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A Journal of Commitment

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December 99

End of a Millennium

End of a Century

END OF A HALF-CENTURY OF TAMIL AGONY !

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Sri Lanka's Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte holds up a map that shows how the future Tamil Eelam would look like !

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Editorial Comment

Your Excellency, Shame on you woman !

The lone, courageous Tamil voice in Colombo - that of Mr.G.G.Ponnambalam (Jr.) - has been silenced for ever; murdered by a pro-government gunman, in broad daylight, in a Tamil residential area, in the capital city of Colombo, on the morning of Wednesday, January 5, 2000. But his fate was sealed earlier; sealed on the day Madame President of the country sobbed her heart out and spewed hatred and warnings through her State idiot box.

Tamileelam Archive

In her victory speech on December 22, having invited the audience to "look at her wounds" (*they were already looking at them*);

having "thanked the gods" for sparing her life (*there are no "gods" in a true Buddhist's vocabulary*);

having spoken of "the vicious pain of losing a father" (*failing to mention that the "vicious pain" was caused by a Buddhist monk in holy robes armed with a revolver*);

having spoken of "the loving pain of motherhood"(*all mothers in the world do feel the same pain, as did Jaffna school girl Krishanthi's mother when she saw her daughter's violated body before she was strangled in turn by Madame's President's armed rapists*);

having spoken about the "soul-destroying pain of losing a husband (*failing to mention that she lost her husband at the hands of a Sinhala extremist*);

she went on to declare thus:

"...Let all those who act in the name of hatred and terror in the Northeast and their supporters in the South be warned... Let all those who aid and abet terror be warned, let those who by act or omission supp -ort terror be warned, let those who secretly or openly condone the path of violence pursued by the LTTE be warned .... (*Govt.owned SUNDAY OBSERVER, Dec.26, 1999*)

Men who are wise to the ways of women know that looks are important for them; even to woman Presidents. The loss of an eye and the consequent disfigurement of her face is not something that any woman can afford to look back except with anger. One has to make due allowance for that, particularly to the head of a country who is constantly in the public eye. But hatred in the heart and confusion in the head is not something that one expects in the executive president of a country.

Mr.Ponnambalam's grave error was that he did not pay adequate heed to those one-eyed warnings. Instead of that , he wrote an open letter to the President (*See Page 25*) where he made the specific charge at her - "Your speech reflects your hatred". If Mr.Ponnambalam thought he was

Contd. overleaf

exercising his fundamental right as a citizen expressing his independent view in what is believed to be a democratic society that upholds freedom of expression, he was in greater error. That rosy picture of democracy is only in the eyes of certain sections of the foreign media which lap up all what the government spokesmen say and pass them off to unsuspecting readers and listeners as "news".

Killing of a Tamil Editor

Mr.Ponnambalam could have at least heeded what happened to Atputharajah (*Ramesh*) the editor of the popular Tamil weekly "Thinamurasu" - an M.P. at that, at least by name - who paid the price for his overtly pro-LTTe stance by being gunned down in similar fashion, in broad daylight, in a Tamil residential area, two months ago. To this day, the verdict on his killing lies swept under the government carpet.

No hatred towards the Sinhalese

Mr.Ponnambalam also made another cardinal error. He might have presumed, even knowing that he was treading on dangerous ground, that his personal standing as a well-known politician, the influence that he wielded among a wide circle of Sinhalese friends, his fluency in the Sinhala language, and his own knowledge that he had at no time any hatred towards the Sinhalese people, would have ensured that no physical harm could come to him. It is that freedom from fear that possibly made him trust even that man who called himself "Shantha" (not an uncommon first name among Sinhalese) and imgratiated himself with Mr.Ponnambalam during the previous two weeks and in some way contributed to the crime.

Signing his own death warrant

His fatal error however came in that open letter where he said: "I write as one whom you have recognized in your speech, and I write as one who refuses to be deterred by the naked threats that dot your

A 'Tiger' to the last: Mr.Kumar Ponnambalam in a playful mood on a recent visit to London

speech". With that one statement, he signed his own death warrant. Mr.Ponnambalam should have known better. He was living and moving about freely in a city that had known 40 years of racist violence,thuggery, intimidation, and State-sponsored mayhem from the time of her father's rule in the fifties. Today, under the daughter's rule, the situation had deteriorated to such an extent that one can hire a daylight killer for as little as Rs.5,000 in Sri Lanka's devalued currency; such is the competitive market for hired killers among the increasing number of army deserters with guns.

But to a man who was a single-minded crusader for Tamil rights nothing was daunting enough, not even the risk of life. Never before in the island's post-colonial history has one man done so much for so many of his oppressed people in so short a span of time as five years. Never before has any government panoplied in power felt so vulnerable and so helpless against one man as did the Chandrika government in the looming presence of bogeyman Mr.Ponnambalam in Colombo. Something had to be done to quieten him, and this was the only way it could be done.

But the Colombo government's problem has not ended. It has just begun. Away from Colombo, the situation in the battlefront in the north has begun to cause mental convulsions among government circles. With the help of censorship and the distractions in Colombo the military debacles are being kept under wraps. Any time in the near future someone is going to press the panic button. Throughout the President's speeches and interviews one can detect an underlying current of anger, fear, desperation, frustration and pique.

The unspoken logic appears to be, if one cannot win the war against the Tigers in the North, go for the easily targettable Tamils in the South and take your vengeance on them. Mr.Ponnambalam for example. The defenceless Tamil political prisoners in the Kalutara jail for example. Three of them have been already killed by the prison warders, and the Welikade jail massacres of black July '83 could well be replayed while the human rights watchers look away.

The good news for Ranil

There is no doubt that Sri Lanka under the rule of a physically wounded and mentally distraught President is sliding into anarchy. The bad news for UNP leader Ranil Wickremasinghe was that he lost the presidential election . The good news for him is that he will not be the one who will be presiding over the liquidation of the Sinhala empire in the Northeast.

S.Sivanayagam

"THE BALANCE OF MILITARY POWER IS IN OUR FAVOUR...

(Extracts from the translated text of LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran's speech on Martyrs' Day 1999)

Our current military successes have surprised and astounded the world. This is a unique historical achievement in the art of contemporary warfare. The dimensions of this military victory have not only amazed our enemy but also astonished several international countries that have been actively helping Sri Lanka's war effort by providing training, arms and funds.

The vast tracts of fertile lands of Vanni, which were invaded and occupied by the Sinhala armed forces after years and months of massive military campaigns, after sacrificing thousands of lives, have been liberated by our fighters at a rapid pace within a short span of time. A colossal military structure with its multiple military complexes, well fortified bases and camps suddenly collapsed with the onslaught of the Tiger offensive. We have liberated almost all the ancient strategic towns in the Vanni region. I am happy that we have redeemed a sector of Manal Aru, which is the heartland of Vanni where the state's army massacred the indigenous Tamils and created Sinhala settlements.

Our massive offensive campaign in Vanni code-named 'Unceasing Waves 3' has effectively demonstrated to the world the extra-ordinary growth and development of the Tiger fighting forces in the art of modern warfare. The speed of our strikes, the ability of rapid deployment, the unified command, the high discipline, the spectacular offensive tactics and the tremendous courage displayed by our fighting formations have astounded the world military experts.

...but we want to resolve the conflict through peaceful means

This war is being waged for liberation of our land. Tamil Eelam is our homeland, a land which belongs to us historically, a land on which we were born and bred, a land of our sustenance and resources, a land that forms the very foundation of our national identity. Our enemy claims that this land belongs to him.

For more than fifty years - ever since the Sinhala chauvinists assumed political power in the island- the lands of the Tamils have been systematically usurped. Our land has been subjected to tyranny and oppression. On one side, there have been devious schemes by which our lands have been forcefully annexed and given to Sinhala colonisers. On the other hand ,our lands have been militarily occupied and their resources destroyed and the people who lived on those lands have been reduced to the state of destitution. It is against this injustice we have been fighting. Therefore our liberation war is essentially a war to liberate our lands and to establish our sovereignty: our right to rule in our homeland.

Our people have now understood the aim and objective of this liberation war. Our people, who have lost their lands and the livelihood that derived from the lands and have become destitute, realise the value and significance of their own lands. They also realise the necessity of chasing away the alien forces that have invaded and occupied our territories. It is because of this realisation wide sections of the popular Tamil masses are supporting and participating in this war of liberating our homeland. **Our liberation war has now expanded and developed into a higher stage as the people's war of liberation.**

In my annual speeches on the Martyrs' Day, I have always empha-

sised the importance of peace and peaceful ways of seeking a negotiated political settlement. At the sametime, I have also pointed out the fact that Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism was not prepared to resolve the ethnic conflict through peaceful means.

The two major Sinhala political parties, who have assumed political power alternatively in the Sri Lankan political system, are essentially chauvinistic organisations. Both these political parties have bred and flourished in the anti-Tamil Sinhala Buddhist racist ideology. For the last half a century these parties competed with each other in intensifying the oppression against the Tamil people. In this diabolical history of racist oppression it is Chandrika's regime which has inflicted the worst form of tyrannical oppression.

The five-year rule of Chandrika has been a curse on the Tamil people. The monumental tragedy that our people encountered in the form of war, violence, death, destruction, displacement, hunger and starvation was the worst form of tyranny ever suffered by the Tamils. Chandrika's oppressive rule marks an epoch consisting of blood stained pages of our history. Her tyrannical rule left a permanent scar on the soul of the Tamil nation.

While masterminding an authoritarian tyrannical rule against the Tamils internally, Chandrika Kumaratunga portrayed herself internationally as a goddess of democracy committed to peace. Having implemented a notorious military programme aimed at the total invasion of the Tamil homeland she interpreted her project as a war effort for peace. **The entire international community believed her and supported her military project. In this deceptive disinformation campaign to cheat the world, treacherous Tamil elements played a crucial role.**

We do not trust Chandrika. She does not have the honesty and determination to resolve the Tamil national conflict in a fair and reasonable manner. We perceive her as a modern representative of a neo-Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism. It is for this reason we refused to engage in a direct dialogue with her. Yet, we did not close the doors for peace. I made an announcement last year in my Martyrs' Day message that we were prepared for peace talks with the assistance on international third party mediation.

Once the resting place of the Tamil martyrs, later ploughed down by the Sri Lankan army

Though we called for third party mediation we have emphasised the necessity of creating certain objective conditions conducive for peace talks. We explained very clearly that these objective conditions entail a situation of normalcy free from military aggression, occupation and economic strangulation of the Tamil nation.

Chandrika's government refused to accept our proposal for creating a congenial peaceful atmosphere for peace talks. Chandrika was not prepared to bring an end to the war, to stop the military aggression of our land and to lift the economic blockades. **The government wanted to use the military campaigns and the economic embargoes as political pressures on the Tamils.**

The concept of the 'war for peace' as enunciated by Chandrika's government signified a military solution. This grand military project aimed at a total invasion of the Tamil homeland and envisages the defeat of the Tamil Tiger movement and finally the eventual subjugation of the Tamil nation. Chandrika worked tirelessly for the last five years to implement her military scheme. Though the project brought about severe setbacks and debacles to the armed forces, she was determined not to abandon her military programme. Therefore, she did not reflect seriously about peace nor has she taken any constructive steps towards peace talks.

Chandrika conveyed to us a message through third party source that she was prepared to hold secret talks with certain conditions while continuing the war effort. We rejected her proposal. It is absurd and practically impossible to hold peace talks on one side while engaging in a bloody war on the other side. **It is an extremely difficult task to involve in a friendly dialogue with the enemy while our people are subjected to death, destruction and suffering.** Furthermore, we do not want to engage in a negotiating process with conditions and time frames. Chandrika did not sincerely extend her hand of friendship. She wanted to lay a trap under the cover of peace talks. But we were not prepared to fall into that peace trap.

Swept by the 'Unceasing Waves' of the Liberation Tigers, Chandrika's

military project crumbled as a house of sand built on the seashore. The spectacular victories that we gained in this current offensive campaign have turned the balance of military power in our favour. The massive effort made by Chandrika over the last five years to weaken the LTTE and to achieve military hegemony was shattered by us in the matter of a few days.

Though we stand today as a formidable force strengthened by manpower, firepower, moral power, and people's power and have the military capability to liberate our homeland, we have not abandoned the path of peace. We want to resolve the Tamil conflict through peaceful means, through civilized methods, without recourse to a bloodbath and the destruction of life.

We wish to re-iterate that peace talks should be held in a cordial peaceful atmosphere of mutual trust and goodwill with the assistance of international third party mediation. By peaceful atmosphere we mean a condition of normalcy characterised by cessation of hostilities, withdrawal of troops occupying Tamil lands and the absence of economic blockades.

We cannot allow the Sinhala State to use the conditions of war, military aggression of our lands, and economic blockades as tactics of pressure against the Tamils. We wish to engage in peace talks as equals with mutual understanding in a cordial environment without external coercion and constraints.

We are keeping the doors of peace open and are sending signals of peace and goodwill to the Sinhala nation. But we are aware that Sinhala political leadership will not agree to create a peaceful environment as we suggest. We are also aware that Sinhala chauvinistic leadership will not easily abandon their longstanding policy of military violence and repression against the Tamils. Therefore we do not live in fantasy hoping to resolve our national conflict by engaging in a rational dialogue with Sinhala political leadership.

Midnight homage to the Tamil martyrs in Tamil Eelam

Tamileelam Archive

The anti-Tamil Sinhala racist political system - which totally disregards human rights and liberties - offers no alternatives to the Tamils other than to fight, secede and establish an independent Tamil state. It is along this secessionist path that the Sinhala nation is driving the Tamil nation.

Years ago our people made a decision that an independent state of Tamil Eelam is the only and the final solution to our national conflict. For the last several years, our freedom movement has been fighting a bloody liberation struggle carrying the cross of our people's aspirations for freedom. Today we have reached a turning point in this long historical journey towards emancipation".

(Released by the International Secretariat of LTTE, 211 Katherine Rd, London E6 1BU, United Kingdom).

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LTTE RELEASE 9 POW

The LTTE released seven soldiers held captive to the ICRC to mark the LTTE Martyrs' Remembrance Day.

ICRC Spokesperson Harsha Abeywardene said that the soldiers were brought by ship to Mannar.

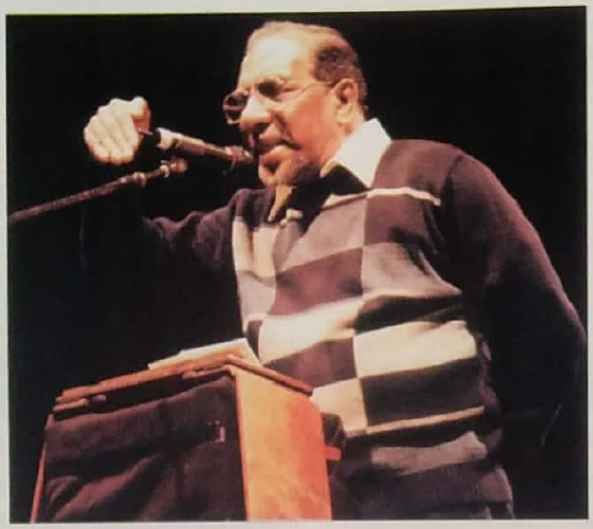
" Since the road line is closed the soldiers were brought by ship to Mannar. They will be handed over to the Sri Lanka Army at Madawachiya," he said.

The soldiers surrendered to the LTTE during the military offensive in the Wanni region recently.

The seven soldiers are H.B.S Tilakaratna , V.H.KS.Dharshana, Pushpakumara, A.N. Jayaratna, P.V. Hemachandra, W.P. R Upali Dharmaratne, W.H.P Bsndula and H.F.Ranasinghe. Two more soldiers, William Wickremasinghe of Polonnaruwa and Gunaratne Bandara of Hingirakgoda were released later.

From Sri Lanka to London by Tamil Eelam shipping !

