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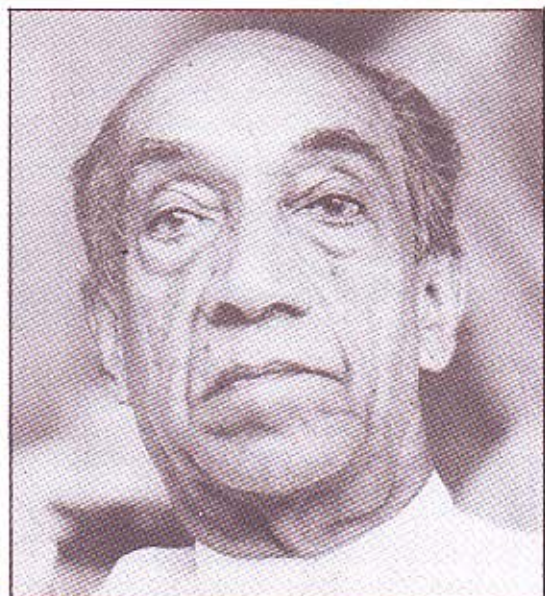
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Co-ordinator of LTTE



K. Gajendran, Leading Member of LTTE and
Editor of 'Eela Murasu'



Former President J.R. Jayewardene who died
on 1.11.96

★ **KILLINGS IN PARIS
— LTTE BLAMES GOVT.**

★ **Women as
Peacemakers**

★ **GANG-RAPE & MURDER**

★ **Leader Who Roused
a Tiger**

★ **PEOPLE CRUSHED
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The Conflict and the Media

A group of 23 Sri Lankan Members of Parliament belonging to all political parties, big and small, recently gathered at a seminar in Northern Ireland to discuss the continuing conflict in Sri Lanka. The discussion was sponsored by the London-based International Alert, an organisation dealing with conflict resolution issues, and the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka.

Following discussions, all MPs unanimously came to the view that : a) all attempts should be made to end the armed conflict in Sri Lanka and a political solution to the problem should be found; b) for a political solution the process of negotiation should include the LTTE; c) the services of a facilitator may be useful at this juncture to move the talks forward; and d) the deliberations of the Parliamentary Select Committee should continue with the active participation of political parties presently represented in it.

In the context of adversarial politics of Sri Lanka where political parties are locked in battle on ethnic lines, the fact that the 23 MPs of different political parties belonging to all major ethnic groups came to this unanimous view must be regarded as an achievement in itself.

Any normal person who has witnessed the sheer scale of death, destruction and displacement of people resulting the years of the unresolved conflict in Sri Lanka would welcome any and every move to end the ongoing barbarous and debilitating war and bring about peace and normalcy in the island.

But those who occupy the elevated positions as editors of the "private media" which seek to parade as the "independent media" as opposed to the "state controlled media" are not normal persons. They regard themselves as superior persons and as the repository of all knowledge and wisdom. They pontificate on all matters, local and international, concerning political, social, economic and very often on moral issues.

True to form, the editors of the "The Sunday Island" and "The Sunday Times" did not fail to utter their pearls of wisdom for the benefit of us all in regard to the discussions by MPs in Northern Ireland. The editor of The Sunday Island said : why should an international organisation spend so much in taking 23 MPs to Ireland; the objective appeared to be promote third party mediation; politicians should be wary of taking part in such foreign sponsored seminars; why should this proposal for a Sri Lankan problem emanate at a seminar sponsored by a foreign organisation held in foreign land; Sri Lanka has enough experts to advise our politicians; the solution to the problems must be found in Sri Lanka itself; let us keep out foreign organisations from telling us how we should get about our own problems. The editor of The Sunday Times said that "our MPs including the Cabinet Minister had to listen to the pontifications as to how to solve Sri Lanka's problems. Our political parties must be more careful before offering our MPs to these bleeding heart lobbies which they say are the doves who want peace but don't know how to achieve it - nor are willing to stop the flow of funds for the LTTE to buy arms for its war machine."

These editors must realise that outside individuals and organisations are interested in Sri Lanka because it has not found its own solution for years. The country is bleeding. People are suffering. Thousands are dying in battles in a war that cannot be won by either party. Unlike these editors, there are concerned people outside and inside who want to bring an end to this catastrophe

These editors must come off from their high horses. As they are doing now, these editors and their like have advised the politicians as to what they should or should not do since and before independence. They and their so-called independent media have contributed to the escalation and continuation of the conflict in the island in no small measure. At every turn any attempt to resolve the conflict was made, the editorialists did not fail to condemn it as a "sell out" and gave space in their columns to points of view of extremism than moderation.

On some major issues which have contributed to the ethnicisation of politics in the country like the deprivation of citizenship to plantation Tamils in the late 1940s or the imposition of Sinhala as the only official language in the post-1956 period, the newspapers and its editors played a diabolical role. Both these matters were later addressed and partially remedied through the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of July 1987 and the 13 amendment to the Constitution in the teeth of opposition from this very same press. Even today, among the most ardent advocates of the continuation of the war and the most strident opponents to the peace process are those who sit in the editorial rooms of the private press. To paraphrase what the British Prime Minister, the late Clement Attlee said to one of his voluble Ministers, a period of silence on the part of these editors would be a great contribution to Sri Lanka and its people.

NEWS REVIEW

Rape and Murder Trial Begins

The judicial hearing against six Sri Lankan soldiers and policemen accused of the gang-raping and murder of eighteen-year-old Krishanthi Kumarasamy, and the murdering of her mother, brother, 16, and a neighbour who went search of her in order to cover their tracks began on Monday 18 November in a Court in Colombo.

Eleven service personnel, including policemen, are reported to have been involved in the raping and the subsequent murders of the four victims. Some of these men are reported to be absconding.

The Court has agreed to an application by the defence to move the trial to Jaffna where the offences were committed. The case has been adjourned to 2 December for hearing. The move to Jaffna, a city under army control, would probably weaken the prosecution case since witnesses would be reluctant to testify, said Mr.T.Poopalan, the lawyer representing the interests of the Kumarasamy family.

The speed with which the Colombo authorities had proceeded to institute and begin the trial against the alleged offenders indicates the government's serious concern that its human rights image has been badly dented by this and other recent cases of gross violation of human rights committed by security service personnel in military controlled areas of the northeast of the island.

Krishanthi, a student of the Jaffna Chundikuli Girls School, was returning home after sitting the GCE A'Level examination on 7 September. As she did not return home after the examination, her 59 year-old mother Rasammah Kumarasamy (a Deputy Principal of another school in Jaffna), her 16 year-old brother Piranavan, and a 36 year-old neighbour Kirupamoorthy went to the nearest army camp seeking information about the "missing" teenager. That was the last time the three

were seen. Later, it is reported a 13-year-old boy found four bodies at a cemetery. Following much agitation, the Kankesanthurai police commenced an investigation into the deaths, and took into custody one corporal, two soldiers and two policemen in connection with the deaths.

An army Brigadier contacted relatives of the family in Colombo and offered five air tickets to them to fly to Jaffna to identify the bodies and participate in the funeral. The relatives refused and wanted the bodies to be taken to Colombo. The bodies were brought to Colombo and a post mortem examination was held by the Judicial Medical Officer, Colombo.

Amnesty International has welcomed the news that members of the security forces suspected of being responsible for the 'disappearance' and subsequent killing of Krishanthi Kumarasamy, her mother, brother and neighbour have been taken into custody. Amnesty International urges the Sri Lankan government that (a) a speedy, impartial and independent investigation under a civilian authority be established forthwith to ascertain the precise circumstances of their 'disappearances' and killing; (b) the safety of witnesses for such investigation be ensured; and (c) those responsible be brought to justice in civilian courts.

Protest Vigil

Ms.Mangalika de Silva of the "Women for Peace" movement expressed horror and shock at the hideous sexual violence of gang rape and gruesome murder of Krishanthi in Jaffna. In a statement, the organisation said:

"In this collective brutal violence, her mother, a widow and Vice Principal of Kaithady Muthukumarswamy Maha Vidiyalaya, brother and neighbour were found buried under crudely dug graves... What is frightening is that the atrocious crimes were not committed in operational areas of heightened military offensives. Kaithady had been 'cleared' by the army and civilian administration controlled by the military.

However people experience terrible fear, insecurity and terror in this battle... The Kumarasamy massacre has shocked the conscience of people who see this as a crime committed against unarmed defenseless civilians. The government's credibility has been seriously eroded and this has led to a loss of faith and confidence that people had reposed in this government which claimed itself towards safeguarding the rights of all people."

Women for Peace has called upon all citizens to join them in a "vigil" to remember Krishanthi and her family and to protest against this kind of brutality against innocent civilians. The "Action" begun on Friday 1 November would continue every other week day (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) from 12.30 - 1.30 pm at Hyde Park, Colombo 2.

Disappearances in Jaffna

The phenomenon of arbitrary arrests, disappearances and extra-judicial killings of persons in army controlled Jaffna peninsula has been on the increase in recent months. The abduction of the school girl Krishanthi Kumarasamy, 18, at an army checkpoint and her gruesome murder after being gang-raped by service personnel, and the subsequent killing of her mother, brother and a family friend who went looking for her has dramatically highlighted and brought into the public domain the increasing violation of human rights committed by the security forces in Jaffna.

The whereabouts of many persons taken into custody remain a mystery and the military's usual response to inquiries by relatives of those arrested has been a denial of such arrests. The Jaffna Government Agent of Jaffna in a letter to the military commander in charge of Jaffna provided details of over one hundred persons whose whereabouts remain unknown following arrests by service personnel.

According to information received by the Government Agent of Jaffna from the officer-in-charge of the Kankesanthurai police station, as many as 740 persons, men and women, arrested between 30.03.96 and 29.08.96, are being held in detention within premises of the police station.

Subramaniam, a mechanic employed by the Jaffna Municipal

Council disappeared at 2 pm on 9 August while here was traveling to his place of work. There have been several cases of missing persons, including women, in recent months. The anguished parents and relatives of those missing have begun to demonstrate and protest publicly.

Ranjani, a young woman aged 24 who was planning to leave to Canada for her marriage went to see her relatives in Kondavil in Jaffna to say goodbye. On her way she was stopped by service personnel manning a checkpoint at Kondavil on 3 October and dragged her into a nearby house where two elderly persons were living. The soldiers chased the two occupants out and Ranjani was gang-raped, murdered and her body was buried in the compound. The relatives who went looking for her recovered Ranjani's naked body from the compound.

The Home for Human Rights, a much respected human rights organisation which was operating in Jaffna in the 1980s, now having its office and operating from Colombo has compiled a list of over one hundred persons who have "disappeared" in recent months in northern Jaffna.

The National Peace Council in a statement warned that "the large number of disappearances in Jaffna, coupled with several incidents of rape and killings attributed to the armed forces are a cause of grave concern. Such incidents reveal an intensity of antagonistic feeling and also give an indication of the plight of people living under military control."

Paris Killings LTTE Blames Govt

The LTTE has accused "state sponsored terrorism" of the Government of Sri Lanka to be responsible for the murder of two of its Paris-based functionaries. Rejecting the accusation, a foreign ministry spokesman in Colombo said that the killings might have been an inside job by the LTTE itself.

The Treasurer in charge of the LTTE's international financial operations, Kandiah Perinbanathan, 32 years, and the editor of the LTTE's Tamil weekly "Eelamurasu" published from Paris, Kandiah Gajendran, 30 years, were shot dead by yet unidentified persons on 26 October when they were walking along the sub-way in Boulevard la Chapelle, an area in Paris where large number of

expatriate Tamils are located. Accounts differ as to what actually happened. Some reports indicate that a gunman who had been in wait shot the two, while others say that a person who was engaged in an animated conversation with the victims suddenly pulled out a gun and shot them at point-blank range. Both died as they were taken to the hospital by the French Police who arrived at the scene shortly after the incident.

There have been some reports suggesting that the police have video tape recordings from the close-circuit-television system operating at the sub-way station which would provide vital evidence as to the circumstances surrounding the murders and the identity of the assailant. But the French police have so far declined to give out any information as to the information in their possession.

In its initial response, the LTTE blamed other pro-government Tamil groups for the killings as part of a conspiracy by the Colombo government against the LTTE. It said Tamils should be aware that "elements within the Tamil society actively participate with the Sri Lanka government's genocidal war on the Tamil people inside and outside."

In a statement dated 9 November issued from its International Secretariat in London, the Tamil Tiger leader Velupillai Pirabakaran said, "I am extremely sad and distressed to learn that two Paris based functionaries to whom the Tamil liberation movement owes a great deal have been gunned down by our enemy."

"Mr. Kandiah Perinbanathan (Nathan) was a senior member of our liberation organisation, an honest worker for the cause and devoted to the ideals of liberation. He has served as an officer in charge of international fund raising, travelled to various countries and has rendered yeoman service."

"Mr. Kandiah Gajendran (Gajan) worked as a publicist for the Tamil Eelam cause and as Editor of the Tamil weekly, the Eelamurasu, built up a wide readership for the paper among Tamil expatriates in several European countries. He was known for his rational and courageous views and his death at the hands of assassins is a tremendous loss for Tamil journalism."

"It is an internationally known fact that the chauvinistic Sinhala government is seriously engaged in a planned mission to destroy the ever increasing international sup-

port which our organisation is receiving, and to destabilise the international structure of our liberation movement which has grown widely and spread its branches everywhere. The government of Sri Lanka is openly engaged in the Herculean task of crushing the freedom struggle of the Tamils by securing the proscription of our organisation in foreign countries and by blocking the contributions we receive from the expatriate Tamil community..."

"The state sponsored terrorism of the Sri Lankan government has now crossed national boundaries and international waters to perpetrate atrocities against the Tamils in foreign countries as well. The International Community should try to identify the perpetrators of this cruel and dastardly act..."

The government's first reaction to the Paris killings that they might have been carried out by a person who did not want to pay money to the LTTE, and its later statement that there was reason to suppose that the killings might have been of a well-known pattern, whereby the LTTE disposed of its cadres who have fallen out of favour with its leadership, have been denounced by the LTTE's international secretariat as malicious and defamatory fabrications.

A People Crushed Between Cycles of Violence

Very little has been written about the Vanni, aside from recent reports following the battles at Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi. It is an area which is considered militarily important by the security forces and the LTTE, where both parties have imposed hardships on the population for their own gains, resulting in unending misery for the civilian population. The groups concerned include approximately 150,000 displaced civilians from Jaffna and over 250,000 who are native to the Vanni. Freedom of movement is restricted by both the Army and the LTTE, to the extent that corruption and human rights violations are rampant, the Information Bulletin No.12 by the University Teachers for Human Rights, Jaffna [UTHRJ] states in a summary of their 29 page report dated 22 October.

The report adds that the movement of those displaced from Jaffna has been closely controlled by the LTTE in the past. The LTTE originally was the main party to

apply pressure on civilians to use the boat service to cross the Jaffna lagoon to the Vanni, but there is also a constant fear of the Army. Often, especially during the Kilinochchi offensive, the security forces have not allowed civilians to leave LTTE-controlled areas. Contrary to military statements, it is not the LTTE that is restricting access in recent months to the Vanni as much as the Army. Upon attempts to gain access to Vavuniya town, civilians have been subjected to various levels of harassment, beatings and arbitrary refusals by the security forces. Young people especially fall victim to this treatment. The whole set-up reinforces the feeling to the Tamil civilians that they are second class citizens in this country, and that their dignity can be tampered with without any hindrance.

The bombing of areas with a large refugee population and the shelling of Kilinochchi where the hospital was not spared, have convinced civilians that these raids are often meant to terrorize the people rather than destroy the LTTE. Often bombs have been dropped miles away from stated targets, such as during Operation 'Sathjaya' when Kilinochchi hospital was extensively damaged. Even this incident occurred after a curfew was declared and civilians were told to seek refuge in places of worship. Furthermore, in Vavuniya town Tamil militant groups operating closely with the Army, such as the PLOTE and the TELO, have been responsible for harassment of humanitarian workers, and corruption are even and suspected of murder. Two well-known torture centres in Vavuniya town continue to be maintained by the PLOTE and the Counter-Subversive Unit of the Police.

Conditions in refugee camps in Army controlled Vavuniya have been likened to those of a prison or worse. Basic medicine is not available and disease, undernutrition and mental depression are widespread in LTTE controlled areas, where Government food rations are constantly delayed and never enough, and upon arriving at centres they are placed under the strict control of the LTTE, which is often concerned about maintaining levels of stocks, however dire the civilian need. Food rations for the displaced from Jaffna were stopped by the Government shortly after the Army took control of the whole of Jaffna in April. A request from Kilinoch-

chi for a desperately needed 40% increase in medical supplies was flatly refused by the Government. Alarmingly, the Medical Committee of the Ministry of Defence cut medical supplies to the Vanni by 75%, to which health officials made no protest. This decision was made just as a large number of wounded civilians needed immediate treatment after the fighting in Killinochchi. Included in this cut were necessities such as treatment for snake bites and chemicals needed for purifying water. As a result, the rural Vanni is rife with hepatitis, typhoid, malaria, meningitis and dysentery, and infant mortality is reported to be on the increase. Clearly, the Government is unable or unwilling to cope with the influx of those displaced by the fighting.

In attempts to escape the horror of living in the Vanni outback, some civilians continue attempts to travel to India. Contrary to official military statements, the LTTE has not needed to pressure civilians very much to make the trip. Large groups of Tamils have been arrested and detained, following attempts to travel by boat to India. Usually about a half of the varying fee charged to go to India is taken by the LTTE, many people having to sell all their worldly possessions to afford the journey. Similar to the system of corruption at military check-points in the Vanni, the LTTE gives travel privileges to those with means, influence and money.

Aside from violations in Jaffna and military control in the Vanni, the people are trying to escape the LTTE's recruitment of their children. There are recruitment centres in nearly every village of the Vanni. Methods often involve psychological coercion and harassment of school children, threats with abuse, abduction and a regular ominous presence over refugee camps. Many of the dead cadre from the recent onslaught at Killinochchi were reported to have been between the ages of 13 and 16. There is at present no pomp and ceremony by the LTTE for the dead youth; they are considered by leaders to be mere fodder for the killing machine. The Vanni is one of the most predominant regions where these young cadre have come from. It is precisely when this displacement and disruption occurs, that young children become the most vulnerable to the LTTE's campaigns.

The LTTE must be held accountable for this suicidal path

which many Tamil youths have been driven down, but the political inertia of the Government and the terror unleashed by the security forces must also be clearly seen as a major factor in this tragedy. In the Vanni, the LTTE remains to exercise a large amount of control and influence, despite the fundamental weakness and unpopularity of its association. Thus, its strength relies heavily on the violence and misery brought to the Vanni by the security forces. Sadly, impunity continues to dominate the politics of this country, with army personnel who are charged with serious violations being released or even promoted. The only hope for the people of the Vanni lies in a political solution which respects human rights, guarantees the physical well-being and dignity of the Vanni people, and works towards a future where the displacement of communities ends.

The Sunday Leader and the President

"The Sunday Leader" columnist, Suranimala, created a political storm when he made a serious allegation in his weekly column (20 October) against President Chandrika Kumaratunga. He alleged that the President, while speaking to some of her officials a fortnight previously recounting her meeting she had with the TULF leaders and making reference to reports that the LTTE was attempting to attack places of worship, including Shri Maha Bodhi at Anuradhapura, with explosives, made "her outrageous statement" that "if the LTTE attacks any place of religious worship, she would personally attack the Tamils and cited the Maharajahs as an example." He added, "Among the officials present when Kumaratunga made this shocking statement was a highly respected Tamil official, who has been personally known to the president for a long time.... Even if the president made the statement in a fit of anger or lighter vein, it certainly was in bad taste."

Though the columnist did not attribute the President's uncharacteristic alleged statement to any source, the report was picked up by foreign news agencies and given wide publicity during the following days. The Tamil Congress leader Mr.G.G.Ponnambalam Jr., who is no friend of the President, fired off an angry letter to her saying, "From what I know of you, I

have not the slightest doubt that you must have made the above statement, as I have always maintained that that was indeed your true attitude and feelings about Tamils."

As rumour spread that the reference to "a highly respected Tamil official, who has been personally known to the president for a long time" was to Mr. Rajan Asirwatham, Chairman of Bank of Ceylon, he wrote to the President: "I wish to state that I was not the official concerned and have no knowledge of this statement. May I also add that knowing you for many years, I am firmly of the opinion that you are not the type of person who would ever make a statement of that nature."

