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IN SEARCH OF PEACE . . .



(Courtesy: Sunday Times)

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PREMADASA'S PEACE COMMITTEE

One of the main features of the joint declaration by the governments of India and Sri Lanka made last month concerning the projected pullout of the IPKF by the end of December is the setting up of 'a Peace Committee on the 20th September 1989 to afford an opportunity to all political and ethnic groups in the North-Eastern Province to come together to settle their differences through a process of consultation, compromise and consensus and to bring all groups into the democratic process, thereby ending violence and improving conditions for the physical safety and security of all communities'. The Peace Committee was expected to 'help restore normalcy and contribute to the effective functioning of the North-Eastern Provincial Council'.

If the main purpose of the Peace Committee was to afford an opportunity to all political and ethnic groups in the North-East to come together to settle their differences, one would have reasonably expected that the Peace Committee would consist of those parties and groups which enjoy a certain measure of representative character among the people of the North-East and those whose views and actions have a direct bearing on any efforts to be made to restore normalcy and contribute to the effective functioning of the North-Eastern Provincial Council. By this criterion, it would have been natural for Tamil militant groups like the LTTE, EPRLF, EROS, ENDLF, TELO and PLOTE and political parties like the TULF, SLMC and Tamil Congress to be included in the Peace Committee. The fact that the UNP, SLFP and the USA parties had contested in these areas during the last two elections would have enabled them also to be considered for inclusion.

But what President Premadasa has done is to invite 28 political parties with three representatives each to participate in the sessions of the Peace Committee. He has converted the proposed Peace Committee into a replica of the presently ongoing All Party Conference (APC). By this action the President has virtually undermined the well defined purpose for which the idea of the Peace Committee was mooted in the first place - for the political and ethnic groups in the North-East to come together and settle their differences.

Whatever views one may have about the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of July 1987 and the manner in which it has so far been implemented, it has to be conceded that certain issues of concern for the Tamil people which led to the ethnic conflict have been addressed during the last two years. First, legislative force has been given to the establishment of the Provincial Council system. Second, the Northern and Eastern Provinces have been merged into one single province. Third, The Tamil language also has been legislatively declared as an official language.

Fourth, the substantial majority of the 'stateless' plantation Tamils have been granted citizenship rights. In spite of these measures, substantial Tamil opinion regards the extent of devolution of powers to the Provincial Council inadequate and that the issue of state-aided colonisation has not been satisfactorily resolved. The ongoing talks between the LTTE and the government should have demonstrated these concerns to the President. What one expected from the proposed Peace Committee was that these concerns together with the existing internecine conflicts among the various political and ethnic groups would be addressed and a satisfactory negotiated solution arrived at 'thereby ending violence and improving conditions for the physical safety and security of all communities' and enabling the restoration of normalcy and effective functioning of the North-Eastern Provincial Council.

By nominating to the Peace Committee extremist political groupings which totally reject the idea of devolution of powers, the Provincial Council system, the grant of official status to the Tamil language, the grant of citizenship rights to plantation Tamils etc., and imposing the precondition that all decisions of the Peace Committee shall be arrived at by consensus, the President has in effect not only frustrated in advance any possibility of reaching a solution, but also has gone back on this commitment contained in the joint declaration. The simple test is: How can one expect a Peace Committee composed of parties which stand for the total abolition of the Provincial Council system and devolution of powers to reach a decision by consensus on the question as to how to 'contribute to the effective functioning of the North-Eastern Provincial Council'?

Premadasa's Peace Committee has already run into trouble even before it has met. Its proposed first meeting scheduled to be held on 9 October has been postponed with no new date being announced. The LTTE has asked for more time to decide on the question as to whether it would participate. EROS/EPD has objected to its composition and made it clear that it would not participate. The EPRLF, ENDLF and TELO have declared that unless the LTTE came into the Peace Committee, they too would keep out of it. Even if these groups later decide to participate, President Premadasa has ensured that, by its very composition, his Peace Committee is doomed in advance to failure. One cannot resist the temptation to feel that Mr. Premadasa is using the device of an unwieldy Peace Committee, with the unedifying prospect of it indulging in interminable discussions without reaching any meaningful decision, to play for time until December 31 when the total withdrawal of the IPKF is to be completed, and thereafter begin playing partisan politics with the 'Tamil problem' as has been done in the past.

COLOMBO NEWSLETTER

THE PRICE FOR PEACE — EXECUTIVE PRESIDENCY

by Rita Sebastian from Colombo

Political parties in and outside Parliament got maximum exposure on state Television this last month as they sat in consultation with President Ranasinghe Premadasa under the auspices of the All-Party Conference.

In the conference room of the Presidential secretariat, an often impassive President Premadasa held court with the government fielding different members of the Cabinet for each sitting, and political parties of various hues articulating their solutions for the country's ills. Sitting in as observers were row upon row of members from other political parties. It was however the Sri Lanka Freedom Party led grouping of five opposition political parties that made the most significant impact by getting a firm commitment from the President for holding a referendum to decide the acceptability of the Presidential system, the SLFP's *bête noire*.

The memorandum submitted by the five parties held, that it was the ruling United National Party and the executive Presidency that was the root cause for the upheaval in the country.

'Time is running out and speedy action is necessary. There is no time for endless discussion. Accept our proposals and take immediate steps to implement them' was the order the President was faced with.

