DMK government on November 16 that 'things will take its own course' if it does not get its act together.

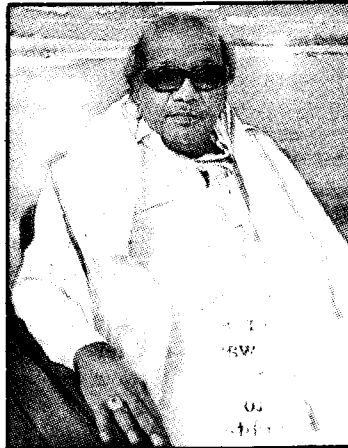
That set off alarm bells at Fort St. George; Shekhar's was no rabble-raising political rhetoric. It was virtually a policy statement made in the Lok Sabha where Shekhar was participating in the confidence vote debate.

Karunanidhi, who has had bruising brushes with the Centre earlier, was quick to acknowledge the ominous message. His senior aide and Revenue Minister 'Nanjil' K. Manoharan was on the next flight to New Delhi where he met the Prime Minister and convinced him that the law and order situation in Tamil Nadu was well under control and that he should not be carried away by the motivated SOS from anti-DMK forces. Said Manoharan: 'The law and order situation, in fact, is much better than most states in the country'.

Manoharan returned with the good news that the Prime Minister and his deputy Devi Lal had assured him that the Centre had no intention of dismissing the DMK government. But it may be too early for the DMK to celebrate the Centre's comedown; the AIADMK led by Jayalalitha would continue to exert pressure on its ally Congress(I) to keep up the pressure on Karunanidhi through Shekhar.

It is cheque-book politicking: Jayalalitha is cashing the IOU from Rajiv Gandhi for the AIADMK's electoral support in Tamil Nadu, and Rajiv will be dangling the IOU before Shekhar for the all-important Congress(I) crutch.

The DMK government has only to blame itself for the uncomfortable position it is in. It has been soft-peddling



Chief Minister, M. Karunanidhi

on the thorny issue of Sri Lankan Tamil militants. Time and again, the militants have run riot within Tamil Nadu only to be exonerated by the DMK government. Finally, the government stood exposed the day 14 EPRLF leaders and supporters were massacred in Madras early this year by alleged LTTE gunmen. That too when the chief minister was swearing that the state had the militants under wraps. Since then the AIADMK and the Congress(I) have used the militant thorn to prick the DMK.

The Congress(I) renewed its anti-DMK campaign at the most opportune time — just when Karunanidhi's ally V.P. Singh was on his way out. 'Tamil Nadu is under the control of the Tigers', charged Rajiv Gandhi in Parliament on November 7, the day Singh faced the confidence vote. 'The links between the DMK and the militants are very clear', Rajiv added to good effect signalling his party's resolve to topple the DMK government.

TNCC(I) president Vazahappadi K. Ramamurthy picked up the refrain in

Madras. 'Over 1,000 militants have infiltrated the state recently to create confusion if and when the government is dismissed', Ramamurthy alleged. Obviously, the Congress(I) was hoping that Shekhar, who had his own scores to settle with the DMK for not backing his power grab, would then do the hatchet job.

Karunanidhi refused to be drawn into a war of words: he left that task to his man Friday and Home Secretary R. Nagarajan. 'There have been all sorts of reports in the press about alleged acts of the Tigers. But there has not been a single instance of Tigers coming to Tamil Nadu', Nagarajan countered.

But the chief minister did take offence when Vice-Admiral L. Ramdas, flag officer commanding-in-chief, eastern naval command and navy chief-designate, fired a salvo at the state government. Ramdas who was on a farewell visit to Madras, by design or otherwise, challenged Nagarajan's contention that no militant had crossed over to the state. Said the officer: 'No militant came here with a band on his head saying he is one'. The sarcasm obviously failed to amuse Karunanidhi.

Ramdas further stirred the murky political scene by disclosing that more than 100 Sri Lankan Tamil smugglers caught by the navy in the Palk Strait and handed over to the police had been released. 'There is one set of rules for sea and another for land', he snapped.

Ramdas's broadside certainly blasted a gaping hole in the state government's defence that it has not been soft on the Lankan militants. But then such an outburst by a defence officer on matters political is unprecedented. What rankled the DMK even more was its timing: Ramdas spoke up soon after Rajiv Gandhi's salvos in Parliament. And, within days of l'affaire Ramdas came Shekhar's blunt talk: DMK-baiters were soon attaching a lot of significance to the sequence of events. Their consensus was: it was the beginning of the end for the Karunanidhi government.

But old warhorse Karunanidhi, having despatched Nanjil Manoharan to guard the flanks, soon launched a counter-attack. Said the chief minister: 'It is made to look as if militants have suddenly descended on the state only during my regime. To make a naval officer mouth such opinion is a mischievous political game. He has joined the Congress(I) chorus that the Tigers have a free run in here. There seems to be ulterior motives in all this'.