As happens year after year, Tiger Martyrs' Day '99 too was observed in several countries around the world. It is an annual event that all Eelam Tamils look forward to, in whichever countries they live.



To the Tamils in UK however, there was an added reason for gathering in their thousands at the massive auditorium of the London Arena on 27th November. LTTE's political adviser and spokesman Anton Balasingam and wife Adele (affectionately called Adele Acca and Adele Auntie by hundreds of Tiger fighters) who were back in London were to grace the occasion.

How they surfaced from Tamil Eelam to England was itself one of those dramatic achievements which the Tigers pull off now and then. An appeal on humanitarian grounds to permit Mr.Balasingam to fly out from Colombo - he was a diabetic who had run out of insulin and had lost one kidney with the second not functioning to full capacity -(an appeal made by an international relief agency), was met with a rebuff from the Sri Lanka government.

The Chandrika government thought it was a good chance to get some mileage on their losing military front. The Tigers must stop harassing the army in Jaffna, ...the Tigers must do that, must not do that ... and so on, in return for permitting Mr.Balasingam to fly out from Colombo ! Not that, knowing the ways of the government's inhumanity in depriving thousands of defenceless Tamil women and children of food and medicine all these years, Mr.Prabhakaran expected the Colombo warlords to accede to any humanitarian request. While Colombo was busy imposing conditions, Mr and Mrs. Balasingam had already left the shores of the island - by Tamil Eelam shipping of course ! What a gripe there was in Colombo. There was some talk of some immigration laws too !

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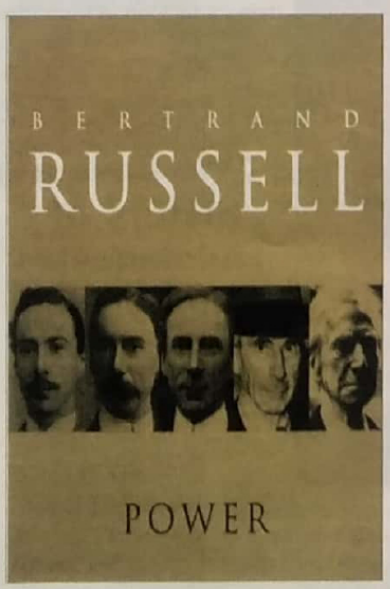
Tamileelam Archive

Pictures shows Australian-born Adele Balasingam looking chic in saree with blouse to match watching her husband making a one-hour speech in the presence of a vast concourse.

A Tiger Story!

"In passing by the side of Mount Thai, Confucius came on a woman who was weeping bitterly by a grave. The Master pressed forward and drove quickly to her, then he sent Tze-lu to question her. "Your wailing", said he, "is that of one who has suffered sorrow on sorrow". She replied, " That is so. Once my husband's father was killed here by a tiger. My husband was also killed, and now my son has died in the same way". The Master said, "Why do you not leave this place?"



the answer was, "There is no oppressive government here". The Master then said, **"Remember this, my children: oppressive government is more terrible than tigers".**

- quoted by British philosopher Betrand Russell in his book POWER (George Allen & Unwin, 1938)

Confucius

The prophet and philosopher Confucius was born in about 551 BC in northern China. This was a time of great conflict and warfare. Confucius gave up his government job and dedicated himself to teaching people how to live in peace with each other. His thoughts and teachings were so influential that they formed the basis of the Chinese civil service right up to the beginning of this century.

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'EVERYONE IS SICK OF WAR, AND NOBODY WANTS TO GIVE IN'

By Dexer Filkins

(Log Angeles Times)

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka—In Asia's bloodiest and longest-running war, the fighting doesn't halt for the casting of ballots.

A spectacular suicide bomb attack here at a weekend campaign rally in advance of Tuesday's presidential election failed to kill the country's leader but underlined a larger point: After 16 years and 61,000 deaths, the country's savage ethnic war hasn't even begun to exhaust itself.

"They all want their pound of flesh," said Kingsley Swampillai, a Roman Catholic bishop in the eastern city of Batticaloa. "Everyone is sick of war, and nobody wants to give in."

The extended conflict between minority Tamils and the Sinhalese-dominated government mocks the best intentions of the politicians here who promise to heal a country already torn in two. In the north of this island off India's southern tip, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam are overrunning government forces. In the east, LTTE cadres have seized huge swaths of jungle and set up a virtual state.

In Colombo, the capital, Saturday's suicide attack shattered the calm of a city normally insulated from the tragedies of war. The rich and the middle class in this languid seaside town lead mostly normal lives, while village boys hungry for jobs do most of the fighting. The censored media report only good news, and an economy built on tourism and textiles hums along at a happy pace. Most of the politicians who preached moderation are dead, leaving behind a fractured society more than willing to keep the war alive.

தமிழீழ ஆவணக்காப்பகம்
Tamileelam Archive

Bishop Kingsley Swampillai

"We live in a very schizophrenic society," said Sunila Abeysekera, a human rights advocate in Colombo. "We have all the elements of civilization—BMWs, KFC—but we have a history of violence, killing and torture."

On Sunday, soldiers swept the capital in search of accomplices and more suicide bombers. President Chandrika Kumaratunga was said to be recovering, although she was reported to have been blinded in her right eye. Officials said Tuesday's presidential election will go forward as planned, even as news of fresh military defeats trickled in from the front.

"I shall be up and about soon," the president said in a recorded message.

"We have a history of violence, killing and torture"

The assassination attempt occurred late Saturday when a woman leaped over a barricade and tried to embrace the president. When Kumaratunga's bodyguards dragged the woman off, she detonated a bomb that was wrapped around her body. The explosion killed 22 people and wounded 110. At almost the same time, a grenade attack at an opposition rally north of the capital killed 11 people and injured 40.

Although no one claimed responsibility for the attacks, the assassination attempt seemed clearly the work of the LTTE, known here as the Tigers. Suspected LTTE suicide bombers killed Sri Lanka's president

in 1993 and a presidential candidate a year later, and in 1991 Tigers blew up Indian Prime Minster Rajiv Gandhi. On Sunday, some Sri Lankans remarked that Kumaratunga might be the first target of an LTTE suicide bomber to have survived.

Indeed, the failed assassination attempt might have the unintended effect of strengthening Kumaratunga's candidacy. Until the weekend, the race between her and her main challenger, Ranil Wickremesinghe, appeared very tight. Kumaratunga, scion of a political dynasty, was elected five years ago on the promise of ending the war, but she saw her popularity slip as the military campaign against the Tigers foundered. Wickremesinghe had gained ground by offering to negotiate with the rebels. Now, many Sri Lankans believe that Kumaratunga will ride to victory on a wave of sympathy.

"The bombing will clearly affect the outcome of the election," said Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, a leading Tamil intellectual in Colombo.

The fighting in Sri Lanka began in 1983, when militant Tamils—members of a mostly Hindu minority who chafed under the persecution of the mostly Buddhist Sinhalese—took up arms against the government. The LTTE rebels and their 45-year-old reclusive leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, are fighting for independence. The government, which dominates the south, refuses to grant it. Numerous attempts to negotiate a peaceful settlement have collapsed.

The Tigers occupy a stretch of Tamil-dominated land that runs north to south along the eastern coast. Estimated to number about 5,000, the rebel force ties up an army 30 times its size. A Tiger offensive last month rolled back two years' worth of government gains and now threatens Jaffna, the country's second-largest city.

It is a sordid war: Prisoners are killed, suspects are tortured, civilians are murdered, and children die in combat. The Tigers have emerged as one of the world's most relentless guerrilla armies, whose male and female fighters often swallow cyanide pills to escape capture. In September, in retaliation for a government air raid that killed 22 Tamil civilians, a mostly female force of Tigers entered the village of Gunagula and hacked to death 48 civilians, including nine children and two pregnant women.

Maj.Gen.Lionel Balagalle

"When you are fighting a Guerilla war, you can't expect success all the time"

"This war is never going to end," said Sherine Xavier, a lawyer who works with victims of torture in Colombo. "People are just too numb."

Inside the majority Tamil areas, the Tigers seem well on their way toward building their own state. Rebel officials collect taxes and recruit soldiers—even in some areas nominally under government control. In Batticaloa, a mostly Tamil city on the eastern coast, the Sri Lankan army concedes that it rules the town but little of the surrounding countryside. In some nearby villages, the government and guerrillas all but bump into one another.

"We live under two governments—and two gunpoints," said V. Nallaiah, a retired factory worker in Puthukkudiyuruppu, a village about 20 miles north of Batticaloa. "There is a daytime government and a nighttime government."

The Tamils of Puthukkudiyuruppu say they are suffering from the government's efforts to keep them away from the Tigers. Two weeks ago, villagers say, government troops entered Puthukkudiyuruppu with a masked informant who fingered 13 suspected Tiger sympathizers. The suspects were taken away.

"The nighttime people have a lot of support here," said V. Selvarajah, the manager of a guest house in the village.

The Tigers appear so sure of their support that even before they apparently tried to kill Kumaratunga, they were trying to sway the election in favor of her opponent. Local politicians say the Tigers have allowed them to campaign for Wickremesinghe in areas under guerrilla control but have warned Kumaratunga to stay away. Analysts believe that Tiger leader Prabhakaran so despises Kumaratunga—who orchestrated a 1995 invasion of Jaffna, the Tamil cultural capital—that he would try almost anything to defeat her, including assassination.

For its part, Kumaratunga's government says it wants the Tamil people to participate in the election. It is ringing the Tiger-controlled areas with polling booths in the hope of drawing Tamils out. The situation is like that all along the eastern coast: Tiger power overlapping with government control.

"If I want to develop my district, I need the support of the LTTE," said M. L. A. M. Hizbullah, a member of Parliament from Batticaloa and a Kumaratunga supporter. "If I want to build a school, the LTTE has the bricks."

Despite such Tiger successes, there is little evidence that Sri Lankans are turning against the war. Last month, after LTTE guerrillas captured dozens of villages and killed hundreds of government soldiers, army generals merely shrugged off the disaster.

"When you are fighting a guerrilla war, you can't expect success all the time," said Maj. Gen. Lionel Balagalle, the army chief of staff.

Even after the attempt on Kumaratunga's life, Colombo and Sri Lanka's other urban areas seem strangely cut off from the fighting. One reason is the overall economy, which last year grew 5%. At night, Colombo residents fill the fancy hotels to celebrate weddings and holidays. By day, shoppers fill the streets. "Wake up with Madonna," says a billboard for a local radio station that has an image of a semi-clad blond woman sprawled from end to end. Kumaratunga's election slogan: "Don't worry. You're looking good."

'The Poor People Fight the War'

At a recent party in the capital's exclusive Cinnamon Gardens section, the men said they don't fret much about the war in the north. Military service, they pointed out, is voluntary.

"The poor people fight the war," said Dev Perera, an airline technician. "They need the jobs."

About 30 miles away, the village of Humbutiyawa has given 14 soldiers to the war. Ten are at the front; four lie in the town's graveyard. One of the dead is Priyantha Gamini, killed in 1992 at the age of 21. His mother, J. A. Shanthi, receives about $60 a month as a pension from the government—and it is the only income she has. She said her son joined the army because there was nothing else to do.

"He thought that if something happened to him, the government would take care of his family," she said. Saravanamuttu, the Tamil intellectual, decries what he says is a lack of debate on the direction of the war. He blames government censorship of newspapers and TV.

"The reason why most people in Colombo are cut off from this war," he said, "is because they have no idea how it is being fought."

Abeysekera, the human rights worker, says she believes that Sri Lanka's problems run much deeper than any election—or this or that political killing. Many Sri Lankans, herself included, have seen dozens of friends and family members killed in the war. Many think not of healing but of revenge.

"When you lose a child in war, there are two ways to go," Abeysekera said. "One is to say: 'I've had enough. I want peace.'

"The other way," she said, "is to give one more son to the battle."

Special correspondent Waruna Karunatilake in Colombo contributed to this report.

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CHANDRIKA'S RE-ELECTION IS A SINHALA MANDATE FOR WAR

says

V.NAVARATNAM

EX-M.P. FOR KAYTS

Leaders may come and leaders may go, but it is the people who really matter, because it is the people who are the permanent feature of the country. It is their will that decides the future. What I mean is, the result of the presidential election of December 21, 1999, must be taken very seriously by the Tamils wherever they are at present, whether in Ceylon or abroad.

Thirty two years ago I called upon the Tamils to rise up and fight for the establishment of the state of Eelam. It was a cry born out of frustration with the Sinhalese leaders who had betrayed the trust which the British placed in them when Soulbury devised a constitutional scheme for the government of the island country, then called Ceylon, and the trust which the Tamils placed in them when they agreed to cooperate with them and work it. The frustration itself was borne out of complete disillusionment and loss of faith in the sincerity and trustworthiness of a long line of Sinhalese leaders who formed governments after the British quit. They repeatedly and systematically went back on solemn agreements .

The last crowning act of betrayal was their tearing up of the agreement which the Sinhalese leaders (including the father of Mr.Ranil Wickremasinghe, the present leader of the UNP) negotiated with some of us of the Federal Party and solemnly entered into in writing in 1965 undertaking to enact legislation granting some semblance of local powers relating to education, Tamil language, employment of Tamils in government service, land in the traditional Tamil homeland of northern and eastern Ceylon, etc. in exchange for the Federal Party supplying the needed majority to the Sinhalese members to form a government and to maintain it in power for the duration of its term.

Towards the tail-end of the term, after availing themselves of the majority provided by the Federal Party to see through Parliament a number of measures which were of great importance to them including a controversial legislation affecting the future of some 525,000 Tamils of the hill country, they formulated proposals under the agreement..

It was when speaking in the debate on the White Paper tabled by the then Prime Minister (later withdrawn by him) containing the proposals purporting to implement the terms of this Agreement that I found it necessary to tell our Tamil people never ,ever again, to trust the Sinhalese leaders. From the forum of Parliament I issued a serious warning to the Tamil people that their future was in danger and that unless the separate state of Tamil Eelam was established for ruling themselves in their homeland territory they would someday become an extinct people in Ceylon. This was in 1968, to be precise.

Now, on the 21st day of December, 1999, the Sinhalese people have spoken, as distinct from the Sinhalese leaders.

Until now the belief has been that it was the selfishly ambitious and chauvinistic feudal leaders of the Sinhalese who resorted to all manner of subterfuges, ruses and dodges to keep solely to themselves the substance of the British transfer of power by deceiving the Colombo-centred Tamil leadership of those days. This belief was strengthened when the Bandaranaike-Ratwatte family took control. First the father, S.W.R.D.Bandaranaike was a master at this game of ruses and dodges, of which I have personal experience. When his mantle of Prime Ministership fell on the mother, Srimavo Ratwatte Dias Bandaranaike, in true feudal tradition, she followed the same technique but was comparatively more blunt. She passed the mantle over to the daughter, ChandrikaRatwatte Bandaranaike Kumaratunga who combined the father's deceptive ways and the mother's bluntness. Whether it was the father or the mother or the daughter, they were the Sinhalese leaders of their times who manipulated the machinery of government.

But now the Sinhalese people have made it known to the world at large in unmistakable terms that there is no possibility of any coexistence of the Sinhalese and the Tamils as equals in the same country, that they alone are the rulers of the island to the exclusion of the Tamils. They have expressed their will to prosecute the war and subjugate the Tamils, no matter how long

it takes or what price they have to pay. Obviously they don't care two hoots if their sons and husbands are killed in their thosands on the battle-fields or being sent home maimed and limbless as so long as aid-money flows in regularly. They know that there are aid-giving western powers which will always make sure that the fat salaries and pensions of the soldiers are received regularly by the parents and wives living in their smug homes far away from the war. They also know that Chandrika Kumaratunga is such a ruthless and inhumanly cruel leader that they believe she alone can make the Tamils beg for peace on bended knees. So they re-elected her for a second term in the certainty that she will continue to deny food, shelter and medicines to thousands of Tamil women and children even if the world accuses her of insensibility.