The UNP working committee, at a special meeting on October first took the wind off the sails of the five party demand by recommending the dissolution of Parliament and the setting up of a caretaker government if certain conditions were met. Most important among them being conditions of peace and normalcy being returned to the country before fresh elections could be held.

If the SLFP was expected to fall in line with this offer the government was in for a surprise. Mrs Bandaranaike made it quite clear that a caretaker or national government was not what they had in mind. What they demanded was a provisional government for the specific purpose of bring about constitutional reform. The main demand being the abolishing of the executive Presidency and the return of those powers to a Parliament with the President merely the constitutional head of State.

The SLFP made it known that if the President was not going to accede to the request for the setting up of a provisional government, which would help create the conditions of peace and normalcy after which fresh elections could be held, then it would not attend

the plenary sessions of the APC scheduled for October twelfth, where the party positions are to be considered and a consensus arrived at.

But events were to take a dramatic turn when, at the consultations held on October sixth to which Mrs Bandaranaike again took her five member grouping proposals, the SLFP did finally commit the President to the holding of a referendum and the setting up of an interim administration within a specified time frame. But whether consensus will be reached on the holding of the referendum is still to be seen. But referendum or no referendum, all indications are that consensus will be reached on the abolishing of the Executive Presidency and a return to the Prime Ministerial system of governance.

But the issue, crucial to the discussions, which was wooing the Janatha Vimukti Peramuna (JVP) and the Deshepremi Janatha Viyaparaya (DJV) into mainstream politics has made no headway. Not even the known intermediaries, said to have lines of communication to the JVP, have been able to elicit any response from them.

A JVP statement dubbing the APC as an Indian instigated conference in which they had no faith was their only known line of thinking on this issue.

A six-day ceasefire brought no response either. Hundreds of state buildings and vehicles being burnt down was a clear indication that crippling the economy is part of the new JVP strategy. In a letter to the Secretary General of the United Nations, and in letters circulated to foreign missions in Colombo, the JVP has called for the boycott of the country's main harbour and airport and the raising of human rights violations in international fora, alleging that an average of two hundred civilians are being killed every day by the country's security forces.

The counter subversive operations called off during the ceasefire are on again and vigilante groups are back on the scene, and unidentified bodies have been surfacing across the country.

The next step according to political analysts is the holding of a constitutional conference that will decide and effect the changes sought through the All Party consensus, the battle on the ground to be handled by the country's law and order machinery.

Meanwhile since the IPKF declared ceasefire in the north and east, over fifty violations have been reported to the observer committee set up under

the agreement signed between the governments of Sri Lanka and India on September eighteenth. Be that as it may the two main players, the LTTE and the EPRLF, still remain as widely distanced as before although they have been making conciliatory posturings in public.

North-East Provincial Council Chief Minister Varatharajah Perumal's offer to dissolve the Provincial Council in the North-East to let the LTTE come in, is conditional. Surrender arms before entering mainstream politics he demands. No way says the LTTE pointing to the arms carrying EPRLF, ENDLF and TELO cadres who roam the north-east at will.

In addition the forced conscription of youth, barely in their teens, has added another dimension to the highly militarised situation in the north-east. While holding out the olive branch EPRLF Chief Minister Perumal has warned of a Tamil National army, 30,000 strong that will, when the IPKF leaves, be ready to meet any internal threat, the threat, spelt out by politburo member L. Ketheeswaran last month, as being the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE.

Although the scheduled IPKF withdrawal is December end they don't seem to be in any hurry to withdraw troops, judging by conditions on the ground. India has at no time agreed with the Sri Lankan government position that the security in the north-east is an internal matter, to be resolved by the government. On the contrary India, whatever terminology it has chosen to use, has linked withdrawal with the safety and security of the communities in the north-east regions.

Chief Minister Perumal at a press conference last week in Colombo called on the Tigers for an open discussion with them. 'We are brothers, why do we need brokers to bring us together?' he asked. The LTTE somehow does not seem to be in the mood to accept protestations of brotherly cordiality at face value.

Whether President Premadasa will be able to bring the two groups together to discuss the north-east situation is still to be seen. A peace committee envisaged under the agreement signed on the 18th that could have made this possible has been indefinitely postponed.

The Eelavar Democratic Front (EDF) (the former EROS) has been the first party to announce that it will not be participating in the committee. The reason being that the peace committee is substantially the same as the All

Continued From Page 3

Party Conference, having both the same function and purpose, and jumping from one conference to another making the same points on the same issues would not help materially to affect the resolution of the national question

Although the LTTE is of the same mind about the non-effectiveness of a peace committee so composed, they

have not as yet made their decision not to participate, public. Talking with the Colombo government the Tigers have learnt not to appear un-cooperative in the face of the excellent relations between them.

If the All-Party Conference shrugged off by the sceptics as just an exercise in politicking could effectively change the structure of governance and thereby appease a large section of

the population, those who still refuse to come into the political mainstream could well be isolated.

Except for the Tigers other Tamil political parties have voiced both their dissatisfaction at the structure of government today and suggested changes that could resolve the national question. Now could well be the opportunity for all the political parties in the country to help achieve that.

In short the entire nation will fight against tyranny until national freedom and these aspirations are achieved, the Press release said.

PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT CALL REITERATED

The United Socialist Alliance in a communique on its consultations with President R. Premadasa on 4 October, states that the principal proposal of the United Socialist Alliance for the resolution of the present national crisis is the setting up of a Provisional Government. The need for this first step is recognised in the joint statement of the parliamentary opposition dated 27.8.1989.