Mr. R. Sampanthan, General Secretary of the TULF which was also referred to in The Sunday Leader report also wrote to the President confirming the meeting between the President and the TULF on 19 September at which the President referred to information of a possible attack on the Sri Mahabodi. The letter added, "At no stage of this conversation did Your Excellency threaten any retaliatory violence on innocent Tamil civilians nor did you in any way suggest that you or the government would condone any such violence. It would be a mischievous and wrongful distortion of this discussion to attribute any such statement to Your Excellency."

A statement from the Presidential Secretariat described the report in The Sunday Leader as "a dangerous report, willfully and maliciously designed to create alarm among the Tamil people and incite racial hatred in a highly sensitive situation".

The Presidential statement said, "The President wishes to state that categorically that no such meeting of officials took place at which she is alleged to have made the statement. Such a statement has never been made by her to anyone, anywhere, at any time. The President wishes to reiterate that such a statement is wholly inconsistent with her well-known attitude to the solution of the ethnic problem and the principles she has publicly espoused over a long period of time for the establishment of peace and ethnic harmony in Sri Lanka..."

"The President and her government have placed their personal safety and political popularity in serious jeopardy, while insisistently defending the legitimate interests of minorities and striving to secure

their personal safety and security and their right as equal citizens of this country.

"It is shocking that respected news agencies like Agence France Presse (AFP) and the United News of India (UNI) have rushed to disseminate this alleged statement on the basis of a report carried in a Sunday newspaper notorious for its untruths, and its vicious and malicious vituperations against the President and the government. A complaint has already been made by the President of criminal defamation in respect of a publication in that newspaper and an indictment on a charge of criminal defamation is now pending trial in the High Court against the editor and publisher.

"This is a dangerous report, willfully and maliciously designed to create alarm among the Tamil people and incite racial hatred in a highly sensitive situation... The President wishes it to be known that she ... will not be deterred by the machinations of those who seek to thwart her efforts to protect the minorities and undermine the trust and confidence that minorities have placed in her."

Asked as to why The Sunday Leader published the alleged statement by the President if it was not true, a PA government spokesman said "As everyone knows, The Sunday Leader is generally known for its anti-government stance and more specifically targets the President personally in its comments and coverage of news. The columnist who is none other than the newspaper's editor, Lasantha Wickramatunga, a failed politician of an earlier era having been unsuccessful in winning a seat and enter parliament. He could not achieve his ambitions through the party, and he is out for vengeance.

He added, "You should know that the paper editorially did not support the government when it started negotiations with the LTTE two years ago, and when the talks broke down and the LTTE resumed armed hostilities in April 1996, the editorials adopted a "we told you so" attitude poking fun at the peace process which the President had started. You will also notice that the paper adopts a strident stance on the need to prosecute the war against the LTTE, and when everyone raises the slogan "Give Peace a Chance" to bring an end to the war, The Sunday Leader some months ago carried an editorial titled "Give Peace a Chance". The paper wants to portray among the Sinhala people that

the government and the President are anti-Sinhala and pro-Tamil, and among the Tamils as anti-Tamil and pro-Sinhala. That is the game the paper is playing."

Controversial Judicial Appointment

The recent appointment of Ms. Shranee Bandaranaike, former associate Professor of the Faculty of Law in the Colombo University, as a judge of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka has raised much controversy in legal, judicial and political circles in Colombo.

The controversy seems to arise from her Ms. Bandaranaike's relatively young age (38) and junior position within the legal profession with only thirteen years of experience at the bar to her credit. Older and more senior judicial personalities, and those now practising in unofficial bar having aspirations to be elevated to judicial position seem to think that her appointment will make her eligible to sit on the Supreme Court for the next twenty years, ten years of which could be as Chief Justice of the country by way of normal seniority. This would be unprecedented in the judicial history of the country, they say.

There are those who do not doubt Ms. B's academic qualifications or record. But they say that she does not even possess the minimum requirement to be appointed even as a District Court judge. The primary requirement to become a District Court judge is that the applicant should have been an Attorney-at Law for at least 15 years. But Ms. B has been an Attorney-at-Law only for 13 years. If she is not qualified to be appointed as DC judge, how can you appoint her as a Supreme Court judge, they ask.

Ms. B is no relation of the island's well known Bandaranaike political clan, and therefore nepotism on the part of President Kumaratunga Bandaranaike is not a reason that is attributed to this appointment. However, newspaper columnists in Colombo have drawn a connection between her and Prof. G. L. Pieirs, the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, in describing him as the "mentor" of the lady in question. It is to be noted that G. L. was Professor of Law at the University where Ms. B was Associate Professor before he became a politician and a cabinet

minister. "This allegation is contemptible and does not merit consideration. Justice Bandaranaike has been a student and a respected colleague of the Minister. However she has never functioned as an aide or assistant to him at the University or anywhere else," the legal correspondent of "The Sunday Observer" said.

The fact that the incumbent Chief Justice was not consulted by the President before the appointment was made has also become subject of critical comment. The defenders of the appointment say that unlike in India, "the Sri Lankan Chief Justice has no part to play in the appointment of the Higher Judiciary. The Constitution expressly confers this power on the President of the Republic... and she has made an informed choice and effected a perfect, legal and entirely constitutional appointment." The appointment may be entirely legal and constitutional. But the President is not a practising lawyer or judicial personality and how did she become "informed" about making a "choice"? One must assume that she must have sought and received advice as to the competence of the appointee to be able to make an "informed choice". If she in fact sought and received advice, one must regard that the incumbent Chief Justice must be an obvious and well qualified source of advice to make an "informed choice". If the Chief Justice of a country "has no part to play in the appointment of the Higher Judiciary", one wonders as to who will be better suited for the purpose, at least in advising the President to make an "informed choice".

The government is beset with all sorts of problems and controversy. One would have hoped that the government could have avoided venturing into such palpably controversial actions to invade into the arena of judicial appointments.

Opposition Leader Questioned

The leader of the United National Party and the Opposition Leader in the Sri Lankan Parliament, Mr. Ranil Wickremasinghe was questioned by CID officers for five hours on the direction of the Presidential Commission inquiring into the setting up and operation of a "torture chamber" by the security forces at Batalanda during the regime of the previous govern-

ment of which Mr. Wickremasinghe was a leading figure.

Evidence given before the Commission has indicated that many who were taken into custody and taken to the Batalanda camp were tortured and several more disappeared.

A statement issued by the Commission's Secretary stated that the Commission had directed its investigating officers to record a statement from Mr. Wickremasinghe regarding matters known to him pertaining to the terms of reference of the Commission.

Following the submission of report by the investigating officers, it is likely that Mr. Wickremasinghe will be formally summoned to appear before the Commission to give evidence and to be further questioned.

Danish Deportation

The recent deportation of 18 year-old Chitra Rajendran from Denmark to Sri Lanka, her subsequent detention in Colombo and the detention and deportation of four Danish journalists who had accompanied her to Colombo have hit the headlines both in Denmark and Colombo.

Worse is that the Sri Lankan government's claim that Tamil refugees or asylum seekers returned from foreign countries would be safe would not be victimised has been demonstrated to be lacking in credibility by the detention of Chitra, and also damaged its image abroad.

Chitra from Kopay in Jaffna went to Denmark at the age of 15 and was pursuing her studies there. She told the Danish authorities that in 1993, because of the civil war in Sri Lanka, her mother raised money by selling a property and sent her to Denmark where she lived with her mother's sister, Sellammah Navaratnam.

Following rejection of her application for refugee status, Chitra was kept in detention by the Danish authorities before she was deported to Colombo.

Students and teachers of the school which she attended in Denmark and human rights organisations launched a campaign of protest against the refusal of asylum and the decision by the Danish authorities to deport her. Disregarding the protests, Chitra was put on a plane arriving at Katunayake accompanied by two Danish officials. Chitra checked out through immigration and customs without any difficulty and went to

a relative's house at Dehiwela.

A group of four Danish journalists also had followed Chitra to Colombo to monitor the situation. On 2 November, one of the journalists belonging to Danish Broadcasting Corporation, Troels Aagaard got in touch with Chitra, interviewed her and broadcast it in Denmark. On the same day, a news broadcast in the SLBC announced that a Tamil deportee from Denmark had gone missing and she was being sought by the police. Following this news announcement, another Danish TV journalist Jensen Gens booked Chitra into the Mount Lavinia Hotel. Chitra returned to her relative's place on 3 November, and when she was with yet another Danish journalist, Mollar, the police took her into custody on a 7-day detention order.

Subsequently, the police questioned and searched the four Danish journalists in their hotel rooms in the presence lawyer K.V. Thavarasa who had been retained by the Danish authorities. They were detained in the Beachway Hotel in Mount Lavinia until November 15. The police are reported to have said that they were looking into the bone fides of the four journalists because it was unusual for four of them to accompany and follow a single woman deportee all the way from Denmark to Colombo and then continue to have contact and interview her.

The journalists were eventually deported on 13 November following a decision by the National Security Council. It has been reported Chitra is being detained at the Salvation Army Hostel on suspicion of alleged "LTTE connections" to be further investigated.

Arthur Clark Welcomes Time Change

With the clocks being put back by half an hour Sri Lanka now six hours ahead of GMT, fresh controversies have arisen over the recent Cabinet decision. The government statement said: "This decision will be effective from midnight Saturday (26/10/1996)", and added accordingly with effect from 12.30 a.m. on 26th October 1996. Sri Lanka will be six (06) hours ahead of GMT, Greenwich Mean Time".

It is alleged that the Cabinet in arriving at this decision had ignored or over-ruled a recommen-

(Continued on page 29)

Krishanthi, aged 19, returning from school was stopped at a checkpoint in army-controlled Jaffna, gang-raped by 11 service personnel, killed and buried in a shallow pit. Not knowing as to what had happened to Krishanthi, her mother aged 59, her brother aged 16 and a family friend aged 36 went in search of the missing girl, and they too "disappeared". It has now been established that they too had been murdered and burned by the same service personnel.

GANG-RAPED AND KILLED

By Pearl Thevanayagam

Krishanthi Kumaraswamy (19) was raped by 11 men in uniform after she was detained at Kaithady checkpoint on 7 September.

Her mother Rasamma (51), brother Piranavan (16) and a family friend Kirupamoorthy (36) went in search of Krishanthi who after sitting her GCE (A/L) examination at Chundikuli Girls High School told her mother she would be attending the funeral of her school-mate who days earlier had been mowed down and was killed by an army vehicle.

The girl who was last seen at Kaithady checkpoint around 11.30am never made it home and until 22 October her sister Prashanthi's mind was a total blank since she had not set eyes on her family after she left Jaffna for Colombo on 31 June.

Each time a soldier commits a murder, a rape or burgle belongings left behind by a panicked and anguished civilian - and this has become commonplace in recent times - the only comment from his officers is that 'he is just a bad egg'. But how many bad eggs are there and what is the ratio of such 'bad eggs' in the military basket to "good" ones?

The answer is "far far too many" and nothing is furthest from this truth as the readers would glean from the following horror story:

Prashanthi Kumaraswamy (21) made appeal after appeal to the military high-ups, politicians, government officials and finally to President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga to trace her family after they went missing at Kaithady checkpoint in Jaffna on 7 September but all that the military could come up with was that

"there were no such persons who passed their hands".

Not until Tuesday 10 October, when Prashanthi got the bombshell that her entire family was dead. She was now all alone in this world and that she need not search for her family.

This response came from her family friend, a post-master from Mannar, who informed her through a letter dated 10 October, he had received information that following the disappearance of Prashanthi's sister, Krishanthi (19), at Kaithady checkpoint as she was returning from the GCE Advanced Level examination, her mother Rasamma Kumaraswamy, her brother Pranavan and another family friend, an office assistant named Krishnamoorthy attached to the CWE had gone in search of Krishanthi only never to return.

A straight 'A' student from a leading girls' school in Jaffna, the Chundi kuli Girls High School, Krishanthi obtained eight distinction passes for the GCE O/L examination, the highest grade one could obtain.

Like most Jaffna students who despite the many hardships heaped on the entire Jaffna Peninsula due to the long and protracted war for well over 22 years never gave up the only tool they could escape with, education, Krishanthi put her heart and soul into passing her exams.

But fate dealt her and her whole family a nasty blow at the hand of brutish soldiers at the checkpoint who knew just one language - the language of violence - through the barrel of a gun.

To the soldiers who are often posted to the North and East and since many of these are recruited

from poverty stricken families where the almost illiterate youth are lured into 'serving the nation' by getting conscripted to the forces, the nubile girls in their smart uniforms passing their checkpoints daily is a sight both pleasing to their eyes and takes away their longing for a distant village and family life.

Hence on that fateful day of 7 September, Krishanthi became prey to the lust of no less than the checkpoint soldiers who allegedly raped her and panic-stricken at their dastardly act killed her. They are reported to have dumped her lifeless body in a shallow pit and prayed their sins would not be discovered.

Did they repent? Obviously not. For to add to their horrendous and dastardly crime they had to kill Krishanthi's mother, brother and a family friend, Krishnamoorthy, who dared to go in search of the missing girl barely two hours later for fear of being discovered, according to information received by Weekend Express.

As to when and how the Kumaraswamy family and the office assistant Krishnamoorthy were killed needs further investigations. But the fact remains that the quadruple murder in the hands of the very people deployed to protect the civilians from atrocities allegedly committed by the LTTE rebels will evoke outrage and anger from every quarter at the silent and complacent military authorities and the politicians who repeatedly proclaim that they are on the verge of "liberating the Jaffna people from the hands of the terrorists".

Who are these terrorists?

Prashanthi, a relative Kodeeswaran and her uncle who is Rasamma's brother, Mr Navaratnam, ever since the ominous day the Kumaraswamy family and Krishnamoorthy disappeared through the Kaithady checkpoint, have been making frantic appeals to every possible military and government contact and each had maintained a stoic silence and callous indifference to the plight of the missing.

Navaratnam told 'Weekend Express' from his home in Wellawatte, "Krishanthi, on her return from sitting the examination at Chundikuli, had decided to attend the funeral of her colleague in the neighbourhood who was mowed down and killed by an army truck a few days previously. But she had informed her family that she would

(continued on next page)

Women as Peacemakers Where Have All the Flowers Gone?

by Sakuntala D. Kadirgamar, Tokyo

We have reached a point in history when we should all with one voice raise our opposition to the continuing violence in our country, Sri Lanka. It's clear that this war will drag on endlessly. It's mainly the young ones who are paying the price. Thousands of youths on both sides have lost their lives.

As a mother I know how much time and care is spent in bringing up children. We as mothers wait for the day when our sons and daughters grow up to be strong independent persons. We long to see the day they take over responsibilities and become leaders in our community. But what's happening today? The lives of young people are snatched away. Their mothers, wives and other kith and kin can only find comfort in holding memorial services and erecting monuments for them. This brings to mind the song about the futility of war sung by Peter, Paul and Mary during the Vietnam war:

ity of war sung by Peter, Paul and Mary during the Vietnam war:

*Where have all the flowers gone, long time passing
Where have all the flowers gone, long time ago
Where have all the flowers gone, picked by young girls everyone
Oh when will they ever learn,
Oh when will they ever learn?*

*Where have all the young girls gone, long time passing
Where have all the young girls gone, long time ago
Where have all the young girls gone, gone to husbands everyone
Oh when will they ever learn, Oh when will they ever learn?
Where have all the husbands gone, long time passing*

*Where have all the husbands gone, long time ago
Where have all the husbands gone, gone for soldiers everyone
Oh when will they ever learn, Oh when will they ever learn?*

*Where have all the soldiers gone, long time passing
Where have all the soldiers gone, long time ago
Where have all the soldiers gone, gone to graveyards everyone
Oh when will they ever learn, Oh when will they ever learn?*

*Where have all the graveyards gone, long time passing
Where have all the graveyards gone, long time ago
Where have all the graveyards gone, gone to flowers everyone
Oh when will they ever learn, Oh when will they ever learn?*

Women have a special responsibility to work for peace. It's common knowledge that in any conflict situation in the world about four-fifths of the refugees are women and children. This should make women everywhere realize how important it is to direct their efforts towards peaceful solutions to conflicts. It's distressing to see people rejoicing over battles won. Have we become so heartless that we cannot feel the pain and loss be-

hind these victories? When the army captured Jaffna, some people in the south celebrated by setting off fire crackers. In the same way, when the army camp in Mullaitivu was overrun, some Tamils were jubilant over the large number of soldiers killed. Let us not shut our eyes and ears to the cries of the suffering masses back in our homeland, even if we feel powerless to stop this senseless war. There are thousands of refugees in our own country without shelter and medical facilities who have to stand in long lines to buy essential food stuffs. The least we can do is to work for peace so that all our people, men, women and children, can one day sleep peacefully without fear and tension.

The time has come for our women living abroad to play a useful role as peacemakers. There is a desperate need for peace. There are a few but very active peace groups in Sri Lanka and there may be a few outside Lanka. What is suggested here is to stress the need for more people to get interested in peace activities and to start peace groups in our neighbourhood. This is an appeal for action. For, we should remember that it is important for the war-displaced victims to know that they are not forgotten. One of our aims should be to raise their hopes for peace and a better life in the near future.

The Sunday Island of October 6 had a news item under the caption 'Saying "No" to War'. It says, 'Recently about fifty women dressed in black, some of them with black gags over their mouths, stood at Lipton Circus protesting silently. The gags marked the silencing of those who do not agree with the "war for peace" ideology. Women for peace organized this silent protest'. It was a courageous act on the part of the participants to stand silently and give their message for peace when there is so much violence in the country. We, who are living abroad, can engage in meaningful activities like building support groups. Peaceful demonstrations like the one at Lipton Circus draw the attention of ordinary people to the gravity of the problem.

Sri Lanka is not the only place where there is ethnic conflict. It has been estimated by the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London that there are 125 ethnic or minority disputes in the former Soviet Union alone. Ethnic conflict is seen by Michael Clarke, director of the Centre for Defence Studies in London, to be the most likely problem of the politics of the 21st

(continued from page 1)
return a little late."

Amidst suppressed anger and sorrow at losing his beloved sister, an aged widow and his nephew, niece and the brave office assistant family friend and enraged over the brutish and inhumane act of the checkpoint lads in uniform, Mr Navaratnam screamed at Weekend Express.

We spent over a month contacting anyone who would assist us, tell us what happened to my family and even Brigadier Lal Weerasooriya told us until the last minute that his soldiers knew nothing of the disappearances. We wrote to General Anuruddha Ratwatte, the President, politicians and the answer was simple silence. No inquiries were made since any inquiry would have compelled the commander to immediately vanquish the post of the soldiers concerned. Any officer worth his salt would resign over this incident. But there was not a single officer who dared to probe the incident. Was my niece a terrorist? Where is respect for a school uniform? Is this military machoism?"

(Courtesy of 'Weekend Express')

century. As a result, there are many women working for peace in war-torn areas of the world. We could begin by educating ourselves on the situation at home and other war-ravaged countries. Speakers from countries that have faced similar traumatic situations could be invited to speak to peace groups. We could get valuable information as to how they are trying to bring peace in their areas and learn from their experiences. It is possible to raise the consciousness of people to the death and destruction caused by wars by writing to newspapers and magazines and organizing discussions. Peace groups could participate in demonstrations protesting against violence as well. It may be good for us to bear in mind at this stage that although there is ethnic conflict in many countries, Sri Lanka is one of the few countries where the problem hasn't been solved for a great length of time. This has resulted in much destruction and bloodshed.

Further, most Lankan women are submissive and dependent. We may be working women but most of us have been playing subordinate roles in society. Some of us think we should possess qualities like modesty and self-restraint, and should not have a mind of our own. According to Virginia Woolf's words in 'Killing the Angel in the House', let's strive to win the rights and freedom most western women enjoy. I attended two international conferences in Katmandu and Tokyo this year. The meetings were mainly on women's issues such as domestic violence, shelter activities for migrant workers, trafficking of women and peace activities. I was amazed to see the strength and commitment of all the participants from India, Korea and Japan. We should learn from them. Unity and solidarity gives strength.