Mercifully, both sides backed out after a frightening replay of the Punjab-J&K face-off seemed imminent. But the DMK government will not be able to bluster its way out if the Tamil militants, particularly the Tigers, con-

Continued on Page 23



AIADMK leader Ms. Jayalalitha

NEWS ROUND-UP

● **ADMISSIONS** to medical college are to be increased to 800 this year, the highest number admitted so far in any year. In the past in spite of high marks, standardisation and limits imposed on the numbers of admissions deprived many students from entering medical colleges, the Minister of Education and Higher Education Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, disclosed recently.

● **AN INDEFINITE** curfew was imposed by the government in the districts of Jaffna, Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu from midnight on 20/21 November to prevent or disrupt LTTE's plans to commemorate their 'Great Heroes' week commencing 21 November. The airforce also had been dropping leaflets in northern areas warning people not to participate in any demonstrations or meetings or any outdoor activities. The LTTE defied the curfew and held meetings and rallies in several places. LTTE cadres attacked an army bunker in the vicinity of Kankesanthurai in which two soldiers were killed and four were injured. According to government sources three LTTE cadres were killed and a large quantity of weapons and other equipment were captured by the army at Kokkanai in Trincomalee district. Government airforce continued to carry out bombing operations in the Point Pedro and Valvettitharai areas for the last three days. On 21 November, three soldiers were killed at Mawiddapuram, three at Kadduwan and one at Tellipalai in the Jaffna peninsula during clashes with Tigers. In a search operation conducted by the Special Task Force at Karaitivu in the Amparai district, 156 persons were taken into custody of whom the majority were released after investigations, but the others were detained. Donations to the government sponsored National Defence Fund have now exceeded Rs.199 million.

● **ABOUT 2000 PERSONS** from various parts of the country have written to the Human Rights Committee of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka in recent weeks complaining that one or more of their family members have 'disappeared', according to the Secretary of the BASL, Mr. H. Warnakulasuriya. The complaints include those from the north-east of the island as well. Meanwhile a resolution passed by the BASL called upon the government to appoint an independent commission of inquiry to investigate the 'disappearance' of persons from 1 January 1983.

● **MINISTER** Ranjan Wijeratne told a news conference in Colombo on 22 November that Sri Lanka had agreed to a request from the Maldivian government to take back 67 members of the Tamil militant group, PLOTE, who were involved in the abortive coup attempt to overthrow the Maldivian government in 1988. He said that certain formalities were being worked out before they were brought back. Asked whether these convicted persons would face another trial or be detained to serve their prison sentence, the Minister said maybe we would use them in the war front against the Tigers.

● **THE GOVERNMENT**, using emergency powers, has confiscated all movable and immovable property of the murdered JVP leaders, Rohana Wijeweera, his wife Chitrangani and other JVP leaders and their family members. The confiscation of the properties were carried out under Emergency (Confiscation of Property) Regulation No.1 of 1990.

● **THE NORWEGIAN** government has reached agreement with Sri Lanka to provide two grants amounting to 20 million and 15 million Norwegian Kroners (Rs.232 million). Rs.132 million is made available to support activities in the North-East to cover the cost of transport of food by ship, provision of basic amenities to welfare centres in the east, supply of food and nutritional supplements to displaced families and strengthening transport facilities in the east, and cover the cost of milk food to displaced persons in the north. Rs.100 million is provided for assisting repatriates from the Middle-East due to the Gulf crisis.

● **PRESIDENT PREMADASA** made an unannounced visit to Jaffna on 24 November accompanied by State Minister for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne and senior military officials even while fierce fighting was continuing between LTTE and government forces in the northern sector. The Presidential party visited Palai, Kankesaturai, Kayts, and Nainativu where security forces would appear to have regained some control from the Tigers. It was reported that the President participated in a number of religious ceremonies including one at the historic Nagadeepa Buddhist temple, and also met leaders of the Eelam Peoples Democratic Party led by Douglas Devananda which is helping the security forces in their war against the LTTE.

● **ELEVEN SOLDIERS** and two Sinhalese civilians were killed in two separate attacks on 24 November. In the incident at Thirappane between Bakmeegama and Gomarankadawela, LTTE cadres exploded a chain of claymore landmines in which six soldiers of the second battalion of Gemunu Watch were killed and four seriously injured. At Katupotha LTTE cadres stormed an army guard point and shot dead three soldiers and two civilians. In both incidents arms and ammunition belonging to the soldiers were captured and removed away by the LTTE. However, Trincomalee Army Commander Brig. Lucky Wijeratne later claimed that hours after LTTE men had carried out the attack at Thirappane, reinforcements were rushed in and in the course of an encounter at Maguruawewa 22 LTTE men were killed and a large quantity of weapons and ammunition were captured.

● **SECURITY FORCES**, in a cordon and search operation in the Embilipitiya area, took into custody the chief security officer of the National Paper Corporation's paper mill together with several members of his security staff for alleged connivance with the JVP activities in the past. During a raid in the village of Heendalukkinna in the southern province, three alleged JVP men were killed and several others were arrested.

● **FIVE WOMEN** were killed and twelve others were seriously injured as a result of a shell attack on 15 November by the Navy from its camp at Karainagar in northern Jaffna. Many properties were also damaged.