The communique said: 'The statement issued by the five opposition parties on 27th August 1989, identifies among other matters the establishment of a Provisional Government charged with the restoration of peace and normalcy and the holding of free and fair elections and for the Executive Presidency to be replaced by a Prime Minister responsible to Parliament as some of the necessary structural changes for a satisfactory solution to the national crisis.

'This Alliance has proposed a Provisional Government because in its considered view the present government is incapable of re-establishing democratic processes of government and opposition. It further views this government as incapable of maintaining the unity, integrity, sovereignty and independence of this country in a situation in which the ethnic crisis remains unresolved.

'The idea of a National Government which appears to be favoured by the President is viewed with suspicion by the people. This Alliance cannot accept a Provisional Government as a substitute for the Provisional Government it has proposed'.

The President has made no response to the proposal for a provisional government.

The USA thinks that no proposal can be made through a bi-lateral discussion unless a favourable response from the President forms its basis. The USA will not participate in a bi-lateral discussion but reiterates its demand for a provisional government.

ANOTHER PROMINENT BUDDHIST MONK KILLED

Ven. Thiranagama Ratnasara Thera, a prominent Buddhist monk was shot dead by an unidentified armed gang in the Hambantota district in south Sri Lanka in the early hours on 30 September. His murder occurred while he was in a privy at Thanamalwila, Angunnakolwewa, seventeen miles off the Lunugamwehera police station where he had arrived from Colombo only a few hours before the murder.

The identity of the killers had not been established. But a letter found near the body of the slain monk made it clear that he was killed for political reasons.

The monk was engaged in archaeological work in many parts of the country and was the author of many books on the island's archaeological and historical sites.

APC CALL JVP FOR TALKS

The All Party Conference, on 30 September, invited the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) to participate or appoint accredited representatives to participate in the Conference.

A communique issued by the APC stated, 'The All Party conference while recognising that the departure of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna from the mainstream of democratic political activities was due to the proscription of the JVP on 30th July 1983 and convinced of the urgency to restore peace and normalcy welcomes:

(a) the deproscription of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna on 10th May 1988; and

(b) the decision of the government to grant all representatives attending the conference full protection and security and

Calling upon all groups who are outside the mainstream of the democratic process to eschew violence and achieve their goals through democratic means;

Invites the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna to participate or appoint accredited representatives to attend the All Party Conference on their behalf.

JVP REJECTS PEACE CALL AND CONDEMNS APC

The All Party Conference is in reality an All Indian Party conference. Except for the Sri Lanka Socialist Front of S.D. Bandaranaike, all other parties in it either directly or indirectly approve Indian imperialism. They depend on financial and military aid from India, states a press release by the politbureau of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna.

The motive of the APC is to form a national government with all the participants, giving them cabinet and other responsible posts and thereby hoodwink international monetary institutions and obtain aid and continue the illegal fascist administration. Whatever happens Indian imperialism will gain victory and all parties participating in the APC will help in their victory. All patriots of this country should realise this truth, the Press release said.

UNP leaders or the parties who are stooges of Indian imperialism cannot bring about peace or safeguard democracy and ensure human rights. Neither do they want human rights nor national freedom. Therefore no one should have any faith in this so called APC.

The educated youth of this country, the working class and the entire nation is fighting and sacrificing their lives today not for the purpose of snatching executive power from Premadasa and handing it over to Sirima Bandaranaike. They are fighting and laying down their lives for:-

- The abrogation of the Indo-Lankan peace accord; and the Provincial Council system;
- Free the country from the autocracy of Northern and Eastern provinces;
- Drive away the Indian invading armies;
- Reverse the changes brought by Indian armies after their occupation and solve national problems democratically without foreign interference, do away with the illegal fascist administration;
- Disband the illegal fascist forces, ensure national freedom and integrity, and win the democratic and human rights.

VARSITY LECTURER MURDERED IN JAFFNA

Dr. Rajini Thiranagama of the Anatomy Department of the University of Jaffna was shot dead near her home by an unidentified lone gunman on 21 September. At the time of her killing, she was the only lecturer attached to the Department and served as its head.

No one has claimed responsibility for Rajini's murder, but the EPRLF and the LTTE has accused each other of this foul crime. Mother of two young daughters, 35 year old Rajini is the sister of the well known Mrs. Nirmala Nithyanandan, was a member of the Jaffna University Teachers for Human Rights and had co-authored many reports detailing human rights abuses by the IPKF and Tamil militant groups. In the last few months she had received threats and her home had been repeatedly raided by armed men who had taken away documents.

The South Asia Solidarity Group in the UK, with which Rajini had closely worked in the past, in a statement said, 'The situation in northern Sri Lanka is so confused that although one can say why she was assassinated, we cannot place the blame on only one quarter... It is possible that Rajini's killer was acting on instructions from the IPKF or the Research and Analysis Wing - RAW (the Indian Secret Service). However it may also be the work of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam which since the recent truce with the IPKF is trying to eliminate all those who have dared to criticise them'.

In condemning the murder of Rajini, the General Council of the Standing Committee of Tamils (SCOT) said, 'The mindless murder of Dr. Rajini Thiranagama, a dedicated academic and human rights activist, is an act of unvarnished terrorism. Those who carried out this diabolical murder stand self-condemned by their own cowardice and lack of courage to accept responsibility for what they have done. The untimely and tragic demise of Rajini is not only a loss for the Jaffna University, but also for the entire Tamil community'.

