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March 2000

# Hot Spring

*A Journal of Commitment*








*"More women have been raped and murdered under my regime than that of any male President. If that's not a triumph of feminism, what else is it?".*

**- Statement that Sri Lankan President failed to make on International Women's Day.**






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# The State of Sri Lanka: A Montage

*From THE SUNDAY TIMES, Colombo)*

## "Stay there (in the North) and finish the job ."

### President gives order to military chiefs



The order was issued to Army Commander Srilal Weerasooriya, Navy Commander Cecil Tissera and Air Force Commander Jayalath Weerakoody when they met her for an emergency meeting at Temple Trees on Wednesday (March 29). After the meeting, the three commanders flew to Jaffna...(very meekly of course - Ed.H.S.)

• • •

*(From the same report)*

"On Friday, Air Force chief Air Marshal Weerakoddy had a narrow escape when his helicopter landed at a security forces position in Kodikamam. Immediately thereafter, mortars began to rain in the area..




"During the six days of confrontation,seven officers and 114 soldiers have been killed. More than 620 have been wounded... Further, two officers and 59 soldiers have been declared missing in action".

• • •

**"I will not allow the withdrawl of troops (from Jaffna) even if I am killed • (sic!)**

- President Chandrika tells State-owned *SUNDAY OBSERVER*

• • •

## Crash & Crash

"The death toll in Friday evening's Antonov -12 cargo plane crash at Kadirana (near Katunayake) had risen to ten , after two more of the injured residents of the area succumbed to their injuries. Five of the seven Russian crew members among those killed. (THE ISLAND, _March 26)

• • •

"The crash of the Russian-built Antonov-26 on Thursday (March 30) in Talawa has given rise to a question whether it was due to a technical failure or due to an LTTE attack. A Russian pilot engineer who visited the scene was reported to have found a part of the wreckage with six bullet-holes....There were 24 Sri Lankan army personnel, including four junior officers,11 Sri Lankan Navy sailors and a policeman along with four Russian crew members on board. (All 40 died) *(THE WEEKEND EXPRESS*, April 1-2)

• • •

*Contd. overleaf*

## Army in poor shape

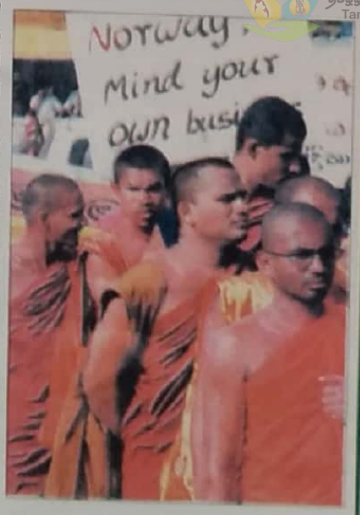
*(What THE ISLAND "Defence Correspondent" wrote on March 26,2000)*

"Even a cursory analysis of the war in the north over the past four years shows that the army cannot destroy the LTTE in the forseeable future.... She (the President) gave the armed forces a blank cheque, allowing them to buy whatever they wanted in terms of weapons, aircraft, battle tanks etc,. And they certainly did, ballooning the defence budget to incredible levels....

"Yet, after the capture of the Jaffna peninsula in May 1996, nothing has gone right for the armed forces. In fact, the last four years have clearly shown that despite all this support, they cannot beat the LTTE on the battlefield.....

"In short, the army is not in any shape to fight the war to a finish. It's clearly time for peace talks. The president knows it. The army knows it. And the Tigers know it. "

## Hate campaign against Norway




From the time Buddhist monks opposed the political settlement contained in the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact , and from the time a Buddhist monk assassinated Prime Minister Bandaranaike himself 40 years ago, they have always opposed any peaceful settlement of the ethnic problem.

It is difficult for any Sinhalese government in the country to go against the wishes of the three Mahanayakes who occupy a position higher than any elected government of the people.

Picture shows Buddhist monks demonstrating against Norway for attempting to bring peace to the country.

* * *

## Strip-search on highway!

Opposite the Gangaramaya Temple in Colombo, March 18, around 10.30 a.m.



Victim: Sinhalese woman from Kurunegalsa named Manchanayake Appuhamilage Srlyalatha (29) mother of a 10-year old.

Strippers: Police and members of the security forces.

Audience: About a 100 hundred frightened but curious onlookers, including some Buddhist monks, according to a security guard, N.G.Perera, who was on the spot, quoted in *THE SUNDAY TIMES*.

"....She was then ordered to raise her hands. She refused to do so, making the onlookers more suspicious. One of the officers pointed a gun at her threatening to shoot her. She then started crying and shouted in Sinhalese.... (Do not shoot me, I have a child)

"She was then ordered to raise the top part of her dress and also ordered to raise the brassiere. Thereafter she was told to take down the lower part of her garment including the knicker up to her knees. She was then asked to dress after which she was thoroughly checked. "

Reason for stripping: She was suspected to be a Tamil woman suicide bomber.

## Liars both

"(S.B.) Dissanayake (Chandrika's Sports Minister) is a fluent and habitual liar... To Dissanayake, lying is a science, albeit one practised amateurishly, for he cannot lie without getting caught. We have in the past, referred to Dissanayake's boss, the President, as being less than faithful to the truth. By this we do not intend to bring her into ridicule or disrepute; we merely point it out to draw attention to the fact that she is a clever lady with a host of charming and comely properties.. all of which are eroded by her propensity for telling lies...."

(Editorial Comment in leading Colombo Sunday paper, THE SUNDAY LEADER, March 26, 2000).

* * *

# "End the Sufferings of Eelam Tamil women"

**(A TAMILCANADIAN REPORT)**

OTWA (women's wing of Tamil Coordinating Committee) is an Ottawa based non-governmental organization under, which is committed to bring forward the suffering of Tamil women in Sri Lanka to the larger public. OTWA is determined to educate Canadians and politicians about issues facing Tamil women. These issues are neither trivial nor negligible, and they effect the lives of nearly 200, 000 Tamils here in Canada, because we still have families and friends in Sri Lanka. The well being of Tamil Canadians is linked to the lives of Tamils in Sri Lanka; it is inevitable and well documented. Throughout the year, OTWA hosts many activities to generate public awareness in search of hope and resolution, and International Women's Day is no exception.

**On Thursday the 2nd of March 2000, The Ottawa Tamil Women's Association (OTWA) hosted its second annual International Women's Day in conjunction with the Immigrant and Minority Women Against Abuse.** A public forum was held at the Regional Government Office here in Ottawa, the nation's capital. The subject was "Rape as a Weapon of War". An array of outstanding speakers with knowledge and passion spoke eloquently about rape as a weapon of war.

The public forum began with a dance of welcome by four young girls of ages 4 and 5. They brought joy, charm and beauty to this serious evening. One cannot help but think of other Tamil children, girls and boys in northern Sri Lanka. Even for a moment, these four dancers did not take our minds away from the real issues. Granted, watching their dance of welcome was a pure joy. Perhaps the "dance of welcome" should be renamed as "dance of innocence",



*Ms. Lucia Spencer*

because it reminded us an all-important lesson: **The lost innocence of our children in Tamil Eelam. Tamil children are being subject serious violence and suffering at a tender age. Violence has become an integral part of their daily lives.** These young dancers through their music and rhythm were inviting us to act, to protect the innocence of their childhood.



*Ms. Thulasi Thiruthanikan*

Their dance is a direct invitation to adults, and that is to take action.

A moment of silence followed the dance of welcome. A moment of silence to remember what we may eventually forget; a moment of silence to feel the suffering of others; a moment of silence to feel compassion so that we may become the voice for the voiceless; a moment of silence to honor the fallen ones.



*Ms. Yamini Thurairajah*

**Next, Ms. Thulasi Thiruthanikan of OTWA spoke passionately and tearfully about "rape as a weapon of war" and its serious implications to Tamil women in Sri Lanka. Her message is clear; rape is not a private matter, it is an act of violence not only against the individual but also against our community and culture. There is a collective sense of rape and shame. She claims that every 17 days a Tamil woman is raped in Tamil Eelam by the Sri Lankan government forces. Ms. Thiruthanikan urged the audience to bring an end to the suffering of Tamil women.**

The keynote speaker and veteran social activist, Ms. Lucia Spencer of Immigrant and Minority Women Against Abuse delivered another powerful speech. Her voice was filled with compassion and strength. Her words were strong, and her message was clear. Ms. Spencer says that rape in war serves as a strategic political tool to dominate and oppress others. She urged the audience to work hard and work together to bring this tragedy in Sri Lanka to an end. Ms. Spencer is a sincere advocate of justice, and it is a blessing to have her speak about Tamil Women.

Mr. Michael Bossin of Amnesty International spoke about rape in war. He outlined few examples from Tamil Eelam, and spoke sincerely about the suffering of those Tamil victims. Mainly, Mr. Bossin focused on gender violence and urged men and women to work together to eradicate violence against women. **Mr. Bossin seems to understand the real issues in Sri Lanka when it comes to rape as a weapon of war, which is used against the Tamils by the oppressing Sinhalese government.** The audience welcomed his speech.

The final speaker, Ms. Yamini Thurairajah of OTWA argued that "media censorship is a human rights violation". Her voice was filled with indignation and she urged the audience to work together. A vote of thanks concluded the evening.

தமிழீழ ஆவணக்காப்பகம்
Tamileelam Archive

# A TAMIL VOICE IN TORONTO

"You're a mother in Sri Lanka and you've been hearing about the case of a pregnant mother of two children who was gang-raped by the Sri Lankan government army soldiers in her own home. Because of the overwhelming evidence of an assault the soldiers decided to destroy the evidence by exploding a hand grenade on the expectant mother's bleeding genitals. This case of rape and murder is nothing new to you, since you live in a country where rape is a weapon of war for the government of Sri Lanka. You've heard hundreds of grotesque cases happening all around you and many have gone unreported.

To make matters worse, your own daughter is missing and the last you saw her, you sent here off to school...

This is a true story that happened to the mother of Krishanthy.

Krishanthy's mother was so worried that she, along with her son and neighbour, went to the army camp to find out any information about her daughter's whereabouts. They were never seen alive again.

It was later exposed that Krishanthy was reduced to begging for water and rest between successive gang rapes. This is a reality to thousands of Tamil women in Sri Lanka being terrorized in their own homeland by the government. Rape...torture-including electric shock, burning, beating on soles of feet, gasoline soaked bags over heads...murder...mutilation...harassment ...beatings...these are everyday occurrences for Tamil women, who can only hope and pray that these atrocities do not happen to them or their loved ones.

**Thus, came the voice of Tamil men and women to fight for self-determination and human justice. Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam are Tamil men and women who have even lost and are losing their lives to earn rights and justice for their motherland, Thamil Eelam.**

***The culture of violence perpetrated by the Sri Lankan government on Tamils is the essence of Tamils' life in Sri Lanka for the past 25 years. Will this ever end?***

**Yes, it will and that's when the nations around actually open their eyes to see the human rights violations against Tamil women by the government of Sri Lanka. "**

**The above was a speech delivered to a sympathetic and horrified audience of more than 2,000 mainstream community members, by Priya Balakrishnan of Women**



*Priya Balakrishnan*

**Organization of World Tamil Movement (WOWTM) on the rally held to mark the International Women's Day on March 04, 2000.** March 04, 2000 was a momentous day for Tamils world-wide and for Tamil women of Toronto in particular. Women Working with Immigrant Women along with many other mainstream women organizations organized the World March of Women on that day. . WOWTM, being part of this, utilized the great opportunity to expose the many human rights violations against Tamil women by the Sri Lankan government.

Many dedicated Tamil men and women gathered at the University of Toronto to add their voice against injustices that women experience world-wide. By the message given through the speech, not only was the Toronto community shocked to hear that such atrocities were being inflicted on our sisters, mothers, wives and young girls in Sri Lanka, but they also felt our pain and ultimately shared our rage.

**Tamil women and men marched in unison from Convocation Hall (University of Toronto) to Metro Hall holding their placards and banners, chanting, "End the Occupation, we are a free nation", "Tamil Women Fight Back" and "The Sri Lankan government lies, Believe the Women's Cries". What was moving was that Tamil men and women of all ages were joined together, that people of other ethnic groups also joined with us in our struggle for liberation of Tamil Eelam.**

Although many others marched along for their respective and worthy causes, Tamil women's group was the most prominent. Not only they were demonstrating their solidarity and conviction through the march but were also distributing flyers that revealed the depth and severity of the plight of Tamil women. Upon reaching Metro Hall they gave vivid and informative presentations to Canadians who wished to learn more about our struggle. It was an excellent opportunity that enabled them to make a lasting impact.

It is important that we educate the international community of what is happening to our motherland. This should be one of our primary objectives because surely we need any help we can get. Tamil women must unify and make themselves heard for it is only Tamil women that can truly feel what their sisters are going through in their homeland. If we as Tamil women do not mobilize as we did on International Women's Day March and Rally, we are simply condemning our sisters to die.

* * *

# Women Tigers: A Profile

## *as an American journalist sees them*

**By DEXTER FILKINS**
**Los Angeles Times (excerpts)**

ARASADITHIVU, Sri Lanka—In a land where women are prized for their quiet passivity, one of the world's most ruthless guerrilla groups is riding toward victory on the strength of its female fighters. The women of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, rebels waging a war for an independent homeland in this island nation, are emerging as the movement's most important weapon after thousands of men have died in battle. With vials of cyanide hanging from their necks, women Tigers are shooting their way into government bunkers and police stations.....



As the men fall, the women fighters are stepping into the upper ranks of a guerrilla army once reserved exclusively for men. Seetha, a 22-year-old leader of 1,500 women fighters, stands just over 5 feet tall, wears her hair neatly trimmed and says she might one day like to have a family. Dressed in camouflage fatigues and toting a machine gun, she talks with the cool confidence of a battle-hardened commander.....

Seetha is one of thousands of Sri Lankan women who have joined the Tigers, changing not only the face of the notorious rebel army but also challenging long-held views of their gender in this traditional society. The Tigers' ranks were filled only with men in 1983, when the predominantly Hindu Tamil rebels launched their struggle against Sri Lanka's Buddhist majority Sinhalese government. Now, after 17 years of fighting and with more than 55,000 Sri Lankans killed, women make up a third of the fighting force, which some experts number at as many as 15,000 fighters. .....

**Anton Raja, a Tiger spokesman, said the use of women in war is part of a larger vision of the guerrilla leadership to liberate Tamil women from the bonds of tradition. "In the old society, women were cultured and nice. We loved them, but they had no major role outside of the kitchen," Raja said. "We went around to the women and told them: 'You are the equal of men, you have the same rights, you can join us in the struggle.' " The result, according to Raja: "Hundreds and hundreds of women signed up to fight."**

Recruiting Women Out of Necessity Many Sri Lankans dispute the idea that the Tigers and their secretive, dictatorial leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, are some sort of guerrilla feminists. They say that Prabhakaran did not decide to recruit women until the war drained his pool of available men. The first woman fighter died in action in 1987—four years into the war. "I don't think the Tigers are motivated by any sense of women's rights," said Radhika Coomaraswamy, a Tamil lawyer in the capital, Colombo. "They use women as cannon fodder."

Maheswary Velautham, also a Tamil lawyer in Colombo, said that by taking to the battlefield, Tamil women are reinterpreting their traditional duty to give everything for their family. "Women have always sacrificed for their families, and that is what the women Tigers are doing," she said. The Tigers have a reputation for being one of the world's most sophisticated and cold-blooded guerrilla armies. In a region with few telephone lines and fewer cars, Prabhakaran has created a present-day Sparta, where nearly every family contributes to the war effort. His small force of guerrillas has seized the

Tamil heartland on the northern and eastern fringes of the island and fought an army of more than 100,000 to a standstill. Suicide bombers known as Black Tigers have killed a Sri Lankan president, an Indian prime minister and hundreds of civilians. After a Black Tiger hit the Sri Lankan Central Bank in 1996, killing 73 people, the U.S. government declared the group a terrorist organization. Tamil women are taking over crucial roles in the rebel group as the civil war enters a decisive phase. A Tiger offensive in November rolled back territorial gains the government had spent months making, prompting Sri Lanka's leaders to propose direct negotiations with the rebels. Meanwhile, fighting is raging across the north and east.



*They live between life and death,but so unswerving is their dedication to their cause,they have even time to smile!*

**Many Tamil women guerrillas say they joined the Tigers after brothers, husbands and fathers died in battle or disappeared while in the custody of Sri Lankan security forces—which many governments and organizations have blamed for torture and summary executions.**

## Avenging her brother

Seetha, the young Tiger commander, was a little girl when her 18-year-old brother, Sugumar, disappeared. Seetha said her brother was not a member of the Tigers, and she blames the Sri Lankan army for his death. When she turned 14, she joined the rebels. "My brother was an innocent," Seetha said, sitting outside her headquarters in this rebel-held village near Sri Lanka's eastern coast. "I am fighting to avenge his death." Since then, Seetha has fought in battles across the island, including some of the bloodiest in the Vanni region of the north. On a recent foray, she led an attack on a police headquarters in the eastern Sri Lankan town of Vakaria. She says she lost four women but that her platoon killed 17 government soldiers and took the police station. Like many of her comrades, Seetha says she does not regard it as extraordinary that a rice farmer's daughter in a traditional culture would be leading troops in battle. **"The women are being raped and killed," she said. "The men are fighting—why can't we?"**

Suresh, a male Tiger officer in the area, shrugged off the presence of women fighters. A foot soldier until he was badly wounded, Suresh says he fought alongside women for years. "The women are dying just like the men," Suresh said. "I don't mind working with them."