And yet, surprisingly, voices are frequently heard urging for what are called "talks" with Velupillai Prabhakaran, the supreme sole leader of the Tamils. I do not doubt the sincerity and good intentions of those who raise these voices. **However, nobody should be oblivious to an estimated 65,000 innocent and hapless Tamils massacred in cold blood in what was a planned exercise in genocide excelled only by Adolf Hitler of Nazi Germany and Pol Pot of Cambodia (a Buddhist), or to a further 500,000 driven out of their country to wander throughout the world seeking asylum and sanctuary, or to the unknown number of thousands of women and children turned out of their homes and forced to live in jungles like beasts under trees and pouring rain, or to the group-raping of young women and school girld and then killing and burying their mutilated bodies in mass graves. These are the "military actions for peace" orchestrated by President Kumaratunga and executed by her uncle General Ratwatte through the army under his command.**

I fail to see what is there to talk about, or to what purpose, of course, if there have to be talks, they can only be for partitioning the Island into the state of Tamil Eelam and the Sinhalese state of Sri Lanka which in reality is only a process of undoing the British welding together of the two parts.

It is possible to visualize that Mr.Prabhakaran as leader plenipotentiary of Tamil Eelam and commander-in-chief of the National Army (LTTE) and Mrs.Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga as president and commander-in-chief of Sri Lanka might then find the need to enter into negotiations to agree on a mechanism for partition. In which case they might want to have the discussions in the presence of , and managed by an impartial regulator from a friendly country with an international stature and reputation.

"They re-elected her for a second term in the certainty that she will continue to deny food, shelter and medicines to thousands of Tamil women and children even if the world accuses her of insensibility. "

As far as I can see, Tamil Eelam might want to have two or three matters take precedence to be discussed and concluded :

Tamileelam Archive

1. FIRST, an Agreement fixing the line that would demarcate the international boundary between the two states and their respective territorial waters.

2. SECONDLY, an Agreement on the future of the Tamils slaving on the plantations in the hill country of central Ceylon. most of whom are in "Tri-Sangu", neither-here-nor-there state with no citizenship in any country and no human rights of any sort.

I personally believe and visualize - perhaps it is because I have always been concerned with the status of this sector of our people which I showed when I broke with the Federal Party over this issue - that this entire population without exception would be absorbed into the State of Tamil Eelam and resettled in its territory. It is not difficult to forsee that such a step would be resisted by Sri Lanka because it would cripple the only British legacy which has managed to survive Sinhalese politics and still continue to dominate the country's exports and foreign exchange earnings.

When they withdrew from Ceylon, the British left behind a number of things in a highly organised and efficient state - an excellent administrative system, with a disciplined and efficient Civil and Clerical Service, a Police Service which was disciplined and incorruptible, an education system with a string of first rate schools, a well-organised railway system with a reputation for punctuality, a network of excellently maintained asphalted roads - all and every one of these are in a shambles today, thanks to fifty years of Sinhalese politics.

The only exception to these are the tea estates which are still maintained comparatively in good shape, thanks to cheap Tamil labour which work them, and which are irreplaceable. Even if they are paid ten times the wages paid to the Tamil labour, no Sinhalese women or their menfolk would venture to go out at day break and pick tea leaves or tend tea bushes in chilly, cold mountain slopes.

If the Sinhalese State of Sri Lanka wants to keep the Tamil labour force in the interest of its plantation industry, a system of dual citizenship with consequential and related rights will need to be negotiated and put in place enabling the Tamils to have their family homes in Tamil Eelam and live and work in Sri Lanka.

3. THIRDLY, considerations of national security of the two States and the Island as a whole demand that a defence treaty be negotiated and entered into, in conjunction with India, our immediate and closest neighbour, for common defence against any possible external aggression.

Those who call for "talks" and those who speak of finding a "peaceful solution to the Sinhalese-Tamil conflict" should not however expect Mr.Prabhakaran to throw away the political foundation on which his armed resistance is built and compromise on the question of Sinhalese seizure of Tamil homeland territory.

Older readers may remember that at the partition of the Indian sub-continent the princely state of Kashmir acceded to India, in token of which Maharajah Karan Singh gave New Delhi a solemn legal Instrument of Accession insisted by Sardar Vallabhai Patel. It enraged Pakistan. Upon the first flexing of muscle and seizure of Kashmir territory by Pakistan, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru hastened to the United Nations. There he was prevailed upon to give an undertaking to hold a plebiscite in Kashmir , thereby for all intents and purposes throwing away Karan Singh's Instrument of Accession - a colossal blunder which his successors in New Delhi are still struggling to wriggle out of, and which has caused India to fight three wars with Pakistan.

In Ceylon, at the General Elections of 1977, which significantly was the last time fair and free and peaceful polling was held the Tamils gave a majority vote expressing their will to separate, and establish an independent state of Tamil Eelam. In fact, one electorate, Kayls voted nearly 100 per cent for independence. Surely Prabhakaran cannot be expected to hold "talks" and throw away such a popular mandate from the Tamil people ?

Fifty years of Sinhalese rule has taught us that elections and polls, constitutions and pow-wows do not change the centuries-old racial attitudes of the Sinhalese towards the Tamils. They are of no consequence when one race is determined to exercise hegemony over the other. Observers accustomed to western ways of government might read majority-minority democracy at work in the just concluded Presidential election of December 1999, but what they will not know (because of censorship) is that this brand of democracy has ratified , and given a mandate to continue the military action which forced hundreds of thousands of Tamils deprived of their homes (bulldozed or burnt down) to eke out an existence in jungles without proper food or shelter.

It is of course human to hope and wish for a better and improved future every time a new year dawns. What future the thousands of young men and girls of the LTTE in the battlefields of northern and eastern Ceylon, some of them in their late teens, can hope to have in the year that has just dawned? **Those of us who ventured abroad and made good in life in learned professions or in lucrative employment or in thriving business are apt to forget why they are there, or why they abandoned their college careers and lives of comfort and opted to be there.**

"Fifty years of Sinhalese rule has taught us that elections and polls, constitutions and pow-wows do not change the centuries-old racial attitudes of the Sinhalese towards the Tamils."

Is it because the commanders, the colonels and lieutenants, the captains, the majors, the gunners and fighters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam from the supreme chief Velupillai Prabhakaran down to the lowliest helper in the field are incapable of learning English, German, French or the humanities and the sciences, or the law or the legal systems, or of acquiring University education and higher learning, and become lawyers, doctors, engineers, accountants and the like, if they chose to ? **It is because they are seized by a sense of mission, because they have a burning desire to free themselves and their people from oppression , and because they believe that at least their generation must deny themselves the good things in life and sacrifice even their lives so that the next, and the next and the next may live with dignity and self-respect as proud Tamils.**

Is it too much to ask that they deserve the gratitude and admiration, not to mention the unstinted support of the entire Tamil race ?

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INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY AND 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF TCHR

A PRESS RELEASE from the Tamil Centre for Human Rights, France States:-

International Human Rights Day, December 10th, is a day to reflect collectively on human rights violations all around the world, and to continue to seek new ways to expose them. TCHR holds an event annually on this day, and this year it is particularly significant since it is also the 10th anniversary of TCHR. **During the last ten years TCHR has been working hard to expose human rights violations, by organising events, seminars, interventions in human rights conferences and other activities and by disseminating information widely through monthly bulletins.** Last year TCHR along with human rights organisations round the world commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Today, as we approach the end of this millennium, acutely aware that the gravest violations of fundamental human rights are still occurring, we held two events, one in France and one in the United Kingdom.

In Paris, the commemoration started with the opening of a photographic exhibition. This was followed by speeches by several prominent lawyers, academics and representatives of several other solidarity organizations. The exhibition was comprised of photographs of massacres, cultural genocide and displacement of refugees caused by the Sri Lankan security forces. Many spectators were shocked by some of the photographs in the exhibition. The speeches started with Mr. S. V. Kirubaharan, General Secretary of the Tamil Centre for Human Rights. He gave a brief history and explained to the audience the general task of TCHR. Today the TCHR has became challenging force to the Sri Lankan government in the International human rights arena, he said.

Many French leading lawyers including Mr. Gill Picuqua, Ms Christian Martino and Mr. Somasundaram delivered speeches in this meeting. Mr. Jean Mari-Julia, retired Principal and the French President's National award "Chevallier" winner, delivered a long speech which touched the heart of the audience. He condemned the Sri Lankan government for its extremely bad record on human rights.

In the city of Manchester, in the North of the United Kingdom, a vigil was held in the Peace Gardens near the Town Hall. TCHR and another human rights organisation organised the vigil, which was attended by many other human rights activists, organisations and individuals. Large torch candles were held and the articles of the UDHR were written in bright cards and displayed, alongside lilies, the flowers symbolic of peace. Speakers contributed with poems and readings on the human rights of trade unionists, women, the disabled community, children, the gay community. Refugee communites shared experiences of genocide and human rights violations in many lands. **Deirdre McConnell, director of the International programme of TCHR, spoke on the human rights of Tamils suffering at the hands of the Sri Lankan government armed forces in the island of Sri Lanka. She condemned the Sri Lankan government for its brutal and callous genocide of the Tamil people. Councillor Pat Carney, speaking on behalf of Manchester City Council spoke on the need to respect diversity and all forms of human rights as we move into the new millennium.** He said that Manchester has a tradition of welcoming people of all backgrounds into the city and is proud to have such a diverse and vibrant community. As other speakers did, he reiterated the vital importance of collective gatherings such as the vigil today, to remember human rights violations going on all over the world.

The human rights situation for Tamils in the island of Sri Lanka continues to be horrendous. Aerial bombing of civilian targets, such as places of worship, hospitals and schools, continues. Less than three weeks ago nearly 40 Tamil refugees were massacred by Sri Lankan army bombing, as they sought refugee in the chapel of Madhu church. The 600 persons "disappeared" by the Sri Lankan army, during 1996 in Jaffna, are still unaccounted for. The callous letters to relatives of the two disappeared persons whose skeletons were identified in the mass graves at Chemmani, stating that the whereabouts of these persons is still uncertain, displays the brutal inhumanity and disregard for Tamil lives of the Sri Lankan government. Torture, rape, arbitrary detention and extra-judicial killings of Tamils, by the Sri Lankan government armed forces continue. We hope that as we move into a new century and millenium more voices will join the fervent call for the human rights of the Tamil people and of all peoples to be restored, so that human dignity will prevail.

10 December 1999

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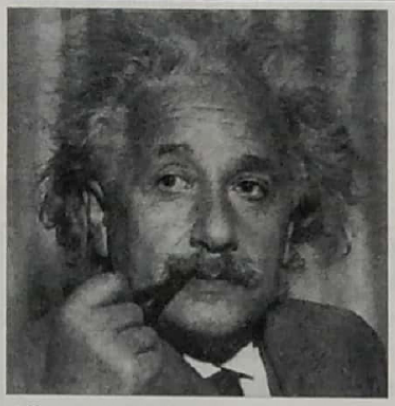
Tamil Centre for Human Rights (TCHR)

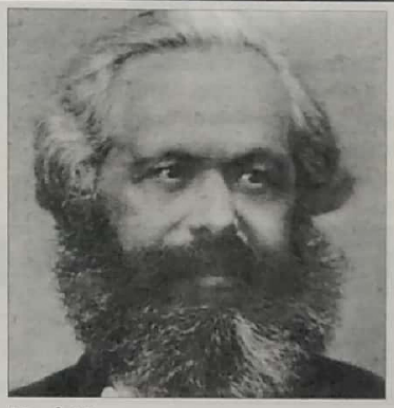
88, College Road, Manchester. M16 8FH, United Kingdom

EINSTEIN IS REUTERS MAN OF THE MILLENNIUM

Gandhi, Marx come joint second followed by Churchill, Newton



Albert Einstein



Karl Marx

Mahatma Gandhi

London: Albert Einstein, the great man of Western science, is Reuters Personality of the Millennium - just ahead of two people who dedicated their lives to dismantling Western institutions: Mahatma Gandhi and Karl Marx.

This is the verdict of leading figures from politics, business, the arts and academia invited by Reuters to select their greatest human being of the past 1,000 years.

"Quantum physics will transform life in future, ", said Terry Waite, a Church of England envoy who spent almost five years as a hostage in Lebanon in the late 1980s and early 90s.

Voting was widely spread with participants voting for 39 candidates but Einstein came out ahead with 15 points, one ahead of Gandhi and Marx. Equal fourth were British World War II leader Winston Churchill and Sir Isaac Newton, who transformed our understanding ofthe universe in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Such surveys cannot, of course, pretend to be scientific when they draw on such a vast subject matter. This millennium, after all, accounts for a fair chunk of recorded human history.

But the survey does allow us a glimpse into the thinking of some prominent people: Who does Bill Gates look up to most, or indeed Arthur C. Clarke, the prophet of the next millennium?

தமிழீழ ஆவணக்காப்பகம்
Tamileelam Archive

BY DAVID STAMP

Albert Einstein's contribution to mathematics and physics is recognised by many, even if it is understood by few. But the originator of relativity theory, born in Germany, later a Swiss citizen and eventually an American, was also a product of his time. "If my theory of relativity is proven correct, Germany will claim me as German and France will declare that I am a citizen of the world," he said in Paris in 1929. "Should my theory prove untrue, France will say that I am a German and Germany will declare that I am a Jew."

Outside his academic life, perhaps Einstein's most fateful decision was to sign a letter in 1939 warning US Present Franklin Roosevelt of the danger that Nazi Germany might develop nuclear weapons. The Allies responded.

Six years later US nuclear bombs fell on Japan and Einstein spent the time leading to his death in 1955 urging control of the new weapons that physics had unleashed. "If only I had known, I would have become a watchmaker," he said.

Few people can deny the West dominated at least the second half of the millennium. Apart from science, two deep influences on the globe have been colonialism and capitalism.

Joint second in the poll - participants were asked to list their top three personalities and then points were awarded - were two men who tried to fight these systems.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi discarded the dark suit of a London-trained lawyer for a loincloth and fought - always through non-violence - British rule of his native India. Gandhi deftly dismissed the comfortable certainties of colonialism on a visit to London in 1930. **Asked what he thought of modern civilisation, he replied: "That would be a good idea."** He succeeded in one respect: India won independence in 1947 and within a couple of decades little remained of the British empire. But bloodshed engulfed his country as it split into India and Pakistan, and Gandhi died at the

hands of a Hindu fanatic.

Karl Marx, the other joint second, deeply influenced global political and economic thought for over a century with The Communist Manifesto and Das Kapital but in the past decade Communism has collapsed. Marx won most votes from respondents in China, where his theories remain officially in favour even if Chinese show more enthusiasm for the free market.

Altogether 34 respondents from 10 countries, ranging from internationally known personalities to figures respected in their own countries, took part in the Reuters survey.

So who did the big names opt for? Microsoft chairman Bill Gates went for someone who revolutionised medical science, the 19th century French bacteriologist Louis Pasteur. In an age when many figures are remembered for how many millions they killed, Pasteur is remembered for the many millions of lives he saved.

"(Pasteur's) discoveries marked the beginning of a complete revolution in medical science, forming the foundation for modern medicine," said Gates.

Jacques Delors, the Frenchman who drove European integration as European Commission president from 1985-94, opted for Leonardo da Vinci, the genius of the Italian Renaissance.

So did British businessman and adventurer Richard Branson. "Almost every aspect of modern life can trace the influence of this one man," said Branson. "He took civilisation from superstition to the scientific and rational in one fell swoop."

Egyptian-born tycoon Mohamed Al Fayed, one scourge of the British establishment, voted for another: Thomas Paine.