UNIVERSITY TEACHERS CONDEMN RAJINI'S MURDER

The University of Jaffna Teachers' Association, in a statement to the press has condemned the murder of Dr. Rajini Thiranagama. Head of the Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Medicine, Jaffna.

The Association said: 'Dr Rajini Thiranagama was the only lecturer

attached to the Anatomy Department and served as its Head. She was so dedicated to her work that the students were in no way adversely affected by the shortage of lecturers.

'At a time when, due to the political situation, doctors are leaving the country, when those who have gone abroad are very reluctant to return and serve the University, Dr. Thiranagama spurned all the offers that came her way to live comfortably abroad! Instead she chose to return to her motherland to serve the community. 'She was in the forefront of humanitarian activities such as the rehabilitation of adversely affected women and the establishment of democratic rights. She did not align herself with any



Rajani Thiranagama - why was she killed?

political party or group but spoke out fearlessly and critically whenever and whoever violated human rights. She strongly believed in the necessity of people's organisations to safeguard human rights and she was grief-stricken that the atmosphere was not conducive to the establishment of people's organisations.

'A very good instance of her devotion to duty and the institution she served was the role she played in getting the University re-opened after the military operations of October 1987.

'Mass murders in the South and regular uninvestigated and unclaimed killings in our own part of the country have once again highlighted the importance of human rights groups. Dr. Rajini Thiranagama was amongst those instrumental in organising human rights work amongst university teachers in the country. International Human Rights organisations (including Amnesty International and International Alert) have respectfully acknowledged the impartiality with which

she exposed violations by all groups and institutions.

'The murder of a socially committed and dedicated person like Dr. Rajini Thiranagama has shocked and dismayed us. Such murders don't concern only the individual and his or her family, they severely affect the whole community. But immersing the people in fear and servility, they are impediments in the march to freedom and human dignity. They blunt the people's heroic striving for freedom. Hence political murders like this should stop forthwith.

The statement added: 'To achieve this goal, all political parties, liberation movements and organisations should get together and sincerely condemn such murders. They should concertedly take constructive steps to see that such murders are not committed in the future. Otherwise civilised life becomes impossible and higher educational institutions like the University may not be able to function in a normal and healthy atmosphere.

FEDERATION CONDEMNS KILLING

The Federation of University Teachers' Association of Sri Lanka condemning the assassination of Dr. (Mrs.) Rajini Thiranagama Head of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Jaffna has in a Press release stated that this death was yet another instance of violence being directed against the intellectuals of this country and particularly the University community.

The following is the full text of the Press release.

The Federation of University Teachers' Association views with deep shock and sorrow the killing of our colleague from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna Dr. (Mrs.) Rajini Thiranagama.

Dr. Thiranagama was a respected academic with a deep commitment in defending human and democratic rights of the people. She also played an active role in the Women's movement in this country.

This death is yet another instance of violence being directed against the intellectuals of this country and particularly the University community.

History has shown that reaction eventually directs its guns at the intellectuals of a country. We seem to be moving into such a phase.

FUTA condemns this assassination in the strongest terms. We tender our sincere condolences to the family of our late colleague and to the members of the University of Jaffna where she worked as Head of the Dept. of Anatomy.

Rs 42.8 BILLION BUDGET DEFICIT

Government will be facing a deficit of Rs. 42.8 billion in bridging its planned budgetary commitments for the financial year 1990 according to a Cabinet memorandum released to the press yesterday.

The memorandum states that total expenditure for 1990 is estimated at Rs. 103,043 million while revenue is estimated at Rs. 60,200 million leaving a deficit of Rs. 42,843 million.

The total expenditure comprises Rs. 60,323 million in recurrent expenditure and Rs. 40,720 million in capital expenditure.

The appropriation Bill will be submitted in Parliament on November 7.

The last budget presented in May this year faced a deficit of Rs. 43,995 million of which Rs. 40 million was met through foreign aid, grants and domestic non-inflationary borrowing, leaving a gap of Rs. 3,395 million to be financed by borrowing from the banking system.

GOVT. UNDERMINING PCs - NSSP

The NSSP said in a statement issued on 2 October that the recent announcement by the government that district government agents and many district administration staff will not be brought under the Provincial Council, shows clearly that the government is bent on undermining the very objective of the Provincial Councils. 'The central government agency that is necessary to look after the subject and functions of the reserve list and the interests in the concurrent list should be a provincial agency and not a set of district government agents. It is strange indeed to hear that a number of subjects in the concurrent list is to be controlled by the central government', it said.

It added that the 13th Amendment itself was being interpreted by the central government to the disadvantage of the Provincial Councils, in effect against Tamils with no indication whatsoever for making any constitutional amendments, to provide for further devolution.

The statement added that 'under these circumstances it is very unlikely that this government will be able to get the hand of Indian intervention dislodged from Sri Lanka. Even those Tamil organizations which have decided to move forward through Provincial Council reforms are getting more and more disillusioned and may prepare for agitation and struggle in the coming period. Obviously they have to defend themselves. LTTE which rejects Provincial Councils for separation, will not keep up the opportunist

friendship with the government forged recently.

'Continuation of this government means continuous unrest both in the North and in the South. In addition it will be difficult for the Indian government to detach itself from its involvement in the North even if it wishes to. Therefore the appeal made by us for the removal of this government by a provisional government capable of fair, free elections is relevant even from the side of greater autonomy, security and the right of self determination for the Tamil speaking people'.