It is interesting to know that the first women's peace groups were started in England as early as 1820. In many instances they have assisted in preventing and ending hostilities, as informal negotiators and demonstrators. The great leader, Mahatma Gandhi, who led the independence struggle against the mighty British Raj, felt that only women were able to save the world from violence and was convinced that Indian women should take the lead in the civil disobedience movement. More than sixty percent of the participants in the salt march were women. Therefore, leaders who were against violence and who fought for peace and harmony be-

The Select Committee Process - Prospects and Problems

by S.D.Sivaram

The Sri Lankan government has promised to finalise the constitutional process of the legal draft in parliament by March next year. Professor G.L. Pieris has said that the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) will conclude its deliberations by then. To most Tamils in the north who had retained any interest at all in the matter it had begun to appear that the PSC was, like every other attempt in the past to politically resolve the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka, slowly but inexorably sliding into oblivion for lack of enthusiasm on the part of the UNP and the SLFP since the conclusion of the Riviresa operations in the north.

Many Tamils in the war torn areas are simply not interested in the government's proposals. A senior western diplomat who visited the army controlled areas of the peninsula recently said that people to whom he spoke during his short tour knew little about what is happening to the government's plan for regional autonomy. The fact is that civilians in the peninsula are so overwhelmed by the day to day problems of survival and are fed only with information

which is considered suitable for them by the army that they simply do not have the time to find out about the PSC's deliberations, in which even the once more optimistic political commentators have lost interest, or are rather justifiably sceptical about the whole thing in the light of their experience under the administration of the military.

The Tamil groups which have supported the government in Parliament lost faith in the peace process early this year. They are now often quoted in the Tamil press and sometimes in the Sinhala and English press that the decision they took in 1987 to join Sri Lanka's democratic mainstream has not done the Tamil people any good. In an interview with the Tamil daily Virakesari Rasamanickam an EPDP MP said that there is little today to sustain the hope that an honourable settlement to the Tamil question could be found through democratic means. The five Tamil party alliance has in fact campaigned for third party mediation on the grounds that it did not believe that the government or the opposition would ever set aside their differences in order to work out a solution.

Leaders of the Tamil parties in Parliament often had to go in search of MPs of the UNP and the SLFP to get the quorum for the PSC's sittings. The ill fated PSC under the last government was also beset by same problem. Many key sittings were called off at that time for lack of quorum.

Most Tamil politicians, except those of the TULF, are not ready to believe that the PSC would be able to have anything ready to be placed before the Parliament in March or April. Many are of the view that the Professor's enthusiasm is not shared by many others in the government. The odds are heavily against him. The UNP's corporation in amending the con-

tween ethnic communities believed women have a role to play in bringing peace.

Finally, when we visit countries such as Canada, Australia and England, where there are large expatriate communities, feelings of friendship, respect and concern for each other are seen. Our sad and painful experiences during the past thirteen years have brought our women together. We could unite together to work for peace. Also, it is vital we become politically enlightened. This will strengthen us in our fight for peace. By developing ourselves and working for peace, we'll use our time profitably. For, our cry to end the war with a just and peaceful solution will be heard only if we are a strong force. ●

stitution with a two thirds majority in parliament is indispensable. This has been pointed out on several occasions by the Tamil parties. And hence a suggestion was made some months ago by some of them that the President should refrain from attacking the UNP leader Ranil Wickremasinghe at least until the legal draft of the constitution was finalised. "If the government is serious about placing its proposals in parliament by March, why is it persisting in further antagonising the UNP at this crucial juncture?" asked the leader of a Tamil group when informed that the CID had questioned Ranil Wickremasinghe for four hours in connection with the investigations into disappearances and arbitrary killings by Batalanda Commission. Despite the solemn promise made by Prof. G.L Peiris the PA leadership seems little inclined to bury the hatchet at least temporarily with the UNP for the purpose of securing that party's support in March when the proposal is said to come before Parliament.

Apart from this there are four issues that can seriously bog down the smooth passage of the proposal in parliament in March. Firstly, the abolition of the executive presidential system - the Peoples Alliance's main election promise to the people which it had vowed to implement by July 15 last year.

Secondly, the unit of devolution. The Tamil parties plan to pin the UNP down to a favourable commitment by asking it to abide by the principle it accepted under the terms of the Indo-Lanka Agreement while in office. The principle was to extend the merger of the north and east with special presidential proclamations until such time it was considered appropriate to hold a referendum in the east to determine whether people of that province would like to remain in an autonomous region along with the people of the north. Although efforts to get a commitment from the UNP in recent times has failed, some Tamil politicians are hopeful that when the question of the unit of devolution is taken up in parliament, the UNP will be forced to take a stand.

Thirdly, the question of the unitary character of the Sri Lankan state. A.C.S. Hameed, a UNP stalwart and its former Foreign Minister, has suggested at the

meeting of the Select Committee on October 29 that the legal draft's "Sri Lanka is a united and sovereign republic" be amended to read "Sri Lanka is a sovereign republic and shall be known as the Republic of Sri Lanka" This can be construed as a willingness on the part of the UNP to give up its stand on the unitary character of the state. If the constitution does not specifically define the state as being unitary then there would not be any legal impediment to achieving the quantum of devolution desired by the Tamil parties.

Fourthly, the problem of finding something acceptable to the SLMC in the scheme for autonomy. The TULF is, as usual, hopeful of reaching an agreement with the SLMC which is still playing its cards close to its chest.

In what sense do these four issues constitute an impediment to the smooth passage of the proposals in Parliament?

a) The PA leadership is yet to give a firm undertaking that it will abolish the Presidential system. The recent stand-off between the PA and the SLMC would have further reinforced the view that Chandrika and her party cannot give up the certainty of executive Presidential power for a precarious existence in parliament. If this is the case then the UNP can simply insist on linking the question of devolution to the abolition of the executive presidential system which, in no time, lead to an impasse where the PA cannot place the blame squarely at the UNP's doorstep. With the government going hammer and tongs at the UNP, and Ranil in particular, over the Batalanda investigations, the UNP is most likely to counterattack the PA on the question of abolishing the Presidential system. It will be most unrealistic, say some Tamil leaders, to hope that the opposition, in these circumstances, can be persuaded to give up insisting that abolition of the executive Presidency and establishing structures for substantial regional autonomy should constitute one indivisible amending/peeling procedure in Parliament.

b) The question of the unit of devolution can simply get bogged down on issues such as the arrangement desired by the SLMC and the redrawing of certain boundaries in order to exclude Sinhala areas from the proposed

council. And, importantly, how much is the government prepared to ignore the concerns of the army in handing over the administration to Welioya to a Tamil dominated regional body. Some leaders of the five party alliance privately say that even if everything goes well with the UNP and the PA, Mr. Ashraff is certain to confound the process even at the eleventh hour. Both a Muslim dominated council which would be independent of the Tamil dominated one in the north-east and a sub-council within the unit of devolution sought by the Tamil parties are not, despite his declarations, conducive to Mr Ashraff's current game plan they say. If he gets a separate Muslim dominated council his bargaining position vis-a-vis the centre would be weak or precarious given the Tamil factor and UNP-PA loyalties in that part of the Ampara district which would be the territorial basis of the council. On the other hand, if he were to come under a Tamil dominated unit his base in Ampara may be threatened. A powerful place in the cabinet is what suits his current ambitions best, they say. And Douglas Devananda of the EPDP told the Virakesari recently that he stands for a sub (or internal) autonomy for the Muslims - within a north-eastern unit that is.

c) And again, the suggestion made by Mr Hameed means little, as long as the UNP does not commit itself to a clear stand on Article 76 for even if it may appear that the new constitution would not hinder greater autonomy to the regions by not defining the state as unitary, the fact of the matter is that as long as Article 76 is in place, legal complications which can impair and erode the quantum of autonomy granted are inevitable.

In this context, the effort of Prof. G. L Peiris can only be considered as a bold but somewhat desperate gamble. It is a gamble because if the proposal fails to get two thirds majority in Parliament in March or April it would politically precipitate the ethnic polarisation - giving greater credence to the LTTE's claim that the Sinhala polity is inherently incapable of conceding anything to the minorities. The PA which is neck deep in problems in the south created mainly by its ad hoc style of governance seems to care little about this than trying give direction to a war that is stuck in a quagmire. ♦

WHITHER THE NEW GENERATION OF LANKAN TAMILS?

by Dr. S. Narapalasingam

Some of the Tamil expatriates, who have been vehemently voicing the case for safeguarding the distinct identity, culture and national status of the Tamils in Sri Lanka, will soon realise (if they have not already) that there are irresistible forces, which will integrate their offsprings and the new generation of Tamils with the different multi-cultural societies in their adopted countries. Irresistible and irreversible cultural and social changes are occurring within the Tamil diaspora, as it happens to every other expatriate community that seeks to lead almost a permanent existence in foreign lands. They will soon witness that, whatever the older generation among them may wish or want, what Tamils back in their homelands regard as their distinctive cherished cultural values are gradually compromised and eventually disregarded.

Inhumanity in High Culture

Citing the works of Prof. George Steiner, the columnist Jayadeva in his comments highlights: "modern history has amply demonstrated that immersion in high culture can go hand in hand with the practice of extreme forms of organized cruelty and barbarism. That is to say, our historical experience disproves the widely held assumption that high culture exercises 'an ennobling influence' upon human beings." Expanding on this theme, he says, "Steiner is really focusing upon the dialectic between reason and emotion, between rationality and faith, or (as one critic has it) between Enlightenment and Romanticism. Or, as I prefer to phrase it, between tradition and modernity." (The Island, Sunday, 1/9/96).

The relatively new trend in brutal killings and torture of fellow citizens in Sri Lanka are claimed to be not in conformity with the Sinhalese and the Tamil cultures, yet some find ecstasy in these acts while others anguish. Methods of warfare and the use of civilians including the old and sickly persons, women and children as in-

struments in the civil war to achieve the military objectives also provide evidence of the contradiction between the claim and group behaviour within the two cultures. From purely a cultural angle, it is immaterial who first allowed hatred and violence to intrude in the two cultures. What is of concern is the end result. The Western societies too face cultural crises of different sorts, as discerned from the breakdown of families, mugging, robberies, abuse and murder of young women and children, drug addiction and the like. At least there are leaders who have the courage of their conviction to condemn these acts and are serious in eradicating them. Unless concerted efforts are made to find the reasons for such intrusions and effective measures taken to deal with them, societies will have to accept cultural regression.

Inhumanity existed in Tamil culture even before the barbaric acts of killings of innocent civilians and nonconformists surfaced. Although this was apparent, as for instance in the degrading and inhuman way the caste system in the society functioned in defiance of all religious tenets, yet the Tamils ignored such contradictions in their self-acclaimed high culture. Only the positive features were highlighted both in written and oral discussions. There is a tendency among some Tamils to assume that their culture conforms to the ideal form embracing all the humane virtues of civilization and therefore is superior to others. The fact that this belief has no basis will be obvious if one examines objectively, the contradictory behaviour of many Tamils, who are under the illusion that their behaviour, however, degrading, dishonest and immoral has no relevance to Tamil culture.

In fact, what passes as high culture in any society represents its positive features, including the civility of the vast majority of the members of the society. What each civilized society aspires to achieve is to move forward with time refining the old high values of its cul-

ture, while ridding the inhuman and uncivil conduct of its members. No one will judge the society by the ideals of its culture, if the current social behaviour of a noticeable section of it is at complete variance with those ideals. Nor will it be judged by what has been written in its ancient history and classics. Societies will be judged by the extent to which universally accepted human rights and humanitarian standards are adhered to individually and collectively.

The majority of the parents, the elders and the leaders including intellectuals in the community have failed to set aside outmoded beliefs that are irrelevant and/or incompatible with the standards and needs of the modern world in order to prepare the new generation to accept the reality of the new environment. Universally applicable New discoveries, interaction of different cultures, liberal thinking, information technology and advanced communication have dramatically changed and still continue to change the world. Beliefs that held sway years ago are giving way to new ideas. There could not have been any human progress, if old attitudes have continued blindly disregarding the positive changes that have been beneficial to the entire human race.

Each society has to decide for itself which aspects of its traditional values are worth observing and which of those of other societies are worth embracing. The environment in which the members of the society live must be a crucial factor in this determination. The manifestation of the ethnic tension between the Sinhalese and Tamils is now blatantly visible even in foreign lands. The social intercourse is minimal. The anger is so overwhelming that each group does not want to understand the concerns of the other. The ethnic division has encroached even in sports festivals. For the first time, the eighth Annual Festival of Cricket held this year on Spring Bank Holiday - Monday, 27 May was conducted without the teams from the OBAs of the schools in the North-East, as the latter did not want to participate in the joint festival. 20 teams representing these schools conducted a separate Tamils only cricket festival on the very same day at a different venue in London. Various reasons have been given for this split, but in the final analysis they all defy civility, highlighting the co-existence of malevo-

lence and the much extolled high culture.

Tamils have been quick to point out the ominous mistakes of the Sinhalese, which isolated them from the national mainstream politically and economically, while ignoring some of their own actions which achieved the same result. This tendency, whether it is part of the Tamil culture or not if continued in the host countries, where the new generation of Tamils will reside permanently could create problems for them. The reality is that they will not return to Sri Lanka even by some miracle either the "lost paradise" is regained or the proclaimed goal of establishing Tamil Eelam in the North-East is achieved. They will continue to live in a different cultural environment of their adopted countries. No sensible person would claim that one culture or for that matter one religion is superior to another. This attitude must prevail not only to be civil but also for survival in the adopted countries.

Anti-cultural Behaviour

The Tamil community had exhibited anti-cultural behaviour even before the intrusion of the gun culture, as evinced by internal rivalries or jealousies often ending in enmity and even violence, land disputes, commercialisation of the dowry system and the allegiance to the exploitative caste system. If anyone claims that the Tamil community as a whole is accords the highest priority for finding space for themselves to preserve their distinct identity and practise freely their traditional Tamil culture, then this calls for close scrutiny. It will be more genuine, if the claim is admitted to be motivated by economic considerations in the belief that they will have greater opportunities to prosper than under the conditions that prevailed in the past.

The rivalries within the Tamil community which have been so conspicuous both in and outside Sri Lanka should not be ignored in its pursuit for material gains. Power to decide "who gets what" is the key to benefit selfishly from materialism. Power is also necessary to exhibit the standing of an individual or a group in the society. This also shows the dominance of individualism or at most parochialism in the society. Power, as an instrument for helping others to improve their living conditions, widen opportunities for others to thrive, ensure civil liberties, eschew violent behaviour and

maintain good neighbourliness, moral and cultural values has become insignificant or at best secondary concern in the social order.

Competitive rivalry between businesses that benefits consumers in the open market is not to be confused with the kind of rivalry mentioned above. A recent report published in the Toronto Star (this was reproduced in the Sunday Leader of August 25, 1996), highlights the rivalry between various Tamil gangs in Scarborough, Canada. It states:- "Tamil community leaders are quick to point out the simmering feud has more to do with disputes over drugs and turf, even girl friends and soccer matches, than with their guerrilla struggle for an independent homeland in Sri Lanka." London has not been spared of such rivalries among different groups asserting their authority. Even in the realms of activities held in high esteem in the Tamil culture such as those performed in Hindu temples and schools, similar kind of rivalry has emerged.

Education

The failure to recognize the major role that education plays in relating the different cultures in a way to promote tolerance and understanding between the various communities has been the biggest tragedy that struck the Sri Lankan society. In many multi-cultural countries where the Lankan Tamils have settled in large numbers, the governments have been known to be tolerant accepting other cultures and even encouraging the co-existence of different cultures. Even before the Tamils took refuge there, they have conscientiously taken positive steps to improve ethnic relations. In this tradition, the Tamil expatriates have been allowed to practise their culture freely. This is clearly evident in Britain and North America. A brief comparison of the educational system in Sri Lanka with those prevailing in some of these countries is useful to the present discussion.

For example, schools in England teach not just Christianity alone but other religions as well including Buddhism and Hinduism as part of a broad subject, religious studies. A study on "School textbooks and communal relations in Sri Lanka, which contains a documented analysis of the textbooks used in schools from the standpoint of the outlook and attitudes regarding communal rela-

tions which they are likely to foster in the school child, demonstrated that the Sinhala books are exclusively mono-cultural in their content - that is, the way of life they present is not only solely Sinhala but also Sinhala Buddhist The Tamils are identified throughout the books as the traditional adversary." This is the comment of Reggie Siriwardene in his piece "National Unity or Communalism: The textbooks our children read", cited by Prof. Jeyaratnam Wilson in his book "The Break-up of Sri Lanka - The Sinhalese-Tamil conflict" (C. Hurst & Co. London - p 44).

In order to develop analytical skills, school children now in the adopted countries of the Tamils are assigned at an early stage various projects which compel them to search for facts from various sources and analyse the assigned subject objectively. In Sri Lanka, this was sadly lacking even at the university level. Here too the reasons for this deficiency are many. Most reference materials were available in English, which the students could not read having had their education in Sinhalese or Tamil. The art of teaching used and which remained popular among the students amounted to "spoon feeding". The students depended exclusively on the notes given by the lecturers, which they memorised habitually for the purpose of passing the examinations. Creative thinking and analytical ability of university students could not develop in the system. The role of the teacher was not perceived as pertaining primarily to develop the students' thinking powers and guiding them to analyse issues or solve problems by themselves. It was perceived solely as helping the students to somehow pass the examinations. This also contributed immensely to the narrow outlook and prejudicial thinking later in their lives.

Even before the large scale migration to foreign countries started since 1983, some of the elites in Sri Lanka left the country in order to educate their children abroad. Education of children (not necessarily in Tamil) has been an important element of the Tamil culture, although enlightenment may not be the only motivational factor. After all in the present materialistic and competitive world, this shift in emphasis is now pervasive.

Those who have seen the changes that have taken place in the school environment in their adopted countries, cannot feel

comfortable about some of them. It is foolhardy to assume that these are favourable for bringing up children. Violence in schools is a new phenomenon and so is the tendency to be hooked to self-destructive habits like addiction to drugs, cigarettes and alcohol. Respect for teachers is also a long-standing custom in the Tamil society. This appears to have eroded even in the Tamil heartland in Sri Lanka, after the rise of militancy.

Television also has a very strong influence on the attitude of the new generation of Tamils. Like in reading what is relevant to the accumulation of knowledge is the kind of programmes they mostly watch in their homes. The same applies to web sites at the Internet. Language has very little to do with accumulation of knowledge. More depends on the interests the children develop during their spare time.

Conduct and responsibility of parents I have listened with trepidation, some parents proudly narrating that they are unaware of the movements and the holiday plans of their teenaged children. These not only reflect their irresponsibility but also the absence of communication between parents and children. Permissiveness allowed to the extreme would be very harmful not only to the children but also to the society. The contradictions within the Tamil diaspora are many with regard to their interests and activities claimed to preserve Tamil culture and arts. Some are more keen to attract the attention of the host community than to make some of their own youngsters appreciate not only the Tamil culture but also the traditional cultures of other groups in the new social and multi-cultural environment.

Tamil parents spend considerable money (even beyond their means) in organizing "Arangetrams" to which their friends and relatives are invited to witness the performances of their children. It remains to be seen whether this is the end of their cultural interest and involvement or it is taken further to enable the new generation to appreciate the exquisite features of Tamil music and dance. The disturbing trend appears to be that these public performances are more likely intended to exhibit the ego and perhaps the social status of the parents. If this is the case, then the objectives are limited both in time and scope. Much more than "Arangetrams" and presentation of other cultural pro-

grammes which bring nostalgic memories to the older generation are necessary, if the new generation of Tamils as a community are to be respected by others.

G.Ramesh (IT of September 1996), states that Kural, Pattuppaattu, Silappadhikaram, selections of Sangam poetry and Nammalvar's hymns have been translated into English by various scholars. Translations of Tamil classics cannot be beneficial to the new generation of Tamils, unless they develop interest at an early stage in prototype Tamil culture. These would not serve "to give them respectability and cultural space" in their adopted countries as the vast majority of the people with whom they will be mixing in their daily lives will be just ordinary people and not scholars who read these classics.

What is far more important for the parents and guardians is to impress upon the new generation of Tamils growing up in the environment of the adopted countries the virtues of living according to the moral values that distinguish a polite, compassionate, lovable and tolerant person from one who is selfish, anti-social, greedy, violent or self-destructive. They should not be carried away by forces, which they have not examined carefully in the context of the moral standards of their own culture and deciding what is right and wrong. Importantly, they should be conscious of their responsibility to themselves as well as to others in the family and the society at large.