(Reuters)

VOICES FROM THE WILDERNESS

Wars are aimed at peace!
The victor is always just.
Conquests usher in prosperity.
Slavery civilises the slaves.
Justice is meant for cultured.
The cleverer will get his riches.
Might is invariably the right.
Majorities are destined to rule.
Struggles are natural for weaker.
The fittest are bound to survive.
Expansions will bring glory.
Forces are intended for defence.
The poor are always the aggressors.
Propaganda has its advantages.

MY GOD ALONE IS SAVIOUR!
MY NATION, RIGHT OR WRONG!

One lie is better than Scriptures!
Laws are worse than cobwebs.
The strong will always escape.
The weak will fall in to the webs.
Ill-starred will end in handcuffs.
Evil genius will be rewarded.
Fool has many things in favour.
The intelligent will never be trusted.
The out spoken will ultimately fall.
The dubious will never be disappointed.
Deceptions will have their demands.
The majorities are entitled for privileges.
The minorities will dream for their rights.
Heroism is classed as devilry.
And self- respect termed as sentiments.
Fundamentalism branded as piety.
And rogues will parade in their robes.
Histories are meant for exams.
Memories are reserved for vanity.
Devastations are made for defence.
Mothers and sisters are muted.
Children and youth are crushed.
Old and sick are to the camps.
Worshipping places for soldiers.
World is made for liberals.
Democracies are safer in debates.
Dealers in arms are blessed.
Enlightened aborigines will rule.
Prophets of the pulp will prosper.
National interests are promoted.

OPPRESSED ARE INSPIRED BY GENESIS.
OPPRESSORS WILL MEET THEIR NEMESIS.

(Written while reflecting on the death of civilians in a Church In Tamil Eelam.) -U.Munusamy, Professor Emeritus, Loyola College, Madras, Tamil Nadu.

தமிழீழ ஆவணக்காப்பகம்
Tamileelam Archive

A Bouquet!

Attn: S. Siva,

By:e-mail

Congratulations on your Oct/Nov "Hotspring" issue. It is fantastic.

Congratulations once again. Keep up the good work.

Prof. & Rani Eliezer
Melbourne, Australia.

Adrian's article: Valuable lessons at eleventh hour

Dear Sir,

Your current issue (Oct/Nov) was so absorbing that I found it difficult to put it down until the last page was read. **Though every one of the articles was thought provoking and incisive I must say that the one written by Adrian Wijemanne simply stood out as an objective analysis where many valuable lessons can be learnt by our Sinhalese compatriots even at this eleventh hour to avoid a total catastrophe. They have to do something quick not for us but for their own community who now stands betrayed and led up the wrong path.** As facts stand the liberation of Eelam Tamils now seems a foregone conclusion. Just a matter of time as the labour pains are already visible. Whether it is a Caesarian or a natural birth is the question.

Thank you again for providing us a medium where our thoughts are meaningfully echoed. **I only wish a parallel one could be published in Tamil for our brethren in both Ceylon and outside who did not have the opportunities we had to learn and use adequately a second language.** This need is more crucial now after the tragic demise of N Atputharajah(Ramesh), Editor of Thinamurasu, which has deprived millions of Tamils of an up to date airing of Tamil opinion inTamil.

Kindest regards
S Mahendran
Ilford, U.K.

Vella Puli strikes again

"BIRTH THROBS AND POST-NATAL PLANS"

North Hykeham
LINCOLN,U.K.

The editorial in the October/November issue of 'Hot Spring', drew our attention to the recent military successes of the LTTE. Since then, there has been further action in the Paranthan area. Only the 'Elephant' remains in the way of the Tigers if they decide to strike northwards to the occupied Jaffna peninsula and do battle once again with the Lions. Jungle warfare in every sense of the word!

During last week, I read, either in the 'Tamil Guardian' or on the pages of www.tamilnet.com that although President Chandrika was moving into top-gear for the elections, her manifesto had, at that time, still not been published. How can you give your vote to support a person or political party before knowing what you are voting for ? In the last elections, Chandrika was backed by a great number of Tamils who felt that her promises would bring peace, justice and democracy to the Island in general and the Tamils in particular. Alas, that was not to be.

If it is true that what we are presently seeing in Sri lanka are "The Birth Throbs Of New Nation State", the LTTE, unlike Chandrika, do have a manifesto ? Much time has been spent in planning for War, what are the plans for the Peace ? Maybe someone of high-standing in the 'movement' could enlighten me, and I suspect, most Sri Lankan Tamils, on what the future might hold.

What would Tamil Eelam be exactly ? Would it be similar to the model that Scotland has adopted; would it be based on the Northern Ireland or Wales model; or is a completely separate state envisaged ? How would the 'border', coastline and existing harbours issues in the proposed Eelam be resolved ? Would the LTTE restore parliamentary democracy with open and fair elections ? What, if anything, would be the role of the other Tamil political parties and their supporters ? Would the new Eelam sign up to the UN Declaration of Human Rights and other International Agreements ?

"PLEASE TELL US ! "

Vellai Puli

(White Tiger)

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LETTERS

"Give us a thousand Ranil Mendis's"

24 December 1999

Dear Editor,

Please permit me to quote a paragraph from a pro-Sri Lankan government website: lhttp://www.lankaweb.com, which appeared on 23 December 1999.

"It is important to realise that the rebels have a cause. The policies in relation to language and education were wrong and discriminatory. Many atrocities have been perpetrated. The riots of July 83, when thousands were killed, and hundreds of thousands displaced, as refugees. Perhaps, even worse was the act of burning the Jaffna Library. A crude and diabolical attempt to stifle the education of the minority community. A highly cultured community, known for their love of learning. The writer is bold and honest enough to state that if he were born in the North, he would be an active member of the LTTE."

The writer is Ranil Mendis. A Sinhalese.

I underlined the last sentence.

When a Sinhalese is honest and bold enough to say that if he were born in the North, he would today be an active member of the LTTE, what does one think of the thousands of Tamils, born in the North, minting money in the U.K and in other countries. Those, calling themselves professionals and making money at the expense of fellow Tamils; those, who equipped of the English education in the early years after independence and equipped themselves in the very North and then migrated to another man's country to prosper themselves, absolutely devoid of any ounce of sympathy for their suffering fellow Tamils back from where they came, refusing to give even a penny to the Tamil cause, lolling in arm chairs, with glasses of whisky and saying that they are "not interested in politics"!

What kind of men are these? Give us a thousand Sinhalese Ranil Mendis anytime, instead of those selfish, callous, shameless, spineless Tamils who when they face their Maker at the end of their lives, will have nothing to declare except their sordid wealth.

A Tamil (name supplied) Purley Surrey U.K.

■ ■ ■

TO READERS IN CANADA, U.S.A., AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

Do you wish to send articles, or letters to HOT SPRING ?Do you wish to advertise in its columns ? Have snippets and social events publicised ? To make things easy for you we have now our own contact addresses in Canada and Australia. Avail yourself of this facility. Remember from now on HOT SPRINg reaches fellow Tamils in many parts of the world.

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FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, SRI LANKA STYLE !

THE BRITISH JOURNALIST WHO WAS JAILED IN SRI LANKA!

Since I have never been inside a British jail, it is difficult to draw comparisons with a Sri Lankan one. But for hilarious bedlam I do not suppose that anywhere begins to match Welikade Prison. Colombo, where I have just spent ten days under suspicion of being an international terrorist and Communist agitator. Welikade Jail (or 'lock-up' in local parlalnce) is a vast and austere compound containing 1500 prisoners on the outskirts of Colombo. Attached to it is a prison hospital, designed like a series of cricket pavilions, and it was here that my two journalist companions and I were remanded. This was regarded as a 'luxury' billet, though luxury is relative; it allowed us access to a draughts board with 17 of its 24 pieces extent.

Since we had bot been charged with anything, beyond being journalists reporting the Tamil war, we relied heavily on the local press for information. The quality newspaper in Sri Lanka is the Colombo Daily News: a curious publication, partly written in Edwardian English, rich in conjunctions, and partly pidgin. The Daily News was very excited by our predicament and revelled in rumour. It was amusing, though eerie, to read that Nicholas David Coleridge, a Briton, is known to have been trained in Moscow; the following day he had developed Palestinian connections; a reference, I deduced, to my first book being published by Naim Attallalh, the Palestinian entrepreneur of Poland Street. Later in the week, for no good reason, the press into Roger Coleridge, and then Roger Coleman to the bemusement of readers transformed Nicholas David Coleridge.

For the new boy in A Sri Lankan jail the first task is to establish which are one's fellow prisoners and which are the guards. Both dress alike and stare in a half-witted manner when you pass by. Several times I was praising the beautiful Sri Lankan climate, with intent to subvert a prison officer, only to discover this was a double murderer. Conversely one would be swapping a little facetious badinage about conditions, only to learn this was the prison governor.

My cell, which was large, was decorated with three pictures of the Buddha, Jesus Christ and Miss Sri Lanka 1964. Of the three, Miss Sri Lanka drew the most comment. The double murderer, our tea boy, has plans to seduce here when he is released in 18 years' time. By then Miss Sri Lanka will be

Benito Mussolini, the Fascist dictator of Italy during the thirties was once credited with the remark: "I'm all for the freedom of the Press. What I cannot stand are the newspapers". President Chandrika Bandaranaike's government has been adopting roughly the same position, except that even her media Minister Mangala Samaraweera is not inclined to say it openly. Not that all Colombo-based newspapers have been lily-white in their behaviour all the time during the past fifty years. In fact, if the relationship between the Sinhalese and the Tamils have now soured to such an extent that Tamils feel living together in peace has become impossible the blame for reducing the country to such a position must go not only to the power-hungry Sinhala politicians but also to the Colombo media.

The first politician to lay violent hands on the Press was Mrs.Bandaranaike, the mother of the present President . President Jayewardene , the first Executive President of the country went one better and tried to ride roughshod over the judiciary as well. It was during Jayewardene's rule that a British journalist found himself inside Colombo's notorius~Welikade jail. Sri Lanka's habit of seeing a terrorist under every bush which persists to this day also began during Jayewardene's time. THE STANDARD, London, in its issue of Monday, February 18, 1985, said: "STANDARD columnist Nicholas Coleridge who has been held in Welikade Prison, Sri Lanka for the last eight days on suspicion of being an international terrorist, was released over the weekend and is back in London.

"The Sri Lankan authorities decided there was no case against Coleridge and two other British journalists who were in the country to make a documentary about the troubles, but advised them to leave the country as soon as possible.

"Coleridge, 27, said on his return that they had been well treated and described the experience as "surreal".

In an article to THE SPECTATOR, this is his account written in hilarious vein:

aged 61.

When you are checking in at a prison most of your belongings are taken away and meticulously listed in a ledger. Since I do not always unpack to the bottom of my suitcase between holidays, some peculiar item had travelled with me. These included a plastic ice cream spoon from a tub at the Haymarket Theatre, a book of matches from the Caprice restaurant and a Daily Express Millionaires Club Card. The Millionaires Club card excited particular interest, since it was believed to be an executive credit card like gold American Express, allowing instant credit of a million pounds. Despite the painstaking inventory of my things, nobody thought to frisk our suit pockets, so we were still in happy possession of 2000 American dollars. This is a fortune in Sri Lanka. Prison guards earn three

Dollars a week, so we felt rather like Noel Coward, in the opening scenes of The Italian Job, strutting about in silk pyjamas in Wormwood Scrubs. The dollars afforded us a constant supply of King coconuts, tinned salmon and Pepsi-cola. There was great rivalry between the guards for the spent bottles for the money back on the empties.

Most afternoons we were visited by Sri Lankan CID to help them with their enquiries. With the exception of a fiendishly cunning Assistant Superintendent. Sri Lankan policemen seemed genial but dozy. We were never interviewed by fewer than six of them at a time and all were determined to get their fair share of questions. Our replies were tape-recorded on a cassette, which ran out half way through each interrogation. Many of the questions were surreal and rarely followed each other in any logical way. How much money have the Tamil Tiger terrorists bribed you? We would be asked. And then: 'Mr Nicholas, how much does your watch cost a duty-free prices? (A peculiar trait of Sri Lankan CID was to address me as 'Mr Nicholas' in the manner of a 19th century housemaid.

In between these interviews some kind of detective work was going on behind the scenes. One afternoon I was informed that the Standard, for whom I had filed a report, had been 'checked up' and found to be a subversive newspaper. Later a copy of the Daily Telegraph, which happened to be in my luggage, was also deemed subversive. 'Where did you get this newspaper?' I was asked. 'A news-agent' I replied. 'Which newsagent?' W H Smith.' Please spell Smith.

My cell, which was large, was decorated with three pictures of the Buddha, Jesus Christ and Miss Sri Lanka 1964. Of the three, Miss Sri Lanka drew the most comment. The double murderer, our tea boy, has plans to seduce here when he is released in 18 years' time. By then Miss Sri Lanka will be aged 61.

My passport, which is a full one, was regularly fingered. A 1976 package holiday to Russia was though highly compromising. 'Where did you go in Russia?' 'Moscow and Leningrad.' 'How did you travel?' 'By train.' 'Aha, so you confess you were trained in Russia.'

The tone of these interrogations was volatile. One moment it was self-effacing; we are a simple and peaceful nation, Mr Nicholas. Look out of the window, so you see any terrorists?' (From CID headquarters all you could see was sky). But it could change in seconds: 'don't you realise that we're at war, Mr Nicholas? There is a state of emergency. We have extraordinary powers. We're fighting for our survival against these terrorists.

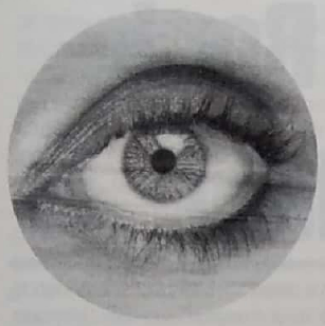
Something that I like about journalism is its limited attention span. The journalist concentrates his mind on a story for a few days or weeks, and then forgets most of it as soon as it's filled and moves on to a new article. The Sri Lankan CID for not share my journalistic outlook, and it became rather tiresome, as time went by, to persist in flogging a dead Tamil horse. Even my dexterous demonstration of American break dancing failed to distract them for long.

One of the prison officers was a particularly agreeable chap. His English was perfect and we lent him Agatha Christie novels. Like all senior officers at Welikade he apologised several times a day for our being there at all, and said he did not know what the country was coming to. We, being well-mannered prisoners, said: 'Honestly, it doesn't matter at all, don't worry, ten days in your delightful prison is no inconvenience.' Another guard showed us photographs of his father, a civil servant under British ruler, who had made the crucial century in an inter-departmental cricket match. In the evening we set up coconut shies, using upturned king coconut shells, and pelted them with rolled-up socks. This event was keenly enjoyed by everyone at Welikade and promised to become an established prison pastime.

One night, on our way back from a particularly abstruse interrogation at police headquarters, we were taken to a Chinese restaurant. This was a peculiar episode. First the road around the restaurant, the Nanking, was cleared of all vehicles and sealed by jeeps and guards brandishing Kalashnikov machine guns. Then the poor waiter, shivering with fright, was escorted outside to take our order through the car window (we were not allowed to leave the back seat). Presently several bowls of shark's fin and crab soup were carried out, having first been dragged for secret messages, followed by Chinese fish and chips. The final scene of this comic meal was the waiter bawling after the jeep as we sped away: 'No tips! Why, oh why, do policemen never leave no tips?'

After ten days in Welikade it was eventually conceded that evidence for our being international terrorists was rather limp, so the airport was indicated instead. An ominous development in Sri Lanka at the moment is an allergy to journalists; two French reporters were being deported on the same flight as us. Nevertheless, despite the daft clowning of the Government, I greatly look forward to returning to Ceylon; it is a delightfully sultry island for a spot of winter sun .

Tamileelam Archive



An invitation to readers

Peering into the future:

WHAT WILL 2010 A.D. BE LIKE TO THE EELAM TAMILS ?