RELIEF FOR REFUGEES

Nearly five lakhs of families were affected by the ethnic violence since 1983 in the North-Eastern Province.

In the Jaffna District, 96,874 families were affected, in Batticaloa 90,221 families, in Trincomalee 52,000 families, in Kilinochchi 27,485 families, in Mannar 26,472 families, in Mullaithivu 24,252 families, in Vavuniya 23,300 families and in Amparai 52,000 families were affected said Mr. A. Varatharaja Perumal, Chief Minister of the North-East Province.

He further said that out of this, 418,588 cases had been investigated and family cards have been issued to 35,783 families.

Nearly Rs. 800 million was given as financial assistance to 535,000 families for resettlement, construction of houses and initiating production, he said.

LONDON-BASED BODY APPEALS FOR PEACE

A London-based body styling itself the Sri Lanka Peace Committee (Patron: Ven. Walpola Rahula, Chairman: Lord Avebury) has issued a public appeal for a halt to killings in Sri Lanka among others by former MP and lawyer Prins Gunasekera who left the country recently after two of his juniors were killed by unidentified gunmen.

The appeal states:

We, the undersigned, deeply concerned at the deteriorating situation in Sri Lanka, call upon the international community to appeal for a halt to the killings and attacks on citizens in all parts of the country.

The ever-mounting loss of life, the mutilation of bodies, the disappearances, harassment and intimidation, the breakdown of the ordinary processes of law, the prolonged suspension of education and interruption of health services, the disintegration of public services and severe disruption of the production and distribution of goods, are making life intolerable for the ordinary people of Sri Lanka.

No-one's life is safe and all are living in fear, as neighbours disappear, rela-

tives are gunned down on their doorsteps, and menacing posters appear everywhere.

HOSPITAL STAFF STAGE DEMO

The entire staff of the Trincomalee hospital staged a four-hour demonstration on 3 October as a protest against the kidnapping of Dr. Gnanasekaran, a dental surgeon of the hospital by unknown men on September 30.

They later walked in procession to the office of the North-East Provincial Council and handed over a memorandum to Mr. Varatharaja Perumal, Chief Minister of the Province regarding the kidnapping incident. They resumed work four hours later.

The members of the public including school children staged a similar demonstration protesting against the kidnapping of the dental surgeon.

Both demonstrations were peaceful.

RESPECT FOR TEACHERS DECLINING

'The high traditions and the teacher-student relationship maintained from the times of our ancestors in our areas are fast deteriorating. The simple life and the thinking capacity of our scholars are fast vanishing. Our students must regard teachers as their "guru" and respect them in every possible way'. This was stated by Prof. Dr. Alagaiya Thurairajah the Vice-Chancellor of the Jaffna University who was the chief guest at a ceremony held recently to mark the release of a book at the Kailasapathy Auditorium of the Jaffna University.

The book written by Prof. V. Sivassamy the Dean of the Department of Sanskrit at the University of Jaffna was released on the occasion.

Prof. C. Pathmanathan of the Department of History chaired the meeting.

Dr. P. Gopalakrishnan, Head of the Department of Hindu Civilization, said that Sanskrit had always been the basis for the progress of their culture and the promotion of the various studies. The role it played in the Hindu Kovils was tremendous.

Dr. N. Balakrishnan, Dean of the faculty of Arts said that Sanskrit was the gateway to culture.

REGGIE MICHAEL DEAD

Reggie Michael, a former Editor of the 'Ceylon Daily Mirror' and a senior English Language journalist died on 25 September in Colombo at the age of 67 after a brief illness.

R.L. Michael who began his journa-

istic career at Lake House earned a reputation for his flamboyant writing best represented by the 'Opinion' column which he wrote as Editor of the 'Daily Mirror'. In the 1960's which was the heyday of his career he had a wide following among middle-class English readers.

After leaving the Times he founded and edited his own newspaper. After 1977 he also served as media consultant to several Government agencies and at the time of his death was Public Relations Consultant to the National Water Supply and Drainage Board. He conducted a popular journalism course at Aquinas College.

Mr. Michael also contributed columns to many newspapers including 'the Island' among them 'Ravi Reporting' a column of light humour.

He leaves his wife and only son. The funeral will take place today.

PRELATES CALL FOR END TO ON-GOING KILLINGS

The Buddhist Mahanayakes, in their letter to President Premadasa have called for an immediate end to the on-going killings.

The letter, signed by the Mahanayake Theras of Amarapura and Ramanya Nikayas, the Mahanayake Thera of Asgiriya Chapter and two anunayakes of Malwatta Chapter, dated September 14 also lamented over the large scale arrests, killings, torture, burning with tyres and disrobing of Buddhist monks taking place in the country today.

It further said:

'These killings and violence whether they are by indisciplined members of the security forces or subversives in hiding or private parties who want to avenge previous incidents, the scores of corpses littering the roads - of the clergy and laity, men and women, young and old - cause great distress to us.

'People pass their time in shock, fear, want and utter distress in homes, temples and on the road. The victims are mostly Sinhalese buddhists.

There are reports about an invisible power behind the present action to discredit Buddhist monks and laymen. The order given by the Secretary to the Defence Ministry to inform Mahanayake Theras of the arrests of monks and related particulars through the Secretary to the Buddha Sasana Ministry is not being implemented.