● **PROF. CHRISTIE WEERAMANTRY** has become the first Sri Lankan to be elected as a judge of the International Court of Justice in The Hague. He won his place following a closely contested election which went into a third round of balloting. The other contestants were from Pakistan, Thailand and the Philippines. Prof. Weeramantry will serve in the International Court of Justice for a period of nine years from February 1991.

● **THE SRI LANKA** Press Council is to be abolished and will be replaced by a Media Commission which would be appointed by the President from a panel of names of eminent persons recommended by a Nominations Commission comprising representatives of all political parties; the 15 member Media Commission which would have a term of five years would be chosen through the mechanism of the Nominations Commission which would forward a list of 'men of integrity' to the President; the Media Commission would not be under any Minister, but would report directly to the President and Parliament; once appointed, neither a government official, nor a Minister or even the President would be able to issue directions to the Chairman of the MC or any of its functionaries on any matter concerning its work, Presidential Advisor on International Relations, Mr. Bradmon Weerakoon told a press conference in Colombo recently.

● **REFERRING TO** the forced evacuation of Muslims from Mannar, the Bishop of Mannar, Rev. Thomas Soundranayagam said, 'The people of Mannar (Tamil, Hindus and Christians) felt it very deeply. They had all been one community until this occurred. When the Muslims left Mannar, the people were really sad and sorry. Still there is a strong feeling among the people that the Muslims should come back'.

Continued from Page 13

Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Jaffna Fort and Mannar are such examples.

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

Decisive point

When the pressure on a decisive point is substantial, political and strategic priorities however crucial they may be are sacrificed and the three principles appear to become the final determinants in the decision making of the field command. It is therefore only logical that the LTTE selected the camp at Mankulam junction if their perception of the army's strategies was such. This is why when the baby brigade struck the men of Mankulam withdrew. After nine

years, excerpts from another work on General Jomini would, I think, help put Prabhakaran's 'new thinking' and strategies in perspective.

Psychological factors

'Critics like Clausewitz, who doubted the validity of any theory of war failed to distinguish between a theory of systems and a theory of principles. Principles were guides to action, not infallible mathematical calculations. The specific application of principles would vary with the thousand changing physical and psychological factors that made war a great drama.

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

Historical cases

Most commanders make bad strategic choices because they are misled by common sense (a phrase not used by Jomini but strongly implied by his endless discussions of historical cases). Attempting to defend territory or a weaker army, they let the enemy decide where, when and how to attack. Uncertain how to protect or exploit several natural lines of operations they hedge their bets by dispersing force among several possibilities.

The uncommon sense of Napoleon and usually of Frederick and of all victorious commanders had always been – says Jomini – to attack with massed forces against some enemy point judged to be 'decisive'. Properly understood, the apparent recklessness of such strategy, which leaves some areas weakened or vulnerable is actually prudence. Aggressive, offensive action deprives the enemy of time to think and act, while superior force at the time and place of battle is the best guarantee of victory. As simple as these formulations may seem, he reiterated them throughout his writing because in the actual conduct of warfare they were so often ignored with disastrous consequences'.

(Courtesy of *The Island*, 2/12/90)

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que has a water source – be it a tank or a well – close by, to enable the faithful to engage in ritual washing before commencing their prayers: the Babri Masjid has none, once again underlining that the place was not originally a mosque site at all. Then there are the five black basalt pillars near the doors of the mosque which, investigations have shown, do not belong to the mosque at all, but must have been remnants of an earlier structure. These pillars even have some idols carved on them: whom they represent is unclear, but certainly Islam prohibits any pictorial representation. Some of the architectural work – such as the casement on some walls, the lotus motifs, the stone lions over an outer door – bear close resemblance to the pattern seen in Rajasthani temples. The disputed shrine has a clearly defined *parikrama* (a path chalked out for going round the entire structure) – a feature unknown to mosques but common in temples.

In revenue records maintained by the British in the 19th century, the disputed area is referred to as the 'masjid-janmasthan'. One singular feature however marks all the historical evidence amassed by the VHP: it comes exclusively from British sources. Indeed historians are unanimous in maintaining that not a single record has been found dating from pre-British

times which makes any mention of this dispute. Says R.S. Sharma: 'There is no proof that there was any *mandir* which was destroyed by Babar'. Adds Sushil Shrivastava: 'There is no concrete historical evidence... Nor is there any other story about Babar's religious intolerance. Most of the kings he fought were Muslims – his object was conquest and material gain, not *jehad*. His first attacks on India were on Lahore in 1518 and 1519, where he fought Daulat Khan; in the battle of Panipat in 1526 he defeated Ibrahim Lodi; he came to Ayodhya to fight not Hindus, but the Pathans who were ruling in Bihar.

Yet another telling piece of evidence from the ASI's researches: B.B. Lal did not come across any artefact which would indicate that Ayodhya was inhabited between the 3rd and 11th centuries AD, which encompasses the Gupta period. The entire story of Vikramaditya arriving in Ayodhya and building a temple there is thus rendered questionable. And if a temple had existed it has vanished without leaving a single archaeological trace: not one figure of Rama or Sita was found in any of the 14 sites dug up in Ayodhya. On the other hand, a Jain figurine was found which implies that there is some truth to the belief that Ayodhya was once a Jain pilgrim centre as well, where the first and fourth Jain saints were born.