The Tamil experience in Sri Lanka during the latter half of the 20th century has been largely one of mental and physical suffering. From the time the numerically larger Sinhalese took over power from the hands of the British colonialists in 1948, Tamils have experienced discrimination in employment, discrimination in higher education, denial of promotions in the public sector, the whittling down of their traditional homelands through State-sponsored Sinhala colonisation, mob riots, State terror, an increasing denial of basic human rights, deaths, destruction and near genocide. They have become refugees both within their own homeland as well as in the big, wide world outside. Their lives have been shattered, families have been broken up and dispersed, and what was once an orderly society has been reduced to rootlessness.

Today, as they stand at the doorstep of a new century and a new millennium, what does the future hold for them? Is it not important that we address our minds to the future ?

We pose these questions to our readers. Ten years into the 21st century - that is, in 2010 - what do YOU think will be the position of Eelam Tamils ? Will they continue to be scattered around the world as they are today ?

What proportion of Tamils who live in foreign lands are likely to retain their Tamil identity ? What proportion of the second and third generation Tamils are likely in your opinion to end up as brown Englishmen and brown Englishwomen, unable to feel a sense of belonging either to their ancestral land or to the one they chose to live in?

Will an independent Tamil Eelam be a reality in 2010 A.D. ? If so, what kind of country will it be ? Will it be a friendly neighbour of Sri Lanka or will there be a state of permanent hostility between the two countries ?

If you doubt the existence of an independent Tamil Eelam by that time, what reasons can you think of that would give credence to your doubt? For example, there is a belief in the minds of some that India would never allow the emergence of an independent Tamil Eelam state next to Tamil Nadu because that could endanger the stability of the Indian Union. Do you agree or disagree with that view ? What kind of relationship Eelam Tamils would have with India and more specially with Tamil Nadu at that point of time ?

What will also be the situation in Sri Lanka in 2010 A.D.? Will it be a prosperous, thriving democracy, or one riven by internal dissensions ?

We invite HOT SPRING readers to put on their thinking caps and arrive at the answers in the way they honestly feel. In short, HOT SPRING invites you to become prophets, political astrologers, or even false prophets, or even dreamers and futurologists, but WRITE to us what you think. Remember, nothing is going to happen to you, even if you go wrong ten years hence.

Please give your names and addresses for the sake of authenticity even if you dont want your names or addresses in print.

Thank you .

Malaysian Tamils Back the Cause of Eelam

PROF P. RAMASAMY

Department of Political Science
National University of Malaysia

Long distance Tamil nationalism is certainly a crucial factor behind the struggle for Tamil Eelam being waged by the LTTE. As its leader Prabhakaran has said a number of times, the eventual creation of Eelam would be testimony to the spirit and imagination of Tamil Diaspora. This poweful statement by the LTTE has given the struggle for Eelam an international basis. More than this, it has provided for both material and intellectual support for the emancipation of Tamils long accustomed to the Sinhala state oppression. Among the Tamil Diaspora, Malaysian Tamils figure prominently in sustaining the quest for Eelam.

Tamils in Malaysia, descendants of labourers brought by the British to work in the plantation, constitute about 10 percent of the total population, about 1.7 million. A very small section of the Tamil speaking population are descendants of those brought from Sri Lanka (Ceylon) by the British to fill in clerical and supervisory roles in the colonial administration. Today they are popularly known as Ceylonese or Jaffna Tamils. Due to the Eelam war, more and more of them are identifying as Tamils. For a long time there was this gap between these two groups of Tamils on the basis of socio-economic differences. While the Ceylonese sought to distance themselves from the Indian Tamils on class lines, the latter disliked the former's one time close association with the British.

Tamil Relief Fund

Thanks to the Eelam war, the relationship between the two groups of Tamils have been improved to some extent. Although class and status distinctions continue to prevail, some sense of ethnic solidarity has been built. Earlier the support for the Eelam cause was quite patchy. Members of the Ceylonese community provided material support on a clandestine basis, either individually or collectively. However, with the entrance of Indian Tamils in support of the LTTE, the nature of support has become much open and to some extent formalised. The formation of various organisations such as the Tamil Relief Fund and others have contributed to a situation where support for Eelam has become more concretised and sustained. Today the support for Eelam takes many forms, some known and some unknown. The more visible nature of support includes activities organised to gather funds, the holding of forums and meetings to provide publicity, the distribution of pamphlets and video cassettes, and others. Every year, during the famous Thaipusam festival in Kuala Lumpur that attracts thousands of pilgrims, a special place has been reserved by the temple officials for the collection of funds for Tamil refugees in Sri Lanka.

தமிழ் ஆவணக்காப்பகம்
Tamileelam Archive

Tamils in Malaysia are fully behind the struggle for Eelam. The devious propaganda unleashed by the Sri Lankan Mission has not affected their support; on the contrary, the support is growing day by day. There are basically three principal reasons why Tamils are behind the Eelam cause. First, as an exploited group in Malaysia, the Tamils more than any other group, fully understand the plight of their brethren in Sri Lanka. And being a class that has nothing much to loose in a material sense, they are much bolder in their support for the cause unlike the middle-class Tamils. **It would not be wrong to say that Tamils, particularly the youth segment, have very high regards for the LTTE leadership in general and its supremo Prabhakaran in particular. Tamils in Malaysia consider Prabhakaran as their hero; the presence of his pictures or portraits are becoming a common feature in the homes of Tamil youths. In the pro-LTTE demonstrations organised in Malaysia some years back, Prabhakaran pictures were displayed quite prominently so much so the police were quite upset.**

Longing for change

Second, the socio-economic deprivation and the political marginalization have affected the performance of the Tamil community. Tamils, despite their sacrifice and hard work, have not rewarded like the other ethnic groups. While the Malays are looked after by the government and the Chinese have a strong presence in the economy, Tamils largely being members of the working class have been robbed off their meaningful share. Not only have lost out economically to other ethnic groups, employment opportunities have been denied both in the public and private sector. The pro-Malay policies of the government have discriminated against Tamils being meaningfully employed in the different sectors of the economy. Beyond this, Tamils are finding it difficult to erect places of worship and have curbs placed on their cultural activities. Their own leaders have not really championed their cause. Many

of them by closely accommodating to the Malay elite have fundamentally neglected the welfare and wellbeing of the community. Thus, given this scenario, it is no wonder that Tamils longing for meaningful change have become quite radicalised. Their admiration for the LTTE have grown by leaps and bounds over the recent years. In fact, many of them secretly wish that they had a militant organisation to take up their cause.

Third and not the least, the selfless struggle waged by the LTTE, the utter dedication of its leaders, the disciplined nature of their performance and others have not been lost on the Tamil population in Malaysia. The role of LTTE has given Tamils here much pride and dignity as Tamils. In short, LTTE has been a fantastic morale booster to Tamils in Malaysia. The LTTE leadership stands in stark contrast to the kind of Tamil leadership in Malaysia. Tamils leaders in Malaysia are not only corrupt but totally an indecent lost. Lacking the moral integrity and pride, these leaders have sold the community outright.

"The role of the LTTE has given Malaysian Tamils Much pride and dignity"

By accommodating closely with their Malay patrons, they have become alienated from the rank and file. In fact, it will be a truism to state that Tamil political parties and organisations have not done anything for the betterment of the community from the time of political independence; but on the contrary, they have endorsed the racist policies of the Malay state.

About 75 percent of Tamils are members of the working class—both in the plantations and urban areas. Tamils share of the national equity is only about 1.5 percent; a share predominately held by rich Tamils who have no sense of solidarity with the working class. All in all, Tamils have been neglected for about 100 years, and if such a neglect is not addressed in coming years, Tamils might think of some alternative plans to improve their lot. As one former Tamil politician remarked some years ago: "We Tamils may be poor, but we are not cowards". In a recent cultural event held at one of the universities, a Tamil student leader remarked at the end of his speech in Tamil: "If the government is not going to address our educational and cultural grievances, then we will have choice but to plant the ....flag".

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A MESSAGE TO OUR DEAR ONES LANGUISHING IN OUR HOMELAND

Tamileelam Archive

A friend of HOT SPRING from Maryland, U.S.A. has sent us greetings of the season, and enclosed in the card was the above message.

Titled - OUR GIFT OF HOPE FOR YOU, AS YOU & WE WAIT, the message runs as follows:

In your tremendous loss and grief,
In your deep pain and hurt,
We, the Tamils living outside Sri Lanka
Are deeply pained and we suffer with you.

As you suffer without an end in sight
You may not dream of celebrating
The festivals of Christmas and New Year
Then how could we ?

Since we experience the same "darkness"
We shall wait with you
Till the Redeemer is born to us
And indeed, liberation will come to us
In what shape and manner
We still do not know.

But we will WAIT with you in HOPE
And this HOPE is our Christmas and New Year.

" SACK SRILAL, BOOT RATWATTE & DUMP KADI"

SENSIBLE ADVICE TO MADAME PRESIDENT !

"President Kumaratunge . . . . stop fighting. There is no point trying to gain ground if you can't keep it. Consolidate the defences around your major camps, close down the others and launch attacks solely against identified Tiger bases. You will lose territory, but not many troops: and ordinary Tamils will realise slowly that you are not attacking them.Especially if you never bomb or shell civilian areas. The nationalist segments of the military will object. So, sack Srilal Weerasooriya.(He commanded Jaffna during the Chemmani murders and should have been court-martialled a long time ago). Recommend the other racist brass to retire (and join the Veera Vidhana if they are so inclined).

"Many professional officers know this war cannot be won Listen to them - not to those who advise you out of ideology or personal aspiration. Boot Anuruddha Ratwatte. Nobody takes him seriously including the Kandy voter (I presume you know the official count was somewhat exaggerated.) Promote him to Field Marshal as compensation.

"While you are about it, dump Lakshman Kadirgamar as well. He accepted the Foreign Ministry hoping it'll lead him to the UN secretary-generalship. He can start his campaign early. Replace him with someone credible, passionate and articulate who'll consceiving his task not just as justifying the Sinhalese to the world, but as one explaining the Tamil cause to the Sinhalese. Your cabinet desperately needs a Tamil motivated by conviction rather than ambition.

"On this subject, stop backing Douglas Devananda. He represents only his bank account

""If you are genuinely committed to a multi-ethnic Sri Lanka, you would insist that the Sangha restricts its public pronouncements to matters of religion. If you truly want to stop hatred, you must make them stop meddling in politics. These actions will send a message to the Tamil people, but they are not enough.

"Stop the restrictions on essential items to the Wanni. Using food as a weapon is truly base. Stop requiring civilians to get permission to travel to and from the north. Requiring passes is reminiscent of apartheid South Africa. Yes, LTTE cadre will then find it easier to get to the south (Though they don't seem to find it difficult now). So enhance security at checkpoints. To prevent abuse of Tamil civilians, a human rights official should monitor every point; actually one should be attached to every military encampment and police station in the country. If there'nt enough Sri Lankan volunteers, get them from Norway or the Quakers.

தமிழீழ ஆவணக்காப்பகம்
Tamileelam Archive

"Other initiatives are also necessary on this front. The Prevention of Terrorism Act must be repealed. It is truly an obnoxious piece of legislation - and nobody can claim it has prevented terrorism these past twenty years..

"Release all Tamil political prisoners. Some Tigers will go free - but they don't have a problem with recruitment anyway - and the bulk of the bulk of the emancipated would be innocent. This is one gesture that he Tamil people will certainly appreciate....

"Right now, their vote is evidence that ordinary Tamils found your first term a disaster. If you want this to change, so must your policy.It's about time you realised that there ain't no such thing as a war for peace. "

(Above are excerpts from an article written by columnist Qadri Ismail in the Colombo newspaper SUNDAY LEADER in its issue of December 26, 1999).

SOUTH AFRICANS REMEMBER TAMIL EELAM MARTYRS

Almost 1,000 South African Tamils participated with enthusiasm at the Karthigai Deepam celebrations at Chatworth Sports Stadium in Durban, South Africa, on 27th November when the Tamil Eelam martyrs were remembered . It is believed to be the largest single gathering of Tamils in South Africa this century.

The bombing of Saiva temples and other places of worship by the Sri Lankan military was condemned at the meeting as was atrocities committed by the Sri Lankan government on Tamil civilians, including women and children.

Mr.D.Maduray outlined the historical background of the conflict in Sri Lanka in a manner that was undersatandable to the people. Many people in South Africa are yet unaware of the gravity of the human suffering imposed on the Tamil people as a consequence of the war waged by the Sri Lankan government against the Tamil nation. It was evident that Mr.Maduray's speech left a deep impression on all those present.

Tamil stalwarts such as Mr.Maya Vinothan, Mr.Dharmalingam, Mr.Jeevaratnam and Mr.Ruban lit candles as a symbol of hope for the Tamils of Eelam, while the audience observed a minute's silence in memory of the Tamil heroes who had given up their lives in the cause of freedom.

The Karthigai Deepam celebrations thereafter continued into the night with music provided by over 300 South African talents and a massive fireworks display.

AN OPEN LETTER TO KUMARATUNGA

G.G. PONNAMBALAM

"Your speech reflects your hatred"

I refer to your Victory Speech of 22-12-99 on your election, once again, as President.

I write as a Tamil Eelavan. But more importantly, I write as an unalloyed and unrepentant supporter of the political philosophy of the LTTE and as one who, with that conviction, lives in the South. I write as one who has publicly stated this position of mine not only within this island but also without, and both verbally and in writing. **I write as one whom you have recognized in your speech.** And, I write as one who refuses to be deterred by the naked threats that dot your speech.

Permit me to tell you that your speech reflects the hatred that you have, only too readily, recognized in others.

Your speech is nauseatingly replete with one word - "peace". But the tenor of your speech is anything but one that is, in any way, conciliatory or given to peace.

You have sent a clarion call to all your "Tamil brothers and sisters" with outstretched hands of friendship. This shows your stark insincerity if one only recalls your speech made many moons ago when you inaugerated the Sama Tawalama at Anuradhapura with the unacceptable posture that this island is Sinhala land and Buddhist country.

You refer to 18th December 1999 as "the night that will go down in history as the night this land was touched by the hand of darkness one too many times". You indulge in this rhetoric because it happens to concern you. Do you not realize that there are thousands of widows in Tamil Eelam to whom certain nights have gone down, in their own lives, as nights that have been touched by the hand of darkness caused by your machinations as Commander-in-Chief of your armed forces?

You have challenged "those who doubt (your) resolve to lift the curse of hatred and death that has fallen upon (this) land" to look you in the face now and voice our doubts about the sincerity of the desire to forge permanent peace. I hasten, with this letter, to say just that to you with all the vehemence I command. I am fortified in this statement by your victory speech itself.

You want to finish the LTTE. Please do so, if you can. With that will go, for all times, any prospect of permanent peace in this island. Your election results shows ruthlessly that all Tamils, not only Tamil Eelavar but also the Upcountry Tamils, not only do not want you because they do not trust you anymore, but also do not want a political solution from you. This is an indictment on all your postulations of wanting to forge permanent peace.

Just take your peace packages. There were three in as many years, during the first three years after the commencement of your tenure. For the next two years, there was not a murmur about those packages. Even those three packages were diluted with each subsequent appearance! Surely, anyone who has a genuine desire to bring about a political solution will not trifle with packages every summer? One stands or falls with just one.

You say that you see very clearly "the enemy that walks so freely" in this island, and you identify that enemy as "hatred". No, the enemy you see are the Tamils in this island. Thank God this is reciprocated by every Tamil worth his salt. This has also been evidenced by the election results.

You boast that "the entire LTTE terrorist enterprise will fail" against you but, in the same breath, you contradict yourself pathetically by wanting the Tamils to bring Prabakaran to the negotiating table. You have played ducks and drakes for far too long about whether you want to talk to the LTTE or not. Political maturity demands that you and your Government finally state whether you want to talk to the LTTE, unconditionally, or not. It is only when this is known definitely will anybody move in this matter.