There are accepted laws to punish offenders, whether they are monks or laymen. No one has the right to overtake them and slaughter human beings like cats and dogs under the cover of a few and immunity for actions, under the Emergency. We condemn the capture or the retention of power

through the massacre of people.

'We expect all political parties to support the action taken by the President to enable the people to live without fear and get about with their work.

'While the All Party Conference is looking for ways and means of achieving these objectives, we appeal to the Government to propose an immediate end to the killings at the very outset, to prevent the further loss of thousands of lives. We appeal also to other party leaders and the militants to support these proposals'.

EVERY LANKAN OWES RS. 13,000 TO THE WORLD

The Sri Lankan government is indebted to other countries, to the tune of Rs. 13,870 for everyone of its citizens at the beginning of 1989, according to Central Bank statistics.

The report revealed that the total foreign and local debt stood at Rs. 221,917 millions (approximately Rs. 222 billions).

The local debt component exceeded Rs. 98,780 million while the borrowing from the IMF and various foreign sources was Rs. 123,130 million.

LTTE TO ACCEPT PC AS 'INTERIM ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

'We will prove very soon that the Tamil Tigers are the authentic representatives of our people. Our organisation and our people will definitely face elections when appropriate conditions of peace and normalcy are created', said Anton Balasingham, the accredited spokesman for the LTTE in an interview with Chris Nuttall of The Guardian in Colombo.

Mr. Balasingham is in Colombo with other delegates of the LTTE for the third round of talks with the Premadasa government, and the LTTE's offer to participate in elections came in response to an offer made by Mr. Varatharaja Perumal, Chief Minister of the EPRLF dominated North-East Provincial Council.

Mr. Perumal told a press conference held in Trincomalee on 26 September that the EPRLF-ENDLF-TELO would be willing for the North-East Provincial Council to be dissolved and stand for fresh elections enabling all groups and parties in the province to be represented in the Council. He pointed out that peace could be established in the province only by all groups and political parties uniting.

'The LTTE should join with all groups and have a cordial relationship in the North and East. If the LTTE enters the democratic path we are ready to face fresh PC elections and

form a provincial council which is represented by all groups', the Chief Minister added.

Mr. Balasingham conveying the sincerity of the LTTE said, 'We are sincere in the sense that our people have suffered so much at the hands of the Indian forces. There is a demand for peace and a return to normalcy'. He added that the Tigers were prepared to accept the North-Eastern Provincial Council as an interim administrative structure, and that they would contest elections once it was dissolved and within six months of the Indian departure.

CONSCRIPTION FOR 'TRAINING' IN NORTH-EAST

Reports from various parts of the North-East Province in Sri Lanka confirm that Tamil militant groups, EPRLF, ENDLF and TELO, are engaged in the conscription of teenage boys for training in the use of weapons and other related matters. The conscription has been intensified particularly since the announcement that the IPKF would pullout by the end of December this year.

School attendance has dropped and parents are employing every method possible to send their teenage children out of the North-East to Colombo, and if possible abroad, to avoid them being

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THE CHANGING SCENARIO IN THE NORTH-EAST

by S. Sivanayagam

The joint communique signed in Colombo on the 18th September in a sartorial atmosphere of light and shade – by Indian High Commissioner L.L. Mehrotra dressed in casual summer wear and Sri Lankan Foreign Secretary Bernard Tilekeratne in dark suit – has been variously headlined in the media as an 'agreement', 'accord' and 'pact', and widely welcomed with eager enthusiasm. **THE HINDU** of Madras even ran the exciting headline: **DAWN OF PEACE IN NORTH-EAST SRI LANKA**, (Sept. 21) little realising the irony that lay behind the words – that Peace should 'dawn' over the intended departure of a Peace Keeping Force!

Apart from the fact that the bad smells of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement (or 'accord' or 'pact') of July 29, 1987 have still not left us, it would be erring on the side of optimism to call this rambling communique by any of these names – so couched it is with vagueness and inexactitudes, and so riddled with loopholes. At best, the communique could be termed as a mutual expression of intentions. But even there, one would be inclined to pose before both parties the traditional question that many a sensible father asks the suitor who asks for his daughter's hand: 'Young man are your intentions honourable?'. The task of translating the words of the communique into action is already taking the form of a dialogue between the deaf and the dumb; with New Delhi getting slightly deaf on the question of a total IPKF withdrawal by December 31, and Colombo somewhat dumb on the matter of the effective functioning of the North-East Provincial Council.

The quibbling over the quid pro quos on both sides began in right earnest even before the ink on the communique had dried. An External Affairs Ministry spokesman in New Delhi started the ball rolling the very same day by saying that the communique 'did not contain iron-clad guarantees on the part of India to complete withdrawal of its remaining forces by December 31'. The LTTE in a statement released in London kicked the ball back by saying that it was 'disappointed to observe that the commentaries and interpretations made by Indian Foreign Ministry officials in Delhi seem to contradict the contents of the joint communique . . .'. On the 22nd, Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Ranjan Wijeratne joined the ball game in Colombo with the categorical statement that there was no question of a linkage between 'the ensuring of the safety of the Tamils and the maintenance of law and order in the north-eastern province' and the withdrawal of the IPKF by December 31. Not to be outdone, Indian Minister of State for

External Affairs Natwar Singh speaking before a consultative Parliamentary Committee in Delhi 'made it clear', according to a UNI report, that the ensuring of the safety of the Tamils and maintenance of law and order in the north-east could not be delinked with the question of the 'de-induction' (withdrawal, to you and me) of the IPKF. It was left to President Premadasa to kick the ball furthest when on the 23rd, while addressing the convocation ceremony of the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies in Colombo he said while the country had succeeded in principle in securing the withdrawal of the IPKF, 'we cannot rest until we have fully succeeded in fact. However far, or however close, or however powerful any nation may be, it has no right to control other nations. It has no right to dictate our policies or maintain an unwelcome presence on our soil. The blood of Sri Lankans past and present has not been shed to subordinate our country'.