These values do not get firmly set in the minds of the youngsters by occasional visits to temples and attending the few Saturday classes where attempts are made to teach them the Tamil language. A lot depends on the attitude and behaviour of the parents inside and outside the home. And on this depends their ability to decide with whom they should or should not associate closely. Particularly, teenaged children should be made conscious of the boundaries that must be conscientiously observed at all times in their behaviour. They must also know the real purpose of the practice of praying and going to places of worship and meditation.

In London it is reckoned that only around 35 Tamil (Saturday) classes are held in a year. The total time devoted to teaching the Tamil language in a year is less than 50 hours. Given that these children have limited time during

their school terms to spend on learning Tamil as an additional language, which in some cases are not the language even the parents communicate with them, there is a need to explore innovative methods of teaching it along with the moral values and the cultural relevance of the many Tamil parables, anecdotes, proverbs, poems and Kural. The appropriate teaching method should be such as to make it appealing to the children, so that they do not get the feeling that they are attending the Tamil classes under pressure from their parents or merely to please them. Many children do not attend these classes for lack of interest. They also show no interest in learning to speak, read and write in Tamil in their homes. Not all parents have the time, even if they are keen that their children should know the mother tongue to teach them the language. The real challenge is to create interest among the children to know about the cherished values of traditional Tamil culture, even if they do not master the language. If the emphasis is on teaching solely the language in the traditional way, many children would find this boring.

The Tamil parents and elders in the diaspora should be concerned about impressing the new generation growing up in multi-cultural societies, the importance of not abandoning totally the basic values of the Tamil society in the mistaken belief that these are not fashionable or modern. At the same time, they should avoid displaying racial hatred in public or within their homes as such conduct will deter the new generation of Tamils to think highly of the much praised values of Tamil culture. Facts can be conveyed without recourse to bigoted language intended to spread hatred against another community. This does not contribute to cultivate rational thinking among the children, who are not born with racial prejudices.

Coming to Terms with Reality

The parents were denied by the policies of the governments in Sri Lanka, the sense of belonging to a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society. Fortunately, this is not the case with their children in their adopted countries (some exceptions exist in Europe). An educated and rational person to be considered cultured, a tolerant and open-minded attitude is necessary. The parents must recognize this reality and stop thinking narrowly within the confines of their own illusory world. It is important to

bear in mind that they left Sri Lanka not to foster Tamil language and Tamil culture in the West but for different reasons. It is dangerous to ignore under this pretense, the pragmatic actions that must be taken as a matter of priority to provide proper guidance to their children taking into consideration the multi-cultural environment and their exposures to unacceptable behaviour even by the standards of the Western culture.

Mixed marriages between Tamils and persons of other ethnic groups, American, English, French, Irish, etc. have already happened. Liberalism is best portrayed at the present time in the inter-marriages between the Sinhalese and Tamils. These are not arranged marriages but preferred by the Tamil male or female partners. Surprisingly, the children of Tamil professionals in the forefront campaigning for the protection of the distinct identity of Lankan Tamils have also opted for marriage outside the Tamil community. Not all Tamil youths, who have married non-Tamils are unaware of the Tamil culture and classics. This proves that knowledge of these need not influence the new generation of Tamils to be chauvinists. In fact it would be imprudent for them to follow exactly the social behaviour of the Tamils of previous generations, who lived in a totally different social environment. To do so would be to alienate them from the mainstream of the society to which they belong.

The fact that the Tamils have not abhorred their sons and daughters for marrying among other ethnic groups including the Sinhalese, as much as they hated them for marrying among certain sections of their own community is well known. In the latter cases, the punishment has been often severe, resulting in excommunication from the family circle. If the Sri Lankans (of all races) only examine rationally, by casting off all the prejudices which have been driven vigorously into their minds by the so-called "defenders" of their race and religion, how this miracle is possible, they may find the path that would eventually lead to a lasting solution to the elusive national problem. They should consider the mixed family unit as a microcosm of the one large family of all Lankans and look deep into the factors that contribute to the solidarity of these units despite their diverse backgrounds with respect to ethnicity, culture and religion. ●

LEADER WHO ROUSED A TIGER

Mark Tully

Junius Richard Jayawardene, lawyer and politician, born 17 September 1906, died 1 November 1996.

Junius Richard Jayawardene, who has died at the age of 90, was prime minister of Sri Lanka from 1977 to 1978, and president from 1978. During his term of office the Tamil separatist movement developed from sporadic acts of violence into a full scale civil war. Yet Jayawardene was a devout Buddhist who was also deeply influenced by the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, including non-violence.

To meet, he was always quietly spoken, anxious to listen, willing to accept mistakes - a man of great charm with a delightful sense of humour. He claimed to be a man of peace, with a genuine respect for democracy, and he was very persuasive. Yet he turned the first country in south Asia to enjoy full adult suffrage into a virtual one-party state, and came to believe the only solution to the Tamil problem was a military one. I could not and cannot believe he was hypocritical, but I never understood how he lived with the differences between his personal beliefs and his public actions. He was to me, a paradox.

Born into the highest echelons of what was then a very stratified society, Jayawardene attended the Law School at Colombo University, but chose politics rather than law as a career. Before Independence he rose rapidly in the Ceylon National Congress.

After Independence he joined the new United National Party, whose aim was to represent moderate opinion and to bring about a consensus between the three main communities - the Tamils, the Sinhalese Buddhists, and the Christians.

When the UNP was defeated for the first time in the 1956 election the leader John Kotelawala lost interest in politics. Jayawardene didn't take over the party leadership but he was responsible for rebuilding the party.

During that period tension arose between the majority Sinhalese Buddhist community and the Tamils over language and education policies. Jayawardene or-

ganised the opposition to a pact between the prime minister and the Tamils leader, heading a march to Kandy, capital of the former Sinhalese kings and a city sacred to Buddhists.

In this way he signified that he was loyal to the tradition which saw Sri Lanka as the land of the Sinhalese Buddhists and the land where their religion survived in its purest form. The Tamils were never to forget that march and the communal violence which broke out in 1958 as a result of the turmoil created by Jayawardene's opposition to the pact with the Tamils.

Many historians believe this was the beginning of the resolute refusal of the Sinhalese to countenance any form of federalism, which has been the stumbling block to any political solution to the Tamil problem.

Jayawardene remained the United National Party's chief strategist both in and out of office but he only became the leader in Parliament after the defeat of 1970, when Solomon Bandaranaike's widow became prime minister. He was to defeat her in the next election which did not take place until 1977.

Jayawardene came to power with a massive majority. Taking advantage of the damage inflicted on the economy by Mrs Bandaranaike's rigid socialist policies, the international oil price increases and a fall in the price of tea, Sri Lanka's main commodity export, he devalued the rupee, scrapped controls on foreign investment, and announced that he hoped to turn Sri Lanka into the Singapore of South Asia. Jayawardene also launched grandiose schemes to develop the economy, including the dam in Central Sri Lanka in whose construction Britain played the major role.

Unfortunately the new policies revived inflation and meant that Jayawardene had to make unpopular cuts in Sri Lanka's welfare provisions, which were far more generous and effective than those of any other south Asian country.

At the same time there was widespread resentment against one of his grandiose schemes, the building of a new city and parliament on the outskirts of Colombo. Naming the city Jayawardanepura did not make the project any easier to sell to the electorate.

Within three years of his coming to power Jayawardene's remedy for the depression left behind by Mrs Bandaranaike was so unpopular that there was a general strike. Jayawardene called out the army and let loose his party storm troopers. He had already taken measures to insulate himself from the electorates anger.

Claiming that reforming Sri Lanka's economy needed strong government he had altered the constitution and been elected the country's first executive president. At the same time he had made doubly sure of his position by ensuring that he could not lose his majority in parliament by reforms in the electoral laws and a new law on defections.

But unfortunately Jayawardene was to learn, as Indira Gandhi did when she declared a state of emergency, that strong government in south Asia does not mean effective government. The economic revolution ran out of steam and Jayawardene found himself embroiled in the Tamil insurgency which was to lead to his ultimate humiliation.

The turning point came on 23 July 1963, when Tamil Tiger separatists killed 13 Sri Lankan soldiers, including one officer, in an ambush. The Sinhalese press was outraged and the next day when the bodies were brought back to Colombo to be cremated Tamil property was attacked.

Although Jayawardene could see the flames of the houses the rioters had set on fire from his residence he did not impose curfew for more than 24 hours and even then it was not strictly enforced. It was four days before the president spoke on television and radio, and then he justified the killing of Tamils and the burning and looting of their property by saying it was a natural reaction by the Sri Lankans to attempts to divide their country. That was taken as an encouragement to riot and the violence erupted again on what has become to be known as Black Friday.

Whether Jayawardene mishandled the crisis from the moment he agreed to the bodies being brought back to Colombo or whether he wanted to encourage violence against the Tamils will never be

known. All that can be said is when the riots broke out they seemed remarkably organised. Rioters had electoral rolls to identify the houses of Tamils.

He had also made the mistake of annoying the imperious Indira Gandhi by depriving her friend Mrs Bandaranaike of her right to function as a politician. Gandhi took the 1983 riots as an excuse to insist on a role in protecting Sri Lankan Tamils. India has a large Tamil population too and she said they were demanding action. At the same time she allowed the Tamil Tigers bases in India and supplied them with some of their arms and equipment.

Jayawardene opted for a military solution but never had any chance of success. The ill-disciplined Sri Lankan army was no

match for the Tamil Tigers, probably the best organised separatist fighters in the world. Eventually in 1987 Jayawardene, no friend of India, had to accept the humiliation of allowing the Indian army to take charge of the war against the Tamil Tigers.

The next year he meekly accepted the limitation of two terms imposed by the constitution he had introduced, retired, and from then on scrupulously avoided any involvement in politics. It was as though the democrat in him, suppressed during the long years in office, came out on top in the end. He has left a country still fighting the brutal civil war, started while he was in office - a sad legacy for an admirer of Mahatma Gandhi.

(Courtesy of "The Guardian", 2.11.96)

THE SECOND OUSTER OF BENAZIR BHUTTO

by G.Ramesh

This time Mrs Benazir Bhutto managed to wield power as prime minister for three years, sixteen months more than her first term in office which ended in 1990. Charged of excessive corruption and economic mismanagement, her Pakistan People's Party (PPP) regime has been dismissed by president Farooq Mohammed Leghari, her one-time ally. The National Assembly stands dissolved and elections, it has been stated, will be held on 3 February next year. The army is on the streets of Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Karachi and Mrs Bhutto's husband and controversial investment minister Asif Ali Zardari apparently placed on arrest in Lahore. This midnight presidential coup d'état is typical of Pakistan, as one recalls that her successor in office and rival Nawaz Sharif had also been dismissed in a similar manner four years ago.

In Salman Rushdie's novel, *Shame*, in which, he says, the country in question is not Pakistan, "not quite". There is a mythical town called Q. The country's troika of president, army and prime minister assume the roles of three mothers, Chunni, Munnee and Bunny who seduce their white masters after a weekend party to jointly give birth to Omar Khayyam Shakil, the protagonist, the model

citizen of this mythical country. This conception is more than immaculate, an act of shame, opines Rushdie. "So whole-heartedly did they wish to share the motherhood of their sibling - to transform the public shame of unwedlocked conception to the private triumph of the longed-for group baby.."

Thus, acts of installation and dismissal of governments, then, in Pakistan, have been rendered akin to this shameful conception. Only seemingly natural, such acts are either part of conspiracies, or events unfolding in the larger tragic anti-destiny of a polity in which the civil society is given to play out what is only a guided role.

Mrs Bhutto has a nice image as a British-educated progressive Islamic woman prime minister for the Western media, but she has been facing a lot of fire back home in the last few months. She had remained beleaguered ever since Leghari put her government on notice in his September address to the National Assembly.

Things didn't look up at all for Mrs Bhutto as her brother and political rival, Murtaza Bhutto, was gunned down in strange circumstances in Karachi within days of the presidential warning. Murtaza had lived in the West for several years before returning to Pakistan a few years ago. Backed by his

mother Nusrat Bhutto, he had challenged Mrs Bhutto's leadership only last year and broken away to lead a faction of the PPP. Even as Mrs Bhutto flew to Karachi to mourn her brother's death, there were unsubstantiated allegations that Mrs Zardari and her interior minister Maj-Gen (ret'd) Nasirullah Babur were responsible for the circumstances in which an "encounter" had taken place between a police squad and the personal security guards of Murtaza. Mrs Bhutto responded by instituting a tribunal to probe the killing. Nusrat too gave a clean chit to Zardari, while contradicting a Western news report. However, within days, an inspector who was part of the police team at the time of the encounter shot himself to death, compounding the mystery behind Murtaza's death. Immediately thereafter, Murtaza's widow, Mrs Ghinva Bhutto had announced her decision to join the PPP faction which has been renamed as PPP (Shaheed Bhutto). Shaheed means a martyr and Murtaza has now inherited this mantle from his late father.

Mrs Bhutto's regime is widely held to be extremely corrupt. Her husband had been charged of collecting huge kickbacks out of foreign direct investment and siphoning them off to unnumbered accounts of Western banks. Another major allegation against Mrs Bhutto relates to the massive fortress-like Sussex farmhouse she had erected in Britain. Also, she had not been able to politically resolve the Mujahir issue which periodically engulfed Karachi.

To the looming economic crisis, Mrs Bhutto's regime responded by devaluing the currency as sought by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Her decision to hike oil prices and impose stiff taxes was sternly resisted by the opposition Jamaat-i-Islami which organised successful sit-in protests and rallies putting Islamabad under total siege. The police had a tough time controlling the protesters and ultimately resorted to firing at them. This evoked further protests, jeopardising Mrs Bhutto's chances of survival in office.

Mrs Bhutto had initiated a series of changes in the management structure of public finance. She hired and fired financial consultants, while trying to meet IMF conditionalities for the release of the suspended tranches of a 600 million US dollar standby credit for structural adjustment of the Pakistani economy. One of her advi-

BENAZIR'S ERROR OF IGNORING HISTORY

Parvez Hafeez

In Pakistan today, virtually everyone is frantically trying to take credit for the unceremonious ouster of Ms Benazir Bhutto from power last Tuesday. Her bete noire Nawaz Sharif, for instance, is congratulating himself for mounting pressure through a series of public meetings and rallies that eventually led to the dissolution of the National Assembly and dismissal of the Bhutto government. The eternally optimistic Jamaat-e-Islami on the other hand likes to believe that it was its Millions March which prompted President Farooq Ahmad Leghari's action, conveniently forgetting that not even a hundred thousand turned up for the rally. Murtaza Bhutto's supporters rushed to the grave of their slain leader informing him that they had avenged his death. The Mohajir Quami Movement leaders and workers danced on the streets of Karachi with such vigour as if it was their sustained struggle which made Benazir bite the dust.

In the prevailing euphoria, however, everyone has failed to give credit where credit is due. The person primarily responsible for Benazir's Second Going is Benazir herself. Yes it was the same old nexus between the Army and the President at work last week, that was responsible for the premature dismissal of the last three govern-

sors V A Jaffrey decided to go on leave, she got a private sector expert, Hussein Lawai, appointed as a consultant for her government. She also went on to replace finance minister Mahkhdoom Shahabuddin with Naveed Qamar. Mr Shahabuddin, who was only supposed to assist her in financial affairs, sulked after he was ignored about the devaluation issue. However, these last-ditch efforts didn't prove successful.

The only option she was left with was to cut the huge defence budget, and the army, the most important constituent of Rushdie's troika, would never allow that. ●



ments in Pakistan. However, Benazir cannot escape the blame of providing this nexus, through her numerous acts of omissions and commissions, an excuse to use the dreadful Eighth Amendment against her government.

Who should know it better than the Oxford-educated intelligent daughter of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto that those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it. In 1993 when the Pakistani people gave the Pakistan People's Party another mandate, one thought that Benazir must have learnt from her past mistakes. One also hoped that in future she would mend her ways and refrain from committing any fresh follies which could be used as a weapon against her by either the Opposition or the nexus euphemistically called the Establishment. But obviously one thought wrong.

From the policy decisions which she took in the last three years, it became increasingly clear that she was bent on once again committing political harakiri. She may take solace in the adage which politicians love to drop at the drop of a hat: you cannot please everyone. This, however, does not mean that she should have displeased everyone. In 1995 when the then President Ghulam Ishaque Khan had similarly dislodged her government, similarly

dislodged her government, there were widespread public resentment against his decision.

In contrast, the jubilation with which her recent sacking was greeted compels one to agree with Nawaz Sharif that 5 November was "the day of deliverance for the people of Pakistan." Now that she has ample time on her hands the former Prime Minister must ask herself how and why did she antagonise virtually every section of society in her three year rule. Not only the impoverished masses but even affluent industrialists were unhappy with her policies; not only the judiciary but even the President was upset by her unnecessarily defiant demeanour, not only her political rivals but even her personal friends and blood relatives were sore with her.

Even on the political front, her behaviour showed that she has not cared to read even the introductory chapter of Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. In the last few months the Pakistan Muslim League, the Jamaat-e-Islami, the MQM, the newly-launched Tehrik-e-Insaf and virtually every political and religious organisation has been gunning for her. If Benazir had even a modicum of political pragmatism, she could have won Imran Khan to her fold and capitalised on his enormous popularity and credibility.

She missed a similar opportunity of scoring a political point with her opponents at the beginning of her second tenure. When she was re-elected in October 1993, the morale of the MQM, a past ally turned adversary, was at its lowest following the military crackdown against it. Since the Army operation was launched during Nawaz Sharif's rule, Benazir could have regained the confidence and support of Alta. Hussain with little effort and thereby consolidated her position. But Benazir failed to win these tactical supports due to an inherent flaw in her character which the Greeks called hubris.

Another folly which led to the doom of a classical tragic hero was error of judgement. And Benazir committed not one but several such errors. A very silly error of judgement that she could have easily avoided was her obsession for promoting her discredited and dishonest husband. During her first term, she had to face flak for the corrupt practices of Zandari who was nicknamed Mr 10 per cent for his penchant for earning commissions and kickbacks and

government deals. Although he was later acquitted, Zandari had to cool his heels in jail for two years on corruption charges. But instead of keeping him at an arm's length, during her second tenure, Benazir accorded official sanctions to the nefarious deeds of her husband by inducting him in her Cabinet.

In India, many political stalwarts have come to grief because of the wrongdoings of their sons and daughters. In Pakistan, it seems it is the spouse who proves the Achilles' Heels for a ruler. What one fails to comprehend is that while one does not automatically qualify for practising medicine on account of being the husband of a lady doctor, why should a crook become an investment minister merely because he happened to be the husband of the Prime Minister?

Benazir's another error of judgement was in giving untrammelled power to Naseerullah Babar, her interior minister. Although in his dissolution order, Leghari has cited corruption, nepotism, misgovernance and economic crisis as some of the reasons, the principal reason for the removal of Benazir, according to the President of Pakistan, was that "thousands of persons in Karachi and other parts of Pakistan have been deprived of their right to life" in the last 36 months. And if one person can be held responsible for the high-handed arrests, unlawful detentions, inhuman torture, extrajudicial killings and other crimes of state terrorism against innocent citizens of Pakistan, it is Babar.

Benazir who was both unable and unwilling to seek a political solution to the lingering Mohajir problem, gave Babar the Butcher blanket powers to annihilate the MQM leaders and supporters. Once again she refused to learn from history. How she could forget that it was similar state repression against the east Pakistanis by the army that had led to the dismemberment of Pakistan and political demise of Yahya Khan?

The error of judgement that proved fatal, however, was initially her complete trust in and subsequently her shabby treatment of president Farooq Leghari. As recently as two weeks ago, she defiantly wondered why did they scare her of the displeasure of the President and the Chief of the Army staff since she had "Not been put in office" by them. In her arrogance, she forgot that although she was not installed by Leghari

and General Jehangir Karamat, they could always dislodge her from power by using the Article 58(2)(b) of the Constitution which like the proverbial Sword of Damocles hangs over the head of every head of government. Incidentally this Article is merely a ruse to give a sort of constitutional legitimacy to an essentially unconstitutional and undemocratic practice.

The tragedy of Pakistan is that even after 49 years of its existence, it has not been able to make up its mind about the kind of government it wants. From Jinnah to Junejo, every leader solemnly vowed to make Pakistan an ideal Islamic republic but until date Pakistan has not become a theocracy. Again, after the death of Zia and with Benazir's emergence as the democratically elected Prime Minister, democracy was ostensibly restored but in reality Pakistan is a far cry from being a real and robust democracy.