## Braiding her hair

"If I am arrested, I have been ordered to take the cyanide," said Srilaya, a commando, as she opened a bottle of Coke using the ammunition magazine from an AK-47. The presence of large numbers of women in the Tigers has forced the mostly male leadership to change some of its rules. One of the biggest debates was about hair: Tamil men historically treasure long, straight hair on women, yet it hinders the women's movement during battle. In the early '90s, Prabhakaran declared that the women would be permitted to crop their hair .....

Some women, like Seetha, jumped at the chance to trim their locks, but others couldn't break with the old style. One combat veteran, a 24-year-old woman code-named Banu, let her jet-black hair grow down her back. If she goes into battle, she braids it and wraps it around her head. Others don tight black caps. "Sometimes during an attack, when I am going through a fence, my hair gets caught in the barbed wire," Banu said.....

"Sometimes I miss the life that my sisters have," said Banu, whose two siblings, one married with children, lead more ordinary lives. "But they have their lives, and I have mine. I've made my choice."

***(Photographs taken from elsewhere and do not relate to names mentioned in the article)***

***

# THE DEBACLE IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND ITS LESSONS FOR SRI LANKA

By: ADRIAN WIJEMANNE

## The background

1. The peacemaking effort in Northern Ireland has foundered on the rock of disarmament, called "de-commissioning of weapons" in the negotiating language used there. The armed conflict in Northern Ireland was based on the possession of weapons by three parties, namely, British troops and the Royal Ulster Constabulary deployed there to maintain peace by, at the very least, separating the sectarian combatants; the republican, Roman Catholic, nationalists of the IRA who aim to separate Northern Ireland from the British state and to join it to the Irish Republic and the unionist, Protestant paramilitaries fighting to maintain the existing union of Northern Ireland with the British state. Three armed parties, not two as in Sri Lanka.

## The Good Friday Agreement of April 1998

2. Corresponding to these armed parties are their civil, political counterparts, namely, the British government's Northern Ireland office under a Secretary of State ( British-speak for "Cabinet Minister"), SINN FEIN (meaning in Gaelic "We Alone") for the Roman Catholic republican nationalists and the Ulster Unionists for the Protestant loyalists striving to maintain the status quo. Three pairs of players, each with an armed wing. A far more complicated situation than in Sri Lanka.

3. The agreement is a very multi-facetted one casting many obligations on each of the four parties to it, namely, the British Government, the Irish Government, the Ulster Unionist parties and the Roman Catholic parties of Northern Ireland. This paper will focus only on one aspect of the Agreement, that relating to the decommissioning of weapons. On this subject the Agreement stipulated that Sinn Fein and the Ulster Unionists will use whatever influence they had with their respective armed allies to secure the de-commissioning of all weapons by 22nd May 2000. In order to complete de-commissioning by that date the surrender of weapons by both IRA and Protestant paramilitaries was expected to commence by January 2000 at the latest. The British government, the third party with arms, agreed to reduce the numbers of its troops in the province and actually commenced doing so.

4. These were the speciEc provisions of the Agreement in respect of disarmament. The British government, the Ulster Unionists and Sinn Fein were signatory parties to the Agreement and as such were bound by its terms. However, neither the IRA nor the Protestant paramilitary organisations participated in the negotiations that led to the Agreement, nor were they parties to the Agreement and, consequently, they were not formally bound by its terms. The entire process of negotiation was triggered off, however, by the unilateral ceasefire announced by the IRA in 1996 which is still in force.

## Devolution of powers and a new implementing Executive

5. The Agreement provided, among other things, for the devolution of limited powers by the British government to a Northern Ireland Assembly to be newly elected for the purpose. From among its members a new Executive was to be established composed of Northern Ireland Ministers in proportion to the representation of political parties in the new Assembly. The Ulster Unionists were reluctant to serve on this new executive until de-commissioning of weapons was carried out or, at the very least, commenced. They refused to sign the Agreement until this was specifically agreed by Sinn Fein. However, they were prevailed upon to sign up by an informal assurance in writing given them by the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, to the effect that even though the specific agreement they sought was unavailable, they would not be obliged to serve on the new Executive alongside Sinn Fein members until the de-commissioning process by the IRA had commenced.

## The IRA and the de-commissioning of its weapons

6. Mr.Blair thus laid an obligation outside the specific terms of the Agreement upon a body (the IRA) which was not a party to the Agreement. On the basis of this assurance the Agreement was concluded and ratified at referenda in both Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic with great public acclaim and relief.

**7. The IRA had not agreed to the unilateral de-commissioning of its weapons either before or during or after the negotiations that led up to the conclusion of the Agreement.** On the contrary, it has stated repeatedly and explicitly and in quite unambiguous language that it would not disarm unilaterally. Instead, it regarded disarmament as an indispensable objective to which all armed parties should be committed equally. In respect of the British government it regarded the withdrawal of all British

troops from the province as its method of disarmament. The necessary pre-requisite for such a multi-lateral process to commence was the effective functioning of devolved government in the province including the "cross-border" institutions for which the Agreement also provided and which would be the precursor of a single, all-island Irish State which was their ultimate objective.

## Devolution and Disappointment

**8.** In the hope that devolution of powers would persuade the IRA and the Protestant paramilitaries to disarm or, at the very least, commence the process of disarmament, the new Assembly was elected. The British Prime Minister's assurance to the Ulster Unionists was circumvented and they were prevailed upon to serve on the new Executive along with Sinn Fein members even though de-commissioning of weapons had not commenced. A short time limit was given to the IRA to commence decommissioning their weapons on pain of suspension of the new Assembly if they failed. All of this made not the slightest difference to the IRA which re-iterated their consistent stand on the overall demilitarization of the province. The new Assembly was then suspended and all are back to where they were when the IRA declared their ceasefire.

**9.** Devolution of powers has failed to buy disarmament. When people take up arms against their state it is invariably due to their perception that there is no other means of achieving their security than reliance upon their own arms. That perception cannot be dispelled by constitutional change for constitutional change does not wipe out historical experience . Furthermore, when the threat to security is linked to perceived national discrimination the very structure of the state is undermined. This is very much the case in Northern Ireland as it was in the 26 counties of southern Ireland when they broke away in 1922 to form the separate, independent, sovereign state of The Irish Republic.

**10.** The situation in Northern Ireland is now down to bedrock fundamentals stripped of all optimistic assumptions about the efficacy of devolution of powers mediated by a third party to secure a settlement. **Of these fundamentals the first and foremost is that the IRA, despite being a mere one-thirtieth of the strength of the LTTE, cannot be militarily eliminated by the armed forces of the British state. The 30year (1968-98) attempt to do so failed and, what was worse, made the IRA stronger than ever before.** An industrial state, even a strong one such as the UK, will be severely disrupted by an all-out military effort any time in the future to eliminate the IRA. In the case of Britain this is virtually impossible due to the existence of large Irish populations of both Roman Catholic and Protestant faiths living in the huge industrial conurbations of the Midlands. Consequently there is no military option available for eliminating the IRA. The result is an unprecedented and invidious contretemps where the state co-exists uneasily with an unsubdued and unsubdueable armed entity within the body politic, a veritable thorn in its side. The classic concept of the sovereign state in jurisprudence as the sole and exclusive repository of armed force within its borders is over.

Tamileelam Archive

**11.** The second bedrock reality is that the Protestant majority of the 1.8 million population of Northern Ireland is firmly committed to remaining within the UK and will not contemplate leaving the UK for a merger with the Irish Republic. All parties in the conflict are agreed that the will of the majority in Northern Ireland must be respected. As the population balance between the Protestants and Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland is gradually heading towards an even balance (Roman Catholic birth rates being marginally higher) the Agreement stipulated a referendum once in 7 years on the issue of secession and merger with the Republic. So now secession is a clearly recognized possibility whenever the majority of the population so desires.

**12.** The third bedrock reality is that the nationalist aspiration for a single, allisland, sovereign state of Ireland entertained mainly by the Roman Catholic population of Northern Ireland is a permanent feature of the situation. It is one that grows from strength to strength as the Irish Republic gradually overtakes the UK in prosperity. Already, way back in 1996 it reached an higher per capita g.n.p. per annum than the Uk and the gap widens steadily with the specially favoured treatment the Republic receives within the European Union.

## The lessons for Sri Lanka

**13. Finally, the most dynamic factor of all in the situation is the power of the huge Irish diaspora in the USA. While the population of the Irish Republic is currently 3.5 million and that of Northern Ireland is 1.8 million, it is estimated there are 45 million Irish Americans in the USA. The great majority of them sympathise with the nationalist, republican cause and a hard core provides the financial and logistical backing for the IRA. Irish nationalism is an important factor in domestic US politics. It provides the rationale for the mediatory efforts of successive US governments including the present one. The Sinn Fein leader, Gerry Adams, is a media personality of star quality in the USA, way ahead of any British politician up to, and including, the British Prime Minister.** This is a factor that will grow significantly in importance with the passage of time.

**14.**The first lesson is that devolution will not buy disarmament. The Sri Lankan experience of 1987 has proved this already in the Sri Lankan context. Current persistence with this policy is due to the inability to face up to, and understand, reality. The futile blandishments of "the package" are a symptom of this ailment. Despite years of endeavour, mountains of paperwork and shambolic political manoueverings it is unlikely to have the slightest effect in arresting, much less reducing, the growing military power of the LTTE. It is a complete waste of time and effort and it will not provide an escape route from having to face up to, and deal with, the manifest reality of military failure.

**15.** The second lesson is the non-existence of what is euphemistically called "the military solution". The Sri Lanka government, and,indeed, Sinhala society as an whole, lack the financial resources for modern warfare with imported weaponry against a nationalist guerilla adversary fighting on his home ground. The experience of the last 16 years of war and the devastating defeats of the last 4 years amply demonstrate this. The annual budgetary provision of S-L Rupees 50 billion for the war is ridiculously inadequate. The fact that the entire annual expenditure budget of the Sri Lanka government, including the provision for the war, is of the order of £ 3- billion is evidence enough of the lack of the financial resources needed for modern warfare. The Sri Lanka populations' annual per capita income is around US $ 900- wholly inadequate for any serious military effort. Sri Lankan governments of all stripes have been ignorant of these realities and have persisted with their floundering military effort once again as a means of avoiding having to confront the reality that a "military solution" is wholly beyond their capacity. There is no military option available other than persistence with failure on an ever increasing scale.

**16. The third lesson is that Tamil nationalism, just like Irish nationalism, cannot be bought off by constitutional offers nor suppressed by military force.** The military effort only exacerbates nationalism as seen so vividly both in Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka. The so-called "moderate" Tamil political parties which participate in the parliamentary arena have not renounced their ultimate goal of secession and sovereign independence. They regard any constitutional settlement as but a step on the way towards their ultimate goal. This is the openly avowed position of Sinn Fein in Northern Ireland. How to deal rationally with ethnic nationalism is going to be one of the most pressing issues of this century. All measures used so far - the carrot of the devolution of powers and the stick of military suppression - have proved counterproductive. Outright separation, as in the UK in 1922, has secured peace in many countries. In the Benelux Union there is a successful working model of a social union among completely independent neighbouring states which has provided the background for the attainment for high levels of prosperity and progress. Such alternatives to the proven policy failures need to be explored.

**17.** The final lesson of the Northern Ireland situation is the decisive role of the diaspora of the nation fighting for independence. The Irish diaspora in the USA goes back one and a half centuries to the massive exodus caused by the potato famine in mid



*Gerry Adams*

nineteenth century. It is now firmly entrenched in the US body politic especially in the states of the eastern seaboard and it has produced many US Presidents including the present incumbent. **The Tamil diaspora on the other hand dates back only to the great exodus of 1983. However, it is more widespread than the Irish being present now in 54 countries including all the countries of Western Europe and Canada, the USA, Australia and New Zealand. These are the world's richest countries. Numbering around 600,000 it is being integrated gradually into the economies of these countries and benefits from their prosperity, high standards of living and employment and from their educational systems. At a conservative estimate the annual per capita income of members of the Tamil diaspora would be 20 times greater than that of the population of Sri Lanka. Their earnings are in the world's hardest currencies whereas the currency of Sri Lanka depreciates steadily against these currencies. The overwhelming majority of the Tamil diaspora supports the LTTE financially, morally and diplomatically.** Their links to the powerful international media are being built up steadily and in the long term could have a significant impact on international public opinion. The countervailing efforts of Sri Lanka's diplomatic representatives are vitiated by the poor quality of the personnel and the paucity of financial resources for the research and network building such an effort requires. The Sri Lankan foreign ministry's efforts to reduce the flow of aid to the LTTE from this powerful source is orchestrated on an official government-to-government basis oblivious of the inability of modern governments to control the free flow of funds via the electronic world marketplace. The massive imbalance between the financial capability and potential international influence of the Tamil diaspora on the one hand and of the Sri Lankan population on the other hand to the overwhelming advantage of the former, gives the LTTE an advantage over the Sri Lankan government that is very considerable and will grow with time. This one factor compounds all others and makes an already impossible situation infinitely worse.

## Differences between the IRA and the LTTE

**18.** The IRA has a much longer history of armed conflict with the British state than the LTTE has against the Sri Lankan state. The long guerilla war of Irish independence fought sporadically over 300 years has no equal in the annals of nationalist conflict. When Irish independence from the UK was won finally in 1922 the armed forces of the IRA formed the nucleus of the armed forces of the new Irish Republic. What is now called the IRA

is just the Provisional IRA which launched armed attacks on British forces in Northern Ireland in 1968. It is noted for its secretiveness and its impenetrable central organisation. This has been achieved by keeping its numbers small, estimated to be no more than 300 highly trained and motivated operatives both men and women. Throughout its campaign, and even now, it has not held any territory in Northern Ireland in defiance of the state - British forces are in full territorial control of the province.

**19. The contrast with the LTTE could not be greater. In numbers alone the LTTE is 30 times bigger than the IRA. It holds large areas of the northeast province in defiance of the state's forces and it has a presence in the remaining contested areas. It has a significant and proven conventional warfare capability and has inflicted a series of defeats on the state's forces in conventional engagements in the last four years.** It has a growing naval force which challenges the state's naval units at frequent intervals. It has surface-to-air missiles which inhibit the performance of the state's air force. It has access to merchant shipping services for supplies of imported weaponry and military supplies which have evaded interception by the state's rudimentary naval forces. In short, it is an incomparably more formidable military organisation than the IRA. What is more it has grown rapidly over the 16-year duration of the conflict right up to now.

**20.** There is an even starker contrast in the opposition faced by each organisation. The IRA faced up to the powerful, well-trained, wellsupplied and experienced troops of the British Army in Northern Ireland. The British government fielded a ratio of 100 troops to 1 IRA guerilla on the ground and had, in addition, unchallenged air and naval control and a sophisticated, state-of-the-art communications system. In the last years of the conflict the British government spent £ 3.25 billion per year on its Northern Ireland operation. In contrast the far more powerful LTTE faces the troops of the Sri Lankan state which is able to field a ratio of around 10 troops to 1 LTTE fighter - a tenth of the ratio in Northern Ireland. In land area the theatre of engagement in Sri Lanka is an half as big again as in Northern Ireland. The Sri Lankan forces use weaponry and military supplies imported from distant countries thousands of miles away whereas in Northern Ireland the British forces were supplied with homeproduced arms and fuel. Despite these factors to its disadvantage the Sri Lankan government has spent, and continues to spend, around £ 0.5 billion per year on the conflict which is wholly inadequate even after discounting cost advantages in some elements of military consumption.

**21.** These enormous discrepancies in the two situations indicate that where the British government failed to subdue and eliminate the IRA it is extremely unlikely that the Sri Lankan government will do any better against the LTTE either in the immediate or the more distant future. On the contrary, given the steady increase of the LTTE's strength and military capabilities during the 16 years of the conflict, the prospect is the further deterioration of an already desperate situation.