In an age of devious diplomacy where no politician is expected to mean what he says or say what he means, President Premadasa's statements would naturally fall into the category of what fashionable political commentators call 'rhetoric'. There is bound to be more 'rhetoric' every time New Delhi drags its feet on the IPKF withdrawal process, which predictably it will. Given the background that the very signing of the communique was delayed by 48 hours because of the 'changing of commas here and there', it is also likely that a certain clinging and clowning with the Queen's English ('de-induction', 'integral document' on the Indian side, and 'consultation, compromise, and consensus' on Mr Premadasa's) will persist. But these distractions may be conveniently ignored. What is of the essence is that a qualitative change has already occurred both in Indo-Sri Lanka relations and in the ground situation in the north-east, which may not be apparent to the eye now, but the impact of which will be felt only in the coming year. The way has been paved – through the communique – for new equations in the north-east, the consequences of which would in all likelihood strengthen the hands of President Premadasa in grappling with the security situation in the south-west.

Even a cursory reading of the communique reveals that while the commitments on the Indian side are largely time-bound, the way that the Sri Lankan obligations have been spelt out offer ample scope for prevarication.

In contrast, the most tangible part of the communique with a definitive ring about it was the one that said; 'The Indian side stated that the suspension of offensive military operations by the IPKF will come into effect at 0600 hours (6 a.m. to you and me) on the 20th September, 1989'. That has already come into effect, and there cannot be any going back on it. The unfortunate chapter of Indian military intervention is now closed. There is no need to rub in the fact that it represents a 'handsome victory for President Premadasa', as a Bombay paper commented editorially. But the point must not be missed that the main beneficiary of this 'handsome victory' will not be President Premadasa himself but the LTTE. The jungle need not be their forte; the ground is opening to them.

One does not of course imply by this that from now on everything is going to be tickety-boo for either Mr. Premadasa or for the LTTE. It only means that the first round has gone in their favour. The next round involves several imponderables: firstly, tiding over the process of bickering over the complete 'de-induction' of the IPKF, a question on which both Minister Natwar Singh and General Kalkat can be expected to offer a last-ditch stand; secondly, the degree of success that President Premadasa can achieve in meeting the JVP threat; thirdly, the nature of the stances the other actors in this blood-spilling drama are going to adopt – the JVP primarily, the SLFP, the USA, the EROS, EPRLF and other sundry Tamil groups that today enjoy IPKF patronage, which in varying degrees would have a bearing on the course of events.

On the question of the IPKF pull-out, the communique says: '... the process of de-induction of the IPKF, which recommenced on 29th July, 1989, will be continued on an expeditious schedule. All efforts will be made to accelerate the de-induction of the IPKF to complete de-induction by 31st December 1989'. What does the process of de-induction which recommenced on 29th July mean in terms of numbers? Here is the record: **July 29:** 600 troops from Trinco; **August 7:** 900 of the 35th CRPF battalion from KKS; **August 8:** 700 of the Gorkha battalion from Trinco; **August 22:** 51 Engineering Regiment (numbers not announced); **August 27:** 500 paratroopers from Jaffna; **September 4:** 700 of an Infantry battalion; and **September 23:** 600 of the Parachute Regiment (not to forget two Jaffna-bred Pomeranian pups that were inducted into Indian soil!). That incidentally was the first batch of troops to be withdrawn after the Colombo communique. Roughly, the numbers tot up

to 4500 troops withdrawn within a period of two months. The 'expeditious schedule' referred to in the communique may not be worked out until the Peace Committee meets on October 9 and reviews the cease-fire. Presuming that the strength of the remaining forces is around 45,000 (or even 40,000) it would mean the colossal task of an average **DAILY** pull-out of 500 troops within the 80 days between 10th October and 31st December – an unlikely undertaking even if all efforts are made to accelerate the process.

Apart from troop withdrawal, how about tanks, armoured personnel carriers, artillery pieces and a whole gamut of other hardware? A correspondent of a New Delhi weekly (**SUNDAY MAIL**, Sept. 24-30), reports that Army Headquarters considers the December 31 deadline as 'unrealistic'. One officer had lamented; 'Ultimately the decision will not be ours. If the exercise had commenced when the Sri Lankan President said we should leave by July 29, we might have been out by December-end. As things stand now, it seems impossible'. It was pointed out that the induction of the IPKF which at peak strength comprised about 50,000 troops, took nearly a year. If the de-induction is to take place by air, that has to be on a war footing the costs of which would be astronomical and at considerable disruption of traffic at several Indian airports, which however does not seem to be the intention of New Delhi while signing the joint communique. It can therefore be concluded that there will be an IPKF presence that President Premadasa and the LTTE will have to put up with until some period in the coming year; not only because of the logistics of de-induction but more possibly because of what Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi once referred to as 'preserving the gains' of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of 1987. The only factor that could induce a change in this scenario is the impending Indian election.