Even a school student knows that it is the military that still holds the levers of power with the only difference that today the generals operate from behind the scenes. In the dismissal of both Benazir and Sharif governments in 1990 and 1993 respectively, the army played the crucial albeit clandestine role. And although Benazir has discreetly one believes - refused to acknowledge the involvement of the army in her sacking, one is sure that it was the Karamat (handiwork) of Jehangir Karamat. Benazir, however, has no reason to lose heart because the game of musical chairs that power politics has turned into in Pakistan, one should not be surprised if Benazir is re-elected in the next general elections, next year provided of course, she is not barred from participating in them and provided the elections are held next year.

Postscript: In Pakistan, the leader of the Opposition takes his/her job so seriously that he/she starts making life miserable for the newly elected Prime Minister the day he/she takes his/her oath of office and launches a movement demanding his/her removal even before he/she completes the first 100 days in office. In the last eight years, four governments were dismissed by the "discretionary" power of the President. The only way to bring to an end this seemingly unending cycle of farces, in this columnist's humble opinion, is the reduction of the term of an elected government from five years to two. ●

(Courtesy: Asian Age)

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(Continued from last issue)

Return of Internal Terror

We give here details of a few cases although others have been mentioned earlier. Killing is just one means of soaking the society in terror. The LTTE constantly sends warning letters to government servants, clergy and NGOs threatening harsh measures against those who co-operate with the Government's rehabilitation efforts to restore normality. Such co-operation is categorised as subscribing to deception and selling their birthright.

19th April, Maruvanpulavu, Thenmaratchy:

On the day the Army moved in the LTTE shot dead one man whom it claimed was a traitor.

6th July 1996, Ariyalai, Jaffna: Mr. Ramalingam, Assistant Government Agent: Thambu Ramalingam had earlier risen to the position of AGA. Under the LTTE regime in Jaffna he had worked under the LTTE appointed GA Dominic, who regularly summoned the official GA. Following the Army's recapture of Jaffna Ramalingam raised the defunct Jaffna District Council's flag alongside the Sri Lankan flag. He rejoined the administration in the pass office issuing tickets for boat travel to Trincomalee enroute to and from Colombo.

Earlier this year he was treated for some cut injuries on the neck apparently resulting from personal enmity. After he was cured he used to be accompanied to work from his home in Ariyalai by a close female relative.

On the two successive days prior to his murder, the lady escort noticed two boys in school uniform coming on bicycles, who said 'good morning' and rode past. The lady escort told Ramalingam that the two looked like LTTE militants. The possibility was dismissed by Ramalingam. On the third day one boy came on a bicycle, stopped in front of Ramalingam and said that he needed a pass to go to Colombo. Ramalingam told him that he should come to his office. Just then the boy rubbed his palm on a trouser leg and pulled out a pistol. The observant lady gave a shout of alarm and hit the boy's wrist deflecting the shot which hit Ramalingam on a thigh. Ramalingam too joined the scuffle and the assassin was grounded. Ramalingam was apparently killed by a second shot - if one is to discount local talk that there was only a single shot dipped in cyanide.

With the lady screaming, the assassin took off on foot leaving behind his slippers, bicycle and school books strapped to the cycle carrier. He later grabbed the bicycle of Satkunam's son which was parked in the front garden while the owner was bathing next door, and made his getaway.

Jaffna: The Contest Between Man and the Beast Within

Some hours later two boys brought the bicycle home after inquiring in the area about a stolen bicycle. Satkunam scolded them calling them bicycle thieves and demanded that they come with him to the army camp. First one boy ran away. On the way the other boy hit Satkunam and ran away. At the army camp soldiers told him, "So you got your bike back, that is fine", and closed the matter. About two days later Satkunam's son was detained. (See above).

July, Nunavil, Thenmaratchy: A former member of the Sri Lankan police previously had close links with the LTTE. Once the Army moved in he formed new friends among the latter while keeping the old.

**THE UNIVERSITY TEACHERS
FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS, JAFFNA
(UTHR(Jaffna))
SRI LANKA
Special Report No.7
Date of release : 29th August 1996**

He is accused of having given the Army valuable information on persons with LTTE affiliations. He is also accused of pointing out sons of relatively affluent homes as LTTE suspects and collecting commissions for their release.

According to local reports he also entertained members of the LTTE for meals. At one such meal he told a member of the LTTE that his group had been sending him warning letters. The member expressed surprise and denied his having anything to do with it. One night the same lunch-guest called and wanted to talk to the man. His wife insisted on following them outside. The LTTE boy wanted something from the house and the man persuaded his wife to fetch it. She then heard a sound and ran out to find her husband shot dead and the visitor missing.

Aspects of this story culled from local accounts may seem exaggerated, and discerning fact from fiction would prove difficult. However such behaviour patterns are consistent with the legacy of a society immersed in terror and is reflective of the tragedy of the whole society and of every individual in it.

19th July 1996: Nallur: Sivajini: The Uthayan of 20th July carried a funeral notice of the kind frequently witnessed during 1985 - 1989, announcing the death under 'tragic circumstances' of Mrs. Sivayogini ('Sivajini') Patkunamanikkam. She was the daughter of Proctor Nadarajah JP, a prominent citizen in the area. The family's isolation and the message of terror

to associate with the bereaved family.

Sivajini was among those who had defied the LTTE's exodus order of 30th October 1995 and had remained behind in Jaffna. Her daughter received a bullet injury from cross-fire during the Army advance and was treated by the Army. Along with 250 others like her the Army had housed them at the Atchuvvely Convent and later helped them to resettle in their homes. They were friendly towards the Army as the Army had been friendly towards them.

On the morning of the day concerned Sivajini was going to worship at the Chemmani Road Pillayar Kovil. On the road a girl wanted to talk to her and both walked together for awhile. At the top of a lane the girl pulled out a pistol, shot her, and ran away, leaving behind a notice accusing her of treachery.

Sivajini's husband lives abroad. She singly cared for her aging mother and her daughter in the university entrance class. She was also an active office-bearer of the Chundikuli Old-Girls' Association. According to her neighbours, because of her sociable qualities and her fluency in the three languages, people of the area regularly sought her help when some problem required an appeal to the Army.

4th August, Karanavai, Vadamaratchy: A father of three children lived just on the uncleared side of the eastern boundary wall. Since he knew Sinhalese, soldiers manning the boundary frequently summoned him as a translator. On this day the LTTE shot him on the forehead. The LTTE reportedly apologised to his family later saying that they had made a mistake. Other local sources feel that the LTTE knew why and what it was doing and there was no mistake!

Military Practice & Current Developments: A comparative overview

There has since July been a large rise in the number of arrests and the institutionalisation of torture to a point where people see it as part of policy rather than as an isolated misdemeanour. The Government's public commitment to Human Rights and the international credit it has received made the latter seem more likely. The consistent failure to issue receipts upon arrests, inform relatives and merely keeping the ICRC on a casual mailing list, letting them know only of those cases that had at long-last been brought to the KKS police station, is a sign of the almost total loss of accountability in Jaffna. The ease with which persons could go missing is alarming. In practice there is no one to whom an ordinary person could complain of criminal misdemeanour by the armed forces without living in fear of severe re-

was underlined by the fact that the 'Informant' on the notice was her daughter Dakshayini, a school girl at Chundikuli Girls' College. Few dared

percussions.

Those who had tried complaining to higher officials feel that although they listen and appear concerned, it does not work. Often these officers seem to have no clue to what is happening to the military machine at the lower levels and adopt what appears in practice, to be an ostrich-like policy.

What is less known is that from the beginning of the Army's takeover there has been a notable difference between the Army's conduct in urban and rural areas. It was a grave mistake to cover up rather than investigate and take punitive action against the few rape cases that surfaced.

Irritations in the rural areas however were more widespread than was appreciated. It became unsafe for people to go out after dusk. A round-up often meant that even old women had to stand out the whole day without food and water. Innocent young men were detained, beaten and told that they would be released only if they named two members of the LTTE. Former members of the LTTE were asked to report and sign at one camp and while leaving were detained by men from another group. When parents protested to the first camp they were told that they had no influence on what others did. Yet despite these the people were willing to give the Army a chance and hope for the best. They had many reasons to feel disillusioned with the LTTE.

The suicide bomb blast in Jaffna on 4th July and the Mullaitivu disaster appear to have been crucial in giving far greater licence to the bad elements in the Army. In Thenmaratchy in particular people have begun to compare favourably the relative physical security they had under the LTTE with the current insecurity they experience from day to day.

One can see shades of Brigadier Tissa (Bull) Weeratunge's regime of the late 70s and early 80s. Weeratunge was sent to Jaffna in mid-1979 with a list of a couple of dozen militant activists and an order from President Jayewardene to eliminate terrorism. Young boys were picked up off the roads in round ups and tortured with the number of disappearances rising to 23 by early 1983. The result was a militant movement several thousands - strong. These failed methods were used again and again and were presented as successful, but carried credibility, if any, only in the short run.

A hopeful exception in recent months has been the handling of Vadamaratchy.

Now for a brief look at the three traditional divisions in Jaffna:

Valikamam

It is in this area that a marked change of military behaviour had taken place following the killing of Brigadier Hamangoda on 4th July. His successor as Town Commandant, Brigadier Gamini Jayasundara, is comparatively cut off from the people. But if the top-brass had not known

earlier, they have been told enough by the public to know what is really going on.

Apart from the missing persons since mid-July, there was a wave of hidden attacks on civilians from 28th July when the full extent of the military disaster at Mullaitivu (about a thousand soldiers in the fallen camp unaccounted for) became public knowledge. A number of persons were detained, particularly at checkpoints, taken into camps blindfolded, and badly assaulted. Those who were released after a few days testified to several others similarly detained, whom they did not see because of being blindfolded, but had spoken to. Kaladdy camp, a key entry-point into Jaffna town and commanded by a major, was one of the places where this happened. Other points about the area have been discussed earlier.

Thenmaratchy

There has been no marked change of policy. People have constantly experienced terror and indiscipline in the rural areas. Being the most readily accessible from the mainland, there have been at least two major attacks by LTTE in each of which about a dozen soldiers were killed. Our cases suggest that from late July there has been a greater licence for criminal behaviour among soldiers, with no tangible attempt by the top-brass to check this.

Every local army camp has a householders list with details about inmates. Visitors have to register. In the absence of monitoring structures and hence accountability, and in the light of experience, people fear that these lists frequently serve a predatory purpose, adding to their insecurity (see cases above under Rape...). Abductions by the Army at junctions (as opposed to arrest that has a legal procedure) has been on the increase. Nunavil is among those noted for such.

Vadamaratchy

The situation in this area that comes under the 28th Brigade based at Pt. Pedro commanded by Colonel Larry Wijeratne deserves to be looked at more closely because it has a commendable side to it as well as some disturbing trends. Its boundary extends northwards from Vallai, south of which is the 29th Brigade based at Atchuvvely.

The first troops to enter Pt. Pedro in May were of the 53rd Brigade under Brigadier Fernando. There were only about 150 LTTE cadre around who left without offering resistance. Relations with civilians have been cordial from the start. At the beginning there was no food and the Army supplied cooked food to the civilians for several days. As in Thenmaratchy the Army had earned popularity by breaking open stores where the LTTE had sequestered rations meant for the people and allowed the people to help themselves.

Unlike in Thenmaratchy, Colonel

Wijeratne has taken far greater pains to maintain discipline among his troops. The events of July caused no break in this discipline. We have received no reports of regular torture and beating such as are reported in the other regions. The Colonel's main thrust has been towards winning over the lower stratum of society by making himself readily available to the ordinary people and taking initiatives such as to revive the economic life of fisherfolk. In instances where misbehaviour by soldiers among some of the poorest folk was brought to his notice, he has been known to apologise to them personally and to reassure them. The culprits are also in some cases said to have been punished. Checks have also been instituted to curb the purchase of liquor from the public by soldiers.

On one occasion a soldier, assaulted a village headman in Vallvettithurai, the LTTE leaders village, from where about 90% of the population had fled to the Vanni. The Colonel called a meeting of headmen, apologised for the incident and also told them that any suspect arrested by the Army would be released on an assurance given by any one of them, provided they would take responsibility. At least up to a point there has been a coherent effort to uphold the dignity of ordinary civilians, who thus feel very little threat to their physical security and that their homes are fairly inviolate - they generally sleep in peace unlike in Thenmaratchy.

The Army also receives a good deal of information of LTTE movements and there are regular ambushes with accompanying mishaps. The following are a sample:

June 1996: Kallikai, Thunnalai:

On receipt of information of an LTTE presence on the uncleared side of the eastern wall, soldiers went to a home and asked the people to continue with their domestic chores as they normally do and waited in ambush. The LTTE made an appearance and 3 of them were shot dead, including the son of Balasingham - Teacher of Puloly who was once a brilliant A-Level student.

Another group of the LTTE who were two doors away took to their heels and escaped.

Early July: Navindil: Going on a tip-off the Army caught 3 members of the LTTE who were hiding in a house and made them squat down. One made an escape and the soldiers let him go. He was shot dead by a second group surrounding the area. The other two were also shot dead and their corpses were carried away in the sarongs they were wearing.

5th August: Kovil-Santhai, Nelliady - Kodikamam Road: The Army went on a tip-off and waited in ambush near a house with LTTE cadre. An old man who was squatting between the hostile parties saw the soldiers and went on squatting. After a length of time, unable to bear it much longer, the old man got up to move away

Seeing movement one of the ambush party fired killing the old man. The LTTE cadre escaped.

Now we come to the disturbing aspect of the policy in Vadammaratchy. In the early stages, such as in the first incident, the bodies of dead LTTE cadre were brought to the Pt Pedro hospital mortuary. The second incident is a case of current practice. According to local reports there is now no taking of prisoners even when it is possible. Bodies of LTTE cadre killed are disposed of without the due legal process. In the case of the old man killed in the third incident we understand that a inquest was held.

The summary killing of LTTE captives and the disposal of bodies is a worrying development that smacks of the general air of impunity characteristic of Jaffna. It makes civilians more insecure during routine military operations and could under adverse conditions degenerate into the kind of thing, so common in the past, that the Government had promised to eradicate.

Some Deeper Issues

Since our inception just over eight years ago, there are two things that we have been stressing as being of the foremost importance in bringing an end to the cycle of terror. The first is that the State should forego some of the illusory pomp and be accountable to the people. The second is that the State should project a higher sense of character in admitting mistakes and shortcomings, and be open to public feelings and demands towards enacting corrective measures. Although there have been decisive improvements under the new government, they still fall short of what it takes to restore peace. Some crucial issues refuse to go away.

It is now clear that hundreds of thousands of people in the Vanni who must have lost count of the times they have been displaced, both by military operations and the exigencies of Tiger politics, could hardly see the Government as caring for them. Many are today camped in open fields in Mankulam without a roof over their head in the wake of the Army's push towards Killinochchi. According to the first sketchy reports coming through civilian sources, Air Force planes have been bombing this area now teeming with civilians. In one part of Mankulam on the main road where a large number of civilians had gathered, bombs were dropped by Kfir bombers killing about six civilians. The civilians believe that this was purely meant to kill them as there was no LTTE target within a mile. Another bomb at Mallavi in Mankulam missed the LTTE pass office and killed about two civilians.

To understand the pretensions underpinning these bombing raids, it is best to look back at a recent event, where, the dust having settled, we have much more information. The world has almost forgotten it, but the people have not. This was the bombing near the Church of St. Peter

and St. Paul at Navaly on 9th July 1995. We then quoted local sources who said that about 65 civilians were killed - also the rough figure given in the ICRC's statement. Jaffna hospital sources later put the figure at significantly over one hundred, based on their records. The President expressed her sympathy, appealed for authentic information and called for an inquiry. Her last public word on the matter at a press conference in early August 1995 was to play on the fact that contrary to early reports the church building was hardly touched (although the fact that a large number of people in the church premises were killed was never contested), and that she was awaiting further information. The Government is now in control of Jaffna, even if Navaly is in the uncleared area, but there has been no further word on the inquiry. The defence establishment confused the issue with speculation given wide press publicity about an LTTE ammunition dump setting off 'sympathetic explosions'. Even the civilians long wondered if there had been an LTTE convoy or even a single LTTE vehicle in the area. Now, even though the Army has access to the area, they are yet to report on the ammunition dump story.

The picture is much clearer now. There were a number of vehicles in the area. These nearly all contained civilians fleeing the military advance. Navaly was then teeming with civilian refugees and volunteer helpers. As those familiar with the situation put it, 'Wherever you dropped a bomb in the area, you were bound to get a few dozen civilians'. The area was four miles from the nearest Army position and there was no marked LTTE activity there.

We have from eye witness accounts found that a single Puccaro bomber came from the north-west, from the direction of Karainagar, at full speed, went straight for Navaly, dropped six bombs, climbed, turned and went back almost in the same direction from whence it had come. At the time the incident took place refugees had been pouring into Navaly for nearly 7 hours, people leaving their homes as intense shelling from the east came nearer. The following is the testimony of a girl among one group that left Chankanai at 2.00 PM, travelled west towards Vaddukoddai and turned south towards Navaly at Sangarathai junction. They were approaching Navaly about 4.30 PM when the incident took place:

"We were part of a huge stream of civilians on the road with fields on either side. The pilot could so clearly see us and considering that the Government knew why we were fleeing, we never expected him to bomb. When he did, we were so much taken over by sudden fear that, in trying to scatter, we tripped over each other and fell on the ground."

Several accounts suggest that there was then just about one LTTE vehicle near Navaly junction under three huge trees

that remained untouched by the bombing, whence the vehicle could hardly have been seen.

It was a quick job and there is no way the pilot could have spotted or distinguished an LTTE vehicle or convoy. There was at that time no LTTE preparation anywhere to resist the Army advance. LTTE vehicles were of course busy in many places away from the advance, taking their possessions away. The one thing the Military could have spotted from the air or have heard from the International NGOs, if not from the Government's own Agent, all of whom had radio links, was that refugees were teeming into Navaly. Civilians who know the facts had come to the most obvious conclusion, and find it extremely difficult to reconcile themselves to the Government. The President too lost much of the trust that she had earlier earned.

The alternative explanation is that the Air Force had issued an order to bomb without any checks, acting on deliberate misinformation. But this raises so many questions without credible answers, apart from the notorious inaccuracy of such raids.

Four days later the LTTE shot down a Puccaro bomber. Almost every civilian, even those waiting impatiently to see the backs of the LTTE and hoping that the Army would come in quickly, was happy about the shooting down of the Puccaro. If one extends this understandable response taking into account the whole picture, one gets a clear view of Tamil ambivalence - the ambivalence about terrorist attacks in the South, about the Government, the Armed Forces, Mullaitivu, and ultimately their own people, the LTTE and the terrible phenomenon of child soldiers. We have always maintained, that though explicable, it is a narrow, unhealthy and suicidal ambivalence of a depoliticised people. The ambivalence is moreover based on immediate concerns of the particular group in a highly divided society with contradictory aspirations.

Correspondingly, there is also in the South ambivalence about the Tamils among them, about the bombing and shelling of Tamil civilians in the North, the use of state-terror and also about a suitable political solution. These with globalisation and the divergent aims of insecure expatriate groups thrown about in various countries, comprise a vicious cycle that needs to be broken.

This is why we have laid stress on the necessity for the state to project a higher calibre of character. We consider a just political solution along with disciplined and accountable Armed Forces to be of paramount importance in order that it will give hope for the people to start afresh a new life with dignity, leaving behind the tragedies of the last few decades. It would further give them space to resist in a reasoned voice, the recruitment of children, which is the greatest evil confronting Tamil society.

We must keep in mind that what obtains in Jaffna has been a closed society for many years with those coming into adulthood having grown up in conflict and uncertainty. Its access to the media remains restricted with only Government controlled newspapers being distributed in very small numbers. One local paper (Uthayan) resumed publication in mid-July. For years now the people have had no media that they could trust. By weeding out independent spirits, the LTTE deliberately paralysed this society to facilitate its own totalitarian control. Elimination and emigration have drained the society of much of its trained talent.

Given the underlying contest for power and the LTTE's determination to use all means to claw back what it has lost, those left in a position to take any initiative to fill the political vacuum or do anything for the common good are terrified even to try to do so. The accepted norm is for NGOs, institutions and individuals to make representations to secure their narrow interests while being indifferent about the rest - a legacy of totalitarian culture. Events of the last decade have also left a society that is deeply traumatised. Its once vibrant system of education is now in shambles.