**22.** There is a final, and very significant, contrast between the IRA and the LTTE. **The IRA is drawn from, and is supported by, a minority of the Roman Catholic population of Northern Ireland which is itself a minority of the whole population of the province.. In short it is supported by a minority of a minority and even that has proved sufficient along with support from the Irish diaspora in the USA to sustain it over the 30 years of the conflict.** Furthermore, the majority of the population of the disputed province has voted consistently at general election after general election for the maintenance of the existing union with the UK. The position of the LTTE is diametrically the opposite. The demand for secession and independence was enunciated first in the Vaddukoddai Resolution of May 1976 - long before the LTTE had taken to arms against the state. That demand received the overwhelming vote of the Tamil majority population of the northern and eastern provinces at the general election of 1977, the last general election under peaceful conditions. To this day the LTTE is supported by the majority of the Tamil population of the northeast province which is the area in dispute and it has an equally widespread support among the Tamil diaspora worldwide. It is the undisputed champion of Tamil nationalism and has been the only Tamil organisation which has been unswerving in its adherence to the principles of the Vaddukoddai Resolution which is as eloquent a declaration of Tamil indepencence as the American Declaration of Independence was exactly 200 years earlier. The enormous sacrifices in young lives and their meagre treasure has won for the LTTE the wolrdwide allegiance of the Tamil nation

## Realities and terms of settlement

**23.** These are the realities of the situation in Sri Lanka to which the lessons of the debacle in Northern Ireland have such vital relevance. They are the realities upon which any settlement has to be based for they cannot be dispelled by any mediatory effort. These realities are completely ignored in the constant triumphalistic hype being put out by the Sri Lankan government and by the Sri Lankan media both printed and audio-visual, both government-owned and privately owned. The preliminary role of any international mediatory effort is to introduce both the government and people of Sri Lanka to these realities and to the inescapable necessity of founding any settlement upon them. The object of this paper is to help its readers to understand these realities, to help them question the currently received wisdom and to address their minds to rational, viable alternatives which could deliver our people from the ruin that threatens to engulf them

**24. This writer can see no viable alternative now to ending the war by separation into two independent, sovereign states followed by a mutually agreed social Union of the two states on the proven model of the Benelux Union.**

# State Intimidation and Repression of Tamils

Following the death of a Tamil fisherman in a collision with a naval vessel on January 24, World Socialist Web Site reporters went to the fisherman's village of Udappuva and spoke to villagers about the circumstances of the incident, the living conditions they face and the history of repression in the area by the police and military. In the final part of the report, they detail the lengthy history of harassment, intimidation and repression that Tamils in particular are subject to at the hands of the police and military.

**Because Udappuva is relatively remote and surrounded by the sea on three sides, the village has been repeatedly accused of being a transit point for LTTE arms and fighters to the south. Again and again the villagers have borne the brunt of severe repression during sweeps by security forces for weapons and LTTE members. In most cases the police have found no weapons and those arrested have been found innocent.**

The Udappuva villagers have close connections through their livelihood to Tamils throughout the north and east of the country. Refugees seeking to escape the war sometimes come to the village to ask for help from their relatives. The appearance of these refugees has often been used by the Sri Lankan security forces as a pretext for a sweep through the village. During the past few years, a number of fishermen, youth and women have been detained. Some have been severely tortured and imprisoned without trial as LTTE suspects.

In July 1996, a member of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) in Sri Lanka, Sellaiah Rajkumar, was detained by police on allegations of being a suspected LTTE member. He was tortured and held in detention camp without trial for more than a year even though as a member of the SEP, the Sri Lankan section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, he opposed not only the Sri Lankan government's war but also the separatist program of the LTTE. He was finally released after an international campaign conducted by the sections of the ICFI to challenge his continued imprisonment.

## By R. M. Dayaratna

*Udappu (Sinhalised into Udappuwa) lies about four miles west of the main highway on the small neck of land between Mundal Lake and the sea. It is a unique HINDU fishing settlement. The village kovil is dedicated to Draupadi Amman.*

தமிழீழ ஆவணக்காப்பகம்
Tamileelam Archive

*- Ed. H.S.*

The detention of Sellaiah Rajkumar like those of other villagers in Udappuva is part of a wider pattern of repression against Tamils throughout the island which points to the racist character of the war being waged by the Sri Lankan government. To be a Tamil in Sri Lanka is to be automatically suspected of being an LTTE member and subject to arbitrary arrest, torture and lengthy detention without trial. WSWS reporters spoke to a number of villagers who had suffered the same fate as Rajkumar.

R. Santhivel is a recent victim of state repression. He was arrested by the Nuwara Eliya police on September 13 while he was at home in Udappuva. His younger brother Mailvaganam had been arrested earlier as an LTTE suspect when he has gone to Nuwara Eliya-a town in the tea plantations in central hill areas. Under police torture he revealed he had a brother at Udappuva and that was the sole reason for Santhivel's arrest. Santhivel said that he was subjected to severe torture for 21 days and then produced before a court as an LTTE suspect. He was later discharged as the police had no evidence for the charge.

**"Police tortured me brutally for eight days and questioned whether I had contacts with the LTTE. I said I hadn't. Then they handcuffed me and beat my feet. They brought my brother before me and questioned me again. That day a constable told me to slap my brother. I touched the constable's feet and said I couldn't. He kicked me then. My head was hit against an iron cupboard and started bleeding from nose and mouth. Thereafter they dragged me away and poured cold water on my head," Santhivel said.**

When taking him to court, the police had warned Santhivel to say nothing about the torture. "They asked me not to tell the courts that I had been assaulted. The police told me I would not be sent home if I revealed the truth. What an injustice to arrest me and torture me for an offence the police thought my brother had done," he said.

Though he was discharged, Santhivel had to undergo medical treatments for weeks. His brother was subjected to the same brutal torture and is still in detention in a police cell. Santhivel said that he did not believe his brother had committed any offence.

In October 1998, Manoranjani, a mother of three children, and two young men, Udayanathan and K. Kanakalingam, were arrested by police at Peliyagoda near Colombo. Kanakalingam was released after a month but Udayanathan is still in prison as an "LTTE suspect." Manoranjani was released after languishing in jail for more than a year. Police severely tortured her to extract an admission that she was connected to the LTTE.

Manoranjani's "crime" was that she had visited Mulaithivu-an LTTE base-for fishing about seven years before. She told WSWS reporters: "Police assaulted me to get a statement stating that I had connections with the LTTE. Without any connection how can I give a statement? They continuously asked me why I had travelled to Mulaithivu. The police detained me without charge in the Peliyagoda police cells for six months. What right do they have to arrest me just for going to Mulaithivu."

Manoranjani was produced before a court after being kept for six months in police detention, but the magistrate postponed her case citing the non-availability of dates for the trial. She was transferred to Welikada prison-one of the country's main prisons situated in Colombo. She was left to rot in prison for more than a year while the magistrate could find no free date for her trial. Finally, after this lengthy period in detention, the magistrate had to discharge her without charge.

## Held for 7-8 years without charge

**According to Manoranjani, there were 1,500 detainees in the prison. A considerable number were Tamil women who had fled from the war in the north and east to Colombo. Among them were young women aged 20-25 who had been held for seven or eight years without charge after being taking into police custody.**

In January 1997, the police arrested five fishermen in Udappuva-Perumal Rajah, Mutthuramu Vairavamurthi, Selvanayagam, Muththuvairan and Iyngre Kumar.

Mutthuramu Vairavamurthi, a father of two children, was detained on January 10. The immediate reasons for his arrest was that a friend of his who had been taken into custody in Vavunia in the government-controlled Northern Province had said under interrogation that he was going to meet Vairavamurthi. They had fished together three years before. On that basis Vairamurthi was held for more than one year in the Magazine prison in Colombo and was only released after legal action by his relatives.

Selvanayagam, a father of two children, was arrested on January 31. His offence was sending his sister's children, who were refugees, back to Mulaithivu. He was subjected to severe torture and had been kept in the Magazine prison. He was later released without charge after a legal action.

**Perumal Rajah, who was arrested on January 27, was tortured and forced to sign a statement in Sinhalese, a language he does not understand, admitting he was a LTTE member. He was detained in the Magazine and Kalutara prisons for more than a year and later released with a suspended jail term of seven years after obtaining a ruling that the guilty plea was made under duress. According to Sri Lankan law, a suspended sentence can be activated if the convicted person commits another offence.**

Perumal explained the cruelties of prison life. "The jail where we were detained was not suitable to keep even animals. We were given rice and boiled meat as food. Bread brought for breakfast was kept in the place where the dogs slept. On November 28, 1997, all the prisoners went on a hunger-strike demanding cleaner meals," he said.

After six days the jailers took away the fasting prisoners on the pretext of negotiations with the Commissioner of Prisons to solve the problem. They were handcuffed, beaten with truncheons and later transferred to Kalutara prison about 40 kilometres from Colombo. **He said his experiences in the Kalutara prison were more desolate and cruel. More than 600 Tamil detainees started a fast demanding their release. The jailers provoked Sinhala prisoners to attack the fasting Tamil prisoners resulting in several deaths.**

## Tried to use him as a spy

Iyengre Kumar, the fifth detainee, languished in the prison for more than a year. He was arrested while drawing fishing nets at Udappuva beach. He was also put through all the brutalities experienced by other young Tamil detainees. After the torture, the police tried to use him as a fingerman. They covered the upper part of his body with a gunny bag (a sack made out of jute fibre) and asked him to point out LTTE members.

"I had no knowledge about LTTE cadres, so how could I identify village youth as LTTEers?" he said. Unable to convert him into a spy, police tortured him to obtain a confession that he was a LTTE member. He was forced to sign a statement written in Sinhalese which they claimed was his release form. At his trial on August 31, 1998, the defence lawyer advised him to plead guilty, saying that he would be discharged. Under legal advice he had reluctantly pleaded guilty to being an LTTE sympathiser. Due to be released on December 16, 1998, he was finally let out on January 17, 1999.

On January 6, 1996, arms and explosives were found buried under the Andimuni coast of Udappuva. Police arrested 11 fishermen and a woman as suspects, tortured them and detained them in the Magazine prison for nearly two years. They were released under suspended prison terms of 5 years, after pleading guilty to "not disclosing information" about the buried weapons to the police. They pleaded guilty not because they committed any offence but again on the advice of their defence lawyers.

## Callous indifference of Lankan Navy

The systematic character of the state repression against Tamils lends weight to the suspicions of villagers that the death of the fisherman, Kandiah Sivakunar, on January 24 was not an accident but that his boat was deliberately rammed by the Sri Lankan navy to intimidate other local fishermen. The failure of the navy craft to rescue the two fisherman and the lack of any official police search certainly underlines the callous indifference of the Sri Lankan government and the state apparatus to the lives of the poor, particularly if they are Tamils.

***16 MARCH 2000***
***(WORLD SOCIALIST WEB SITE)***

# LETTERS

## CBK's Nobel intentions?

*Mr.Sachi Sri Kantha of 5616-305 Tsukimicho, Fukuroi City 4370126, Japan, writes:*

**Dear Sir,**

It is always a pleasure to read the editorial comment in the HOT SPRING. "The courage of NOT compromising" (Jan-Feb.2000) is no exception. The editor wonders whether "President Chandrika is trying to use that (Norway) government's good offices as cover for any secret agenda of hers".

Well, from my readings of Chandrika Kumaratunga's pronouncements, I can grasp what she is pretending to do and what she wants from this exercise. **She has dreams of becoming the first Nobel Peace laureate from Sri Lanka.** Let me quote from the horse's mouth (call this a Freudian slip of tongue !) which appeared last year in an interview to the **ASIAWEEK** magazine dated February 26, 1999. Chandrika has blurted out, "We should be given the Nobel Prize for trying to be democratic in a situation that was most undemocratic ". Phew !!

I substantiate my reasoning with the following observation as well. During the past few years other nations (such as Britain, Australia and South Africa) had shown occasional interest for playing the role of mediators. But why did Chandrika and his yes-man Lakshman Kadirgamar turn a blind eye to those overtures ? This is because, the Nobel Peace prize decision is made only in the environs of Oslo. Chandrika probably dreams that she can become the woman counterpart of Yitzak Rabin, Yasser Arafat and Nelson Mandela. **The funny thing is none of these three distinguished gentlemen whom Chandrika wish to emulate were traditional politicians. Rabin was a shrewd and ruthless military commander. Arafat was a legendary guerrilla warrior and Mandela was an aggressive rebel. They proved their mettle and rose to fame by dodging bullets, and suffering physical harships and not on the skills of verbal pyrotecnics of a traditional politician. Prabhakaran shares much in common with these three gentlemen than Chandrika or her " yes-man" Kadirgamar.**

## "Irresponsible piece of diatribe"

*Dr.Selvy Thiruchandran of 32, 8th Lane, Colombo 03 writes (by fax):*

**Dear Sir,**

Attached is a letter written by me to all the Sunday papers in Colombo but only the Weekend Express has published it. This is sent in response to the irresponsible piece of diatribe against me. However, the question that begs an answer is , does not one condemn the atrocities committed against Anoja Weerasinghe because she is a Sinhalese, lives in Colombo and is an actress.

Tamilesam Archive

(The reference is to the comment made in Arjuna's column in **HOT SPRING** of Jan-Feb.2000 - Ed.HS)

It was foolish to pose such insinuative questions, when it is on record that we have condemned rapes when they did occur.We do condemn the rape of all our sisters, Sinhalese, Muslims, Burghers in feminist solidarity and not only on ethnic solidarity. We stay in Sri Lanka amidst a lot of insecurity, fear and fright and fight for the rights of people who are affected.

I strongly feel that it is an attempt to create mischief. Please confirm receipt of this letter and the paper clipping.

## *No attempt to "create mischief"*

*In response to Dr.Selvy Thiruchandran's request that we confirm the receipt of her faxed letter and the attached clipping from the Weekend Express (Sexual harassment of Tamil women: An open letter to President Chandrika Kumaratunga), the Editor faxed her the following reply:*

*HOT SPRING feels relieved and happy that you have publicly called for remedial action from the President against the increasing violence against unarmed sections of civil society. Your listing of the various incidents of rape suffered by Tamil women is especially welcome, because Rape when used as a weapon of war against an ethnic minority is particularly obnoxious and deserves wider condemnation.*

*The comment in Arjuna's column in the **HOT SPRING** issue of JanFeb.2000 was written before your open letter to the President appeared in print, and the writer was probably unaware of any condemnation by you individually or by your organisation of such rape incidents PRIOR to that letter you have cited.-*

***HOT SPRING** holds that any atrocity committed against any person of whatever race, religion or ethnicity is an offence against all civil society, but what is regrettable is the use of double standards in projecting violations of human rights by those who claim to champion women's rights. The inclusion of your name in that context is regretted.*

*I can assure you that there was no attempt to "create mischief" as you fear, nor was any personal malice involved in the reference to you by name.*

# LETTERS

# "They never hide their heads in Colombo"

*Ms.M.S.Sivagurunathan of Rohini Road, Colombo 6, writes (by fax)*

**The Editor, Hot Spring**

**Dear Sir,**

I shall be grateful if you will publish this letter in your next issue. Your columnist Arjuna on the January/February issue has produced one of the most idiosyncratic pieces : Anoja vs Krishanthi. If he/she does want to do some sociological research, here are some objective facts and hard data which can be corroborated by many sources.

1. Krishanthi's affair was a past event. There was widespread condemnation by many women's organizations. The women you have mentioned *(Radhika Coomarasamy et al - Ed.H.S.)* are members of such organizations. There was a public demonstration in which one of them spoke followed by a Sinhalese feminist Rohini Weerasinghe. The role played collectively by many NGOs and politicians in fact helped a great deal to bring the culprit to book.

2. The feminist movement in Sri Lanka does not function on any communal considerations. The women have formed into collectives and in many instances they function collectively and at times on individual capacities.. The petitions and statements are not always accepted for publication. Under those circumstances they are subsequently sent to H.E.The President, State agencies and Human Rights organisations. On Sarathambal, both (as far as I know there would be others too) Women's Education and Research Centre and Centre for Women and Research sent letters to H.E.The President and they were acknowledged. Subsequently, the Cats Eye column took it up .

3. The feminist collectives function under three major groups: Sri Lanka Women's NGO forum consisting of forty women's organisations, the Women's Coalition for Peace, and the Cat's Eye Column(in the Island paper on Wednesdays has half page article on relevant issues written collectively by a group of women.)

4. Of the three names you have mentioned two of them are members of all three organisations and one of two organisations. But all three were involved in condemning the rape of those whom you have mentioned and many more which your columnist does not know.

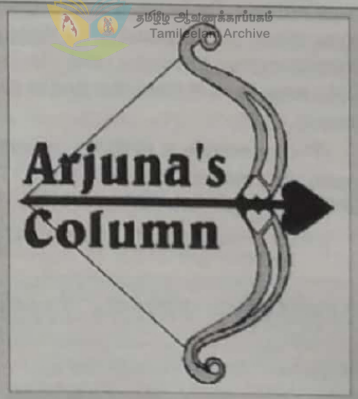
**Please get your facts correct before you put down in writing and do not mislead the readership of Hot Spring. Besides there is a lot of hate speech insinuations and in fact malicious sentiments which have been conveyed by that columnist.**

**Who is an egg-head? These women are not sitting in their chairs and writing columns from safe quarters in sophisticated surroundings with heavy funds. They get reasonably and moderately paid as wages for what they do. They travel around to dangerous zones and meet with affected people. They have never hid their heads.**

What is the motive of the columnist ? To disgrace them ? To create mischief ? Such hatred in language will become infectious with disastrous consequences for the women. There are certain minimum standards and codes of ethics a journal should follow. What is said in the column is not even partially correct.