Yet again Tulsidas was born and lived all his life in Ayodhya. His exact

year of birth is disputed: he was either around 30 years old when Babar passed through Ayodhya or born a few years after the emperor died in 1530. Had there been a major outrage, such as the destruction of the 'Ram Janabhoomi temple' in the very town he resided in, be it during his lifetime or a few years before his birth, would not the author of *Ram Charit Manas* have written about it somewhere? He has not. There is no complaint against Babar anywhere in his work! Similarly Hsuen Tsang, the Chinese traveller and Buddhist who visited India, has mentioned Ayodhya in his works, calling it a centre of Buddhist culture at that time, full of *viharas* and *stupas*. But he makes no mention of any magnificent temple dedicated to Shri Rama.

Historians aver that the worship of Rama as a deity began only around the 13th century AD, with Swami Ramand, who lived in the 14th century playing the major role in its popularisation. Even so, initially, Ayodhya remained unaffected, with Shaivism being the dominant cult there during the 15th and 16th centuries. It was only thereafter, as Rama worship took over, that temples in the name of Rama, Sita and Hanuman began to spring up all over. A Rama temple constructed as long ago as the VHP supporters claim, the one allegedly destroyed by Mir Baqi, seems to be a historical aberration.

Continued from Page 7

TASK FORCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

President R. Premadasa has appointed a special task force on human rights to 'monitor and effectively deal with all allegations of human rights violations'.

The eight-member task force is chaired by Mr. Bradman Weerakoon, Presidential Adviser on International Affairs.

Government sources said that the task force was in response to the concern about human rights in the country expressed by Sri Lanka's donor governments at the Paris Aid Consortium

meeting recently.

The other members of the task force are R. Paskaralingam, Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Solicitor-General Tilak Marapana, Secretary, Ministry of State for Defence, Air Vice-Marshal Walter Fernando, Police DIG A.F. Seneviratna, Nihal Rodrigo, Foreign Ministry, K.N. Choksy PC, and Neville Jayaweera (consultant).

The task force 'will monitor all allegations with a view to minimising the occasion for making them'.

Supreme Court Warns Police Officers

Four police officers, including the HQI, Homagama Police, who are respondents in five fundamental rights cases were warned by the Supreme court yesterday not to interfere with the petitioners or cause any harm to them.

The four police officers were seen outside the Court premises and had in their custody one of the petitioners, Thorake Lakshman at the time the five fundamental rights applications were taken up for hearing last morning by a three-member bench comprising Justices Bandaranayake, Fernando and Kulatunga.

The police officers concerned HQI Homagama Police, Rohan Fernando, and Police Constables Arthur Banda, Nandasena, and Mendis also of the same station are respondents to all five fundamental rights applications pending before the Supreme Court.

The other respondents to

the applications are SSP, Nugegoda Henry Perera, ASP Homagama, K.H.D. Gunatillake, IGP Ernest Perera and the Attorney-General.

Attorneys M.D.K. Kulatunga, and Nalin Disanayake, appearing for the five petitioners who were not present in court at the time the matter was taken up, moved to withdraw the five fundamental rights applications which allege illegal arrest, detention and torture of the five petitioners by some officers of the Homagama Police.

At this stage a lawyer watching the interests of the Bar Association in this matter informed Court that four of the petitioners were waiting outside the court as they were 'scared' to come in and that the fifth petitioner was seated in a police jeep parked outside court along with some police officers.

It was also brought to the notice of Court that the original proxy giving the Legal

\$125 Million Loss Due to Gulf Crisis

Sri Lanka's economic loss due to the crisis in the Persian Gulf will reach an estimated US\$ 125 million (about Rs. 5,080 million), senior government officials disclosed recently.

Presidential Adviser on International Affairs, Bradman Weerakoon, who chaired the media briefing in Colombo said that expert estimates indicated that the country's losses could amount to US\$ 203 million (about Rs. 8520 million) if the Gulf crisis was prolonged throughout 1991 as well.

Foreign Employment Bureau Chairman, David Soyza said that 72,626 Sri Lankan migrant workers had so far returned from West Asia mainly by air. The flow of returnees had slowed to a trickle in recent weeks, he said.

Mr. Soyza disclosed that Sri Lanka embassy officials in Baghdad had been allowed to enter Kuwait and were currently busy informing Sri Lankans still in the emirate of the availability of flights direct out of Baghdad. Upto 10,000 Sri Lankans may yet be in that country, he said.

Aid Centre of the Bar Association the right to appear for the petitioners had not been revoked.

The petitioners and four police officers were thereafter brought into Court by the Registrar of the Supreme Court.

On being questioned by Court four of the petitioners said that HQI Rohan Fernando and the other three police officers, all attached to Homagama police, had after threatening them, obtained their consent in writing to withdraw the applications.