If talking to the LTTE at the negotiating table is your honest position, then

your outburst about "cowards of the LTTE" and "terrorist cowards" or your urge to wipe out the LTTE, must surely be counter productive.

By all means "clear away the culture of terror and death", which has become the way of life in this island thanks to the Sinhalese who first showed everybody the way in June 1956. But you will realize immediately, as everybody in this island realizes, that you will have to start doing so at your very own doorstep in the first instance, before you decide to go anywhere near the LTTE!

May I close by referring to your constant refrain about bringing about peace. If you are hoping to bring about peace through any one of your packages, please forget it. The Tamils have shown unmistakably that they are not interested in you or in your peace packages.

In fact, if the Tamils are worth their salt, they will not want anything dished out by you, or for that matter, by your adversary. Why should we? We Tamils were not born to depend on the "benevolence" of the Sinhalese or on what they choose to dish out to us. A part of this island rightfully belongs to the Tamils, in as much as the other part rightfully belongs to the Sinhalese. This must be appreciated by the Sinhalese.

As far as the Tamils are concerned, they in turn, must appreciate that if their aspirations hold that as a Nation they have the right to self-determination and that that right is inalienable in that it is born with them, then they must have the political wisdom, strength and sagacity to exercise that right and decide their own political future themselves. They have, for far too long, looked to peace packages, negotiating tables and anything offered or dished out by the Sinhalese. This beggarly attitude must go. The sooner it goes, the better it is for the Tamils.

The Tamil Nation has, through the Delegation of the Tamil People, solemnly informed the world about its aspirations in August 1985 at Thimpu. To go back on that position will be tantamount to compromising future generations of Tamils yet unborn. The present generation does not have the right to compromise future generations. Any signal that would give the Sinhalese the idea that the Tamils are not serious about their aspirations, or that they are climbing down, will be an act of treachery. The present generation does not seem to tolerate such treachery or to take kindly to traitors.

May I end by saying that, on the basis of what I have just stated I, personally, have got disgusted and tired of talks, third party intervention, etc. My considered conviction is that a political solution to the Tamil Problem is in the hands of the Tamils themselves and only in their hands and that the Sinhalese and Tamils can continue to live in this island and in peace only if they live in two definite and distinct compartments each minding their own business unfettered by the other. Only such an arrangement will prove relevant that great quotation on peace you have used in your speech:

"Peace is a battle.

Peace is never given freely, never acquired.

Its conquest is the result of courage and of respect for others.

It demands awareness and commitment from everyone.

Peace is not the law imposed by the mighty, but that which is founded on equality and dignity of all peoples."

PROMOTING PEACE IN SRI LANKA

Bosnia, Chechnya, Kosovo, East Timor - these are the civil and inter-communal wars that have aroused horror and sympathy in the past few years. But in Sri Lanka there is another internecine conflict no less tragic, a war that has waxed and waned intermittently since 1983, destroying more than 60,000 lives.

Now with the results in from Tuesday's presidential election and Chandrika Kumaratunge re-elected with a dramatically reduced majority of only 51 percent, the time is ripe for an international peacemaking initiative. All the humanitarian justifications for saving lives in Kosovo, Bosnia, East Timor, and Chechnya apply in the conflict between the Sinhalese majority in Sri Lanka and the Tamil minority. Civilians, conscripts, and victims of terrorist bombings all deserve to be saved from a senseless repetition of murder and mayhem that can be ended only by a negotiated solution.

Chandrika, as the president is known to her compatriots, was elected five years ago as the leader who would bring peace to Sri Lanka. But instead of trying to end the killing by granting autonomy to the Tamil areas in the north and east of the country, she yielded to hard-line arguments for a decisive military solution. In turn, the Tamil Tigers have shown no willingness to end their campaign of murder and terror.

In a scorched earth offensive this year, government troops occupied most of the Tamil homeland. But this fall the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam overran one government post after another. It should be clear by now that the government's tactics succeeded only in driving the moderate Tamil population of the north and east into the hands of the Tigers. The war is unwinnable.

The time has come for third-party mediation. Washington is unwilling to play that role, but just as Norway originally midwifed the Oslo accords between Israelis and Palestinians, an impartial country could mediate peace talks. Such talks should be preceded by a cease-fire, a withdrawal of government troops, and the provision of food and medical aid to civilians in the north and east. If the principle of an international humanitarian obligation is to have any meaning, it must be applied consistently.

Courtesy: Boston Globe, Thursday, December 23, 1999

C.THARMAKULASINGAM
Jaffna's Pioneer Revolutionary

The island of Ceylon bred many Marxists and revolutionaries during British colonial rule of the 1930s. They consisted of two kinds, one,-the "fashionable" foreign-returned ones who knew their Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky by heart and who wore their Marxism in their sleeves: men such as Dr.N.M.Perera (London School of Economics and favourite pupil of the renowned Harold Laski); Philip Gunawardene (Wisconsin, U.S.A.), once hailed as the "Father of Marxism", but later to descend into racism; and Pieter Keuneman (Cambridge University), the charming cricketing Communist, who, along with men like Dr.N.M.Perera kept heralding a revolution that was round the corner, but soon got tired of it and succumbed to the lure of Ministerial office under the anti-Tamil government of Mrs.Bandaranaike.

The second kind were the home-grown ones, sprung from the grassroots, more closely attuned to the native soil than to the highfalutin theory of world revolution. The subject of this tribute - the late C.Tharmakulasingam - belonged to the second category. "Jeyam", as he was popularly known in the hardy Vadamarachchy area of northern Jaffna, was basically a born rebel. A lawyer by profession, coming from a highly regarded family in his native Puloly in Point Pedro, happily endowed like his lawyer brothers with good looks, he yet rebelled against the encrusted social values of the very affluent, conservative society from which he came. He was a fighter against casteism, a champion of the underdog, and the foremost architect of Trade Unionism in the North. He incurred the wrath of a privileged few,

BY S.SIVANAYAGAM

but was worshipped like a demi-god by the under-privileged mass of people, and the downtrodden and the working class.

Many a Jaffna bus traveller of that time would remember how bus drivers had pictures of Hindu gods and goddesses framed and mounted on top facing their seats. In the same row among the gods and goddesses, there will also be a framed photograph of "Comrade Jeyam" ! - such was the reverence with which the workers of the bus companies of the time looked upon the late Tharmakulasingam. In fact it was he who was the founder of the Bus Workers' Union, and it was to him the bus workers carried their grievances. He was their leader and their mentor, and their Messiah. Those were the days of private bus companies and worker exploitation. Those were also the times when caste discrimination was at its highest. **But interestingly enough, ethnic consciousness was never a divisive factor in those early years, neither in Jaffna nor in the rest of the island. Class consciousness was uppermost, compounded of course by caste differences.**

Tharmakulasingam was a member of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), in fact the party's only leading representative in Jaffna. Founded in December 1935, it was the LSSP that pioneered Marxism in the country and turned Trotskyist in the late 30s, in protest against Moscow's attempts to make national Communist parties instruments of Soviet foreign policy. The Communist Party proper was a later creation. Tharmakulasingam who was born in 1910 was thus 25 years old when the LSSP was born, and being Left-inclined it was the only party that could have claimed his political loyal-

ty, given his background of Trade Union activity.

He contested the Point Pedro parliamentary seat at the 1947 General Elections on the LSSP ticket, and although he polled well on his personal popularity, he lost because Jaffna could never accept a Marxist party candidate. The single exception was the election of P.Kandiah who stood as a Communist Party candidate at the 1956 elections and won his seat at Point Pedro. His party label however was not what brought him to parliament. **While the Sinhala South had a volatile workforce and a long-standing tradition of Left politics, Jaffna had a settled agrarian economy and an inbuilt ressistance to any change, and was hardly suitable soil for Communism to take root. Staging a revolution in Jaffna would have been like trying to set fire to an iceberg !**

It is not given to every man to achieve anything in life even if he lives to his full life span of eighty or more.

But to be snatched from life at the young age of 38 - when the productive years were ahead of him - and yet to make a mark in life, was an achievement in itself. And now to be remembered 50 years after his death, that is an honour not earned by many.

Mr.Tharmakulasingam passed away in 1949, an year after the island got independence. Had he lived, he would still be 89, an age to which many live. But at least he was spared the trauma that the Tamil people had been going through since the country got independence. He was also spared the pathetic sight to which his own party had shrunk.

His was a life, so brief, and yet so well-lived. May his spirit live in all of us.

(From the booklet published in memory of Jeyam Tharmakulasingam on his 50th death anniversary , to be released at a function in Sydney,, Australia on 8th January 2000. The function willbe for the purpose of inauguating a Tamil memorial project called "Anantha Nilauyam" Details alongside.)

■ ■ ■

"ANANTHA NILAYAM"

a project for the new millennium

A proposal to set up an international memorial cultural centre in Sydney, Australia, that would encompass Tamils all over the world, irrespective of religion, place of birth or nationality has been mooted. It is envisaged that the centre would include a Conference Hall, a mini Theatre, and administrative office facilities.

The Centre would primarily be a "Ninavalayam" to honour and remember Tamils who had donated their lives, Life, Time , Wealth, Skills and Knowledge to promote and safeguard the land, language and culture of the Tamils whereever they lived. They could be categorised under such heads as : Social reformers, Martyrs, Scholars, Journalists, Poets, Creative people, Spiritual leaders etc.

Among other objectives that the sponsors of the project have identified are:

1) To look back with pride at the achievements of the past so that they could provide inspiration for Tamil excellence in various fields in the future

2) To recognise and identify our people who are down trodden and less fortunate and find ways and means to raise them to better living

3) To help to ensure the second and third generation of Tamils in the West do not forget the Tamil heritage and make them conscious of their roots and their duty to the motherland from where they evolved

4) To help break the various barriers among our own people, based on religion and caste and promote harmonius living

An association for the purpose of furthering the project will function from 18, Rochester Street, Homebush, NSW 2140, Australia The organisers welcome support, suggrestions from well-wishers from around the world.

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Pre- election Media Comment
November 23, 1999

The Guardian

THE WAR WE ALL FORGET

The slaughter in Sri Lanka is unabated

The cost of Sri Lanka's bitter, 16-year old civil war is generally put at 58,000 dead. That is a horrific figure in a country with a population of only 19m. And the total edged up a little at the weekend when 42 people among 3,500 sheltering in a church compound at Madhu were killed by artillery. The army blamed the Tamil Tigers, who are fighting for an independent state in the north; the Tigers blamed the military. An independent massacre investigation is unlikely. Journalists are routinely denied access to the war zone, and President Chandrika Kumaratunga's government is struggling to keep the lid on as presidential elections on December 21 draw near. The Tigers' latest, so far successful offensive, code-named "Unceasing Waves III", has cruelly underscored Mrs.Kumaratunga's failure to fulfil her 1994 pledge to negotiate an end to the war.

Not that anyone else seems likely to do better. When it comes to Velupillai Prabhakaran, the Tigers' ruthless leader, Sinhalese and Tamil democrats are at a disadvantage. His movement relies on terror rather than consent. Its victims include president Ranasinghe Premadasa, India's Rajiv Gandhi, and many political moderates. Mr.Prabhakaran is not interested in a negotiated solution. He wants unconditional victory. Following another Tiger massacre in Gonagala last September, some fear the Tigers may be turning to ethnic cleansing.

Sri Lanka challenges those who advocate global, humanitarian intervention. Bill Clinton is one; he promised again in Istanbul last week that in future, nations would not stand idly by as others suffered. But just as Russia's Chechen was is too "big" a problem to get involved in, so Sri Lanka is too small and unimportant . **Why isn't the UN intervening ? Where is the US "special envoy" ?, as in Cyprus or Northern Ireland ? What is the Commonwealth doing ? Sri Lanka is caught in the credibility gap between feelgood doctrines and realpolitik. "**

Letters ***The GUARDIAN published the following reader response: November 26 1999***

TIGERS OF WAR

It is surprising to find the Guardian suddenly awakening to the 16-year old war in Sri Lanka (Leader, November 23) just at a time when the war is going against the Sri Lanka government. Where were you when the "58,000 dead" - mostly Tamil civilians - were getting killed by the Sri Lankan armed forces those 16 years ? To talk of Mr.Prabhakaran's "terror" when his Liberation Tiger forces are overrunning one military camp after another in open war, is semantic confusion or what is worse, one of misplaced solicitude towards an oppressive government.

S.Sivanayagam
London.

Post-election comment

December 23 1999

IN BY A WHISKER

The president's strategy fails in Sri Lanka

"Wounded by a suicide bomber, Sri Lanka's president Chandrika Kumaratunga has narrowly avoided being fatally wounded by the electorate. She won a new mandate yesterday with just 51% of the vote, a massive drop from the total she enjoyed when she swept to powerfive years ago. Whether she won extra votes through a burst of sympathy for her escape from death is not clear, but the reasons for disappointment in her five-year tenure are obvious. Although the country's economy has picked up, president Kumaratunga has failed to end the 16-year long civil war either by negotiation with the Tamil Tiger insurgents or by military victory, and it was on her promise to bring peace that she was first elected.

The president's strategy has been to undermine support for the Tigers by offering to devolve power to the regions in the hope that local autonomy would satisfy Tamil moderates. But the plan has been repeatedly blocked by the parliamentary opposition, the United National Party (UNP) whose leader she beat in this week's presidential election. By calling that vote early, she wanted to pave the way for an early parliamentary poll and win enough of a majority to be able to change the constitution. With her narrow margin of support yesterday, that now looks unlikely.

Even if devolution took place, it would not be enough to satisfy the Tigers. Six months ago another suicide bomber killed Neelan Thiruchelvam, a well-known human rights activist and Tamil moderate who supported the devolution package, albeit with reservations. Neither atrocity has been claimed by anyone, but suspicuion must point to the Tigers. They apparently want to intimidate Tamils into rejecting devolution. The president is still caught between the UNP's insistence on maintaining a unitary state and the Tigers' demands for secession.

It is sometimes said that the country's elite makes too little effort for peace. Although sporadic bombs and the attacks on leaders break Colombo's calm, the war is largely confined to the remote north-east of the island. Unemployment tempts peasant boys to volunteer so that conscripting the middle class is not needed. Censorship keeps the war off the screen. Yet the charge of complacency is unjust. President Kumaratunga is trying, but the odds are not yet in her favour.".

தமிழீழ ஆவணக்காப்பகம்
Tamileelam Archive

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS.....

"There is no doubt whatsoever that this year would bring us peace, national harmony, equality and prosperity if we discard insular, politically-motivated ideas and uphold the goal of achieving development"

- President Chandrika Kumaratunga in a New Year message to the country, January 1, 1999, quoted by AFP.

❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁

"I give an assurance to this House and the people that this government...(will) finally reach the much-desired goal of defeating terrorism and usher in a new era of peace in this memorable year"

- Sri Lankan Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte, speaking in Parliament on January 7, during the monthly debate to extend emergency regulations island-wide.

❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁

"The Vanni district parliamentarian Dharmalingam Siddharthan opined that with the launch of "Operation Ranagosa" recently, the entire Vavuniya district has been liberated from the grip of the LTTE".

- Ananth Palakidnar reporting for the government owned SUNDAY OBSERVER, March 14.

❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁

"There's a very simple way to defeat the once invincible LTTE. Take away the civilian population under the control of the LTTE from which the Tigers recruit their fighters. No more civilians to recruit from means no more recruits. As existing cadres are killed in battle, the LTTE gets smaller and smaller until one day it will be too small to hold on to any significant land area".

- Piece of wisdom by THE ISLAND's "Defence Correspondent", THE ISLAND, March 28

❁ ❁ ❁ ❁

1999 Quotes

"Who wants to die for Velupillai Prabhakaran ? He is one of the great losers of history. He failed to hold together his elusive homeland in Jaffna, and he failed to build in its place a Greater Eelam. In the past 14 years, he has launched three wars with no success in sight. He is currently on the verge of losing a piece of real estate which is held dearly to be of strategic importance to the Sri Lankan forces as they advance in dense jungles of the north... blah, blah, blah...."