It is thus an apathetic society with hardly any visible movement and is barely capable of the immense political effort needed to democratise its life and administration. In the resulting frustration, the old totalitarian order of the LTTE, as highly deprived as it was, may appear attractive to many.

Those of us who wish this society well and want the Tamil community to survive as a cultural and ethnic entity, are therefore faced with the painful task of rebuilding a democratic infrastructure amidst the present ruin. A new leadership will have to be helped to emerge by promoting collective action beginning at the village level. Unless the people can become interested in their own future and are given the power and the necessary resources to do some thing about it, there is little hope for the Tamil community here.

Conclusion:

After the initial euphoria of going back to their home after their ordeal of several months, the people have now to come to terms with their reality, which can be summed up as follows:

- A. Immediate concerns to start normal life
 1. Loss of properties and damaged houses.
 2. Ruined economy and agriculture.
 3. Limited supply of food, other materials and inadequate health facilities.
 4. Overall inertia of the Government machinery.
 5. Restricted travel to the South.
- B. Security concerns and uncertainties
 1. Unstable situation and general insecurity.
 2. LTTE's presence and the prospect

of LTTE's provocations leading to Army retaliation, in turn leading to a stifling of normal life.

3. Routine checking.
 - C. Political and social reality.
 1. A total political vacuum.
 2. Hardly any effective structures left to assert community interests.
 3. No positive developments in the political scene regarding the proposed political solution.
 4. The terror syndrome
 - D. Psychological aspects.
 1. The trauma and disorientation due to continuous war conditions and a regimented life.
 2. The very deep-rooted effects on children with nothing at present to give meaningful hope.
 3. Need for structures which can deal with problems related to trauma and promote peace activity: Humanising the social sphere is an essential task in peace making.
 4. Rejuvenating the educational system with a clear focus on the essential needs of the society for giving hope to the younger generation.
- These manifold considerations thus need to be taken into account by those

formulating programmes for revival. Future developments will depend on a healthier change, a change that can take place only if we take steps to address these issues with a clear vision.

With a view to promoting democratic and human rights, we strongly feel that the following issues should be addressed immediately:

**** Hold a preliminary inquiry into the bombings at Navalay and Nagarkovil (July & September respectively in 1995) and pay compensation to the victims.**

**** Arrest the deteriorating situation by taking immediate steps to investigate concerns in this report about the possible induction of the white van abduction team, torture and disposal of the bodies without proper post-mortem etc.**

**** Remove censorship.**

**** Provide more access to journalists.**

**** Allow the Human Rights Task Force (HRTF) to become active in Jaffna with personnel who have the ability to make it functional in a meaningful way.**

**** Allow international NGOs and Human-Rights organisations to visit Jaffna with a view to fulfilling their obligations.**

The Debate on the Status of Tamil

by S.Sivasegaram

I write in response to the rejoinder of G. Ramesh (TT 15.10.96). I would stick to the issues and avoid personal remarks, which can only drag the Tamil Times to the low levels of debate in some little magazines of Tamilnaadu, the down-side of the little magazine that I did not mention.

1. No language is designed to be diglossic. Any language is subject to diglossia in the course of its development, and heteroglossia occurs partly in the process of dealing with the entry of new concepts and object names from foreign sources and partly because of an elitist fondness to use foreign words.

Despite the creative potential of classical Tamil, however one may choose to define it, the language has changed continuously and considerably since its Sangam period, and even the post-Sangam period remains remote to many of us. As much as modern writers in English would not use the language of Shakespeare, writers in

modern Tamil opt for the language as it is today. This is not a rejection of the abundant wealth of tradition but only a call for wisdom in drawing on it. Writers benefit from it in different ways and what matters is the extent to which the language is enriched in the process, and there can be no prescriptions.

2. Latin was the language not only of Christian theology but also of the sciences as recently as a few centuries ago, and has also been used in creative writing. Nevertheless, it was just as fossilized as Sanskrit and ancient Greek. I have not read Kaalidhaasa's works at source, but I understand that he used Sanskrit for narration and to present the speech of the masters and the scholars and used the living languages to present the speech of the ordinary people. That should tell us something. More recently than Kaalidhaasa. Muththuswaami Diekshithar, a native speaker of Tamil, chose to compose in Sanskrit, and even today there are people who compose

their *kierthanams* in Sanskrit. But it remains a dead language, despite attempts by C. Raajagopalaachchaari and others once to revive it by making it the official language of India. A fossilized language that has, however, been successfully revived is Hebrew. Sanskrit, the successor to the relatively primitive language of the Vedic literature, itself owes much of its word-stock not only to the *Dhraavida* languages but also to the *Mundaa* family of languages. Once a language becomes fossilized, contributions to the word-stock by creative writers alone cannot bring it back to life. How and at what stage Sanskrit ceased to be a language for social intercourse is another question which relates to its fossilization.

Diglossia is a sign of life and does not arrive by intent but as part of language development. End of diglossia almost always implies stagnation and eventual fossilization. Common speech, denounced by traditionalists as the speech of the lowly, is what has kept Tamil alive and vibrant. I think that the modern creative writer in Tamil is correct to emphasize it while this is no cause to disregard tradition.

3. I have no illusions about the role of standardization of language and have not provided prescriptions either. In today's context it involves coming to terms with the reality of various dialects as well as new lexical and grammatical structures that have entered the language, accommodation of new sounds and sound distributions that have been accepted in speech, and many more things. A new set of norms are necessary to help the coherent development of the written language in a way that it benefits from the positive aspects of what has been dismissed as vulgar and the language of the lowly. One source of the kind of mass Tamil that is strangling linguistic and literary creativity is at the heart of Chennai. It is precisely because of this kind of degeneration, that the need for standardization of the language on the basis of the strengths of the modern language in all its forms becomes important.

4. Linguists from the Indian sub-continent have studied the question of 'disinherited Englishes' and made a case for considering the Englishes of the various regions as languages or branches of English in their own right. A sizable section of the sub-continent population uses English to an

extent that it is almost, if not actually, their first language and, to them, that English is close to their heart. In their case, one finds evidence of diglossia, sometimes resulting from the continuing conflict between the desire to adhere to the norms of the 'standard' language and the reality of everyday usage. The user of English as a second language, like scholars of Sanskrit, Latin or ancient Greek, tends to adhere to one form, namely what the user understands as the standard language. The role of English has become more important with the globalisation of capital. The 'English for survival' is not to be confused with the adapted Englishes, and its role in Asian societies is more formidable than that of any other non-native language at any time.

5. Tamilnaadu elected Jayalalitha not because the people thought that she knew English and therefore everything. The 'myths' came into being after she came to power. The fact of the matter is that the politics of Tamilnadu stinks, and the corruption in that state started long before her. If ministers and public servants were willing to fall flat at her feet to further their careers, that was not because she was a convent drop-out.

6. Although the article had a pessimistic tone which I could not fail to notice, I did not refer to anything that the writer may be suffering from, including 'misplaced pessimism'. It will help healthy discussion if those concerned resist the temptation to read non-existent meanings into plain and simple statements.

7. What I wrote about the type-writer keyboard was that it was based on the one for Roman characters. I repeat that its value is restricted to those who are familiar with typing in English, irrespectively of the source of the idea. I also stated that I value the contribution of the author of that keyboard, and will not waste any effort to explain how Ramesh chooses to distort my comments.

I am not a computer expert, but I am aware of ways in which bit maps are created for designing characters. What is important is that, it is far more practical for a typist copying a document in Tamil to use a keyboard with Tamil characters and diacritical devices.

8. Nothing that happens in Tamilnaadu, including herbal petrol, shocks me. I am rarely fascinated by innovations and always

valued the modest contributions that help us understand our society and help us go forward. I also see no harm in a creative writer being concerned with the public sphere or following great poets like Bhaarathi or Bhaariththaasan and adoring that brilliant writer Puthumaippiththan. I have made clear my views about commercial writing in Tamil in my earlier communication and have little to add to it.

9. I thank Ramesh for the offer to allow me space in the columns of *viththiyaasam*, but I am already unable to cope with my commitments to the handful of magazines to which I write regularly. South Asian Books, Chennai published under the title *thamilum ayalum* a collection of articles written by me between 1982 and 1993 on the question of the status of Tamil and I am awaiting responses before I write more on the subject. In the mean time, I would recommend the use of the magazines *kaalachchuvadu* and *kanatyaali* which reach a wider readership to discuss these matters more fruitfully.

Late Night News

Roger McGough

*Sorry, there's nothing new to say
It's all been said before
The slaughter of the innocents
The futility of war.*

*The empty streets, the rifle shots
The corpses not yet cold
The interviews with colonels
Who say as they are told.*

*The refugees, the loaded carts
The feeble and the lame
Locations change from week to week
But the misery's the same.*

*A million miles of footage
Countless reels of tape
Twentieth century history:
Murder, torture, rape.*

*When we hear the starting gun
We dispatch the nearest crew
Today it's Sarajevo
Tomorrow? A town near you.*

*So if you wake up screaming
From dreams you did not choose
Remember that you saw it first
Here on late-night news.*

(From "The Nation's Favourite Poems",
BBC 1

Book Review

T Sabaratnam has written really the history of the Federal Party, and of the later Tamil United Liberation Front, than a mere story of the political career of Amirthalingam. Sabaratnam used the advantage of a diligent and inquiring journalist to gain a clear profound understanding of personalities and events of the political scene in post-independent Sri Lanka.

Amirthalingam, when young, entered politics and soon emerged as a leader to reckon with. Although some may look upon Amirthalingam as the stormy petrel of politics. Sabaratnam by sober and detached analysis of utterances and events justifies that a more appropriate appellation for Amirthalingam could be a "moderate". Given today's endemic mayhem, murder and violence. Sabaratnam could be right in referring so to a doughty fighter who, nevertheless, lived dedicated to democratic ways.

This study which all who are concerned with the future of Sri Lanka would do well to read demonstrates that Sabaratnam has drawn copiously on his immense personal knowledge and made judicious discriminating use of material to which he alone had access. The book itself unravels not only the story of Amirthalingam but also the important vicissitudes of the Sinhala-Tamil conflict, the "national question".

In Amirthalingam, Sabaratnam justifiably with convincing evidence discerns a Tamil moderate, and the context of the late concerns Sri Lanka's main national political parties' capitulation to "Sinhala chauvinism" at the expense of Tamil interests. He is objective in detailing "interparty rivalry", "short sightedness" which crippled the Tamil moderate but also caused immeasurable misery that Sri Lanka is still experiencing.

Sabaratnam turns out to be an optimist with faith in the future; an exceptional brave man! He notes that the Sinhala leadership is realising the mistakes that they made in using the Tamil problem only for gaining mere political mileage. He believes that the present day more enlightened leadership has demonstrated remarkable courage in approaching the Tamil problem in a more understanding

AMIRTHALINGAM - A MILITANT, A MODERATE OR AN ENIGMA

The Murder of a Moderate, Political Biography of Appapillai Amirthalingam by T Sabaratnam, August 1996, pp. 426, Nivetha Publishers, 21/1 P T De Silva Avenue, Dehiwela, Sri Lanka

by Professor Bertram Bastiampillai

manner. Yet he ends sounding a note of caution; he warns the reader that the leaders are still under pressure. Quite true as attitudes remain unchanged.

The first chapter is a dramatic fast moving version of the tragic demise of the TULF leaders. Amirthalingam and Yogeswaran. Sabaratnam stresses the principal difference that distinguishes the TULF from the militants. While referring to the heroism of the LTTE, Amirthalingam nevertheless emphasised that he preferred they adhered to accepted democratic traditions instead; the voice of moderation as the author would assess.

Thereafter, Sabaratnam traverses developments related to an issue which endures fundamental to the differences between the Sinhala and Tamil people. When the transfer of power began there was no way of successfully bringing about an understanding between the Sinhala and Tamil over power-sharing. This issue remains to this day unsolved and has accounted for so much tragedy. The majority strong enough to compromise does not.

The formation of the Federal Party its objectives such as the pursuit of the rights of Tamil speaking individuals; citizenship rights to all; removal of social inequalities and injustices particularly of untouchability; realisation of a socialist economy with equality of opportunity in education and employment; and promotion of goodwill and friendship with the Sinhala in the interest of Federal unity and progress are forcefully delineated with commendable incisive skill.

Another issue which Sabaratnam deals with i.e. "State Aided Colonisation" proves that too posed an obstacle to the settlement of the sense of grievance nurtured by Tamil speaking peoples. Amirthalingam never objected to

"voluntary settlement" but only to "state organised colonisation" "intended to alter the population pattern of the traditional Tamil areas". Land has been even according to colonial governor Hugh Clifford a matter of enormous importance to all communities who were "very sensitive" and "emotional" about it. A succinct paragraph on the hartal which proved to a decisive event in recent history because it led to the resignation of Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake ends Chapter 3.

Then followed outbursts of violence with the eruption of the language issue following the elevation of Sinhala as the official language. The author outlines the lobbying that forced the enactment of this divisive legislation. The chapter is replete with information of a valuable nature on the politics of language.

Amirthalingam's readiness to compromise so as to bring about a solution to the critical problem is amply demonstrated. He tells S W R D Bandaranaike that though we are demanding federalism we are ready to settle for much less or some sort of autonomy.

It also becomes evident from Sabaratnam that Chelvanayakam, leader of the Federal Party, was now beginning to eclipse himself and to hand over the reins. He exclaimed that Amirthalingam is the "voice of the youth" and remarked to Bandaranaike "you must try to satisfy the youth".

Chelvanayakam's prophetic insight was manifest when he remarked to Bandaranaike that, "today you oppose regionalism. If you fail to concede it, one day you will have to fight separation". This was portentous, and today we are painfully aware of it.

The Chapter on "The Language Issue" is particularly loaded with interesting informative material. At times the chapter recounts events

which, if not for the tragedy, can be read with a smile. The forging of the Bandaranaike Chelvanayakam pact, and its sad end is recounted in a graphic and fuller manner. Remarkably the writer recapitulates the worsening of ethnic relations in Sri Lanka, sad reading! It is also made clear that a chance to settle differences in a fair manner was lamentably lost and one lives to rue the day.

Further contentions between Sinhala and Tamil and the disappointment of the Tamils with the post-independent governments became starkly obvious when the Sinhala Act was fully implemented from 1961. The Federal Party fell back on the option of taking to protest movements through hartals. When there was a suggestion that the Tamils should think in terms of separation, again Amirthalingam was firm that although the Sinhala people had rebuffed their call for federalism they should continue to try their best to convince and convert them to the federal concept before they decided to break away; the moderates voice once more according to the author's evaluation.

So both Chelvanayakam and his followers now embarked upon resistance movements against what they considered blatant injustice. They engaged in a struggle "in full force and which would be 100 per cent non-violent". Similar sentiments were echoed by party members from the East who spoke of the "Chelvanayakam path" as the "Gandhian path", and of the Federal party's path as the Chelvanayakam path. Passive resistance seemed to have a romantic spell on the Federal party indeed.

Sabaratham carefully and truthfully describes this resistance movement and endeavours of the Federal Party and leaders like Amirthalingam to convince the government and the Sinhala people that a wrong has been done to Tamils. Amirthalingam once asserted that the Tamils were "studying Sinhala voluntarily", and only opposed it being "forced down our throats". This message was in vain as it went unheeded.

The repressive reaction of the government to the non-violent resistance movements, and Satiyagrahas in 1961 are very faithfully recounted. The setting up of Post Offices known as the Tamil Arasu Postal Service and other measures taken to illustrate their disillusion with the Government and its attitude to the Tamil people are lu-

cidly related. But once more the efforts proved futile, none could see or wished to.

The protest continued in 1962. Generally the pre-occupation of the Federal party now was on Education and Employment of the Tamils which received focus at the Eighth National Convention of the Federal Party on 31 August 1962 in Mannar.

In regard to Education the Federal Party alleged that there was a total denial of equal opportunity of education and employment to Tamil speaking people and religious minorities by blatant and unscrupulous discrimination. The closure of a number of Tamil medium schools and Tamil streams provided evidence. Furthermore, proposals of the National Commission of Education regarding grants of Scholarship and the medium of instruction in estate schools exacerbated the sense of discrimination.

Throughout Sabaratham proceeds to detail scrupulously the planning and execution of the diverse measures of protest headed by the Federal Party. Nevertheless you also learn that the party in spite of having suffered at the hands of the Lake House stood against the proposal to take over the press. Here the author sees a principled democratic stand despite adversity; a value based judgement of the moderate and the prudent.

This chapter is also of special interest because it details an informative account about the Federal party arriving at an agreement with, the United National Party. District Council were discussed and the party was encouraged by Dudley Senanayake's Address to the Ninth National Convention of the Federal Party at Kalmunai where he asserted that as long as he was the Prime Minister he would assure the Tamils that "the Tamil language and heritage would never suffer". Furthermore he elaborated that in a multi-racial country the preservation of the culture and language of the different groups was essential to democracy if all were to enjoy freedom and that racial harmony must be permanent.

But the honeymoon with the UNP did not last. By 1967 differences began to surface with the adoption of measures, mostly unpalatable to the Federal Party. Its relationship with the UNP came under strain. By 1968 Chelvanayakam saw that Dudley Senanayake too was letting down the

Tamils. Yet even then Sabaratham indicates that at the Eleventh National Convention of the Federal Party a resolution on a separate state for the Tamils was planned by the youth, but the Federal High Command however persuaded them against it. But a resolution to quit the National Government was adopted. Towards the end of the Chapter one understands that the Tamil youth and the law and forces for the first time came into direct conflict. 1969 was the last year of the entente of the Federal Party and the Government; like an arrow spent an opportunity went by wasted. The Government had no time for the problem until the problem festered further.

Thereafter Sabaratham proceeds to deal with the Constitution that was to be enacted by a new government within the Constituent Assembly in 1970, and the Federal Party's reactions.

The Federal Party welcomed the Constituent Assembly. Meanwhile, elsewhere however, Tamil youths tried unsuccessfully to assassinate the Junior Minister of Cultural Affairs. This was a first act of violence and a sign of things to come. The youth had grown restive and reliant on their initiatives.

The Federal Party presented their draft constitution along with a memorandum to the Constituent Assembly. The gist of it was a demand for "autonomy for their territories under a Federal Union". Sabaratham briefly but instructively provides an insight into the Federal party's draft Constitution. But the party met with no success again. Amendments on the nature of the constitution, citizenship rights, and other fundamental rights were rejected according to Chelvanayakam. He was left forlorn and empty handed and no message of hope to the youth.

They then vacated the Constituent Assembly except for C X Martyn who alleged that the Federal Party leadership was being pressured by Militant Youth. Martyn was playing his last or lost innings! Youth leaders considered the decision of the Federal Party to quit the Assembly their victory.

And in 1972 Amirthalingam declared that the Federal Party should "give up its stand of federalism and demand a separate state like Bangladesh". The birth of Bangladesh had an impact on the Tamil youth and Amirthalingam felt heady enough to speak of "a clear cut struggle for a totally separate state" with "foreign assistance" Amirthalingam the orator

would often submerge Amirthalingam the real moderate and resourceful strategist as one understands.

Sabaratanam correctly opines that the government failed to realise the importance of Amirthalingam's statement. He "was voicing the growing militant thinking of the Tamil youth". To the government Amirthalingam was raving in the wilderness and not appealing to their understanding. This was a signal error in judgement.

Sabaratanam thereafter provides an absorbing account of the radical changes that pressured the Federal Party. The sympathy in Tamil Nadu, formation of the Tamil United Front are graphically described. The author notes that the youth grew disenchanted with the Federal Party: Its members by attending parliament lent legitimacy to the 1972 Constitution. There were two voices now, the voice of the youth and that of the Federal Party Parliamentarians but both voices fell on deaf ears. To appease the youth, Chelvanayakam resigned his seat. But the by-election was postponed for long which further strengthened the youth resolve to revolt: Parliamentary democracy in the island forfeited their confidence in it.

Chapter 8 treats the volatile topic of "Standardisation". One learns from Sabaratanam's exciting account how strong fuel was added to the raging fire that had already been lit among Tamil youth. The author in a fair narrative sharply and firmly points out that "standardisation added yet another grievance". Students of "two ethnic groups had two different qualifying marks" to enter Universities. This badly hurt the Tamil youth. The Tamil Student Movement was formed. The youth were disappointed with the impotence of Tamil Parliamentarians to resist discriminatory measures. This Student Movement later metamorphosed into the restless Tamil Youth Movement.