Thorage Lakshman, however, informed court that he consented to the withdrawal of his application because he did not want to clash with the police.

Court immediately directed the Registrar to summon a senior Police Officer in charge of the Homagama area. A short while later SSP Nugegoda, Henry Perera, appeared in Court.

SSP Perera, who is also one of the respondents to the five fundamental rights applications said he had no knowledge of what had taken place.

On a directive from Court, Mr. Perera, undertook to direct the respondents to the applications and all police stations under his charge not to interfere with the petitioners.

SSP Perera told Court that the petitioners could inform him if there is any kind of threat in the future and that he would take necessary action.

Four of the petitioners Messrs Ratnayake Wijesiri, K. Gamin Priyakumara, Malikarachige Anura and Pitipana Achige Mahinda informed Court that they wished to pursue with their original applications against the police.

Thorage Lakshman, was given time till January 18, 1991 to consider whether he wished to pursue with his application.

Continued from Page 17

Tamil brothers and sisters in Tamil Nadu to help us.

ONGC is owned by the Indian Government and Sri Lankan Tamils request that the Indian Government protect the rights of the Tamils and ensure that Mannar area (15 miles from Tamil Nadu) is not colonized by Sinhalese Buddhists from the South.

D. Balan

P.O. Box 2079,
Victorville,
California 92393,
U.S.A.

Continued from Page 20

tinue to operate with impunity in the state.

The police intelligence wing has reported that non-LTTE militant leaders have been visiting the refugee camps to try and work out an alliance against the LTTE, especially in view of Colombo's plans to revive the provincial councils. Two of them were told to quit Indian shores because the police feared that the LTTE would stalk them down. But one chieftain slipped into Tamil Nadu in disguise and the police got to know of his visit only after he had left

Tamil Nadu's shores.

Meanwhile, the police intelligence has it that the Tigers bring their wounded to Tamil Nadu for treatment. Of course, it is a hush-hush operation - the police have not been able to trace the exact local links. But the Tigers' propaganda is overtly active, particularly in Madras. If and when the Congress(I) AIADMK combine forces Shekhar's hand, Karunanidhi would be hard put to explain these goings-on.

- Vincent D'Souza
(Courtesy of 'The Week')

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MATRIMONIAL

Jaffna Hindu parents seek very sophisticated and fair bride for only son, systems analyst with Canadian Government. Reply with details. M 444 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents seek qualified groom for daughter, 38, fair and attractive, lawyer practising in Kuala Lumpur. Details and horoscope to M 445 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu seeks partner for her sister, 28, slim and attractive. Send particulars, horoscope. M 446 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu parents seek qualified groom for attractive daughter, 20, Mars afflicted. American citizen following degree course. Details, horoscope to M 447 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu seeks partner for brother, 33, in employment in London. Please send details, horoscope. M 448 c/o Tamil Times.

Jaffna Hindu brother seeks groom for sister, 29, final year university student. M 449 c/o Tamil Times.

WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate the following couples on their recent marriage.

Dr. Ravindran (Ravi) son of Mr. and Mrs. V. Nadarajah of 150 Gorrington Park Avenue, Mitcham, Surrey, U.K. and **Nagulini (Meera)** daughter of Mr. and Mrs. M. Nadarajan of 44 K.K.S. Road, Kokuvil, Sri Lanka in Salem, South India on 12.11.90.

Umamahesh son of Mr. and Mrs. Mahesa of Amirtha Vasam, Kadaisamy Road, Vannarponnai, Sri Lanka and **Vasanthi** daughter of Mr. and Mrs. V. Sivarajan of Urumpirai East, Sri Lanka on 2.12.90 at Highgate Murugan Temple, London N6.

Vijeyakumar son of Mr. and Mrs. Sittampalam of 15 Airie Bank Road, Moawell, Victoria 3840 and **Parimala** daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Annamuthu of P.O. Box 6957, Boroko, Papua New Guinea on 6.12.90 at North and West Melbourne Community Health Centre, North Melbourne, Australia.

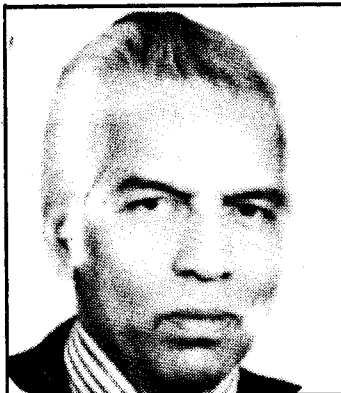
Miththyran son of Mr. T. Sangaralingem, Retired Principal, Hindu College, Colombo and Mrs. S. Sangaralingem of 121A Hambrough Road, Southall, Middx., U.K. and

Methura daughter of the late Mr. S. Markandu and Mrs. A. Markandu of 10 Thomas Clarke Street, Westmead, Sydney on 15.12.90 at Highgate Murugan Temple, London N6.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The family of the late **Mrs. E.P. Arulanantham** wish to thank all friends, relatives and past pupils of Chundikuli and St. John's College, for the messages of sympathy and their presence at the time of their recent bereavement - 3 St. Johns Church Road, Folkestone, Kent. U.K.