I don't even know whether they will personally write to HOT SPRING to clear their names. Perhaps they will not. I came to know this by a friend who faxed the page of Hot Spring to me. Hence this attempt.

**Ms.M.S.Sivagurunathan.**




தமிழ் ஆவணக்காப்பகம்
Tamil Eelam Archive

## Arjuna says:

*My ! My ! What a bashing ! "Get your facts correct". "Do not mislead !". "Malicious sentiments". "Hatred in language"! "Disastrous consequences". "Code of ethics". Whoever would have thought the lady to have had so much fire in her ? The Editor warns me he is printing her letter word for word. God ! I am prepared to wear sackcloth and ashes from now on. But Almighty - God, will you give these women activists the same fire and courage to write to the Colombo newspapers who carry racist hate speech, who do not check their facts, who mislead their readerships day in and day out, and who have absolutely no code of ethics, who would not even condescend to publish what these worthies send them in the cause of human rights, in consequence of which, the poor dears are compelled to complain to the very "H.E.The President" whose own minions continue to rape and kill Tamil women with impunity. God Almighty, will you also see to it that these women do-gooders do not get infected with the "hatred in language" in speeches made by their own "H.E"The woman President.*

*Krishanthi's rape and murder was not a "past event" Madam, as you think. The Sarathambals of Year 2000 are the same Tamil Krishanthys of 1996 by another name. If only you could get your mind released from the Colombo syndrome, you would realise that there will be more Krishanthys and Sarathambals to come, as long as a war based on ethnic hatred continues.*

# LETTERS

***Respected Mr.S.Sivanayagam,***

*Herewith I am enclosing an attachment with reference to an article published in your Dec, 1999 issue. I would appreciate if you could publish my letter in your next issue to clarify the opinion and to present a true picture from a Malaysian of Tamil origin, who is proud to have lived in this country of peace and harmony:-*

*(His letter below, is published with a few deletions keeping in mind the law of libel and the harsh tones of language - Editor H.S)*

***

We do appreciate inclusion of the line ' that the views expressed by the contributor do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or the publisher". However the fact the TAMILS have lived in this country from the time of KADARAM-, which was later known as KEDAH, one of the States in Malaysia- should indicate that we are living in a peace loving country as citizens and not as conquered.

We were not tortured or discriminated as the Sri Lankan Tamils who had been massacred / tortured / raped / buried alive/shot indiscriminately in Sri Lanka. Every imaginable torture has happened to them under the disguise of a FAIR and JUST RULE.

To be honest, History, which speaks for itself, proves that it was the TAMILS who had been long settled in the island CEYLON. We know the details but this is not the issue to day.

The allegations made by Prof.P.Ramasamy in your issue HOT SPRING Vol 4 No.7, - December, 1999, Pg:22-23, - " Malaysian Tamils Back the Cause of Eelam" are probably his personal view. Probably he has forgotten the past.

We had great leaders who, together with BAPA MALAYSIA, our beloved FIRST Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman was responsible for the negotiation, which resulted in our obtaining INDEPENDENCE.

# Malaysian Tamils & Prof.Ramasamy

*(Mr.S.Kumara Kulasingam, Senior Retired Government officer of Malaysia writes by e-mail (kisugi1@hotmail.com)*

Prof.P.R.'s allegations that " Tamil leaders in Malaysia are not only corrupt but totally indecent lost" is strange probably Prof. has forgotten to include himself as a prominent Tamil leader himself

The general statement that " Tamil political parties and organizations have not done anything for the betterment of the Community from the time of political Independence"is both vulgar and rude .....

Our leaders left as paupers- Tun V.T.Sambanthan, Dato Athi Nahappan, Dato V. Manickavasagam all had their own profession, business and wealth before entering politics, but left without being corrupt as alleged by the writer Prof.P.R. His comments " that Tamils are finding it difficult to erect places of worship and have curbs placed on their cultural activities are again arrogant, selfish, thoughtless .....

We have been given assistance in the manner befitting the needs without much ado as and when necessary and requested. There are provisions for these; The Malaysian Hindu Sangam, Malaysian Hindu Youth Council, Manni Manrams ( Bell Clubs), Annual grants to several institutions like the Buddhist Federations, Pure Life Society, Malaysian Temples for their consecration ceremonies and several Cultural Associations have received grants and aids but they may not be to the satisfaction of the community. That is a different issue.

**We the Tamil Community are to be blamed to a certain extent. We spend large amounts of earned income at the toddy -shops, bars, pubs, gambling casinos, lottery smoking and many more unhealthy activities.**

**When it comes to contributing to society we back out except for a few, probably the writer himself may fall in this category.**

Just for information there are about 15,000 thousand Temples in Malaysia. All of them are not probably registered or are on unauthorized land. Some are run by family for personal gains. These Temples have been in existence for well over 20 to 50 years. Several attempts have been made and are being made to consolidate the state of affairs but when there is no co-operation no one can do anything including Prof.P.R.. There are over 1,500 Temples Registered and properly managed by Boards and Committees.

The Chinese community is conscious and is always ready to serve their community and needs. The Malays have their ZAKAT and other forms of compulsory contributions to make for their annual Pilgrimage.

What do the Tamils have? They even do not pay their RM 1/- subscriptions a month to the Temples. How many are members of a Temple or a Cultural group? What action has the great Prof. P.R. taken to assist in this area?

As mentioned 1.7 million are of Indian origin, why does not the so called PROF. P.R. organize and sacrifice his time and the money earned in this country to form a Registered Organisation to collect RM 1/- from each person-thereby this collected massive amount of money can be generated to support various projects:- educational, cultural, Religious, social and many other projects which require help instead of criticism.

The Tamils in general are fond of making loud speeches and creating

*Contd. overleaf*

# LETTERS

ugly scenes at meetings to project negative image of themselves.

Added to this is the TAMIL / HINDI movies which are produced for commercial / business purposes in a foreign country which has no reality to our living conditions. But the masses are so engrossed in them and become total slaves to these actions in the movies and to their movie-idols.

We have to change the mentality and attitude of the Tamils themselves first. Unless they want to change for the better, nobody and no external efforts can make their future better for them. Perhaps Prof.P.R. should focus his energies on such issues rather than dissipate them in making the TAMILS FEEL WORSE THAN THEY REALLY ARE.

***

***Mr.K.Sarveswaran of 24 Marsh Avenue, Mitcham, Surrey CR42JN writes:***

I read with interest your list of Tamil achievers in the 20th century. Publication of such a list should serve as a source of knowledge and awareness to the Tamil community at large and is commendable. I would like to add one more name that should have been in this list and shall be thankful if you could include his name as well:

Hon.A.Sabapathy. *Member of the Legislative Council (1916). *Editor of HINDU ORGAN; *Member of Jaffna Urban Council; *One of the Founders and Manager of the Jaffna Hindu College and affiliated Hindu schools (1914-1924, until his death) *Secretary of the Jaffna Association.

He was one of the earliest fighters for Tamil rights in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) when he was in the Legislative Council and through his activities as Secretary of Jaffna Association and as Editor of HINDU ORGAN.

* * *

***Mr. I.A. Sivananthan of 217, Tamworth Lane, Mitcham, writes:-***

I think the following two persons deserve to be remembered in your list of Tamil achievers of the 20th century:

1. Captain K.Thambipillai who took the sailing ship called "Annapoorani amma" all the way from Vavettiturai to America.

(Will any reader provide more information about this naval exploit - Ed.HOT SPRING)

2. Poet Sangarapillai Vaithilingam pillai (1845- ), a scholar-poet who lived during the same period as Arumuga Navalar and possibly the only Jaffna-born who earned recognition in the scholarly world in Madurai in India.

* * *

***Neville Thiru of New South wales, Australia,writes:-***

As a Tamil I must congratulate you for writing such a forceful editorial with correct historical backgrounds. (Hot Spring-Jan-Feb) Each and every Tamil should read your article. From time to time leaders are born among us to show the way. Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and now. . . Prabhakaran. Please continue writing such articles.

* * *

***Mr.Sri. Subramaniam of Ilankai Tamil Sangam, Florida, U.S.A, writes (by e-mail):-***

Thank you Mr.Sivanayagam for the report on the situation of refugees in the special camps in Tamil Nadu (H.S. Jan-Feb) It is very shocking to hear.

* * *





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Off Station Road
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**Tel: 0181- 515 7000 Fax: 0181- 933 1361**

Arjuna's Column

# AMNESTY says they are also investigating Kumar's killing !

**Senior Superintendent of Police "Show" Wickrema singhe is not the only one investigating the Kumar Ponnambalam killing. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL are also "pursuing their investigations" into the killing two months after the deed was done. Imagine that!**

This claim is being made by Graham Bennett, Acting Program Director, Asia & Pacific Program, in a letter sent to Mr.M.Sivarajah, the President of the Tamil Welfare Association, Hendon, U,K. The letter dated 9 March, 2000, was in response to Mr.Sivarajah's faxed letter accusing Amnesty International of bias in its work in Sri Lanka Mr.Sivarajah in the course of his letter made specific reference to Amnesty's failure to condemn the killing of Mr.Kumar Ponnambalam, although they have been rushing to condemn many other killings and bomb attacks, whether they happen in Colombo, Jaffna and Vavuniya.

Mr.Graham Bennett writes, inter alia:

"... First of all", says Mr.Bennett, while patting his organization on the back," let me clearly state that., as the person in charge of the Asia & Pacific Program, I have always felt our work on Sri Lanka to be of the highest standard...". He continues later:

"Your censure of Amnesty International for not condemning the murder of Kumar Ponnambalam is frankly hurtful. We have, and continue to engage closely with his family and still hope to be able to issue a statement at an appropriate time. The problem has been that from the time of his murder we were investigating several possible scenarios for who could be responsible for his death. We could have issued a general condemnatory statement without naming a specific perpetrator, but actually in the initial period after the killing, we were close to naming those alleged to be responsible (i.e. the National Front Against Tigers, who claimed responsibility). Only later we learned that nost people who saw their claim did not think it was genuine, but saw it more as a prank or a cover-up. In addition valrious other scenarios were being suggested whlch also souned plausible (not all). By then, issuing a more immediate reaction/general condemnation was too late. Let me assure you that we are still pursuing our investigations, and that we still would like to be able to say something. The magisterial inquiry is going on, so that may throw some light or provide an angle....".



தமிழீழ ஆவணக்காப்பகம்
Tamileelam Archive

## Arjuna says:

We have always respected Amnesty International as a world-wide Human Rights movement. But the way Mr.Bennett talks of their work in Sri Lanka, one would think they also function as an investigating agency. Secondly, Mr.Bennett in replying to the charge of failing to condemn the killing of Kumar Ponnambalam, goes into a laboured explanation (very, very laboured)

We have a few more questions to ask Mr.Bennett.

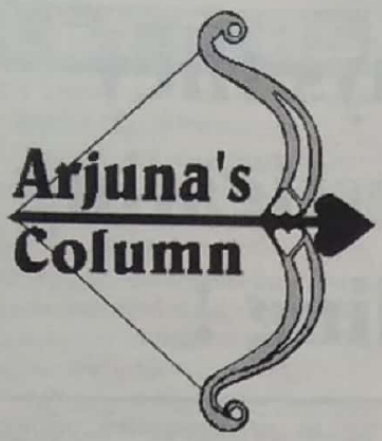
1. In late January this year there was a parcel bomb attack in the Vavuniya Post Office. The incident occurred on the 27th, and within hours of the report Amnesty condemned the attack, and added, "By choosing a post office as its target, the LTTE appeared to have contravened the principle of distinction in international humanitarian law". Now did Amnesty "investigate" the incident, as it is doing in the case of Kumar, or did it issue the condemnatory statement on mere presumption?

2. If the condemnation was issued after a quick investigation, will you please tell us how the investigation was done in Vavuniya where the incident occurred ?

3. How do you account for your smart detection within hours of the crime in Vavuniya, but are unable to make any progress in finding the culprit even after two months of Kumar's murder?

4. Was your hesitation in condemning the killing of a Human Rights advocate like you, (irrespective of who the assassin was) due to your natural suspicion that it was a pro- govt. gunman who did it, and that your condemnation could displease the Sri Lankan government ?

*(Contd.)*




5: How come you are so quick to condemn the LTTE for this and that, but drag your feet, where it concerns human rights abuses by the Sri Lankan government ?

6: It was largely because of the pressure of public opinion, credit for which must go to the late Kumar Ponnambalam, as well, that the Chandrika government was forced to admit the question of mass graves at Chemmani. That issue has yet to be settled satisfactorily. Yet your representative Ms. Ingrid Massage went out of the way to give a testimonial of good conduct to the government in saying: "We are pleased to see the government proceeding with its investigation on the widespread report of disappeared people in 1996. Especially, for a government which is in the middle of an armed conflict, it is rather exceptional that the authorities are taking a bold step to help the victims of human rights violations committed by the state forces". **(WEEKEND EXPRESS,** Colombo, June 19-20, 1999).

This policy of quick-fire condemnations of the LTTE and handing over testimonials of good conduct to the government must stop if Amnesty International wants to restore its credibility in respect of its work in Sri Lanka. Please remember we are not making any allegations about the great and valued contribution that your organisation is doing internationally. This is specifically about Sri Lanka that we are commenting.

Our submission to you is that anyone with an inbuilt hostility towards the LTTE, (which, like the government is also in the "middle of an armed conflict") cannot be a worthy representative of Amnesty International.

## The logic of war

In sustaining the war against the Tamils, the Sri Lankan government has been adopting a curious logic; endorsed by and large by the Colombo media, and believed by unthinking sections of the Sinhalese public. The logic goes thus: If Tamil non-combatants get killed in the northeast of the island, that is the price of war; if Sinhalese civilians get killed in Colombo, that is terrorism. If Sri Lankan war planes bomb Tamil habitations in the north, that is also the price of war;but if some alleged Tamils throw bombs in Colombo that is terrorism. In that kind of reasoning, only bombs hurtled from the air qualify to become accepted weapons of war, not those thrown or detonated by hand. !

Such double standards often go unchallenged because the right kind of questions are not asked. Such as : "In which country is this war going on?". Surely, it is Sri Lanka. "Is not Colombo part of Sri Lanka?". Of course, you stupid. "So why do you think that the war should take place in only one part of the country, and not in another. It is one country, is it not?".

This is the point in which the embarassed humming and hawing begins. The honest answer - as part of the same logic will be, that part of the country (northeast) is not ours, and that's why we think the war should be confined to that area. So there ! you have conceded Tamil Eelam in your mind. If your perverted logic can lead you into accepting the northeast as another people's homeland, why not accept the same gracefully through sound logic and received wisdom .

# THE RAPPORTEUR IS A LATE DEVELOPER !

One of the problems about the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Violence is that she is a late developer. A Press release of the United Nations said on March 16,:

"The Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Radhika

Coomaraswamy, says she is dismayed that the incidence of gang rape and murder of women and girls by Sri Lankan soldiers is continuing in Sri Lanka. She also expressed concern about political violence in the South of the country that was having impact on women victims. In a letter dated 13 March 2000, the Special Rapporteur expressed blah, blah, .....

Bless her, after four years of rapes and murders and mayhem, the UN's Special Rapporteur has suddenly woken up to what is happening in her own country. Until now, she took a telescopic view of the big, wide world : flying to parts of the world where she thought many white women were suffering violence, or maybe to attend or inaugurate a seminar on the subject. (Remember her father Raju Coomaraswamy, an Under-Secretary in the UN system was known as "Roving Raju"). The living conditions of women prisoners in some jail in New York, for example, used to cause her distress.There was money and prestige in it.

The Press release of recent date is just in time for the 56th Session of the Commission on Human Rights now sitting in Geneva. That was smart, a timely act of self-defence.

There is a good reason why the Radhika Coomaraswamys and Lakshman Kadirgamars behave in the way they do. IT IS ONLY BY DENYING THEIR TAMIL IDENTITY that they can prosper within a system that is heavily loaded against anything Tamil. Remember the fate of Kumar Ponnambalam who tried to flaunt his Tamil identity .

*The Kumar Ponnambalam murder investigation*

# IS THERE SOMETHING FISHY GOING ON?

Soon it will be three months since Mr.Kumar Ponnambalam who was in the company of a man called Shantha was assassinated in Colombo city in broad daylight.What is the state of the police investigation into the killing ,as during the third week of March ?

Wilson Gnanadass of THE SUNDAY LEADER, Colombo, interviewed Senior Superintendent of Police Bandula Wickramasinghe in connection with the commando style attack in the city on March 10-11, allegedly by the LTTE, in the course of which he also asked the SSP about the progress of the Kumar Ponnambalam murder investigation. (SL- March 19)

Below, we reproduce the relevant questions and answers in respect of the latter. Bandula Wickramasinghe who is popularly referred to as "Show" Wickramasinghe has Boaster as his middle name.