Now violence erupted more frequently from 4 June 1972. At the Annual Convention of the Federal Party on 9 September 1973 at Mallakam, Amirthalingam proposed that "federalism" be replaced by "separation" as the objective. The means to it was to be non-violence. Non-violent revolution was the only way for an unarmed people. Caught between the

devil and the deep sea of an insensitive government and impatient youth. Amirthalingam had to concede some "to retain more".

The rest of Sabaratanam's account dwells on the escalation of violence and the pressures it exerted on the Federal Party's leadership. And it is at this time the UNP accepted that Tamils confronted several problems and when it came to power it would remedy grievances regarding education, colonisation, use of Tamil and employment. Meanwhile on the other hand, the Vaddukoddai resolution too was adopted by 1976 favouring a free, sovereign and secular state of a Tamil Eelam. The Tamil United Front changed into the Tamil United Liberation Front.

The Chapter on "Safety and Security" demonstrates how unrecognisably the situation had altered, violence and counter violence occurred frequently. From this period onwards confrontation and collision grew common. The time for the "moderates" had passed and "militants" had come in, the space for moderates became lesser and lesser. Sabaratanam traces these regrettable and sad developments in admirable detail and with remarkable dexterity. He tells this story via his records of his encounters and experiences and often distances himself as a good writer who ventures to present a record rather than advocate a cause.

Even in April 1978 the TULF nevertheless was keen peacefully to settle the Tamil problem and agreed to serve in all the Standing Committees of Parliament even though the UNP government had not still shown any signal of evolving a settlement to a protracted and vexed issue that had bloodied the relations between the Sinhala and Tamil people for so long.

However, soon afterward, violence overwhelmed the island and the pressure of the militants on the TULF aggravated as the militants struck more often than ever before. The TULF found itself in an unenviable position as one discovers from Sabaratanam. Even ministers alleged that the TULF was a part of the terrorist movement. The TULF had become suspect and Amirthalingam spoke at Madurai in March 1979 of achieving "a separate, sovereign and independent state", but through "peaceful means". The parting of the ways between the TULF and the UNP had become unavoidable and close.

Strict laws were enacted to curb the militants such as the prevention of Terrorism Act. The TULF in principle was opposed to them although it did not attend Parliament. Tamil Youth Leagues were now engaged in a "youth revolt" and condemned TULF inaction. The youth were losing confidence in the TULF, while Amirthalingam was still singing the same refrain but in the void: "the method of democracy is the ballot and not the bullet". None listened.

"The Political Murder" (Chapter 10) continues to be a so carefully crafted account of the deterioration of relations between the TULF and the UNP. The abominable riots of July 1983 had driven a wedge between the Sinhala and Tamil, and as Sabaratanam recounts the riots too were blamed on Amirthalingam, and the TULF. Parties that advocated the division of the country were exiled; an opportunity for India to gain a role in the island's internal affairs as ACS Hameed correctly foresaw. There is much more that is new that Sabaratanam has so deftly woven into the gripping account of contemporary problems.

Sabaratanam tells us all. He recapitulates some of the encomiums posthumously bequeathed on Amirthalingam and sums up with the conclusion that Amirthalingam's death "was not the end" but "the beginning" in achieving his federal goal.

This book cannot be laid aside as you begin reading it. Sabaratanam writes "an easy on the eye" style, and packs into his study a formidable amount of hitherto unknown or little known matters. It is a book that captivates your attention like well told detective fiction, but it also proves the trite but true saying that "fact is stranger than fiction".

Sabaratanam is punctilious about chronology and he has built up a fascinating account from well kept, methodically put together notes. He excels as a story teller and clearly vindicates Amirthalingam of the label "militant". To the end he was a democrat and looked to non-violent protest as a moderate to attain the objective of power sharing, as Sabaratanam convinces the reader. However, Sabaratanam also prompts the reader with the feeling that Amirthalingam could be ambivalent - an enigma. Unfortunately he died before one could better understand him. ●

Readers Forum

Making of a Constitution

The article by Rajan Hoole (TT October 96) made me wonder about some things concerning constitutional reality. It was the great Indian democrat Nehru who exercised his constitutional powers to dismiss a lawfully elected government of the left in Kerala in the 50's. His daughter outdid him in that field and ruled with an iron fist under a state of emergency for most of one elected term to be defeated at the polls in 1977 and re-elected soon after to commit the ultimate sacrilege against the Sikhs. His grandson avenged her murder by presiding over the killing of innocent Sikhs, and how can we ever forget his efforts at peace keeping. In what way has the constitution helped overcome caste oppression, suppression of women's rights, violation of the rights of religious minorities and the abuse of children? The Ashoka chakra cannot blind us to the reality of brutal suppression of popular uprisings, from Thelina gaanaa in the early 50's to Kashmir today. The constitution, as Hoole correctly observes, is not

there to guarantee a perfect society for the people, but it does its best to preserve the status quo for those in power. I do not mean the politicians, but those in real power.

What Hoole has to say about American media and democracy amazes me. The Whitewater scandal of the Clintons passed unnoticed by the watchful media until the lady tried to make trouble for the medical insurance sharks. The right to free expression exists for the mass media, which also happens to be controlled by the establishment which decides on the things that the people have the right to know. How else did the U.S. government get away with its crimes against Vietnam for so long and more recently Nicaragua and many other countries of the Third World? A piece of writing that I can recommend is 'Necessary Illusions' by Noam Chomsky, an American scholar describing the role of the media in the U.S. He also explains in his 'Class Warfare' how the main goal of the media is to destroy every form of organization and association that might lead to democracy.

As for the problems in Sri Lanka, the central issue is self-determination for the nationalities. Tamil nationalism was an inevitable by-product of Sinhala chauvinism and cannot be wished away. If the government does not have the moral courage to confront Sinhala chauvinism, it will have no choice but to seek a military solution. As for 'human rights, the rule of law, equality, economic and social programs aimed at the under-

privileged and the fight against corruption', they have not been there for us to say 'good-bye'. All these have been deliberately taken away from the country by the faceless masters who determine government policy from afar.

S. Sivasegaram

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Poet Kannadasan's Stature

The future of Tamil language is a vital topic of interest to me. I contributed an essay on this theme to the Tamil Times, eight years ago in the May 1988 issue. I have been following the debate between Dr S Sivasegaram and G Ramesh and contribute my two cents worth on this theme.

As it appears, I believe that both learned contributors are engaged in intellectual nit-picking on who are the worthy successors of poet Subrahmanya Bharathi. But it is disappointing to note that with myopic disregard to the realities in terms of name, recognition, popularity, range of talent and quality of output, these two arbiters of Tamil culture have not even bothered to mention the one-and-only Kannadasan in their list of successors of Subrahmanya Bharathi. Undoubtedly, the second half of this century in Tamil literature was dominated by none other than poet Kannadasan. His output of two volumes of autobiography, novels, poems, lyrics, essays and commentaries on the relevance of Hinduism in three decades (1950-80) makes him as the foremost contributor to the Tamil literature. In the minds of millions of Tamils, Kannadasan remains the popular and worthy successor of Bharathi and not other innovators listed by a few dozens of intellectual arbiters belonging to the class of Dr Sivasegaram and G Ramesh.

Fifteen years have passed since Kannadasan's death in Chicago. If he had lived, he will be 70 in 1997. To bring out an English biography. I am compiling information on Kannadasan and I will be glad if other readers share their views on Kannadasan's contributions to the Tamil language.

Sachi Sri Kantha

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Japan.

(continued from page 8)

dition by an official committee that the clock be put back by one hour to the time that prevailed before May 26.

A member of this committee of experts told the press that most people were in favour of going back one hour mainly in view of transport problems. But the Cabinet had rejected this report and instead accepted a recommendation by officials who had painted a rosy picture about energy saving to the power and energy minister, he said.

On the contrary other quarters including space scientist Arthur C. Clarke hailed the decision to put Sri Lanka six hours ahead of GMT saying it would put the country move in line with the international time zone.

"I'm absolutely delighted. At

last local officials have come to this decision and now Sri Lanka can join the rest of the world." "Anyway it was a good compromise as people were of two different opinions with regard to time change. I think both the old time (5 1/2 ahead of GMT) and the advanced time 6 1/2 ahead of GMT were not keeping with the international time zones, and that the odd half hour difference led to so many complications, especially for those who have global connections," Dr. Clarke said.

But members of the experts committee feel the half hour time change might cause economic problems especially as it would put Sri Lanka somewhat out of line with India. "The New Delhi time is quoted for most things internationally and any change should have been made in consultation with India," one member said. ●

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Aunt seeks partner, upto about 37 years for nephew, divorced Hindu Tamil in permanent, professional employment in UK. No encumbrances. Send details and horoscope. M 900 c/o Tamil Times.

WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate the following couples on their recent wedding.

Dr. Janakan son of Mr. & Mrs. K.S. Nadarajah of 33 Frances Road, Colombo 6 and Pamathi daughter of Dr. & Mrs. V. Kanagarasa of 5187 Cameron Drive, Troy, Michigan 48098, USA on 25.10.96 at San Marino Club Hall, Troy, USA.

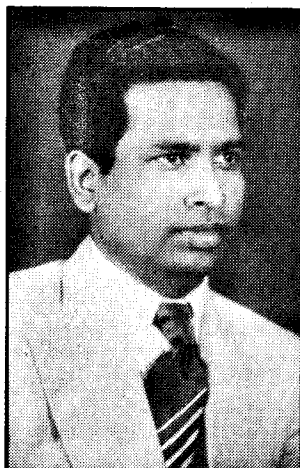
Rathakrishnan son of Mr. & Mrs. K. Palakidnar of 31/1 Inner Fair Line Road, Dehiwela, Sri Lanka and Murugananthy daughter of Mr. & Mrs. A. Sivatham of 'Malaya Cottage', Suthumalai South, Manipay on 25.10.96 at Saraswathy Hall, Bambalapitiya, Colombo 5.

Visakan son of Mr. & Mrs. N.

Maniccam of Chetty Street Lane, Nallur, Jaffna and Kamesh daughter of Mr. & Mrs. R.S. Thillainathermurthy of 'Yogapathy', 9/3 16th Lane, Colpetty, Colombo 3 on 26.10.96 at London Sri Murugan Temple Wedding Hall, Manor Park, London E12.

Rathakrishnan son of Mr. & Mrs. C. Vanniyasingham of 46 Fernando Road, Colombo 6 and Malarvili daughter of Mr. & Mrs. M. Yohesvaran of 34 Moor Road, Colombo 6 on 30.10.96 at Hilton Serendip Ballroom, Colombo 1.

OBITUARIES



Mr. K. Nakalingam of Colombo, retired Assistant Postmaster General, Chairman of Public Service Commission of N.E.P. (1989 - 1992), beloved husband of the late Saraswathy; dearest brother of Mr. Kandasamy (Colombo, formerly of Singapore), Mrs. Nallathamby (Colombo), Mrs. Shanmugam (Colombo), Mrs. Ganeshan (Colombo), Mrs. Ragunathan (Colchester) and Dr. Tharmaratnam (Singapore) passed away on 28th July 1996.

Wonderful Memories Woven in Gold
 These Are The Treasures We Tenderly Hold
 Too Good To Die, Too Precious To Lose
 It Was God's Will, We Could Not Choose
 Not For Himself But For Others He Lived

Not To Receive, But Only To Give
 Two Willing Hands, A Heart of Gold
 The Dearest Brother
 This World Would Ever Hold.



Mrs. Parupathipillai Chelliah, beloved wife of the late Mr. S. Chelliah and loving mother of Mrs. Kalavathy Sivakumaran passed away in Madras, India on 10th October 96 during a pilgrimage. Her mortal remains were cremated in Madras on the 11th October in the presence of her close relatives. She is sadly missed by her loving grandsons Nimalan, Ramanan, Shyaman; son-in-law K. Sivakumaran (New Malden); brother K. Alvapillai and wife Easwaradevi (Canada); nephew A. Ehalaivan and family (Canada); niece Yuhendra and husband Manmathan (Canada); sister-in-law Navamani Nadesar (Sri Lanka), Alageswary Aruliah (Australia), Maheswary Alalasundaram (Sri Lanka) and their children.

Her family wishes to thank all relatives and friends who sent messages of sympathy and assisted them in various ways. - 60 Blakes Lane, New Malden, Surrey KT3 6NX, Tel: 0181 949 2614.

IN MEMORIAM



In Everloving memory of **Miss Sivakamasunthari Thambyahpillai**, daughter of the late Dr. Thambyahpillai (Imperial College) and Mrs. Thambyahpillai who passed away on 10th November 1995.

The fire of life brightly burning
 In your eyes and through your smiles,

Your radiance touched so many,
 Yet blossoming youth was denied.

You passed away a year ago,
 It feels so strange to write it now,
 To those who feel, and loved and cherished,
 A precious gift, for so short a while.

Yet through our sadness we remember,
 Times together - forever gone.
 But fond memories must sustain us,
 In the darkest times ahead.

Deeply missed and loved always by her mother and sister.



In ever-loving memory of **Mrs. Chandra Ragupathy** on the first anniversary of her passing away on 26th November 1995.

Missing you every moment as this lonely year without you has been the hardest ever. Love, care and the strength you showed, I miss every day, but happy memories linger on and shall be for ever.

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by your darling husband **Ragupathy** - 262 Wicklemarsh Road, Blackheath, London SE3 8DW.



Richard Jeyarajasingam
 Born: 20.11.28

Called to Glory: 27.11.90

A golden gate stood open
 Six years ago today
 With farewells left unspoken
 You slowly slipped away.

The cup was bitter, the loss severe
To part with the one we love so dear
But God wanted a new star in Heaven
A beautiful light to shine
So out of this world of sorrows
He called His own, 'Oh dear son of mine'
The light that shines through death's deep rift
Eternal life is God's own gift.

Fondly remembered by
Ranee and Children.

**Dr. P.S. Alageswaran –
Fourth Death Anniversary**



Born: 4.7.28 Died: 10.11.92
A beautiful life full of kind deeds

A helping hand to those in need
Unselfish, loving and kind
Sweet memories that are left behind.

Much loved and missed by
Ratnes, Krishna, Shyamala,
Family, Friends and Relations.



In loving memory of **Mr. P.V. Nadarajah** on the eighth anniversary of his passing away on 16th November 1988.

Fondly remembered and sadly missed by his loving wife Thilagavathy; children Usha, Varathan, Nalini and Nanthini; sons-in-law Sivanathan, Rajkumar and Vathsayan; daughter-in-law Savithiri; grandchildren Bairavi, Luxmi, Uruthiran and Abhirami. – 11 Carina Place, Castle Hill, N.S.W. 2154, Australia.



In loving memory of **Mrs. Ratnambiga Sambasivam** on the first anniversary of her passing away on 12.11.1995 at Vaddukoddai East, Sri Lanka.

Sadly missed and lovingly remembered by husband Sambasivam, daughters Gaithiri, Sharmini and Subo of Sri Lanka; brothers Jogeessvaran (UK), Rajeswaran (Singapore), Gnanesvaran (Canada); sister Indradevi (UK), relations and friends. – 6 Newby Drive, Ipswich IP5 5UY.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

December 3 Feast of St. Francis Xavier.

Dec. 6 Krishna Ekathasi.

Dec. 8 Pirathosam.

Dec. 9 Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Virgin Mary.

Dec. 10 Amavasai.

Dec. 13 Chathurthi; Feast of St. Lucy.

Dec. 14 Feast of St. John of the Cross; 7.30pm S.C.O.T. Christmas Dinner Dance at Acton Town Hall, London W5. For tickets Tel: 0181 952 7249.

Dec. 15 Vinayaka Sasti.

Dec. 16 Thiruvembavai Pooja starts.

Dec. 20 Vaikunda Ekathasi.

Dec. 22 Pirathosam.

Dec. 24 Full Moon.

Dec. 25 Christmas Day.

Dec. 26 Boxing Day; Feast of St. Stephen.

Dec. 28 Sankadakara Chathurthi; Feast of Holy Innocents.

Dec. 29 Feast of the Holy Family.

At Bhawan Centre, 4A Castle-town Road, London W14 9HQ. Tel: 0171 381 3086/4608.

Dec. 1 6.00pm Mridangam & Drums – Percussion Symphony by Balachander & Peter MacDonald.

Dec. 22 5.00pm Christmas Celebrations at the Bhavan. Carol singing, Dance & Snacks. All welcome.

**AUSTRALIAN
NEWSLETTER**

Dance Drama 'Ramleela': The Indian Dance Centre of Sydney presented the Dance Drama 'Ramleela' at the Orion Centre, Campsie on 12.10.96 in aid of Sewa International. It depicts scenes from Ramayana from the birth of Rama, his life as a young man, his marriage to Sita, his exile to the forest on the urgings of Kaikeyi, the death of Dasharatha from grief, their life in the forest including Surpanakha's failed attempt to woo Rama and Lakshmanan, Ravana's abduction of Sita and her imprisonment in Sri Lanka, Hanuman's exploits, the battle between Rama and Ravana upto the coronation of Rama in Ayothya. The Dance Drama directed and choreographed by Sri Raghavan Nair and Smt Nisha Nair was superbly presented with a huge cast with Sri Nair himself taking the part of Rama. The costumes and settings were spectacular and the dancers executed their parts with precision and excellent abhinaya.

Sewa International is a charitable organisation of high repute interested in the welfare of poor, abandoned and orphaned children by providing homes, hostels and residential high schools in different parts of India and Goa, in addition to providing medical care to remote and tribal villages through mobile dispensaries. It is run by

volunteers and lives by Swami Vivekananda's dictum, 'Service to humanity is worship of God'.

T.M. Soundararajan's Concert: Hundreds of people packed Bowman Hall of Blacktown Civic Centre, Sydney on 3.11.96 to listen to the magical voice of Sri T.M. Soundararajan on his first visit to Sydney and probably Australia. His son Sri T.M.S. Balaraj accompanied him. For nearly four hours he kept his audience enthralled with his rendering of popular songs from M.G.R. and Sivaji Ganeshan movies. He sang with the enthusiasm and vigour of a young singer and his voice sounded as it did 25 years ago. His son who also sang appeared to have inherited the father's talents, and the duets both of them sang thrilled the audience. The orchestral music for the singers was provided by a music group from Melbourne and they performed brilliantly in spite of the fact that they had not accompanied a singer of the calibre of Sri T.M.S. The concert gave immense enjoyment to the audience.

Sri Vithiananthan of Melbourne compered the concert and Sri Bala Prabhakaran of the Sydney Tamil Radio Station 'Inpath Thamil Oli' honoured T.M.S. draping him in a golden shawl. He was similarly honoured by the writer Matala Somu and gifts were presented to him and the other musicians by Dr. Vijayakumar on behalf of the Sydney Tamil Sangam and others from

the Sydney Tamil Manram, Inpath Thamil Oli, and J.K. Digital Television Productions of Sydney.

**Violin Arangetram of
Parthiban and Nirshanthan**



London is now a centre where Tamil cultural shows in the form of Vocal, Instrumental and Dance Arangetrams are on the rise. I definitely enjoy and appreciate such a situation having taken an active part in it myself.

It was a pleasant experience for me to witness the Violin Duet Arangetram of the two brothers Parthiban and Nirshanthan, sons of Dr. & Mrs. Nagarajah of Oakwood, London N1, that took place on 1st September '96 at Beck Theatre, Hayes in front of a full house audience.

The South Indian Carnatic Classical music is one of the greatest of the various systems of music in the world and in it the Violin is indeed a difficult instrument to handle. It is even called a 'MAMANGA VADYAM' meaning it requires a solid twelve years to acquire mastery over it.

The two brothers did put up a good show on that day. The 'LALGUDI BANI' revealed itself in the beautiful Mohana Kalyani Varnam in praise of Lord Ganesha and the brothers handled it with a lot of poise and grace. The Swaraprastharas in Hamsadhvani for the Annamacharya composition 'Vandeham jagat vallabham' were sharp with interesting 'kannaku' (Mathematical) patterns.