-H.L.D.Mahindapala in SUNDAY TIMES, Colombo, April 25, 1999.

❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁

"The LTTE's current fighting cadre is less than 3,000. During the Jaya Sikurai Operation they had a fighting strength of between 4,000-5,000 men. The extent of the country's land mass which was controlled by the LTTE was reduced from 25 percent to 8 percent"

- Deputy Minister of Defence General Ratwatte quoted in WEEK-END EXPRESS, May 15-16, 1999.

❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁

"Heavy fighting is continuing between Sri Lankan troops and LTTE cadres in the dense jungles of Wanni while 16 soldiers and **452** rebels were killed in Thursday's action, defence ministry said on Friday.

A defence spokesman said on Friday that the casualties might be even more as no report was available from the embattled north...."

- ASIAN AGE report quoting UNI from Colombo in its issue of June 12, 1999.

❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁

"With the latest military claim , the number of guerrillas killed rose to **93** since the new wave of fighting erupted on Friday..."

- ASIAN AGE three days later on June 15 quoting AFP and Reuter.

❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁

"Sri Lankan troops have recovered the bodies of **86** Tamil Tiger rebels killed in fierce fighting in the island's north-west, officials here (Colombo) said on Monday"

- ASIAN AGE, June 29, quoting AFP

❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁

"The Tamils firstly have clearly and without any hesitation to decide whether they are going to strengthen the hand of terror and murder by their secret, silent and partial support for the LTTE".

- President Chandrika in a disguised threat to the Tamils in Colombo passing off as a broadcast to the nation, after escaping an alleged assassination attempt on her, December 19, 1999.

❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁

Tamileelam Archive

Remembering some of the Ceylon Tamil achievers of the 20th century

THESE ARE PERSONS WHO HAD MADE AN IMPACT ON CONTEMPORARY TAMIL LIFE, AND ARE NO MORE WITH US. THEY DESERVE TO BE REMEMBERED

(in alphabetical order)

Dr.Ananda Coomaraswamy

Sir.P.Arunachalam	(1853-1924)
Arumuga Navalar	(1822-1879) *
V.S.Kumar Anandan	(1943-1984)
Hon.K.Balasingam	(1876-1952)
S.J.V.Chelvanayakam Q.C.	(1898-1977)
Dr.Ananda K.Coomaraswamy	(1877-1947)
Sir Muttu Coomaraswamy	(1834-1879)
Dr.C.Durai Raja Singam	(1904-1994)
Sir Waithilingam Duraiswamy	(1875-1966)
"Pandithamani" Kanapathipillai	(1899-1986)
Dr.K.Kanapathipillai	(1903-1968)
K .Kailasapathy	(1933-1982)
K.Kanthasamy	(1930-1988)
S.Krishnakumar (Kittu)	(1960-1993)
A.Kumaraswamy Pulavar	(1855-1922)
A.V.Kulasingam	(1890-1978)
C.Loganathan	(1913-1981)
Prof. A.W.Mailvaganam	(1906-1987)

Yoga Swamigal

Sir.P.Ramanathan

Handy Perinbanayagam

Sir.P.Arunachalam

S.J.V.Chelvanayakam

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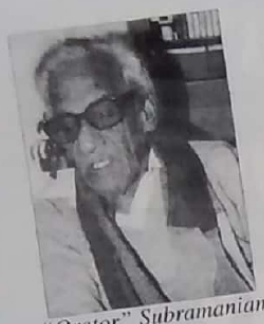
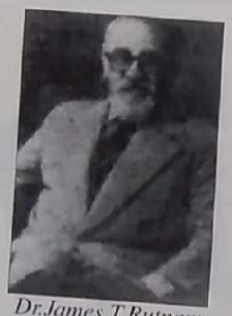
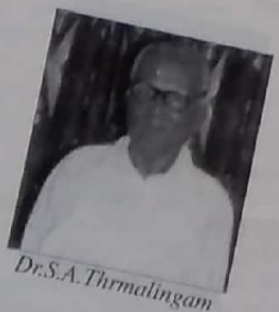

"Orator" Subramaniam


Dr.James T.Rutnam

K.Kanthasamy


Dr.S.A.Thrmalingam

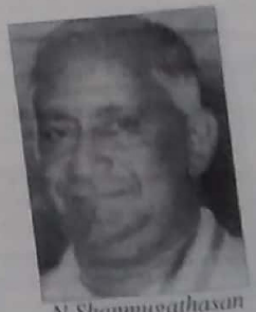
S.Nadesan Q.C.	(1904-1986)
Dr.E.M.V.Naganathan	(1906-1971)
"Kalai Pulavar" K.Navaratnam	(1898-1962)
Mrs.Ratna Navaratnam	(1910-1993)
Dr.Milroy Paul	(1900-1989)
Dr.S.C.Paul	(1868-1942)
Handy Perinbanayagam	(1899-1977)
Rev.Fr.Peter A. Pillai	(1904-1964)
G.G.Ponnambalam Q.C.	(1902-1977)
G.G.Ponnambalam (Junior)	(1938-2000)
"Eelakesari" Ponniah	(c1900 -)
"Annai" Poopathy	(- 1988)
Dr.S.Rajasundaram	(1943-1983)
Sir.P.Ramanathan K.C.	(1851-1930)
Mudaliyar C.Rasanayagam	(1870-1940)
Dr.James T.Rutnam	(1905-1988)
H.A.P.Sandrasagara K.C.	(1875
N.Sanmugathasan	(1920-1993)
Manickasothy Saravanamuttu	(1895-1965)
Pakiasothy Saravanamuttu (P.Sara)	(1892-1950)
Nevins Selvadurai	(1863-1938)
"Saiva Periyar" S.Sivapathasundaram	(18781953)
P.Sri Skanda Rajah	(1905-1968)
C.Subramaniam ("Orator")	(1902-1994)
Dr.S.Subramaniam	(1878-1964)
C.Suntharalingam, ex-M.P.	(1895-1985)
Meary James Tambimuttu	(1915-1983)
K.C.Thangarajah	(19071987)
Father X.S.Thani Nayagam	(1913-1980)

தமிழீழ ஆவணக்காப்பகம்
Tamileelam Archive

C.Suntharalingam

S.Nadesan Q.C

C.Vanniasingam

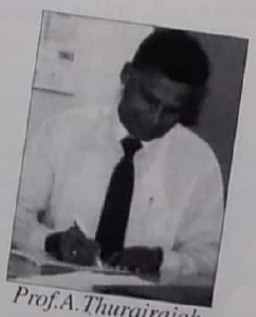

N.Shanmugathasan

'Annai' Poopathy

Lt.Col.Thileepan

Col.Kittu

Dr.S.A.Tharmalingam	(1908-1998)
Rasiah. Parthipan.(Thileepan)	(1963-1987)
S.Thondaman	(1913-1999)
Prof.A.Thurairajah	(1934-1994)
C.Tharmakulasingam	(1910-1949)
M.Tiruchelvam Q.C.	(1907-1976)
Mrs.Punithavathy Tiruchelvam	(1918-1981)
Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan	(1896-1965)
C.Vanniasingam	(1911-1958)
K.Velupillai ("Kalladi Velan")	(18601944)
Dr.S.A.Vettivelu	(1904-1985)
Swami Vipulananda	(1892-1947)
Caroll Visvanathapillai	(1820-1880)*
Prof.S.Vithiananthan	(1924-1989)
Yoga Swami	(1874-1964)



Prof.A.Thurairajah

தமிழீழ ஆவணக்காப்பகம்
Tamileelam Archive

Poet.Tambimuttu

*Although not technically belonging to the 20th century they have left behind an enduring memory.

G.G.Ponnambalam

S.Thondaman

Punithavathy Tiruchelvam

TAMIL NADU RAISES VOICE AGAINST DEATH SENTENCE

(India Abroad News Service)

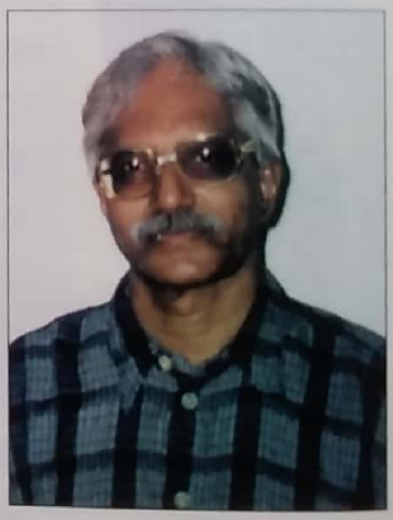
Capital punishment has become an emotive issue in Tamil Nadu ever since the Supreme Court sentenced to death four persons for the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Raising their voices against the death penalty, some in the state's intelligensia and political circles have also shown that they still have sneaking sympathy for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the Sri Lankan rebel group to which the assassins belong. Rajiv Gandhi's assassination on May 21, 1991, at Sriperumbudur, near Chennai, by an LTTE suicide bomber shocked the entire nation.For the people of Tamil Nadu, the tragedy was too close for comfort. Overnight, attitudes against the LTTE hardened. A state that had become a shelter for displaced Sri Lankan Tamils - militant or moderate - turned the heat on LTTE sympathisers. Political parties found it prudent to tone down their pro-LTTE rhetoric. But the death sentence facing Murugan, Santhan, Perarivalan, and Nalini has brought the LTTE sympathisers back into the public domain.

Nalini married Murugan after the assassination and a child was born to them in prison. Rajiv Gandhi's widow and Congress leader Mrs.Sonia Gandhi met President K.R.Narayanan to request that Nalini's life be spared. "It is my personal feeling, keeping the need of a mother for a child", Mrs.Gandhi said.

Some of the protesters against the death sentence at a rally held in Geneva opposite the United Nations building on 26thOctober.

Leading Tamil writers, including Sundara Ramaswamy, Indira Parthasarathy, K.Rajanarayanan, Rajam Krishnan, M.Mehta, Poneelan Kovai Gnani, Sirpi Balasubramaniam, Inquilab and Jeyapragasam, collectively articulated their positions at public forums. They said: "An eye for an eye, murder for murder cannot be accepted in today's civilised society".



S.V. Rajadurai

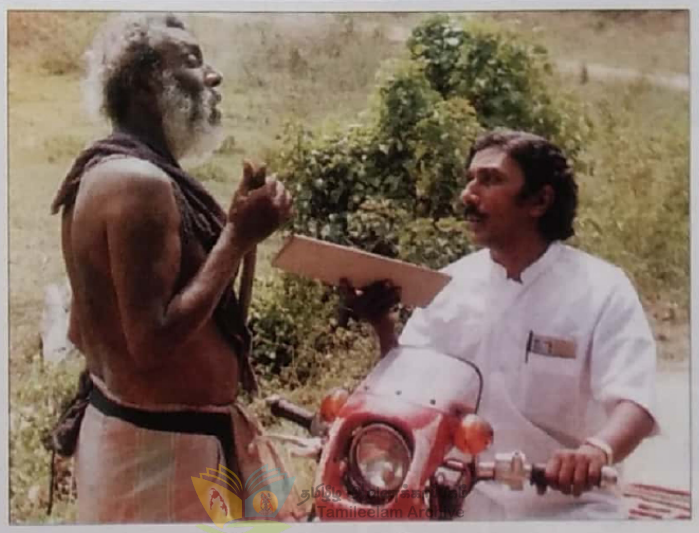
Chennai demonstration against the death sentence

Barring the People's Union for Civil Liberties, no group in Tamil Nadu has ever before spoken out so strongly against the death penalty. PUCL activist and writer S.V.Rajadurai told the local media: "The campaign should not be confined to those sentenced in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case but should cover all prisoners sentenced to death".

A number of organisations came together under the banner of the Abolition of the Death Penalty to organise a "rally for humaneness" in Chennai. Thousands of people took part in the rally. Some of the processionists, in a macabre depiction of prisoners about to be hanged, wore black hoods covering their faces.

"DEATH ON A FULL MOON DAY"

The film that was denied screening in Sri Lanka



Film Review :

By Gopi

The ethnic war between Sinhala and Tamil nations in Sri Lanka is continuing for the last 16 years, and even at the eve of the new millennium, we don't see any sign of an end. The ordinary people of the Island undergo immense hardship without any hope for peac e. Often, various local and foreign media reports speak about this. However, it is a disappointment the literary community in the Island has not made any serious attempt to reflect the problems in their creations. Although, artists from both the Sinhala and Tamil communities produced a few materials, they have not reached the international media. The state imposed media censorship an d other threats to this creative personnel may have prevented such efforts.

In this regard, the film 'Death on A Full Moon Day' (Pura Handa Kaluwara in Sinhala) is different. The film displays the effect of the on going war at the home ground. The home ground situation featured in this film is that of a Sinhala village in the North Central province in Sri Lanka. The situation is much more different from the ground reality of a Tamil village in the war torn North and East of the Island.

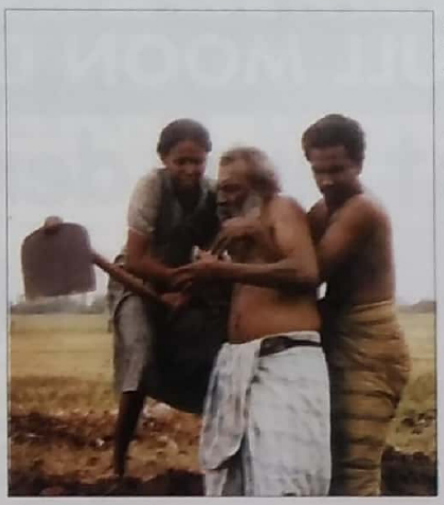
The village shown here is a land stricken by drought, unemployment at peak and hopeless but cheerful people. Few miles from the village the sons of this rural poor are dying on the war front.

Wannihamy (Joe Abeywickrama) a blind old man. His son Bandara was one of those who joined the army to relieve the poverty at home. Building a small house for them and to get his younger siste r married were his aims for joining the army. Needless to say, joining the army is the only choice for the poor village youth to get a decent income.

On a full moon day, his soldier son's body was returned in a sealed coffin. The body was buried with full religious respects but without opening the coffin. **The local government officer (Mahendra Perera) who came to attend the funeral says with relax, to the people at mourning, 'the human loss on the other side is many more than ours'.**

Wannihami refuses to sign the papers which entitle the family to the Government's compensation pay for his son's deathin action.Sunanda (Priyanka Samaraweera) the younger daughter silently acce- pts her father's decision and finds a job in a garment factory. Employment at a garment factory, though not well respected in the village, is another source of income in the poor village. Her fiance Somay (Linton Semage) was against her decision to work in the garment factory. He compares the job to prostitution. Instead, he asks her to pressure Wannihami to sign the papers and to get t he Government's compensation money. He says that the money is nee

ded to start a new life for them. The other option he had, to jo in the army as he knew the money he earns by making bricks wouldn 't provide an income to start a family.



The local government officer from whom Wannihami lent some money, Yamuna (Nayana Hettiarchchi) the elder married daughter and her husband pressurise Wannihami to sign the papers. The Buddhist priests at the local temple remind Wannihami that the alms giving ceremony, three months after Bandara's death was faster approaching. Yamuna and her husband plans to hold the ceremony but they d esperately need the compensation money as their estimate for the ceremony reached to 7,000 rupees. The Buddhist monks also want to c onstruct a bus stop in the name of Bandara who gave his life for the country.

Frustrated by the pressures from kiths and kin blinded by desperate poverty, day to day hardships and empty glories of being nothing more than cannon fodder, Wannihami retains the clarity of vision which gives him the wisdom that reaches far beyond what the eye can see. He picks up the mammoty to dig up and open his son's sealed coffin. By doing this he knows he will invalidate the compansation claim, but his greater purpose is to believe that the war cannot kill his son.