*"I've have caught a fish that big,but I won't show you"- "Show" Wickramasinghe.*

**Q: What progress have you made in the Kumar Ponnambalam murder case ?**

*A:* We have progressed very well. We have identified the real person. But we will not come out with the full story now. But I told Mrs.Ponnambalam that with my 33 years of experience and a feather in my cap, I will definitely solve this issue. I traced two witnesses with the greatest difficulty. They refused to come forward. I had to go and beg from them to come forward and help us in this regard. Then only they made the statement and gave us a further description and gave us the artistic impression as well. And following this I have now identified who the person is and from which organisation he is. I won't commit myself now by revealing further information. But I am 100 per cent sure that this case will end up successfully. Even the witnesses at home identified the person.

**Q: But the family members have said you are investigating this murder case with a pre-conceived notion that the government has had no hand in itWhy is this ?**

*A:* All I can say is this. I don't have divine powers. Let me further investigate into this and prove to everybody who has done it. That is all. In the field of crime I have a lot of experience. And using my experience I will do it. It will be another feather in my cap if I prove this very soon.

**Q: It has also been alleged that you had forced two domestic aides in _Ponnambalam's house to identify a Tamil suspect from Batticaloa. Is this correct ?**

*A:* No. Not correct. Why should I force ? Can you fool the country ? Can you fool the people ?

**Q: It is believed that underworld figures connected to the government were responsible for the murder. What do you say ?**

*A:* There is no truth in it at all. Underworld has no such weapons to carry out such a cold murder. Even the police do not have such weapons. Of course the army has. The underworld may have T-56 and revolvers. That is all. Or grenades. They don't have any other weapons.

***

# "KUMAR WAS UNIQUE AMONG TAMIL LEADERS"

## Dr Vickramabahu Karunaratne (Leader of the Nava Samasamaja Party)

I FIRST met Kumar when we were students at Cambridge, England. He was angry and displeased with some of the Sinhala colleagues there, for not giving a sympathetic ear to his view on Tamil national problem. Here I intervened. I was prepared to listen and persuade others to do the same.

This was the begining of our friendship which lasted until his most unfortunate death. back in Sri Lanka we both entered politics, but in different camps. We did not meet for several years. One day I met him in Kandy and immediately he asked "Bahu why didn't you contact me when you had legal problem? Are we not friends any more?" I never thought that I could ask such a favour from him. There after everytime I was dragged before courts for political reasons he appeared for me spending his valuable time and money. In 1980 with others such as Hon Minister Alavi Mawlana, Hon Vasudeva Nanayakkara I was accused of planning an anti government conspiracy through the general strike and sathygraha. This case dragged on for eleven years. Kumar appeared very regularly in Colombo high court until the case was demolished and thrown away. More recently in 1995 I was accused of keeping illegal weapons. For four years Kumar stood by me until the case was thrown into hibernation.

We had many political differences. But we agreed that Tamils and Sinhalese could live together only on voluntary basis. As such liberation of Tamils is a precondition for unity. Offer of unity should be based on equality, autonomy and right of separation for the Tamil speaking people. On this basis we both supported the Tamil liberation struggle. I had the opportunity



to participate in many seminars, both local and abroad where Kumar stood up like a fearless giant to smash the opponents of Tamil liberation. We never had any conflict on this issue.

**Kumar was unique among Tamil leaders, as he stood among Sinhalese and spoke in Sinhala to explain the Tamil National Problem.** Whether in Rupavahini or any other media he was forthright and fearless in dealing with the enemies of Tamil liberation. He was killed precisely because of this. He dared to speak in Sinhala to the Sinhalese on the right of self determination of the Tamil speaking people. Sinhala chauvinist cowards, both outside and within the government including those of so called Anti terrorist movement and Sinhala Weerawidana Padanama are totally responsible for this heinous crime.

**Those who committed this crime should know that only created a hero of Tamil people, to be remembered for ever. Removal of one Ponnambalam will only pave the path for creation of hundreds of such Ponnamblams. They will rise again and again until liberty is won for the Tamil speaking people.**

## Tribute by Rev.Yohan Devananda

"I would like to mention that I write as a minister of the Christian Church, as a member of a peace organisation, namely, the Sri Lanka Group of the World Solidarity Forum for Justice and Peace in Sri Lanka, and as a member of the Sinhala community. I have known Kumar Ponnambalam as a friend and as a person with whom I have worked in the progressive people's movement. He was genuinely committed and a lovable person.

"I first came to know him in the seventies when he readily responded to my request to defend a Sinhala insurgent from a remote village in a murder case. He undertook the case free of charge and won the case. That Sinhala village youth is now a respected member of society. There were others whom he helped in this way, including one, also a Sinhala youth, who became an outstanding peasant and human rights organiser.

"Then we have worked together in the peace movement when he was a member of the World Solidarity Forum. Later our views diverged on the ethnic issues. However, though I disagreed with him, I must acknowledge that he emphasized a side of things, a certain dimension, shall we say, that was seriously distorted and neglected by others. It was a side of things that need to be emphasized and he stood practically alone in this and in doing so, he showed outstanding, amazing courage. .....

## The Kumar Ponnambalam assassination

# "THE CLUES ARE THERE, BUT NO PROPER INVESTIGATION"

*(In a call for urgent action the Tamil Centre for Human Right (TCHR) has issued the following report dated 28th Febuary 2000)*

With reference to our Urgent Action - Ref No. AE/02/01 of 5 January 2000, we would like to bring the following matters to the concern of all human rights organisations, human rights activists and persons committed to promoting values of human dignity and worth.

**Our observations on information that TCHR has received since the assassination of the human rights defender Mr. Kumar Ponnambalam, strongly indicate that a serious cover-up and manipulation by the investigators are taking place.**



*The scene of the tragedy and Mr.Ponnambalam's car in which he was shot*

So far, no proper and serious inquiry has been carried out regarding this assassination! We would like to draw your attention to the press release of the Tamil Information Centre (TIC), in London, dated January 06, 2000. This states that "The Tamil Information Centre understands that Police Officers who came to the scene of the killing of Ramesh Nadarajah (Editor of a weekly Tamil news paper) had told concerned MPs that they would not spend time in investigating the case as it was not done by the LTTE and that they have no interest in the case!"

When a crime is reported in Sri Lanka it is the local police in whose jurisdiction the incident occurred that investigates along with the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). In the case of Mr Ponnambalam's assassination, it is the Wellawatte police along with the CID that ought to be investigating the crime. However, on the 3rd day after the murder, this case was handed over to the Colombo Detective Bureau (CDB) on the instruction of the President and the Inspector General of Police. This is highly irregular.

Even though the person named "Shantha", referred to in our previous Urgent Action had come to the family home, had sat and spoken with Mr Ponnambalam before going in the car with him, and even though the CID had been informed of this, no attempt was made to find out where he sat in the house, which chair he sat on, or to take finger-prints anywhere in Mr Ponnambalam's home.

**According to a human rights lawyer and a good friend of Mr. Kumar Ponnambalam, there was an eyewitness to this assassination! He is Mr. "X", a businessman in Colombo. Mr "X" had gone in a trishaw to Ramakrishna Terrace via Marine Drive and Ramakrishna road. As the trishaw turned into Ramakrishna Road he had seen a jet-black Isuzu Trooper jeep with dark tinted windows parked at the bottom of Ramakrishna Road. He had proceeded up the Road and turned into Ramakrishna Terrace where he had seen Mr Ponnambalam's car parked on one side to the left.**

He had noted a man seated in the left-hand front seat of the car and another man standing outside the window closest to Mr Ponammbalam. He had driven past them and had got off opposite No. 7 Ramakrishna Terrace and had rung the bell/knocked on the gate. There had been no reply from the house.

At that point he heard what he described as fire-crackers. He had not taken special note of this, as it was the festive season. Since there was still no response from the house he had turned to go back towards Ramakrishna Road when **he saw the individual standing outside the window where Mr Ponnambalam was seated, tuck a gun that seemed like**

**a revolver /pistol into his waist and pull the shirt over it**. The other man had got out of the car by this time and they were both "casually" walking towards Mr "X", that is, towards Vivekananda Road. Then he found that a person had been shot dead inside that particular car.

Immediately he brought this fact to the notice of two policemen who were nearby at the time. When he told these policemen about the killing, they said that they had come to that area because they had received information that there was a suspicious vehicle parked and it had been there for some time. In fact, even the policemen were referring to the same "Isuzu Trooper Jeep" which the businessman had seen.

**In Sri Lanka, the vehicle referred to above, is only used by the Security forces, especially by the Sri Lanka Army, Ministerial Security Division (MSD) and the Presidential Security Division(PSD).**

Furthermore, we feel it important to note that the Government Analyst Department who examined the car in which Mr. Ponnambalam was killed could not find any fingerprints anywhere on this car. **Even Mr. Kumar Ponnambalam's finger-prints could not be found on the driver's wheel, or anywhere else!**

The Government Analyst Department checked the car on three separate occasions yet could not recover any evidence whatsoever, and could not find any bullets in this car. Whereas later, two bullets were found in this car by others.

A columnist of the Sunday leader of February 13th 2000 has said in his article "It is indeed frightening that anyone called Shantha could become an automatic suspect in the Kumar Ponnambalam case. But then again there are reservations. The media in recent times has been full of allegations about **an individual called 'Shantha' who is allegedly a member of the Presidential Security Division.** He has been 'credited' with several acts of violence against civilians considered as enemies of this government. But the police so far have not interviewed this gentleman so far in this regard."

It is a well-known fact that that Mr. Kumar Ponnambalam was an able Criminal Lawyers in Sri Lanka, who had seen many criminals and murderers in his life-time. Therefore, anyone with bogus information such as a false name, address, profession, etc could not have approached him.

The talk in Colombo is that the organisation which claimed this assassination is not a fake one, but it is considered a front organisation of the Government.

In the light of the above information, we kindly request you to send letters / faxes of protest to the President of Sri Lanka and the Inspector General of Police, urging a genuine, rigorous and serious inquiry into this matter and to follow up every suspect whatever sector they belong to or work in.

TCHR recommends that the Sri Lanka government should conduct a public inquiry into the brutal assassination of Kumar Ponnambalam.

Thank you.

**The address of the President and IGP are given below :**

***Her Excellency President Chandrika B.Kumaratunga,***
*Presidential Residence,*
*Colombo 3, Sri Lanka*
*Fax: 94 - 1 - 333 - 703*

***Inspector General of Police,***
*Police Headquarters,*
*New Secretariat,*
*Colombo 1,*
*Sri Lanka*

***Head Office :***

***Tamil Centre for Human Rights (TCHR)***
*Le Centre Tamoul pour les Droits de l'Homme (CTDH/TCHR)*
*9, rue des Peupliers*
*95140 Garges les Gonesse*
*FRANCE*
*E-mail : tchrgs@hotmail.com*

***Tamil Centre for Human Rights (TCHR)***
*88, College Road*
*Manchester M16 8FH*
*UNITED KINGDOM*
*E-mail : tchrdip@hotmail.com*


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## *U.S.State Dept. acknowledges*

# Sri Lanka among human rights violating countries

Washington - The world t ook a turn toward freedom in 1999 but conflicts in Kosovo, East Tirnor, and Sierra Leone showed that human rights have not yet taken frrm root, the State Department said in a report published on february 25.

In its annual report on human rights around the world, the State Departrnent said that with elections in populous Indonesia and Nigeria, more people carne under democratic rule than in any other year in recent memory including 1989, when the Berlin Wall collapsed and Eastern Europe abandoned comrnunism.,)

**"Too many authoritarian governments continue to deny basic human rights," the report said.**

Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, at a media appearance to launch the 6,000page report, said human rights must and would remain an integral part of US foreign policy.

"Serious and repeated abuses of human rights are everybody's business. In today's transformed world, ignorance of atrocities is barely possible," she said.

**In apparent order of priority, the report introduction described violations of human rights in Yugoslavia, Cuba, China, North Korea, Burma, Belarus, Uzbekistan Turkmenistan, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Equatorial Guinea, Colombia and Sri Lanka.**

For Washington, the human rights case of China is probably the most troublesome of all because of its nuclear status, strong feelings among US lawmakers, and the sheer size of the bilateral relationship, especially in trade.

The report said: "Beginning in the spring, Communist Party leaders moved quickly to suppress what they believed to be organized challenges that threatened national stability and Communist Party authority."

"The government's poor human rights record deteriorated markedly throughout the year, as the government intensified efforts to suppress dissent," it added.

On Russia, it said the human rights record remained uneven in 1999 and worsened in some areas, particularly in Chechoya, where military forces killed numerous civ~lians.

Prison conditions, torture, and arbitrary arrests were also cited as continuing problems.

**At the end of 1999, the world had 120 democracies, three more than at the end of 1998 and the highest number ever, it said, quoting the human rights group Freedom**

Multilateral intervention in Kosovo and East Timor also showed that the international community can and will move against profound violations of human rights, it added.

"Yet these significant gains in democracy and human rights cannot overshadow the fact that the past year also saw a number of profound challenges to human rights," the report added.

It cited Serbia's mass expulsion of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo, the Indonesian army's complicity in a militia rampage in East Timor and the horrors of Sierra Leone, where rebels have indiscriminately cut off the limbs of civilians.

Another setback took place in Pakistan, where General Pervez Musharraf overthrew an elected civilian government in a military coup in October, it said. ❑

## "The most violent country in Asia"

The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), based in Hong Kong has described Sri Lanka as "the most violent place in Asia". In its annual report for the year 1999 the AHRC states:

"Sri Lanka is the most violent place in Asia in recent times, primary reason being the loss of democratic process, due to non-working of the democratic system. In 1978, then President Junius Jayawardene acquired Suharto-like powers, through a tailor made constitution. The democratic process was suppressed by using democratic methods. The country has not recovered from this trap ever since. In fact the situation is much worse.

"Ethnic crisis has its roots in this collapse of democracy. The military enjoys all the privileges, without needing to have recourse to taking power as in Pakistan. The civilian political leaders have only a limited space of freedom...".

* * *

# Are global players fighting a proxy war in Sri Lanka?

Students of global politics will know far more than myself about the global chess board , the chess masters and the games they play. What am I talking about, readers may ask ? I will attempt to explain.

The chess board example is a way to explain how the super powers exploit and fight proxy wars in the backyards of less powerful nations. It is not difficult to think of many instances where this has taken place and will continue to take place as long as individuals, businessmen, politicians and 'generals' have a lust for power and a desire to control.

## The Kymer Rouge

Let's take Cambodia [Kampuchea] as an example. When the Kymer Rouge took power, they were backed by China, traditional enemies of the neighbouring Vietnam, who were backed by the Russians and although on the surface, the Kymer Rouge were fighting the Kymer Seri, what was also happening was a proxy war between China and Russia. In the Vietnamese war, the global players had been Russia and the USA.

So what's happening behind the scenes in the conflict between the LTTE and Sri Lankan Government ?

In all such conflicts, it is difficult to know the identities of the shady spooks or prove for whom they are working but one can hazxard a few guesses !

## Two harbours?

I was interested in an article I read on the internet, published by a sinhala nationalist group, suggesting why the Norwegians were really interested in playing the role of mediator at any future peace talks. Apart from stating quite unequivocally that they wanted no third-party mediators, this group suggested that what Norway was really interested in, was the two harbours located at KKS and Trincomalee [the latter in particular].

## "Vellai Puli" (White Tiger)

Should Eelam become a reality, the facilities at Palali, KKS and Trinco, would be situated in the Eelam state and to be on friendly terms with whoever controlled those facilities would be a great advantage ! Forget bananas, coconuts, tobacco and chillis - they would just be the icing on the cake.

So who are the global players who are fighting their shady proxy war in Sri Lanka ? Are they interested in how many Tamil and Sinhalese lives are lost in the process ? No, of course not ! What they are only concerned about is being on the right side when the conflict finally ends and/or trying to determine the outcome by supporting one side or the other.

We know that the British and USA are involved and we know that the India/Tamil Nadu card is somewhere in the 'deck'. We guess that China might be playing both 'gamekeeper' and 'poacher'.

We, the British, are known for our tradition of divide and rule in international relations and diplomacy. Could this explain the reason why the LTTE has not been proscribed in the UK and we continue to supply training personnel and weapons to the Government of Sri Lanka ?

**You can bet that whoever emerges the victor in Eelam War 3, the British Government will be on friendly terms with them.** ❑


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# PEERING INTO THE FUTURE FUTURE



# "Thamil Eelam can rise from the ashes"

*The Editor,*
*"HOT SPRING"*
*London.*

Dear Sir,

In response to the call in your Dec.1999 issue, my imagination ran riot; and I am translating my thoughts into writing:

If predictions by astrologers come true, Thamil Eelam will become a reality in the year 2005; and by that time, they say, Prabhakaran will not be available. Can't imagine that!