The two ragas Amruthavarshini and Nagaswarali were portrayed well by the elder and the younger brother respectively in their individual renditions preceding the corresponding Krutis 'Ananthamrutha Karshni' and 'Shri Sankara'. Both are pentatonic scales and it was creditable on the part of Parthiban to have attempted to play a slightly rare raga like Nagaswarali.

'Bhajare Re Manasa' was neatly rendered right from the alapana through the song till the swaraprastharas. Most of the 'korvais' for the various swaraprastharas throughout the concert were interesting and refreshing. The Thani Avarthanam played by Ravishankar and Prakash was wonderful. The Karaikudi mani style was unleashed with gusto by Ravi who is a very natural Miruthangam player and was admirably matched by the inimitable Prakash on Ghatam.

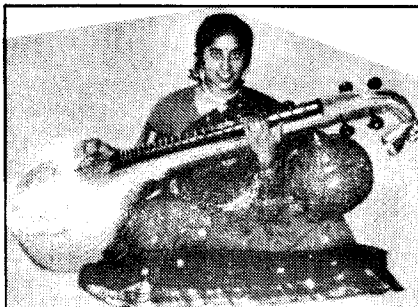
The Ragam Thanam Pallavi in the post interval session was well executed in Thisra Thripita including the Thisra nadai as well. The boys were quite unaffected by the 'stage syndrome' even though it was their maiden venture!

All the other items that followed in the lighter mood were neatly rendered and the duo deserve a good pat for their show. As the Violin Maestro Sri L. Subramaniam put it in his speech as Chief Guest, the duo should pursue more and more and probably evolve an individual style of rendition. A word of praise for the wonderful job carried out by Lakshmi Jayan in her adept training of these two brothers. Let many more parents convince their children to contribute to the great Hindu and Tamil culture.

Rajkumar Bharathi.

(Sri Rajkumar Bharathi, great grandson of the Tamil renaissance and nationalist poet Subramanya Bharathi, is one of the foremost vocalists of South India and a musicologist).

Suboshini Kugaprasad Veena Arangetram



Sixteen year old Suboshini Kugaprasad of Chingford had another Arangetram earlier this month this time on Veena. She had her

Bharatha Natyam Arangetram two years ago. The venue was the Waltham Forest Theatre, Lloyds Bank Walthamstow.

The programme started with an address of welcome by Sri. R.V. Naidoo, a Member of the Board of Trustees of the London Sri Murugan Temple which presented this Arangetram. We were informed that Suboshini studied Veena at this Temple under Smt. Rudrani Balakrishnan.

With accompanying musicians, Muthu Sivarajah on miruthangam, Gananathan on gatam, and Sithamparanathan on morshingh seated beside her and her proud Guru Smt. Rudrani Balakrishnan seated on the stage facing her Suboshini very confidently started with the Sarasakshi (Varnam) and moved on to Vinayaga, and Entharo mahanu. After three more items two of which were Tyagaraja Kirtis she started her Ragam-Thanam-Pallavi - the music for which was set by her Guru. Suboshini displayed her full talent and skill in this attractive piece. The ovation she received at the end of this item proved how much this piece was appreciated by the audience.

With another Tyagaraja Kirti Suboshini presented the evergreen piece - 'Alapayude' and a Thevaram followed by the Thillana. Notably there were no breaks in this Arangetram except for speeches and presentation. Suboshini's Guru in Bharatha Natyam, Smt. Padmini Gunaseelan, Director of Narthana Kalalyaya, spoke and heaped praise on her student followed by the chief guest Smt. Saraswathy Packiarajah.

Suboshini, a Gold medallist in Bharatha Natyam also plays the Veena, Violin and Western and Carnatic Flute, wins prizes for Tamil oratory, and pioneers the Internet Group at her Walthamstow School does indeed find time to study. She demonstrated this in her recent GCSE results by obtaining 10 'A's' of which five were 'A' Stars.

The programme was compered by Sri Wimal Sockanathan, a Broadcaster. The proud father, Mr. Kugaprasad, proposed a vote of thanks. Suboshini who can be described as a Wizz-kid owes her achievements to the encouragement and support provided by her parents and the disciplined training she received from her Guru, Smt Rudrani.

Violin Arangetram



The Arangetram of four young budding violinists took place on 8th September at Caterham High School, Ilford. The four debutants were Abhirami and Atheetha, daughters of Dr. and Mrs. Sivanathan of Clayhall and Anuja and Maithini, daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Manoharan of Manor Park. The Chief Guest was Mrs. Saraswathy

Packiarajah and Dr. C. Yogachandran was Guest of Honour.

The artistes are students of Dr. Lakshmi Jayan, who has produced several young violinists in the last few years. Her efforts at training these youngsters and bringing them to concert standard was praised by the guest speakers. The variety offered and the coordinated playing of the quartet were applauded by the audience.

The comperes for the evening were Mr. Sarvanathan, Anusha Sivanathan and Geetha Yogachandran. The concert started with the varnam in Raga Bowli, followed by Pillayar Sthuthi in Raga Hamsadhvani and the kriti 'Entharo Mahanubhau' in Raga Sri. The next piece was 'Anandha nadamaaduvu' in Poorvikalyani. The first half of the concert ended with 'Evarura Ninnuvina' in Mohanam with the percussionists Ravi Shankar and Prakash joining in with the 'thani avarthanam'. After the intermission, the mood was set by 'Raghu vamsa sudha' in Kathana-kuthookalam followed by the Ragam, Thanam Pallavi in Karaharapriya.

A particularly impressive piece was 'Kaliyuga Varadhan', in the raga Brintha-vana Saranga. The Thillana in Mohana Kalyani was diligently played, bringing out the intricacies of the piece. Penultimately came the Thiruppugal, an Arunagiri Nadhar composition in the raga Shanmugapriya. The Mangalam in the raga Madhyamaavathi concluded this enjoyable evening.

Kavin Kalai Malai - 1996



The Mathangy Fine Arts Academy of Harrow held their annual event - Kavin Kalai Malai on 6.10.96 at the Alperton Community School, Wembley. The programme commenced with Pannisai vocal recital by the students. This was followed by Veena, Violin and Flute recitals.

During the second half of the programme there were Kavadi Dance, Pava Dance, items of Bharatha Natyam and 'Vathiya Biruntham' - a combination of Indian and European music. The evening's proceedings ended with the awarding of prizes to the winners of the title 'Ilum Isa Thenral' to those who took part in the competition sponsored by the The Britannia Hindu Temple Trust and held at Highgate Murugan Temple on 18.8.96. The winners were nine year old Janany Arunachalam for Veena and Preadeepan Velpillai for Flute.

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A Committed Dancer



It was almost inspirational. A solo Bharata Natyam by Chitra Satgunandan, at the end of a Mrudanga ensemble by students of Somasundra Desikar at Rutlish Hall in Morden on 21st September, was something to talk about, particularly in the context of prevailing Natya Arangetru vizhas in London. It was a performance we watched for the first time and pleasantly surprised at the near technical perfection and artistic execution of **Adavus** and **Mudras**. Possessed of an attractive figure and expressive features, Chitra commands an instant draw.

Chitra stepped in with an arresting **Natyambam**, executed a **Ganapathy Sthuthi**, and took up the **Varnam** 'Enthan Swamiyai Azhathodi Vaa' a well tried out composition in Ragamalika, choreographed with knitted **Jathis** by Dandayuthapani Pillai, late of Adyar Kalakshetra. For full fortyfive minutes Chitra held the audience captive by her stylish **Adavu** variations and **Abhinaya** skills. Her quick changing **Sthanika** poses and **Hashta** sweeps together with expressive gestures told of her intensive training and full understanding of the texts. In the prostrate **Namas-karam**, the feet forming **Nagabandham**, a detail not often found in others, was remarkable. However, those who were exposed to the original Dandayuthapani choreography would have noticed certain deviations, adapted, perhaps, for **San-charibhava** variation. This is understandable since Chitra is now under the guidance of the well known Dance instructor Pushkala Gopalin London. The **Charanam** part of the Varnam elevated the audience appreciation with its alternating **Swara-Sahitya** exchanges, and the dancer's **Thatti - Mettu** steps competing with the **Mrudanga Solkattu**. The commanding **Nattuvangam** by Sruthi, the teenage

daughter of Pushkala Gopal, was unforgettable. Her grandmother, Kalpakam Balasubramaniam, a seasoned artiste, sang for the dance, while Somu on the **mrudangam**, Malini Thanabalasingam on the **veena**, Kothandapani on the **violin** and Chidambaranathan on the **morsing** contributed excellent orchestral support.

Talking to Chitra was illuminative. It was a long road she has travelled in pursuit of this arduous task of attaining near perfection in the art of Bharata Natyam. It was in 1979 she learnt the first steps under a true Kalakshetrian, Uma Chandradeva. For the next ten years she attended classes run by Selvalakshmi Ramakrishnan and under her direction had Arangetram in 1989. Later, a visit to Madras and meeting the classical dance maestro Adyar Lakshmanan enabled to get a polishing of her **adavus** and **abhinaya** exercises as well as acquiring lessons in **Nattuvangam**. Now she is being assisted by Pushkala Gopal and Unnikrishnan in London. Though born and brought up in London this Law Graduate converses fluently in Tamil and observes Hindu religious rituals. This has motivated her immensely in her training and teaching. An enthusiastic and articulate young artiste she is, the 'long road' has further extensions for her. And here is an object lesson to scores of our aspiring Natya students.

— Sivapatha Sundaram.

Kalakshetra - In London?



The atmosphere at the Bharata Natya Arangetram of Thushyanthy, disciple of Smt. Uma Chandratheva at the Logan Hall on 7th September made me feel that a little bit of the Adyar Institute is transplanted in London. The exacting **nattuvangam** and commands of Uma, a true Kalakshetrian evoked in me memories of that great Adyar Institute. Superb **Jatiswaram**, **Sabdam** and **Tillana** composed by another Kalakshetrian Karaikudi Krishnamurthy, who handled the **mrindangam**, completed the Adyar picture.

It is known that in London quite a few teachers of Bharata Natyam claim to be of Kalakshetra lineage, while they are third and fourth in Gurukula line which is self deceptive. But here we found an unusual team work which resulted in a clean authentic Natyam.

The repertoire was full of variety and gave enough scope for Thushyanthy to neatly exhibit her talents. The Varnam was neatly executed with **Sancharibhava** elaborations. Further **Abhinaya** skill was shown through a variety of pieces like **Padam**, **Jawali** and **Ashtapadi**. The **Kalyani Thillana** at the end was a composition of Karaikudi Krishnamurthy and this was danced with consummate execution by Thushyanthy. **Thilakasakthy Aramuthan**, who sang for the concert is a new find among the vocal artistes in London. Voice modulation and good grasp of musical phrases identify her musicianship. Besides Karaikudi Krishnamurthy's inimitable **mridanga** support, Kothandapani on the violin and Gnanavaradan on the flute elevated the show.

— Deepam.

Arangetram in Paris



The Bharata Natya Arangetram of Selvi Bindu, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jeyabalan and disciple of Shri Dayalasingham took place on 3.11.96 at the Theatre De Boulogne Billancourt, Paris.

Bindu is a gifted dancer with versatile talents. Her repertoire commenced with the **Ranga Anjali** in Ragamalika and continued with **Jathiswaram** in Rasali Ragam and the Varnam in Sankaraparanam.

After the intermission it was 'Varuha varuha' in Sumanesha Ranjani Ragam and 'Aadum Aruljothi', a Siva Patham in Hindola Ragam.

Guru Dayalan has moulded Bindu into a good dancer by bringing out her **Bhava** and **Nritya** talents. He is a student of Sri Adayar. K. Laxmanan of Madras and Bindu is his third student to perform her graduation under his tutelage. The Arangetram was well attended. The

orchestra consisted of Vocal: Smt Ambika Thamotheram and Selvi Kumuthini Selvarajah, Mridangam: Sri Ravi Dharmarajah, Violin: Smt Komala, Veena: Smt Chandra Rangarajulu and Flute: Smt Punitha Basakaran.

World Saiva Council Meets in Durban



The World Saiva Council held its fifth Annual Conference from 20th to 23rd September '96 in Durban in South Africa. It was a grand success both in its impact on over five laks of Saiva Tamils resident in South Africa and its clarion call for Saiva unity and identity.

Attended by over 70 overseas delegates including 30 from Sri Lanka, 15 from Malaysia and 10 from South India including Heads of Mutts and Saiva Siddantha scholars, the 4-day conference was attended by over 3500 local saivites who were treated to cultural events during the evening sessions. The next conference is to be held in Tamil Nadu in South India in late 1997.

Debutante's Delightful Display



Thirumahal Kandiah and Kannan Jeristus pupils of Kalaimamani Vasantha Daniel had their Bharatha Natya arangetram on 31.8.96 at Markham Theatre, in Metro Toronto, Canada. They hail from

Hindu and Christian families respectively and gave a dazzling performance of a dance form that represents the most refined elements and aspects of Dravidian culture and aspirations. The evening's repertoire included the traditional renderings of an arangetram but their choreographic uniqueness was a typical Vasantha Daniel hallmark.

Both Thirumahal and Kannan fulfilled the expectation of an audience with their deft movements and footwork, expressions and synchronization. They particularly excelled in the reincarnation story Dasavatharam composed by the late K.N. Thandayuthapanipillai, Vasantha Daniel's guru.

The Chief Guest, Mr. Richards Karunairajan in his speech said that the Tamils today speak so many languages in various parts of the world, that they are no more a people of a monolingual and monoreligious culture. This being the reality, he said, we now have the challenging opportunity to share our culture with people of other communities and build bridges of greater understanding wherever we have made our home.

Led by Guru Vasantha Daniel on the Nattuvangam and vocalists Renuka Balachandran and Mohan Thiruchelvam, the debutantes were ably supported by Vasudevan Rajalingam (Mridangam), Sivananthini Kathirgamanathan (Violin), Ajanti Mathanaharan (Flute) and Nivethitha Balachandran (Thambura).

Veena Arangetram – Rohini Rajendram



The Veena Arangetram of Rohini, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. P. Rajendram and Sishya of Smt Rudrani Balakrishnan took place at Forest School Hall, Snaresbrook, London on 2.8.96. The chief guests were Veena Vidwan Smt Geetha Ramanathan Bennet and Mr. Reginald Massey. Smt Nageswari Brahmananda was one of the guest speakers. Rohini was accompanied by Sri Sivarajah on the Mridangam, Sri Ganathan on the Ghatam and Sri Sithamparanathan on the Morsing. The programme was most ably compered by Dr. K. Sivakumar.

The opening composition was Viriboni, varnam in Bhairavi Ragam. From the very first bar it was evident that we were in for a musical treat. The fact that the artiste was a twelve year old child showed true inborn talent. This was followed by Vathapi Ghanapathim and compositions by Thiagarajah and were played beautifully. Her skilful use of the sangatis, made each kriti the

foundation for a beautiful musical edifice, while displaying her ability to extemporise. The Ragam-Thanam-Pallavi which followed provided us with a glimpse of Rohini's appreciation of 'Ragabhavam', her control of tala and her ability to play with verve and emotion.

Rohini's musical sense is impeccable. She did not strike a single apaswaram nor miss a beat throughout the performance. The brilliant concluding performance of Lalgudi Jayaraman's Thillana in desh ragam showed Rohini's virtuosity which bespeaks her immense hardwork and mental discipline. With a guru like Smt Balakrishnan and a sishya like Rohini, the future of Veena as a concert instrument is assured. The chief guests were justly lavish in their praise of the artiste and her guru. I shall watch her future development with eagerness and interest. Congratulations are due to the Guru, the accompanying artistes, the parents and above all to Rohini herself.

Dr. Meera Srivatsa.

First Tamil Woman Judge Retires

Mrs. S. Aruchuna, the first Tamil woman Judge retired recently from Trincomalee, her last station. After graduating as a private candidate, Mrs. Aruchuna joined the Ceylon Law College in 1969 and passed out as an Attorney-at-Law in 1972. She practised as a civil lawyer in Point Pedro, her home town when she was appointed District Judge, Mallakam in October 1987. After serving in Mannar and Colombo, she was posted to Trincomalee in April 1991, where she performed the dual functions of Magistrate and District Judge.

She is a mother of six children and her husband who was an Administrative Officer in the Postal Department retired earlier.

Woman of The Year Lunch



Dr. Qudsia Chandran of Ravenshead, Nottingham, was among the women at this year's Women of The Year Lunch at Savoy Hotel, London. The event now in its 41st year brings together women from all walks of life and Dr. Chandran was selected from

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over 1200 nominees for her outstanding achievements in general practice and issues concerning women, to be one of the guests. The Guest of Honour was Princess Michael of Kent.

Dr. Chandran, who qualified from Pakistan's women-only Fatima Jinnah Medical College, practices as a GP with her husband, Dr. Raj Chandran, Commissioner for Racial Equality in Britain.

As a qualified obstetrician, her specialties are maternity and women's health and in pursuit of her interest in Asian women's health, she has organised two national conferences of Asian women in London.

The Search – Dance Drama



The Search, presented by SAMUDRA, was performed to a full house at The Bull, Barnet on 26 October. The dance drama is based on the fairy tale poem **Poothapattu** by Etasseril Govindan Nair, one of Kerala's best known poets, set to music by Reji George. Direction was by Thanuja Shanker, who takes the lead female role, with Sharath Kumar from India taking the male lead role.

For the first time a Kathakali dancer in full traditional costume plays opposite a Bharata Natyam dancer, a highly successful combination which just needed the right theme to make it happen. The wonderfully detailed and powerful mime of Kathakali, as superbly portrayed by Sharath Kumar, has special impact when set against another style. **The Search** has proved to be a triumph for the adaptability of Kathakali.

Thanuja Shanker as the mother made a stunning entry with neatly choreographed sequences, joining village girls in a group dance. Her white and gold edged costume and hair knotted on one side were pleasing reminders that the location was Kerala.

The bond of mother and child was beautifully established in an early scene where the mother nurses her baby, plays with it, rubs oil all over its body and finally rocks it to sleep. Thanuja conveyed the mood of adoring motherhood with freshness and tenderness.

It is a touching and memorable scene when the demon, played by Sharath Kumar, entices away the young boy and makes him his playmate and only friend. We see a fearsome demon, in fantastic and awe-inspiring Kathakali attire, amusing himself with the innocent child and this forms a most extraordinary picture.

Marianne Yates, age 8, played the part of the boy with confidence while capturing the naivety of a small boy. Her little introductory footwork pieces demonstrated her firm sense of timing and rhythm. The audience was enchanted by her performance.

When the distraught mother at last finds her child playing with the demon he tries all sorts of tricks to be rid of her, including magically creating an imitation boy – but she is not deceived. She finally threatens to curse him if he does not return her son to her. The courage of her love forms a climax to the story and Thanuja conveys this with striking effect.

The dance drama ends with a brilliant and totally original Thillana performed by the mother, the demon and the boy. While keeping to the strict rhythmic structure of the Thillana, the characters interact according to their particular relationships as they pass each other in the space choreography. This took the audience quite by surprise and was a wonderful ending to an enjoyable show.

Lynette Hague.

An Exhilarating Performance

Mavin Khoo's dance concert at the Purcell Room on 4 October was an exhilarating performance, aptly named 'Prana'. It was a confluence of dance and music each complementing the other throughout a performance which never lost its momentum. The invocatory piece 'Sathasivan Mainthane' in Hamsadhvani raga sung by Viswakala Bharathi S. Sathiyalingam set the mood and pace of the concert. He also conducted the music comprising vocal accompaniment and nattuvangam by daughter Mohana Harendran with Balachander on Mridangam, Kothandapani on the violin and Gnanavarathan on the flute.

Mavin has combined his training in Bharata Natyam, Odissi and Classical Ballet to enhance the grace and vitality of the nritta without losing the basic spirit and mood of Bharata Natyam. The Charukesi raga varam in particular, had a comprehensive exposition of nritta and nritya with variations on gathi and speed in the different avarthanams and was brilliantly danced to the music and nattuvangam rendered with much sensitivity by Mohana.



Mavin's youth, humility and dedication combined with his competence contribution to the success of the concert. It was a refreshing and reassuring contrast to a number of concerts in the recent past, such as two presented at the festival of India's South which did not come up to expectation and other experimental (?) dancing based on Bharata Natyam which deprives it of its grace and spirituality.

One looks forward to seeing more of Mavin's dancing as well as his adaptations to other forms and styles of music which must follow given his cosmopolitan background, training and present trends and demands to carry the art forward.

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