The villagers also join him at the graveyard where Wannihamy star ted digging ground. Somey who borrowed the mammoty from Wannihami managed to open the coffin and what they found was a couple of stems of banana tree and a big rock. Although it was a surprice, it was a big relieve for Wannihami, and the villagers too. But th e Government officer moans about loosing the compensation money.

The film was shown in the National Film theatre, London as part o f the forty third London Film Festival. The director of the film, 37 year old Prasanna Vithanage who appeared on the stage before the commencement of the show said that the Sri Lankan defence min istry has refused to allow him to screen in Sri Lanka. The defenc e ministry feels that the film discourages people in joining the a rmy and it would hampers their recruitment drive. He went on to s ay about how he made the film with the financial assistance from the Japan Broadcasting Corporation. 'I have attempted to display the situation at the home ground, how the war affects the rural people', he said.

It is a 75 minutes long colour film in Sinhala but with English s ubtitles. Joe Abeywickrama the veteran actor of the Sinhala scree n who cast as Wannihami deserves a lots of praise. He really bri ng the true image of a strong Sinhala rural character. Joe has won numerous awards in the past for his best acting talents. The other actors who are relatively new to me, have performed their roles with perfection. M.D.Mahindapala, the director of photography has brought the beauty of a rural village to the screen like a poem.

I couldn't see Prasanna's other films, 'Aanantha Rathriya' or 'Pa wuru Walalu' but I must say that this is a master piece. We have to commend his efforts in bringing an untold story of people's grievance to the international audience.

The pity is the film which was shown only two shows (13th and 15th November) was attended by a very few viewers. I went to see the film on the second day and the audience were around 200 which is very little for that great auditorium. And most of the people w ho attended the shows were non Sri Lankan nationals. I don't know the reason behind this, whether this was lack of publicity or pe ople do not want to see the reality

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THE DIRECTOR

Prasanna Vithanage was born in 1962. He became involved with the theatre on leaving school. He translated and directed Bernard Shaw's ARMS AND THE MAN in 1986 and Dario Fo's STRAWBERRIES AND TRUMPETS in 1991.

He directed his first feature film SISILA GINI GANI(Ice on Fire) in 1992 which won nine OCIC (Sri Lanka) Awards, including Best Director, Best Actress and Actor. His second feature ANANTHA RATHRIYA (Dark Night of the Soul), made in 1996, which he wrote and directed, participated in several international film festival and won a Jury's Special Mention at the 1st Pusan International Film Festival.

It won all the main awards at the 1996 Sri Lanka Film Critics Forum awards for Most outstanding Film, Best Director and Best Scriptwriter. His third feature, PAWURU WALALU (Walls Within), completed in 1997, won the Best Actress Award (for Nita Fernando in her role as Violet) at the 1998 Singapore International Film Festival. It won ten out of eleven awards at the 1998 Sri Lanka Film Critics Forum Awards, including Best Picture and Best Director. PURA HANDA KALUWARA (Death on a Full Moon Day), which he wrote and directed and completed in December 1997, is his fourth feature.

IT'S A DOGS' WORLD!

தமிழீழ ஆவணக்காப்பகம்
Tamileelam Archive

"To his dog, every man is Napolean hence the popularity of dogs"

- Aldous Huxley
English author
1894-1963

WHAT HUMANS DO, DOGS TRY TO UNDO

Have you heard of Nardo, Notan, Balto and Kim ? Not likely. They are are the four dogs - German Shepherds - brought to Sri Lanka to sniff out the landmines in Jaffna. The dogs, three males and one female, specially trained in South Africa by Mine-Tech, an international company associated with de-mining are considered specialists in the job !

According to Mine-Tech chairman John Dixon, the dogs are trained to sniff landmines that are planted 100 to 400 cms deep. "They are capable of sniffing any mine depending on the explosive smell. But it is easier for them to detect new mines than the old ones".

The number of dogs used in a project depends on the area the company concentrates on and the approximate estimation of the number of landmines that are buried.

According to UN official Gary Helseth, Sri Lanka was chosen for this special mine-detection programme by the UNDP because a large number of children living in Jaffna die or get imjured due to landmine explosions.

"The government and the LTTE agreed not to plant landmines within the areas that fall under this de-mining programme. When the conflict ends you will need development. And removing landmines en masse is part of this", he said while explaining why Jaffna was chosen. He added that the main aim of the programme was to make Jaffna a better place to live in.

Will the sniffer dogs themselves not come to any harm was the question asked. John Dixon says even if the dogs stepped on landmines the pressure of their light weight was insufficient to trigger an explosion which was not the case if a human stepped on it.

தமிழ் இணைக்கரப்பகம்
Tamil Islam Archive

DIVORCED COUPLE BATTLE FOR CUSTODY OF DOG

A couple in Maryland, USA, who got a divorce after seven years of marriage are still wrangling over the custody of a dog. They were divorced two years ago, and have no children.

Jennifer Kidwell and Ethan Assal sorted out the rest of their wrecked marriage between themselves, but when it came to the custody of their pet dog Sable, a US judge has been called upon to adjudicate in the matter.

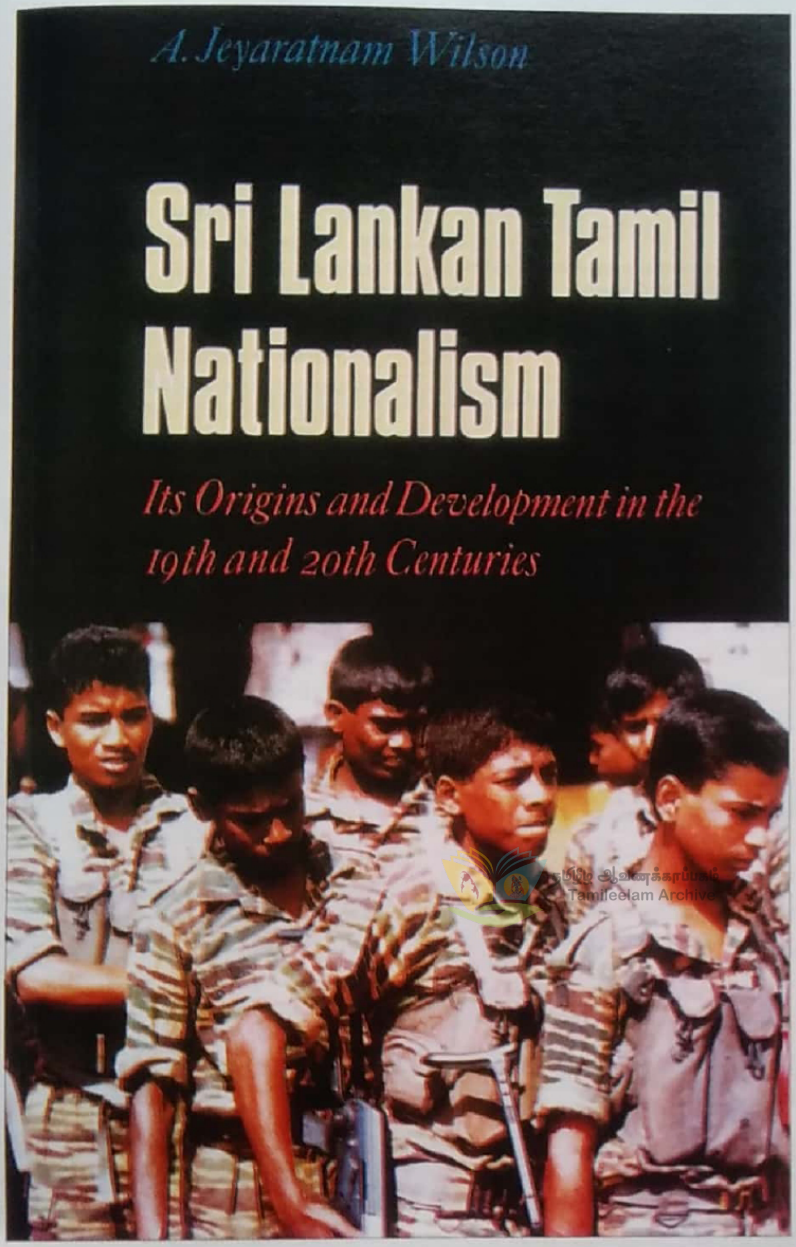
Judge Michael Pincus, sitting at Montgomery County, Maryland, eyed the divorced couple wearily. "I'll take a deep breath before I say this ", the judge said, "It's because there's been no visitation with the dog".

He ordered Ms.Kidwell, 33, to relinquish Sable for a one-month visit next month, but only after hearing a formal brief from the Animal League Defence Fund, urging him to consider the best interest of the dog. If the couple would not agree on visiting rights, the dog would be sold and the proceeds shared, the judge warned.

CHANDRIKA'S MINISTER SMELLS A CONSPIRACY

It's about a dog again. President Chandrika's trusted Minister Mangala Samaraweera was in a sorrowful state recently. His pet dog (name not known) had died suddenly.

Being a powerful politician in the country, he did not want the matter to rest there. He called in the Criminal Investigation Department to probe whether there was any conspiracy behind the sudden death, so the SUNDAY LEADER in Colombo reports. The results of the investigation are not known at the time HOT SPRING went to press.



Professor A.J. Wilson's most recent publication, released by the London publisher Hurst & Company, 38, King Street, London WC2E 8JZ

The book includes a chapter by A.J.V Chandrakanthan, Professor of Theology at Concordia University, Montreal,titled Eelam Tamil Nationalism, An Inside View.

The publisher's note says inter alia, The Tamil nationalist fervour that has urged forward the determination to establish a sovereign mini - state of Tamil Eelam has now become a permanent political reality within the contemporary Sri Lankan polity,'writes A.J.V Chandranthan in the opening words of the ninth chapter ('An Inside View ') in this book. Professor Jeyaratnam Wilson, the leading expert in the field, explains, concisely yet comprehensively, how this ominous development came about.

JAFFNA STUDENT TOPS ALL - ISLAND A/L PASS LIST

According to the recently released A/L examination results (August 1999) Arluliah Ilankumaran topped the list and was ranked No.1 in the island in the Physical Science section. Ilankumaran is a student of Jaffna Hindu College.

Mr.Ilankumaran who is now in Colombo waiting to get started with his University education was interviewed by Swamarajah Nilakshan for the Tamil daily "Thinakkural".

Speaking of his background he said his place of birth is Pungkuduthivu (an islet off Jaffna) and had his primary education at Punguduthivu Sri Ganesha Vidyalayam and later at Jaffna Hindu Primary School. His secondary schooling was at Jaffoa Hindu College.

Nilakshan: Your education would have been definitely affected by the war-like situation in Jaffna. In spite of this, you have performed so well.....

Ilankumaran: A continuous war-like situation existed in Jaffna even before the massive displacement of people in 1995. No one could say when the next shelling would come or when the next time bombs would fall from the air....We lost a number of school days by being displaced from place to place....

Ilankumaran told the interviewer that he would like to have his higher education overseas, but once he achieved his ambition he would come back to his homeland. "Happiness which I enjoy living in my own land can never be obtained living in other places. I would like to come and serve my own people", he said. ❑

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MATRIMONIAL

Respondents are invited to write to THE MEETING POINT, PO Box 24360, London SW17 7FF, United Kingdom.

Tel: 0181 767 1230, Fax: 0181 672 6433

Please ensure that you quote the appropriate Ref.No. given at the end of the proposal in which you are interested.

Brother, 33, Engineer, PhD qualified and working in a senior position in UK, seeks professional/graduate preferably with some UK background. Please forward details in confidence. Ref: MPB113 Hot Spring

Daughter, 29, graduate, High School teacher in Canada, 5ft 6in tall, vegetarian, Jaffna Hindu, seeks professionally qualified partner. Please send horoscope and details. Ref: MPG221 Hot Spring

Ceylon Tamil Roman Catholic mother (father Sinhalese, deceased) now resident in Canada, Seeks partner for daughter, 28 years old, Canadian citizen and working for a prestigious bank. Catholic or Christian preferred. Please provide details in strict confidence. Ref: MPG 232 Hot Spring

Nephew 30, Nieice 28, Christians, both doctors, fair complexion, Sri Lankan born. European citizens, Western qualified. Seek suitable professionally qualified partners. Please forward details in confidence quoting the following: Ref: MPC 101 Hot Spring

Engineer, 42, divorced, 5 ft 4 in tall, in good management position in UK, Hindu, originally from Jaffna, now British, seeks Hindu lady aged about 35 single, divorced or widowed. Please send details. Ref: MPB112 Hot Spring

Daughter, 29, British citizen, came to the U.K. in 1984. gainfully employed near London. Numerology 1. Horoscope can be forwarded to interested parties. Please write giving particulars. Ref: MPG 233 Hot Spring

Daughter, 27, Roman Catholic, of Jaffna origin, graduate, qualified in the accountancy field, currently working in London, seeks suitable professionally qualified Roman catholic or Christian partner, aged between 28 to 35. Please forward details. Ref: MPG227 Hot Spring

Jaffna Hindu Daughter, 29, graduate, currently teaching in Madurai, South India, with brothers and sisters settled in European counties, seeks suitable partner. Willing to move. Please forward horoscope and details. Ref: MPG219 Hot Spring

Brother, 32, Hindu, UK resident, ACCA, working in an accountancy firm in London, seeks a good looking Hindu girl, preferably with resident visa in UK. Please send horoscope and other details in confidence. Ref: MPB114 Hot Spring

Niece, 30, Christian, educated throughout in Colombo, presently in London, doctor father practicing in Colombo, seeks suitable Christian professional preferably employed in the UK. Please forward details. Ref: MPG228 Hot Spring

Daughter, 28, Jaffna Hindu, 5ft 9in tall, vegetarian, Graduate, currently employed as a Software Engineer in the US, parents in Canada, seeks a suitable Jaffna Hindu professional. Please send details and horoscope. Ref: MPG220 Hot Spring

Jaffna Hindu Son, 27, MSc, Management Consultant in computing in London, seeks suitable partner, Hindu with university education. Horoscope essential. Please forward details. Ref: MPB107 Hot Spring

Son, 30, Hindu, British born, Masters degree holder, currently working as an Academic research Assistant in a London teaching hospital seeks suitable partner. Please send horoscope and details in confidence. Ref: MPB110 Hot Spring

Jaffna Hindu daughter, 28, now British, vegetarian, graduate, withtraditional cultural background including dancing, a Sai Baba devotee, seeks suitable partner. Please send horoscope and other details. Thank you. Ref: MPG209 Hot Spring

Daughter, 39, Tamil Roman Catholic, Masters degree holder, settled and employed in USA, divorced with two children, seeks understanding partner. Please send background details in confidence. Ref: MPG204 Hot Spring.

The Meeting Point

Tel: 0181 767 1230 Fax: 0181 672 6433

The Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora has in recent years spread to many different countries in the World - to the UK and other European Countries, to America, to Canada and Australia. As a result contacts between those who were previously friends and neighbours back in Sri Lanka have become almost non-existent. The hardships and pressures in trying to establish ourselves in the new country of residence have made matters even more difficult.

Many young men and women of marriageable age are therefore faced with difficulties in finding suitable partners in their own community.

The Meeting Point was inaugurated in London on 17th May 98, at a meeting attended by a large number of Tamil parents. The Meeting Point will operate as a voluntary organisation manned by a few respectable retired persons who are keen to serve the community by helping parents find suitable marriage partners for their sons/daughters. These volunteers understand the nature of this exercise and will ensure utmost care and discretion in divulging information of individuals.

The Meeting Point also organises events such as parties and forums where young people will have opportunities to meet and get to know each other in a leisurely atmosphere. Suggestions, help and contributions are most welcome.

Parents/guardians/friends, desiring to seek a partner for a girl/boy, are welcome to make an application to The Meeting Point. Applicants are also welcome to visit the office of The Meeting Point by prior appointment.

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