By the time Thamil Eelam is achieved, the Thamil people living in the North-East will be revelling in ecstacy and celebrating the event as the biggest blessing to them granted by God. Not only the Eelavars but also all the expatriate Thamils far flung around the globe will be rejoicing at this freedom.

## Wrenched out

**This freedom, you will agree, will not be graciously given by the Sri Lankan Government; but it will be virtually wrenched out from their cruel hands in return for the loss of thousands of young lives that were mercilessly extinguished in their prime of life.** It is they who had given this freedom to us through their sacrifice although they have not lived to see and enjoy it. In addition, those who have lost their limbs, their livelihood, their dear ones and their valuable possessions should not be forgotten.

The immediate impact, when Thamil Eelam is declared an independent Nation, will be a host of celebrations and enjoyment among the Thamils all over. But when the whole indigenous population finally settles down, the reality will begin to show its ugly face. The enemy would not have left us in a position to have a normal living in our homes, if there are any

**BY: RAJA KADCHEVY**
தமிழ் ஆவணக்காப்பகம்
**(AUSTRALIA)**

homes left. As happens in other war-torn countries, here too the enemy would have followed the scorched-earth policy and destroyed and wrecked everything, including humans, that he confronted while on his way home, sweet home. Giant problems of rehabilitation will confront each member of the Thamil Nation, such as building a house to live in with his remaining family members, finding food for their immediate needs, exploring the possibilities of getting a job to keep the hearth burning, working together as a community to rebuild the schools or the semblance of schools left over by the armed forces to enable their children to revive their learning skills, helping the new authorities to renovate or rebuild the hospitals, as the case may be, and minor problems of clothing, health, transport, entertainment, and sport, and more importantly Public Finance.

If the present administrators of the Liberation Movement would live to receive the freedom of Thamil Eelam, then you can rest assured that the problems quoted above would be solved without much difficulty because they are dedicated and patriotic.

It may not be out of place if I mention here that the cream of intelligence among the Thamils was put to the best use by the then Governments. They utilised their services which were indispensable and irreplaceable to them at that time because the common Sinhala man was not keen on education and he spent his days in "jolikarallaa" and died. Once the Governments felt that they could manage without the dedicated services of the Thamils which they no longer needed, they simply threw them out of Government Service, under some pretext or other. **Such intelligence and dedication to one's work and the hard-working habit of the Thamil man is still there, as can be seen in the technical advancement leading to the events that happen in the NorthEast despite the chaos created by the war. He can rise up to the occasion, and build up Thamil Eelam from the ashes.**

## TAMIL EXPATRIATES

A majority of the Thamil expatriates, shame to say, will try as much as possible to remain where they are. They feel that they can lead an easy life in the Western Countries - These countries are devoid of factors like quarrels with neighbours, fence-disputes, scarcity or rush for public transport, all foodstuffs and provisions

available at low cost, physical exertion such as drawing water from wells for home use or for watering the garden, chopping of firewood, mending of fences periodically, thatching and repairs to the house annually, walking to the near-by shop to buy the daily needs, limited entertainment like T.V., Radio, or Cinema, continuous disturbances by neighbours or frequent visits of relatives for help, i.e. no privacy, and similar disadvantages. The persons of this category belong to the period when things were rosy in their homeland, when they did not feel the latent pressure exercised on them by the 'alien' government without their knowledge, when the then Thamil leaders failed to smell the rat that they were being led up the garden path by the nose like the donkey and the carrot. **Whereas, the younger generation among the expatriates who have actually gone through the mill and felt the pinch of oppression in their homeland will feel like returning to their motherland to be of actual and active service in order to continue the good work done by the Liberation Movement.**

## STAY NO GUARANTEE

And moreover, what is the guarantee that the other countries will continue to care and tolerate these "foreigners" any more, given the fact that the Thamils have redeemed their own land. The natives themselves of those countries will raise objection and pressurise their Governments to send them out. As you suggested, it will be practical hell for those Thamils opting to remain behind for they will be treated like dirt - or at least as Blacks or Browns with knowledge of English. They will be discriminated in a worse manner than they had been in their own homeland.

## NEIGHBOUR INDIA

As already declared by the Thamil leader, Thamil Eelam will be friendly and an ally with India, its giant neighbour. As to its position with its immediate neighbour, the present assailant, Sri Lanka, it depends on how Sri Lanka behaves with her new-born neighbour, and will act accordingly. Thamils need not entertain that slavish mentality any more, since they are not in any way inferior to their neighbours any neighbour for that matter.

## AT ANY COST

Having toiled thus far, having sacrificed so many thousand of human lives, limbs and possessions in the ardous task of redemption of our homeland, having suffered so much pain and spent energy by the indigenous population and the Thamil expatriates to educate the world as to the ground reality prevailing in the North-East of Sri Lanka, having shocked the observers in the western countries by their recent excellent victories in the on-going war, and having kept this powerful enemy at bay in spite of their enormous man power and fire power, and also having sent back home the world's fourth biggest (Indian) army, it will be a miracle if Tamil Eelam is not achieved in the next few years. **The Tamils have now travelled up to the point of no-return, and they will reach the target at any cost.** They will fight to the last Thamil man available, and will inflict as heavy damages as within their power to the enemy, in order to attain independence.

## STRATEGIC REASONS

India cannot afford to lose the friendship of Thamil Eelam for strategic reasons as well as for geographical considerations. Whether Indian States will clamour for independence or not is the Central Government's burden. It cannot site Eelam Thamils fighting for separation as a cue for their States thinking of severing themselves from the Centre. In fact there is no need for it. In India, the States are independent enough: they look after their own affairs: there is no room for dissatisfaction, as it is.

In my opinion, Thamil Eelam will be a Social Democratic State, having been built up from scratch - as in the case of Germany and Japan and even Singapore, after the last World-War - working hard for the prosperity and well-being of its citizens, and well-behaved with her neighbours.

*Yours sincerely,*

*Raja Kadchevy*


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# Army sacrilege of an ancient Hindu temple

**By: V.N.**

Thiruketheeswaram temple is an ancient and most venerated temple in Sri Lanka, belonging to prehistoric era. This Sivan temple is situated in the Mannar District and is the most sacred place of pilgrimage of the Hindus in Sri Lanka. In the past, pilgrims have gathered in there thousands there to observe Maha Sivarathiri, one of the most auspicious days in the Hindu calendar. For the last 10 years, no festivals or rituals have taken place at the temple. However, restoration work was in progress until recently.



*Five-tiered Raja Gopuram erected in1968, it rises fifty two feet and contains hundred and sixty sculptures*

A pre-Maha Sivarathiri visit by the temple trustee brought to the attention of the outside world, the present conditions there. **The temple and its surrounding had been converted into a regular army camp. The Vasantha Mandapam inside the temple had been converted as the living quarters of the army recruits. The sacred well inside the temple had been desecrated. The soldiers were using it for their daily ablution, bathing and washing clothes.**

**The western Veedi, a part of the temple, was being used for target practice. All around the temple, bunkers had been dug. The underground portion of the THER MUDDI had been converted into bunkers.68 carvings of the chariot had been wrenched away. The third eyes of all Punchaloga Icons had been gouged in the most uncivilised and brutal way.**

It was only after this visit, that Hindu Organisation, Tamil politicians and the media began to take an interest in this matter. Following strong representations made to the President, she announced that the army would vacate the temple premises and permission for some pilgrims to visit on Maha Sivarathiri would be granted. However, the conditions imposed included that **a maximum of 300 pilgrims would be allowed to travel from Colombo on a pre-arranged route; no movements outside the temple premises and no movement and noise at night other than Pooja activities.**

Eventually, only 100 devotees came forward to submit themselves to the rigorous clearing procedures. However, on the morning of departure, only 45 brave pilgrims turned up at the starting point, Ponnambalavaneswarar temple in Kotanchenai, Colombo. The coach journey commenced under the leadership of MP, Mr. R. Yogeswaran.

These pilgrims were prepared to risk their lives to undertake this sacred pilgrimage. The journey proceeded without any major setback or harassment until the party reached Mannar town. **The army insisted that the last 5 miles should be undertaken in a darkened coach, i.e. windows papered so that the pilgrims would not be able to observe their route.** Following vehement protests from the pilgrims, the party was allowed to proceed with the window curtains closed.

**Nevertheless, the pilgrims could observe small army camps set up right along the route. Everywhere they looked, there were armed soldiers. Contrary to what the politicians and some Tamil political parties in Colombo were claiming, the temple and its surroundings had**

**been turned into the army's 16th Division Camp, and the whole area was under the command of the said Division.**

In order to impress on the pilgrims, that the temple and Vasantha Mandapam were free, all evidence of the army's presence had been removed and the whole temple had been washed and still wet when the pilgrims arrived. Moreover, tyre marks of the army vehicles, which had been parked in front of the temple, were clearly visible. In the surrounding bushes, small bunkers could be seen. The 35 pilgrims' rest huts constructed in the 50 acres of land belonging to the temple were ruined and overgrown. Posters could be seen in many areas surrounding the temple, warning that the area was unsafe.

**Armed soldiers, some in uniform and others in civil were roaming around in the outer street (Veli Veethi). Soldiers in civil were also present inside the temple observing all the pilgrims intently and videoing all their movements**. Senior army officers and officers manning the Force's broadcasting station, 'Vaanampadi' were busy talking to the pilgrims and recording interviews.

None of the pilgrims was allowed to leave the temple that night. It was only the next morning at 6.30a.m that they get an opportunity to proceed to the banks of 'Palavi' tank. **The whole night's proceedings were videoed and photgraphed by the army.**



*Coach windows covered with paper*

Of course, no Poojas took place at the temple. Devotees were only able to light incense and camphor and offer their prayers to the Lord Thiruketheeswaran.

In addition to the pilgrims from Colombo, three busloads of Mannar residents too, were allowed to come to the temple escorted by the army. All the bus windows had been covered by paper during the journey.

One of the Mannar pilgrims lamented sadly, "We are so saddened to see the condition of the temple now. In those days, we came here with much happiness but that happiness is no more. **Today, in order to visit this temple, we have to subject ourselves to harassment and intimidation. We have to register at the Mannar Civil Affairs Office, 2 days before departure. There, our ID cards are checked and retained and we are photographed, videoed and fingerprinted. We are brought to the temple in darkened buses like prisoners. We observe religious rituals so piously, but here you find meat eating, unwashed soldiers roaming about the temple and even entering the sanctum sanctorum. They have desecrated our temple. They must face the wrath of Lord Thirukethwaran."**

***

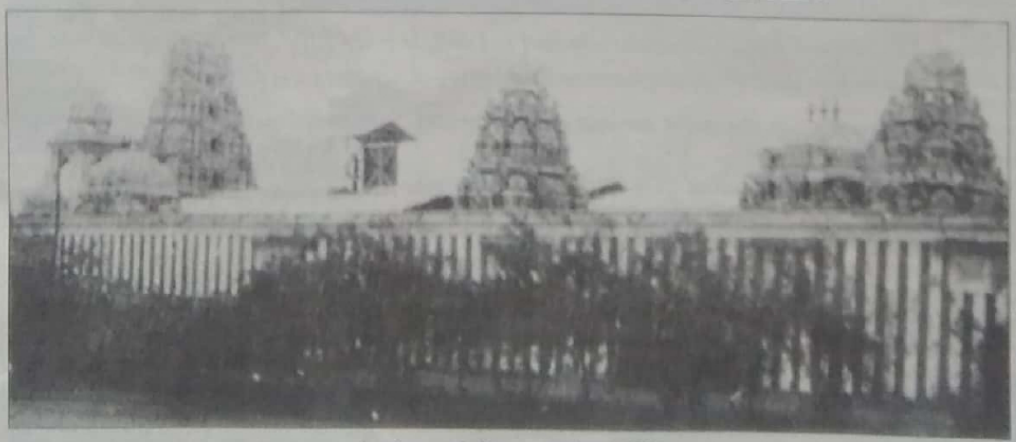
** Temple now a camp of the army's 16th Division.*

** Meat-eating unwashed soldiers roaming about.*

** Pilgrims taken in coaches with windows papered blocking the view .*

** Pilgrims photographed, videoed and finger-printed like criminals.*

** No priests, no poojas on the holy night of Maha Sivarathiri.*



*A view of the temple, 1978*

## Richard Phillips interviews Prasanna Vithanage

# That anti-war film by a Sinhala film maker

*Sri Lankan filmmaker Prasanna Vithanage recently visited Sydney, Australia for a special showing of his latest film, Pura Handa Kaluwara (Death on a Full Moon Day) . The film, which was reviewed on the World Socialist Web Site on February 29, explores one man's attempt to deal with the impact on his family of the Sri Lankan government's 16-year war against the Tamils in the north.( The film was reviewed by Gobi in the December 1999 issue of Hot Spring - Ed. H.S)*

*While Death on a Full Moon Day has not been released in Sri Lanka, it has been shown at several film festivals over the last year and had limited screenings in some cities in North America, Europe and Asia. It is due for commercial release in France and has been submitted for this year's Sydney Film Festival. Vithanage's film was nominated for Best Asian Screenplay at last year's Singapore International Film Festival and Joe Abeywickrama, who starred in the film, won a Silver Screen Award for Best Asian Actor at that festival.*

***

**Richard Phillips:** Although Death on a Full Moon Day is a relatively simple story, the film's measured pace and depth of characterisation is striking. Could you explain how you developed the script?

**Prasanna Vithanage:** The original script is quite different from the film you saw yesterday and centred not on the old man but the soldier. However, when I went to the location I realised that my script was false compared to what was actually happening in the village. It was incredible because, on the



*Prasanna Vithanage*

surface, life in the village seemed to be simple, but underneath the issues were very profound. So I decided to go with what I saw in this village and changed the whole script.

I was influenced to a great degree by the film traditions of the Fifth Generation of Chinese filmmakers. The Fifth Generation filmmakers were born out of Mao's Cultural Revolution. Because they were forced to live in far away villages they saw that life in these areas was completely different from the official government line. So they began making films, such as Yellow Earth by Chen Kaige, that tried to be true to reality, not what Mao said or the Communist Party of China said.

Fortunately I had money from outside Sri Lanka-the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation funded the film-and although they didn't like me changing the script **I thought this was a chance to make a film and truthfully investigate what is happening in my country. I knew that even if the censor board in Sri Lanka did not allow the film to be screened it didn't matter because I had the opportunity to produce an honest film. So all the things you saw in the film are based on real life incidents.**

Let me give you a picture of the region where the film was made. The village is in the north central province, near the ancient capital of Sri Lanka, and an area still famous for its irrigational skills and man-made dams. The city is Anuradhapura, which is considered a sacred city, and is the ultimate metaphor for Buddhist-Sinhalese chauvinism. But there is a great contradiction between these chauvinistic ideas and what is happening in the village.

## Buddhist Chauvinism

When I arrived, there had no been rain for three years and no paddy cultivation during this time. The only option for youth was to join the army or go into town in search of a job. The parents knew, and the youth knew, that by joining the army they would probably be killed. But the parents couldn't stop the young people because they thought that even if they were killed the compensation money would provide for their kith and kin. In other words, they were prepared to sacrifice themselves so that their families could live.

The bodies of those killed in the war would be brought to the villages in sealed coffins and after all the crying

and the rituals, people were given this compensation. I realised that this was a tragic and vicious circle, so I created a character that would expose this.

**RP:** What is the significance of the film's title?

**PV:** I decided on the title Death on a Full Moon Day because the full moon for Sri Lankan Buddhists is not only a night but it is also a day. It's a day for religious observance and a national holiday. The film tries to explore the connection between religion and society.

In Sri Lanka religion is not only a way of life; it is life itself. You will notice that I started the film with the Buddhist chanting. Chanting takes place every morning in the sacred city of Anuradhapura, but there is a contradiction between this chanting and the delivery of coffins of dead soldiers.

**You may also know that Buddhism is institutionalised and the Buddhist monks are in the foreground of the chauvinistic Sinhalese movement. The constitution gives preference to Buddhism and Dr Colvin De Silva, who was once a Trotskyist but betrayed socialism, put this clause in the 1972 constitution. The chauvinists demand that it should be kept that way. So Buddhism is an institution that manipulates and can be very oppressive.**

In the film the Buddhist monk tells the old man that his son is a war hero and that they will build a bus stop in his honour. In fact, there are so many bus stands built in memory of fallen soldiers in these areas. For the Buddhist this is a sacrifice for the country. The father, who is very subtle, says that building bus shelters and other things should be done anyway. So I use the Buddhist rituals in the film, not as some kind of tourist attraction, but to debunk the rituals.

**RP:** The father refuses to accept compensation and eventually digs up the coffin. Is this common?

**PV:** No it is not common, that is why I decided that the father should do it. If someone opens a coffin they lose the compensation money. These are the rules. The coffin is sealed and two soldiers stay with it until it is buried. In my film the old man has the coffin broken up so that no one will get any compensation.