OBITUARIES



Mr. K.S. Nathan Q.C. beloved husband of Elizabeth; dear father of Mohan, Indira, and Anil; brother of the late Navaratnam, Pathmanathan and Balasingam; Mrs. Mageswary Sivagnanam and Rajeswary Gomez passed away suddenly on 20.11.90 in London - Tel. 081 360 5893.



Mrs. Sivarathinam Tharmalingam, wife of the late T. Tharmalingam (Retired Divisional Superintendent of Post Offices, Sri Lanka) passed away peacefully at Southampton U.K. on 22.11.90. She was the mother of Mrs. Pathmalosany Perampalam (Madras), Dr. T. Sivendran MD, FRCS (USA), Mrs. Pushpalosani Kanagarasa (USA), Mrs. Neelalosany Thambirajah (USA), Nethralosany Krishnarajah (Sri Lanka), Nirmalosany Arumainayagam (UK); mother-in-law of Dr. V. Kanagarasa MD (USA), Dr. Thambirajah MD, FRCS (USA), Dr. Krishnarajah (Dental Surgeon, Sri Lanka), Dr. Arumainayagam MRCP (UK); sister of the late Manickavasagar, Thanabalasingam, Kulaveerasingam, Tharmakulasingam and Loganathan and sister-in-law of Mrs. Rasiah and the late Maivaganam.



Alagaratnam - Thavamany, wife of the late J.H.A. Alagaratnam, loving mother of Paikaianathan (Sydney), Karuna (Hong Kong), Kirupa (London), Dharma (Chicago), Chitra (London) and Sumithra (Chicago); sister of A.C.J. Eliezer (Melbourne), Prof. C.J. Eliezer (Melbourne), Mary Anandanayagam (Batticaloa) and of the late Poomany Nalliah; mother-in-law of Puvanam, Malini, Jeya, Yogamani, Sebarajah and Arunthavanathan died on 25.11.90. Burial took place on 1.12.90 at the Clarendon Hills Cemetery, Chicago.

IN MEMORIAM



Dr. T. Thambyahpillai (Research Fellow, Imperial College, London) who passed away on December 4, 1984.

Six years have gone by:
Slowly, sorrowfully;
But we still remember your voice. That smile
shall never vanish from our minds;
Inevitably tears will fall,
The days will pass,
Full of grief.
Yet we still expect a knock at the door,
And you to enter;
But that cannot be true,
It is just a memory.

So sadly missed and dearly loved by his wife and children, Meenalosani, Sivakamasunthari and Shiyamalanayagi.

Jayam Says His Final Amen



Richard Jeyarajasingam son of the late Mr. & Mrs. Richard of Usan, Mirusuvi, Sri Lanka said his Final Amen on 27.11.90 at Gant's Hill, U.K. A former Registrar of the District Court of Sri Lanka, Mr. Jeyarajasingam was held in high esteem in the various District Courts he had served. His death came suddenly while he and his wife were visiting their children in the U.K. During his short stay in England, he identified himself fully with the Eastham Tamil Church and the touching services at the residence and later at the Eastham Church on 1.12.90 and the communal rites at the Crematorium were testimonies to the respect and affection with which he and his wife were held by the Tamil Christian community of East London. In his home in Point Pedro, he was not only a livewire of the Methodist Church but was also known as a caring and concerned neighbour and citizen, with an unblemished record of public service.

Mr. Jeyarajasingam leaves behind his wife Rachel Ranee (U.K.), children Ranjan (U.K.),

Seelan (Canada), Christabel Shanty (France) and Jayanthi (U.K.); son-in-law Theva; daughters-in-law Vanitha and Darshi; grand children Durshan, Doreen, Ian and Luxmi and a host of relatives and friends to whom he has always been a tower of strength and inspiration.

His life now is a beautiful memory – an example of a husband, father, neighbour and public official who ran his course with honour.

Richards Karunairajan



In everloving memory of the late **Mr. Kanapathipillai Navasothy**, on the first anniversary of his passing away on 4.1.90. Fondly remembered and sadly missed by his mother Mrs. Parameswary Kanapathipillai; beloved wife Ruparane; loving children Manivannan, Vathani and Yalini; brothers Sathyamoorthy, Raveenthiran, Kanakeswaran and Vasanthakumaran; and sister Mrs. Eeswary Shanmugapalan – 45 Avorn Road, London SW17 9HB Tel: 081 767 2585.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

December 31 8.00pm. Sri Lankans Dance at Copland Community School Hall, Cecil Avenue, Wembley, Middx. For tickets Tel: 081 902 7428/571 3436.

January 12 6.00pm. Aid for Children of Tamil Parents presents 'Dinner & Dance' at Hounslow Manor School Hall, Prince Regent Road, Hounslow, Middx. For tickets Tel: 081 423 5946.

At The Bhavan Centre, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ. Tel: 071 381 3036/4608.

Jan. 5 5.30pm. Discourse on 'Ramayana' by Sri Mathoor Krishnamurthi.