After the film was screened yesterday, one young man came up to me and said it would be better if the coffin contained an army uniform otherwise youth would be discouraged from joining the army. I explained that the film had to show what was really happening-that the army and government don't even bother to keep the soldier's uniform-they just put tree trunks and stones to give some weight to the coffin. This is the harsh reality of the situation.

**RP:** When did you begin opposing the war against the Tamils?

## Saturday Review Jaffna

**PV:** From the beginning, even from childhood. My parents, especially my father, were inspired by the early Sama Samaja movement-when it was a Trotskyist party. This had an influence on me.

**I went to school with Tamils, Sinhalese and members of the Burgher community. Of course there were also many chauvinists at the school but from childhood I was politically aware and felt that Tamil culture had been suppressed. I also read the Saturday Review from Jaffna. This newspaper exposed what was happening under the J.R. Jayewardene regime. I also saw the 1978 riots and the 1983 riots. The Tamils are oppressed culturally and economically and so my feelings go with them.**

**RP:** Why did you shoot the film sequentially?

**PV:** When I told my Japanese producer that I was shooting the film in chronological order he was a bit nervous. He told me this was a luxury, that no one could shoot films this way. But I explained that I had clear structure and was not shooting blindly. I wanted to see how the main character bloomed so I was always discussing with the actor. By shooting sequentially I had a chance to think and react to the development of this character. I am not from this area so it also gave me time to explore the village.

I always try to shoot the film not according to logical sequence-from medium close-up to master shot and so on. My aim was to try and convey how the power structure of the household changes when the father's daughter arrives. So the camera changes its approach and becomes more observant. Rather than cutting from shot to shot, the camera work becomes very meditative. The audience may not completely notice this, but it was important to try and make them go more inwards. So we planned the film and all the camera movements very carefully.

Let me also explain our work with the actors. Many Sri Lankan films fail when they attempt to portray villagers. When professional or more popular actors are in the same frame it's easy to pick who is from the city and who is from the village. If you come from this area, the colour of your skin is different because the sun is so harsh. I wanted to change that.

Two actresses who appeared in the film had acted in one or two television films but they had never faced a film camera, and they looked like they were from this area and the person who plays the priest is the village priest. The exorcist, who comes to the father, is the village exorcist. So there were a lot of contributions from the local people, which enriched the film and provided it with authenticity.

**RP:** There are accusations by one of the film's characters that the father's daughter is becoming involved in prostitution. Could you explain?

**PV:** The youngest daughter has a job in a garment factory. In every village from 1982 to 1994 President Premadasa organised garment factories. His idea was to take the city to the village, so a working class, a proletariat, began to be born in the villages. In the film the boyfriend felt that she was not telling the truth. He went to the fac

tory and saw soldiers looking for girls. The boyfriend feels helpless and angry about this and says to the father, 'you are thinking about your son and your daughter is going into prostitution.' She explains that she is working in a proper job.

**When I made the film in July 1997, prostitution was just beginning in Anuradhapura. Now, after Colombo, the highest prostitution rate in Sri Lanka is in Anuradhapura, the sacred city. Soldiers who come from the north spend two days in this city and a whole prostitution industry has developed. The wages in the garment factories are very low and so some of the girls go to massage clinics and from there they are pushed into prostitution. I heard of one incident involving a young soldier who went to a brothel and was shown all the girls available. He saw his sister amongst these girls and became so angry that he attempted to kill the brothel-keeper and his sister. The brothel-keeper took him to another room, calmed him down and got him another girl. You see how the war has eroded basic human values and the conception of Sri Lanka as some great Buddhist civilisation.**

**RP:** The father's opposition to the war is naÔve and passive. Is this typical or are villagers and small farmers beginning to consciously oppose the war?

**PV: I wanted the film to express my opposition to the war, but I have to be truthful when I create such a character. The father doesn't know what he has exposed. The reality of the war in some ways is beyond him. This is what the film shows. Opposition to the war, however, is now starting to build up throughout the country. People are getting tired of the argument that the war can be solved militarily by massacring Tamils, especially when their sons and next of kin come back home in sealed coffins. I hope my film will assist in this process.....**

**RP:** Could you provide some background on your lead actor?

**PV:** Joe Abeywickrama is one of the most respected actors in Sri Lanka. He joined the Sri Lankan film industry in 1957 as a comedian and was the most popular comedy actor until 1970. After that he acted, as they say in Sri Lanka, in serious roles. Actually he is half-blind and he has many similar characteristics to the person he plays. He enjoys going to the jungle and can also predict rain. So I wrote my first script with him in mind.

*"People are getting tired of the argument that the war can be solved militarily by massacring Tamils...."*

When I changed the script most of the film fell on his shoulders and if he had not been successful in the role the film would have been very different.

Before we started shooting I didn't have a completed script so he was asking me, 'what are we going to do without a script?' So I told him to just be there. This was a little bit of an insult to him because I am a lot younger than he is.

**The brilliant thing about him is that he makes you feel what is going on inside his mind through his facial expressions. So I am very thankful to him for his great contribution and I am happy for him that he received the best actor award at the Singapore International Film Festival last year. This is the first international award won by a male actor from Sri Lanka. All the male actors, and it comes with male chauvinism, are rather worried about their physical appearance. He is not a racialist, he can speak Tamil, and he knows the village scene and its characters well, and was not afraid to show his emotions. He is the only character that could provide the qualities needed for this film.**

**RP:** What has been the government response to the film? And why did you decide to screen the film outside Sri Lanka first?

**PV:** When I submitted the script to the Defence Ministry of Sri Lanka they objected. Although it's not necessary to give the script to the military, if you are going to use firearms or military uniforms you have to get their permission. They objected on four grounds. The most important reason for them was that the film, they said, would discourage soldiers and officers joining the army and that family members were shown to be neglected.

But I went ahead and shot the film 180 miles from Colombo. Somehow, using guerilla filmmaking techniques, we were able to get the shots we needed. So I made the film against their directives and didn't submit the completed film to the government. My aim was to get recognition, or rather attention from the international film festivals. If a film is submitted to the government in Sri Lanka and they say no, then you cannot export any prints.

The film will be presented to the Sri Lankan censor in the first week of March. I have told the newspapers that if the government insists on cuts, especially the controversial final scene, I will not agree. The money for the film came from NHK [Japan Broadcasting Corporation], so I am not after money. I have done my job and if it is approved I will go to the villages and show the film.....

*(Due to exigence of space we are unable to reproduce the interview in toto- Ed.H.S)* *

தமிழீழ ஆவணக்காப்பகம்
Tamileelam Archive

# 'Do not skirt round the real issues'

## *Robert Evans, MEP, in Brussels*

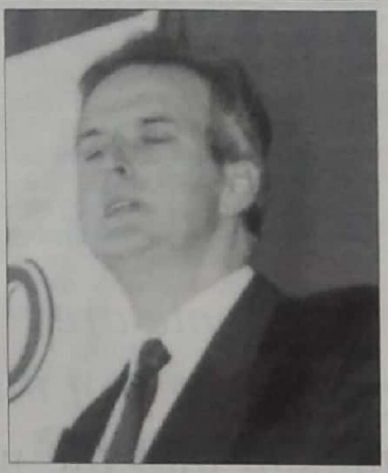
***Statement on speech to the Hernandez Mollar Report, Brussels, 29 iii 2000***

This is a report which speaks about European action plans for asylum and migration policy.

Each of the countries referred to are different and each of the plans vary accordingly. I will concentrate my time on actions and inactions and speak solely about Sri Lanka, a country I have visited and a country from where many citizens have sought refuge in London and other parts of the EU.

It is a country in which a civil war has raged for the past 18 years. Eighteen years in which have seen the proportion of defence spending by the Sri Lankan government rise steadily. This money is spent on a war that the government cannot win. It is a war that the Tamils cannot win either. The only solution must be a brokered peace. The European Union with its historical links ought to be the intermediary working for peace but recently the only country that has made a real effort is Norway.

I argue that this report therefore, skirts round the real issue and is a diversion from the debate ion Sri Lanka that we ought to be having. The report notes of course that there is no



*Robert Evans, MEP*

end to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and there are many cases of human rights abuses, cases of aid not reaching the most desperate areas and reports of economic deprivation. That's the effects of the war and the Sri Lankan government itself, with whom the report says we should work more closely, it is they who control what we know, they control what coverage we get and they control who goes into the danger areas.

We all know there are well publicised cases of military action by the Tamils, mostly in Colombo. There are much less well publicised cases of government abuses of the Tamil population. Stories I have heard of hospitals and schools being destroyed and of torture by government troops. There was an assassination in Colombo recently of a Tamil human rights lawyer, Kumar Poonambalam, a man I knew and who visited this parliament not long ago. What is the Sri Lankan government doing about the investigation into his violent death ?

Here is a report about a country from which people are fleeing, about an action plan to lessen the number of migrants and yet Sri Lanka is still in holiday brochures. Go to any travel agency and you can still visit Sri Lanka - a country with military check points on every corner.

So when the report says we should 'look for ways to find a political solution to the conflict.' I agree, Nothing else matters. Nothing else will solve the problems or lessen the human rights abuses. Nothing short of a cessation of the conflict will end the misery of the Tamils in Sri Lanka, nothing else will end the Tamil action against the establishment and nothing else will stop Tamils fleeing Sri Lanka. A high level action plan that doesn't recognise these fundamental points is not worth the paper its written on.

As for sending people back, failed asylum seekers or not, would anyone here want to go to a war torn country against their will. I suggest not. So I can support he principles but I have serious reservations about the actual content of this paper.

# Young Tamil mother and three children arrested in Colombo

In an urgent Press release, dated 31st March, 2000, the Tamil Detainess Support Group based in 237, Edgware Road, Colindale, London NW9 6LU, states:

Mr. Satkunalingam who left the shores of Sri Lanka for employment with a shipping company in 1998 leaving his wife and children has approached the Tamil Detainees Support Group in connection with the detention of his wife and children in Colombo by the police.

His wife Mrs.Rathy Satkunalingam aged 31 and the children Sinthuja (12), Senthooran (11) and Ratheeskanth (7) were arrested by Galkissa police on 18th February 2000. Despite his efforts Mr.S.SatRunalingam is unable to find the whereabouts of his family members.

Mr.Satkunalingam is very distressed about the detention. He is distressed that his young children will be traumatised if they are held in prison. He is also concerned about their safety.

The Tamil Detainees Support Group appeal to the international governments and non-governmental organisations to appeal to the Sri Lankan government in turn to announce the whereabouts of Mr.Satkunalingam's family members and to speed up the process of justice to them.

# THE TAMIL WHO PRESIDED OVER THE STATE COUNCIL

BY: SRI RAM
(Australia)

The year was 1943. There were 23 students in that class, only two of them from the North, one of those two being yours truly in that school somewhere in Colombo. Our teacher, a short and stubby gentleman wearing monocles, belonged to the majority community and later was a junior minister in the Government of the day with parochial views of race and language. I can remember vividly to this day, his blowing the high trumpet of his country, its history and his clan. It was of - course a little embarrassing for my small mind and body in those early days. Nevertheless I had to carry on regardless, particularly since I did not know whether, due to I.Q . proportions may be, boys of my clan in many school and colleges in the South at that time would normally top their classes in studies. I also did not know whether this was the crux of the problem for our ' uneasy' existence amongst them then and even now.

And so it was that one fine sunny day our pugnacious teacher arranged for us all to 'have it out' at the Galle Face green, topped by an educational stint to the then State Council in session. What impressed me most in that Council in session. What impressed me most in that Council was the impeccably dressed Councillors in their English designed full dress suits, even with tails and a small 'patch' of England too, except for an erudite gentleman in specs, presiding over that August assembly wearing a spotlessly white 'close coat', sash frilled turban and a shining "pottu" on his wisely fore-head . What a fine cultured figure he cut, so scholarly and cute as cute can be. It was so exhilarating to my young eyes that I still remember tat scene even today. He looked every inch a Supreme Court Judge, a gentleman to his finger



Sir Waithilingam Duraiswamy

tips, genial with a ready smile, full of kind thoughts, kind words and kind deeds. Blessed by nature with a graceful appearance, he had dignity and the gift of a sharp intellect; impartiality and fairness came to him naturally, a man for all time, he was the Speaker of the State Council for 11 long years, the man who pressed for self-government for the North - East when he appeared before the Donoughmore Commissioners in 1928, which timely concession if had been generously made, would have 'saved' 71 long years of suffering , agony and trepidations for all our peoples. And that was the man who defeated an eminent Sinhalese gentleman by the name of Mr. Francis De Soysa. K.C. for the post of speaker in those 'golden' days.

Another 'huge' gentleman who impressed us in that assembly was the Rt. Hon. D.S.Senananayake. And so after an eevetful day, we were allowed to return home and rest.

On the following day, in the very first session of our class, our worthy teacher's first questions were as to what we had seen on the previous day.

Every one said something or other and then came the million dollar question, "Who was that man with a 'pottu' and a turban who presided as the Speaker of the State Council?"

Then all hell broke loose-some said "a Tamil man", some said "a judge" and others said "a man in white", but no one gave the correct answer the teacher expected, till he pointed at me and said, "hey, Jaffna, who was he?" I meekly replied " Waithilingam Duraisamy, Sir".

The very next moment, he turned to his students and speaking in Sinhalese, said "Well, that is what you all should see does not happen when you all are grown up men,-a Tamil presiding over an assembly of the Sinhalese people"

Stunned and astounded as I was, I walked home dejected and in a haze, young as I was. If it was today with a Tamil as the President of the Singapore Government, I would have just swooned.

However, coming back to my story, sleep never came to me that night. Instead, it looked as if the sky had opened up and across it flashed in red the banner words "EAST IS EAST AND WEST IS WEST AND NEVER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET".

All this happened in 1943, long before independence came to this blessed country, so much so that what happened after independence is no

surprise at all in any sense of that word.

But the incomprehensive million dollar scenario is that our community has always been living in a fool's paradise and are continuing to live so, except perhaps, a section of it living in the jungles right now.

What caused this parlous situation was the integration manipulated by the British when they amalgamated the North- East with the rest of Ceylon in 1883 for their own conveniences to have succeeded immensely.

But the salient fact remains as firm as ever that Sir Waithilingam Duraisamy's insistence on self - government for the North-East in 1928 still holds 'plenty of water' to the discerning mind with a political will and fore-sight to succeed, considering the extreme sagacity and love for the whole of his country that he possessed, reflected in what he said then, thus:-

The policy of "divide and rule' shall not make us great Therefore let me once again reassure the people of Ceylon that we are acting on behalf of the whole of Ceylon and not from any sectional motives".

So much so that, Sam Wijesinghe, the retired Secretary-General of Parliament could scarce forbear to declare " HE IS A MAN NOT FOR AN AGE, BUT FOR ALL TIME". Hence it looks obvious that even his 1928 proposal for a self governing North-East is also FOR ALL TIME.

But today all such great men are but ashes of dust and one wonders from events whether all their 'golden' words and intentions are interred with their ashes and whether a 'great pearl' has been put on a platter and gifted to Satan, for, another of those greats, Chelvanayakam had thrown up his hands to heaven and exclaimed, "God save the Tamil".

But what should be remembered is that historically and biologically this nation called the Tamils are not only industrious and intelligent, but also are they eminently resilient and would never accept 'no for an answer at any given time or age even if stretched to the limit.

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# WHAT THE TAMIL SURVEYOR TOLD THE SINHALESE SOLDIER

**BY S.SELVENDRA**

The Sinhalese government of Sri Lanka unleashed its military in the dying months of 1995 to take over the Jaffna peninsula which had a hundred percent Tamil population. The indiscriminate bombing and shelling by the advancing army made the Tamils to abandon their homes and belongings and flee as refugees to the Wanni region.

The army of occupation in control of the war-ravaged peninsula, devoid of the bulk of its population, started setting up a chain of mini army camps all along the periphery of its area of control Every quarter kilometer or so , the army began occupying clusters of houses belonging to the Tamils. Barbed wire fences were erected throughout the length and breadth of the area, encompassing places of habitation and excluding large tracts of open land. In addition, bunds were erected demolishing numerous residential properties. Valuable furnitures, doors and windows were removed from the vacant houses of the Tamils to prop up the bunds. Landmines were also planted to prevent infiltration into the army-held areas.

In this process, some houses were left outside the fences and bunds. The people in these houses had to enter through the army check points to go into their own towns, and shopping areas for their daily requirements.

As many houses inside the army-controlled areas were without the occupants, weeds and creepers started growing and soon the towns and villages started resembling jungle areas. Even temples and churches without their worshippers became haunted places overgrown with weeds and creepers.