Jan. 11 7.45pm & Jan. 12 7.00pm. Bhavan's Founder's Day Celebrations.

Jan. 19 5.30pm. Slide Show on 'Gandhara Sculpture' by Dr. John Marr.

Jan. 26 5.30pm. Lecture on 'Ethics in World Religions with particular reference to Sikhism' by Dr. Indarjit Singh.

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World Snooker Championships in Colombo

The 17th World Snooker Championships were worked off at Galaderi Meridian Hotel, Colombo from 10th to 24th November 1990. It was the biggest sporting event ever to be held in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka hosted 58 players from 31 countries. Paradise Sri Lanka, the U.K. based travel firm sponsored Stefan Mazrocis, the European Champion at the Championships and their Sales Manager George Hodges was in Colombo to give a supporting hand.

Saraswathy Poosai in Vancouver

The first every Saraswathy Poosai was celebrated by The British Columbian Tamil Sangham at Kerrisdale Community Centre, Vancouver on 29th September 1990. The celebrations commenced with 'Poosai' and was followed by the singing of Thevarems. The significance of 'Navarathri' was explained in Tamil and English and this was followed by special items by individuals and groups. Special devotional songs were sung by the post graduate faculty members of the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University.

The highlight of the evening was the scintillating performance of Bharatanatyam by Miss Maithili Singham. Her movements and mime reflected her talents and created a feeling of enthusiasm for the traditions and culture of the Tamils, particularly among the younger generation present. The function ended with a vote of thanks to Mrs. Pathma Rajamahendran for the meticulous manner in which she had planned the whole program and the serving of 'Prasadam'.

Eelam Mother's Anguished Call

1. For God's sake my dear children,
listen to me for a moment;
Amidst the noise of bombs and guns,
you don't hear my cry of torment
I just can't bear to see you fight; brother
destroying brother
You are all my precious boys; how can
you do this to each other?
You have formed into many groups,
called by many names
What difference does it make to me,
love you all – the same.

2. My heart once nearly burst with pride,
when the world praised your valour;
Then you fought side by side and won
everyone's favour.
You helped us as a Nation, to lift our
heads with pride
You helped us all to look the world –
'right in the eye'
We laud our darling boys, who lost their
lives in the fight;
Their names are written in our hearts, in
shining letters of light.
For their memory's sake and for the
cause for which they died;
Dis-card discord, please write and work
for what they espied.

3. Seven long years of destruction,
Death, Terror and Strife;
Enough is enough! Can't take any more,
we're sick and tired of life!
Because of you the people faced the fury
of two armies;
What hurts them now, is that you treat
them as if they are your enemy
They are being killed on every side, in
the name of Liberation;
Whom are you going to liberate, if you
wipe out the Nation?
They wonder what life will be like, when
your rule is begun;
Will the official language be, the
language of the gun?

4. It's time to lay down your guns my
sons, and plan for tomorrow;
Don't let your countrymen live in endless
war and sorrow.
You will have to change your ways, if
you want to regain their trust
They are your own kith and kin, win over
the love you've lost
Come my sons let's once again, try the
path of peace
Let all intolerance and inhumanity,
forthwith and fully cease.

5. Go back to the people boys, let them
decide who is to lead
Let's have free and fair Elections lads, in
tears I earnestly plead
I hear them sigh in homes and fields,
down each and every lane
In the Town and Marketplace, it's
echoed again and again.
I hear the lonely maidens pray, whilst the
Elders groan and moan;
Oh God! when will this misery end?
When will our boys come home?

– by an anguished Mother

Ramayana – from South East Asia to South London

Having successfully staged Part One of the Ramayana, The Indian Epic, earlier this year, South London Tamil School produced Part Two as the main item of the Cultural Evening held on 24th November 1990. Mr. Richard Gorrington Education Officer, London Borough of Croydon, who was the chief guest, reiterated the Borough's commitment to South London Tamil School which was warmly welcomed.

South London Tamil School is privileged to have the services of Mrs. Sivapathasundaram of Radio Ceylon fame, who produced and directed the play. Under the guidance of Miss Jovani Joseph, a product of Kalakshetra, exquisite dance pieces were added, the music being provided by Mrs. Anandalingam.

Ramayana fame has spread to the far corners of South East Asia and become part of the cultural heritage of many nations. The translation by Kamban is hailed as one of the glories of Tamil literature. Ramayana continues to be an unfailing source of spiritual strength to many and the Tamil community in South London is no exception.

In Part Two, Rama is banished to the forest as a result of a plot by the devious Mantharai. One of Rama's brothers Lakshmana and his wife Sita join him in exile as he refuses to return to Ayodhi until his promise to his father has been fulfilled, although his brother Bharatha, who could have taken the throne, pleads with him to do so.



Well sustained characterisation was an impressive aspect of the show. Mrs. Sivapathasundaram included in the performance, in various roles, almost every pupil in the school and her painstaking work was triumphantly rewarded. All the children deserved the children deserved the applause they received and Dhanya Wigneswaran gave an excellent portrayal of Mantharai. The props were good and the costumes beautiful and parents had obviously worked hard. The timing was allowed to go haywire but perhaps this was in true Ramayana theatre tradition!