A retired surveyor in Pt.Pedro whose house was outside the barricades had to cross the sentry points daily to get into his town centre. Unable to bear the sorry sight of vast areas of his town slowly becoming a jungle, he made the following comment in fluent Sinhalese to the Sinhalese soldiers manning the sentry point:

"We the Tamil surveyors toiled all our lifetime to clear malaria infested jungles in the Sinhalese areas of Sri Lanka and develop them into towns. Now you Sinhalese people are converting our towns and villages into jungles. What sort of people are You all". ❑


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# Perarivalan, tortured almost to death in police custody

The narrative is right out of a B grade movie complete with torture tales of pins inserted in finger nails, crushing of toes and other unspeakable horror stories of police brutality.

This is no flight of imagination or morbid creativity, but the heart breaking story of Perarivalan, sentenced to death in the late prime minister Rajiv Gandhi's assassination case.



*Perarivalan(Arivu)*

In a letter written while in solitary confinement in Central Jail, Vellore, addressed to the South India Cell for Human Rights, A.G. Perarivalan has made one last desperate appeal for grant of amnesty in his case, terming it " a step towards success in justice".

Handed over to CBI inspectors on June 11, 1991, Perarevalan's tryst with torture and mental agony has lasted now for more than nine years. " I was forced to remove my clothes and then the inspectors beat me with their bare hands; suddenly another inspector kicked me on my testicles while my toes were crushed under his shoes," writes Perarivalan of his eight days of "unlawful" custody as he call it.

## By: G. Anuradha

That was just the beginning of his nightmare . Then began the beating of the back muscles of his legs with PVC pipes filled with cement. Then followed the unspeakable agony of his legs being stretched at an impossible 180 degree while he was seated . Writing about this, Perarivalan says, "Words cannot describe the pain I experienced at that time". **Denied sleep, food and water, Perarivalan was also sometimes given no permission for the most basic of human functions like urination. All this culminated in signing a confession of his involvement in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case under TADA rule. "I was not permitted to read the contents of the papers and I was told that I would be free if I signed them. I did not know about the TADA Act. I could not bear the torture and I signed the document in the hope of saving my life,** "he writes about his confessional statement. Unaware of the enormity of the weight that such a confession carried in court under TADA rule, Perarivalan has been finally sentenced to death in the case.

Tamil Eelam Archive

### Solitary Confinement

Even after that, Perarivalan is still undergoing mental trauma and sometimes physical trauma as a result of which at the young age of 24, Perarivalan has high blood pressure. Perarivalan writes sadly, " The social status of the dead person alone was taken into consideration, not my behaviour while I was in prison, and new rules were framed for me. I am kept in solitary confinement even now, though the Supreme Court directions prohibiting solitary confinement even for a person sentenced to death."

Perhaps the most disturbing question that Perarivalan has written in his letter is " In future, if investigations about the bomb (Perarivalan was accused of providing the 9v battery used to make the bomb for the assassination,) prove that I am innocent, what would be my position?"



*Perarivalan's mother Arputham Ammal gesticulating in anger at the shock verdict on her son*

The question is not whether Perarivalan is guilty, but of violation of human rights through torture in unlawful police custody, of the possibility that future investigations may indeed reveal that he was innocent and then, the enormous guilt of the country in killing an innocent man.

***(COURTESY:ASIAN AGE)***

# SIVAYOGAM

## London Muthumariamman Temple

**180-186, Upper Tooting Road**

**London SW17 7E j**

**Tel:020 8767 9881. Fax: 020 8767 2337**

### Religious & Cultural Programme APRIL 2000.

**April 1:** Muththamil Vizha at Kalai Arangam Music, Dance, Drama, Debate
10 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. Admission Free.

**April 2 - 23:** Religious Discourse 7-8 p.m.

**April 3:** **21**-Day Festival begins ending April 23.

# SIVAYOGAM FUND

## for Eelam widows, orphans and destitutes

## A Charity registered in England & Wales

Realizing the urgent need for every Tamil to extend a helping hand to our kith and kin undergoing immense hardships, back in our homeland, Sivayogam launched a special fund with the beginning of the new milliennium, January 1, 2000.

From the income derived from the temple, from contributions made by devotees and from the special till box kept in the temple, a sum of £1,000/- is being set apart for this fund. A sum of £2,500/- has already been given to the "Chencholai" Children's Fund in the month of January itself.

Contributions could be made either through Standing order or by cheque. The following trustees manage the fund:- Messrs. N.Seevaratnam, M.Singham, N.Karunanidhi, Dr.Nadesalingam,Mrs. Gnanachelvam, and Messrs. V.Thayalan and V.A.Ramanathan

**Barclays Bank, Clapham Common Group of Branches, Name of the Account: SIVAYOGAM - EELAM DESTITUTES Account No: 8060 3309. Sort Code 20 21 78 Address: P.O.Box 4028, London SW12 9YB.**

# For your Diary

## Tamil Sports Festival

Tamil Sports Festival at Dulwich College grounds 28 May, 2000. London SE21. Also at the Festival Millennium Raffle of BMW 3161 SE Compact. Ticket prize £1 only, Prize will be awarded at the end of July when the new model is released. Prize must be claimed before August 31, 2000. Contact UTO on 0171-403-4554 for details.

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## "Putney Church": London Tamil Christian Congregation

The Putney Church will be holding its traditional Good Friday Service on the 21st April, at 12 noon. The focus of the Service would be on Meditations of the Words of the Cross combined with singing of Thamil lyrics.

The Easter Service will be celebrated on Sunday 23rd April, at 4 p.m. The Services are held at Rivercourt Methodist Church King Street, London W6.

For further details of regular Services: Revd.B.J.Alexander (0181-427 2722. Mr.Rajan (0181-621 0527)

***

## St.Patrick's Alumni Dinner/Dance

Celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the founding of St.Patrick's College, Jaffna and Alumni Association Dinner/Dance on 20th May. Wandsworth Town Hall.

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# A 133-foot statue for Tamil scholar-poet TIRUVALLUVAR

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.Karunanidhi fulfilled a life-long ambition of his when on January 1, 2000, he unveiled a gigantic statue of Tamil philosopher-poet Tiruvalluvar at one of the most scenic spots of Tamil Nadu - Kanyakumari.

While the statue itself is 95 feet in height, it stands on a 38-foot pedestal, making it one of the tallest statues in the world. The statue stands atop a natural rock formation at the sothernmost tip of India, a meeting point of the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean, and the Arabian Sea.

2,000year-old The Tirukkural which Tiruvalluvar authored is a/classic consisting of 1,330 couplets - aphorisms on a wide range of subjects including morals, politics, economy, statecraft, love and homelife. It has been claimed as a didactic work that transcends the barriers of race, creed, place and time. Mahatma Gandhi called it "a textbook of indispensable authority on moral life ." "The maxims of Valluvar have touched my soul", he said.

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## COMMUNITY EVENTS

### Nimalan: Mridanga Arangetram



Caption

தமிழீழ ஆவணக்காப்பகம்
Tamileelam Archive

The Mridanga Arangetram of Nimalan Thiagarajah took place at the Watersmeet Theatre, Rickmansworth, U.K. recently. Nimalan is a pupil of Muthucumaraswamy Sukumar, who has taught at West London Tamil School and at the Herts Tamil school. The guru Sukomar is himself from a talented family, and is a brother of the Bharatha Natya dansesuse Gowry_MuthucumaEasawamy who distinguished herself in the role of Meenakshi in the celebrated dance drama "Meenakshi Kalyanam" in the sixties in Colombo.

Vocal support to Nimalan was given by Thirumathi Sukirthakala Kadatcham, while another Mridanga vidwan Muthu Sivarajah accompanied on the Kanjira. Other accompanists were Thirumathi Kalaivani Indrakumar on the violin, Kandiah Sithamparanathan on the Morsing, Sri N.Prakash on the Ghatam, while Kalithasan Chandrasegaram who teaches Indian classical dance at the Herts Tamil school strung the Thambura.

Dr.N.Sreeharan was the Chief Guest on the occasssion and Mr. Logan Rasiah of the Tamil Union of Herts and the Herts Tamil School was Guest of Honour

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# COMMUNITY EVENTS

## Tamil Information Bureau Awards in Canada

Canada's Tamil Information Bureau, an Information Organisation administered by Mr.Thiru Thiruchelvam, a former Lake House and Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation journalist, celebrated its 9th Anniversary and Presentation of Annual Awards at the City Council Chambers in Toronto recently.

Mrs.Maria Mina, Minister for International Cooperation in the Central Government of Canada was the chief guest and Barbara Hall former Mayor of Toronto, Pam McConnell, City Councillor, City of Toronto, and David Caplan, Member of Provincial Parliament, Queen's Park, were guests of honour. The Council chamber was packed to capacity by journalists, professionals, religious dignitaries and other invitees from the Canadian society.

TAMIL INFORMATION DIGEST, a monthly, conducts this function each year and honours ten distinguished Tamils from all over the world for their achievements in their chosen fields. Each recipient is presented a shield and a gold medal. Awards for the year 2000 were presented to :

Mrs.Lalitha Brodie (Community Service), Mrs.Vijayaluxmy Seenivasagam (Carnatic Music), S.Pathmanathan (Literature), S.Jeyarajah (Art & Cultural Enrichment), Manimaran Kanagasabapathy (posthumous award to a young Telecom genius), Siva N. Sivalingam ("Man of the Decades" Canada Award, S.Sivapathasundaram of UK ( Broadcasting & Tamil culture), Wimal Sockanathan, broadcaster and lawyer from UK (Mass Media), E.K.Rajagopal of UK ( lifetime contribution to Tamil journalism)



*Picture shows Mr.Wimal Sockanathan receiving his award for outstanding contribution to the Tamil Media from Mrs.Maria Mina.*

Four youngsters from Canada were given awards for outstanding performances in various fields:- Mr.Prasanth Balasubramaniam of Montreal (Swimming), Miss Yalini Logendralingam (Canada Day National Youth Award recipient - 1999), Mr.Ramana Ganeshalingam (Millennium Award recipient , McMaster University, and Miss Nisha Sivagurunathan (Tamil Music).

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*E.K.Rajagopal with Mrs.Maria Mina after receiving the award for lifetime contribution to Tamil journalism*

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# Obituaries



## S.Arumugam

The death occurred in London on March 6, 2000, of Sanmugam Arumugam, retired Deputy Director, Irrigation, Colombo, author and religious activist. He was 94.

Mr.Arumugam was born on 31st August 1905 in an orthodox Hindu family in Nallur, Jaffna. He had his early education at St.John's College, Jaffna and St.Thomas' College, Mt.Lavinia, passing the Cambridge Local examinations with honours. He obtained the General Science degree (London) from the Ceylon University College in 1928; he then proceeded to London and graduated in Civil Engineering from Kings College and gained practical engineering experience at the Manchester City Corporation Water Works.

Returning to Ceylon , he joined the Irrigation Service as an Asst.Irrigation Engineer in 1933, eventually to hold the post of Deputy Director of Irrigation for a period of ten years. He was the author of several technical papers and publications, including "Development of Water Resources of Ceylon" (1969), a monumental volume of 326 pages.

On his retirement, he spent his time in research-study of the development of Hindu Civilisation and Tamil Culture in Sri Lanka.He published books on the history of some of the revered ancient institutions: "Some Ancient Hindu Temples of Sri Lanka" (1980) Reprint (1982); "The Lord of Thiruketheeswaram" (1981) reprinted as "Thirukeetheeswaram" (1990).

### Extensive travel

Mr.Arumugam who had been an active member of many cultural organisations has travelled extensively; to Hindu religious places in both South and North India, to the U.S.A. in 1957, and thereafter to Japan, Thailand, and Malaysia. He went to Russia in 1960. During 1989-90, he made an exploratory study of the ancient Hindu Monuments of Java, Bali and Lombok and published "Lombok and its Temples" in 1991.

Since 1983, he has been living in the U.K. and continued his writings. Among them were "Stone Sculptures in Colombo Hindu Temple"(1990) and "Thiru Koneswaram" (1990). "The Genealogical study of a Nallur Clan" was released on his 90th birthday on 31st August 1995. Along with his friends he also compiled " Dictionary of Biography of Ceylon Tamils" of over 750 personages, both living and dead, published in January 1997.

His remains were cremated in the presence of a large gathering on March 9. Tributes were paid on the occasion by his close associate and friend , Mr.M.Theagarajah- and members of the Saiva Munnetta Sangam (UK).

He leaves his wife Thiraviam, sons Thirumugan, Srimugan, and Sakthimugan and four daughters, Sushila Arichandran, Vimala Gunasingam, Praemala Ganesan Raju and Ahila Raja Rayan.

## Rev.S.M.Jacob



*(From a correspondent)*

Rev.Swaminathan Masillamoni Jacob, Honorary Pastor of the London Tamil Christian Congregation at Putney, U.K. passed away on the 27th February at Middlesex Hospital after several years of distinguished service to the Methodist Church in two countries Sri Lanka and Britain. He was 73.

Born in South India, he had his education at Wesley College, Colombo. He got his B.D. at the United Theological College in 1951 and his M.Th. at the Chicago Theological Seminary in 1965. In the course of a varied religious career, he left his stamp wherever he ministered with pastoral care for his people and with his skill as an administrator. He served as a popular Secretary of the Methodist Conference in Sri Lanka.

When invited to Britain as part of the World Church in Britain Program from 1975-1981, he was a Circuit Minister in Hammersmith, Brentford and Hounslow. A man of vision and commitment , it was during his stay in London that he understood the needs of a small Tamil Christian Congregation originally from Sri Lanka, which since 1972 was striving to create a worshipping Tamil community in London. We were longing for fellowship, warmth and pastoral care. We became the London Tamil Christian Congregation (LTCC) at Putney.There was an air of ecumenism and a sense of belonging to the one world church as a congregation when he became our honorary minister.

Rev.Jacob who was appointed Area Secretary for Asia and the Pacific from 1984 to 1991, made many trips abroad, led a Peace mission to Fiji at the time of the coup and continued to be honorary Minister of the LTTCC. His compilation of a bilingual Book of Prayers was uniquely designed to meet our needs as a people using both Tamil and English during worship.

A well-attended service of Thanksgiving before, and a Fellowship meal after his committal rites at St.Maryleborne Crematorium was held at Wesley's Chapel in London on 6th March.

***

# 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.*

***Daughter, 23,*** with traditional cultural background, including Bharatha Natyam & violin, living in Colombo, parents both doctors currently working in London, seek Hindu professional 26-30 years. Please forward horoscope and details. *Ref: MPG 229 Hot Spring*

***Daughter, 26,*** Christian, fair, pretty, British citizen, qualified in business studies and employed in London with good salary. Owns property in London. Seeking a professional Tamil Christian wishing to settle in London. Please apply with details. *Ref: MPG 234 Hot Spring*

***Engineer, 32,*** Jaffna Tamil, graduated (Computer & Control Engineering) in the UK and employed in London with good salary and permanent resident status in the UK, seeks a suitable educated Hindu Tamil girl. Not particularly keen on horoscope, but is available if required. *Ref: MPB 115 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*

***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*

***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*

***Jaffna Hindu son, 32,*** well qualified Software Engineer in good employment with immediate family members living in the UK. Partner to suit his horoscope with mars in the 7th house is sought by mother. Please write in confidence. *Ref: MPB116 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, with traditional cultural background including dancing, a Sai Baba devotee, seeks suitable partner. Please send horoscope and other details. Thank you. *Ref: MPG209 Hot Spring*

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## 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.*

# A CT SCANNER FOR JAFFNA
# A Gift from Tamil Expatriates

News Flash!




*An outside view of the war-battered Jaffna Teaching Hospital*

தமிழீழ ஆவணக்காப்பகம்
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The news coming from Jaffna has been most of the time depressing. But now, for once HOT SPRING brings good news from Jaffna.

A CT Scanner machine, a piece of equipment, considered necessary in every hospital in the West, but never seen in Jaffna before has now been installed in the Jaffna hospital. It was sent from U.K. to Colombo in February 2000. Mr.Kunanandan, Neurosurgeon, Jaffna, who organised the project was there to receive the machine in Colombo. He arranged Customs clearance etc. and transported it to Jaffna by ship. The machine arrived in Jaffna on the 22nd March 2000.

Our correspondent reports that it was installed in Jaffna hospital by an engineer from the U.K., Mr.V.Shah. The scanner is now up and running and many patients have benefitted already from it, according to Mr.Kunanandan. By having this scanner in Jaffna life has been made easier for many patients who would otherwise had to be sent to Colombo for treatment.

The CT Scanner is a vital piece of equipment which is necessary in the diagnosis of tumours (cancer and benign tumours) and other illnesses. It also helps to detect serious bleeds inside the brain, either spontaneous bleeds or those following accidents It helps greatly in deciding the right form of treatment for the patients.

The purchase, transport and installation of the scanner amounted to Fifteen Thousand Pounds ( £15,000/-). This money was donated by individual Tamil expatriates in U.S.A., Canada, U.K. and by the Medical Institute of Tamils,U.K. (MIOT).

A radiographer from U.K. is due to leave for Jaffna shortly, to train radiographers in the Jaffna hospital in the operation and maintenance of the machine.

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