There were two programmes of Vocal music given by students of Mrs. Kala Yogarajah and Mrs. Shashikala Kothandapani. Mrs.

Saraswathy Nadarajah produced two programmes of instrumental music, a veena recital and an orchestra. All these were of a very high standard.

The P.T.A. produced "Londoninalai Sellathurai" adopting a rhythmical folk-drama style. The hilarious outbursts repeatedly elicited from the audience was a temptation to dismiss the play as a mere farce but Mr. Yogaraja, producer and chief performer, incorporated many ideas relating to the lifestyle of expatriates that merit serious thought. He was ably assisted by many colleagues on and off stage. The audience stayed the course until late evening and thoroughly enjoyed the P.T.A. production.

Sivakumar.

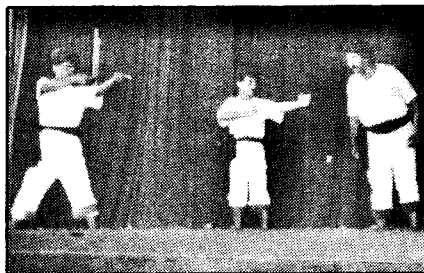
Our Nation on Fire: a Novel Presentation

The Tamil Performing Arts Society is in the process of perfecting a new form of Tamil Theatre in which modern Sri Lankan Tamil Poetry is set to music and used to portray the recent social and political history of the Tamil nation. A small group of artistes, seven on-stage and three off-stage, using mime, narration, song and simple dance steps, and supported by modernist illustrations projected on to the screen at the back of the stage, bring out the essence of the poetic message. Poems by more than fifteen Sri Lankan poets, including the well known Mahakavi (Rudra-moorthy) and Murugiyani who are perhaps the best representatives of the traditionalist style of modern Sri Lankan Tamil poetry and Cheran and Sukumaran who are among those who have taken Tamil free verse to new heights, have been used to portray the life of the people as it was and depicting critically the development of national oppression and the course of the liberation struggle.

The last staging at the George Wood Theatre, Goldsmith College, London SE14 on 8.12.1990 was a refined and forceful version which evolved from the early attempts around the end of 1986 and a long way from the less sophisticated attempts by a group of young poets in Jaffna in the early 80's – to perform to the reading of poetry. What needs to be recognized is that this art form has something beautiful and uniquely Sri Lankan Tamilian about it. It blends two art forms in which Sri Lankan Tamil artistes boldly claim superiority over their counterparts in Tamilnadu, namely modern poetry and modern theatre.

The portrayal of caste oppression by the Sri Lankan armed forces was very effective because of the blend of powerful verse, music

and mime. The best piece in my view was however, the one which illustrated the brutalisation of the liberation forces by the militarisation of the struggle at the expense of politics. The music for most of the material was by Kannan of Jaffna who has been long associated with light Tamil music of quality and Sri Lankan character. The rest of the music was arranged by Niramala. The singing was pleasant with only a harmonium and percussion to accompany. Overall, it was a successful effort to build a theme out of material from poets with different social backgrounds and political outlooks. The material



was selected and arranged to create unity in the diversity of style and content of the poetry. This is a remarkable achievement in itself.

There were of course some flaws, about which I have complained earlier and about which little can be done until the attitude of the Tamil audience and the Tamil community in the UK towards the arts changes. Punctuality is one problem but the set of cultural values of the overseas Tamil community causes greater concern. Bharatha Natyam and Karnatic music remain matters of social prestige and an Arangetram to many is the ultimate goal in training one's child in these art forms. There is no lack of patronage and support and sponsorship, even from those who do not understand these art forms, which more often

than not, are imitations and tiresome repetitions of what has been developed long ago. There are, of course, creative contributions, but few and far between. What is sad is that the hearts and minds of the vast majority of the overseas Tamils are hooked to the obscenity called the Tamil movie. Many are so opiated by the 'video' that they cannot see the relationship between art and life. The sensitive minority too have failed to encourage the few art forms which can have a distinctive Sri Lankan Tamil character. Overseas Tamils talk proudly about the great Tamil tradition of iyal, isai and Kuuththu and here is theatre which blends all three of them, but very few even want to know about it. If the Tamil community thinks that teaching their children Tamil on Sundays, going to the occasional music or dance recital and regularly watching Tamil video movies will preserve their cultural identity, that will soon be an identity not worth preserving. It may be far better for that identity to perish or be assimilated into the Western culture than survive as something which no Tamil could proudly say is his or her own.

What is at one and the same time heartening and saddening is the fact that serious Tamil theatre in London is being supported not by people with financial resources but by those without. The majority of the artistes involved with Tamil theatre are casual employees who have to sacrifice a day's wage to make the performance possible. The overseas Tamil community owes to itself the duty of supporting in every possible way the financial resources to support not just a few amateur groups but several professional groups. There is potential to attract the native British communities. The other ethnic groups in the UK are exploring their artistic potential. Is it not time that the Tamils did?

S. Sivasegaram

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