If at least the bulk of the Indian forces is withdrawn by year-end, that should give enough elbow room to Mr. Premadasa to move with a heavier hand on the JVP, should the latter fail to revise their strategies. Much is made of the contention that the JVP being anti-systemic, an IPKF withdrawal alone cannot counter the threat it poses to the Sri Lanka establishment. But when it comes to the crunch, no force, however intimidatory it may seem at the moment, could possibly succeed in overthrowing a system unless the vast mass of the people share that outlook. What pervades Sinhala society today is not an anarchic impulse, but the very fear of anarchy. There is a difference between the reality of power and the illusion of power; where the JVP has succeeded, is in convincing the mass of the Sinhala

people of the illusion of power. Equally distressing is the continued Sinhala failure, both on the part of the people as well as the politicians in power, to address their minds to the fundamentals of crisis-management. That the present internalised tragedy (symbolised by floating corpses and charred bodies) has its antecedence in their external mind-set against the Tamils has yet to be realised, with even well-meaning radicals distracting from this truth by trotting out economic theories from the book. If the present President has grasped this truth – and there are indications that he has – unfettered as he is with intellectual baggage, there lies the hope for both the Sinhalese and Tamils.

Considering the fact that Mr. Premadasa assumed office under heavy odds (unlike his predecessor); that he had to inherit the legacies of his predecessor's 11-year misrule (a growing Tamil separatist threat in the north-east, a resurgent Sinhala insurgency in the south-west, an alien military presence, a rapid militarization of the entire society, a slow disintegration of democratic values, and an economy going downhill); that he was forced to paddle his own canoe because of intrigues within his own party; that he had to stand up to diplomatic and military pressures from a regional super-power with no support either from his own senior party colleagues or from the democratic Opposition, his brief 9-month tenure in office stands in splendid contrast to Mr. Jayewardene's eleven year misadventure – a glaring fact that one suspects has yet to seep in to the Sinhala consciousness not only at the popular level, but even in the perceptions of the Sinhala intelligentsia. Should some day the country break up into two, or even three, with Ruhuna reasserting its ancient will in the face of failure to stem Tamil self-rule, it is not Mr. Premadasa who will be to blame, but the Sinhala people who would have failed to lend him support at a critical point in their own history.

On the north-eastern front, should the Tamil groups now functioning under the protective umbrella of the IPKF persist in clinging to their aggressive postures, they would naturally be living on borrowed time. But happily there is a gradual 'de-induction' of stridency in their outlook, tempered by an anxious concern of the future. The cease-fire has held, and there is every possibility that it would hold in the main, notwithstanding isolated acts of violence and charges and counter-charges of violations. The recent statement of Chief Minister Varadaraja Perumal that he was prepared to step down from office, dissolve the Council and hold fresh elections if the LTTE gave up violence and joined the democratic mainstream sounds on the face of it as a welcome gesture in the

right direction. Quite apart from the certainty that it will not evoke any serious response from the LTTE, at least not until the last Indian jawan has left, there is a significant undertone in the statement that should not be missed. It could be a bid to entice the LTTE away from the 'embrace' in Colombo, on the basis of an acceptance of LTTE supremacy, and an invitation for joint efforts to wrest more powers from the Centre. But having lost credibility among the people, both at the leadership and cadre levels, one cannot foresee any great political future for either the EPRLF or the other groups associated with it. The frequent references to the ensuring of the security and safety of the Tamils once the IPKF departs, are largely red herrings across the trail. What is relevant is not the projected spectre of the Sri Lankan army waiting to pounce on the Tamils but the avoidance of another round of bloodshed in the north-east arising from internecine warfare among the groups, in which unarmed civilians may themselves get sucked in. It is not often recognised that there is a basic difference between the past Sri Lankan army presence in the north-east and that of the IPKF. While the former was engaged in attempting forays from inside army camps, culminating in an open offensive at Vadamarachchi (an operation that President Jayewardene then claimed was the result of years of planning) the Indian troop presence, bigger in numbers than the total strength of the Sri Lankan army, was all-pervasive – saturating the entire length and breadth of populated areas, and regulating the daily life of the civilian population. The removal of such a presence will certainly create a vacuum that cannot possibly be filled by the Sri Lankan army (one does not see any such intention anyway) nor by any one Tamil group as at present. The Civilian Volunteer Force constituted in dubious circumstances may prove to be more a wrecker of peace than a preserver. There are no signs of the emergence of a Police Force either. In such a situation, there would be no point in blaming the Premadasa Government. The key to peace would effectively lie in the hands of the Tamil armed groups and the resourcefulness of the larger public in standing up to gun culture.

While one has to be realistic and accept the position that in a violence-prone society, with guns in the hands of an assorted section of youths, both disciplined and undisciplined, ready to pull the trigger for a variety of reasons. Peace cannot dawn suddenly. But making due allowance for this debilitating factor, there is every reason to believe that the changing scenario in the north-east has opened a new chapter – 'hopefully the penultimate chapter before law and order and stability return.

NEWS ROUND-UP

- **ALL UNCULTIVATED** lands would be taken over by the state from January next year thus reviving a law that had remained dormant for nearly 15 years, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Co-operatives, Lalith Athulathmudali told a press conference on 15 September. A new strategy for agricultural development in the country had been mapped out taking account of the fact that Sri Lanka had a small-holding agricultural set-up, a large number of people had less than two acres of land, landlessness was growing in the context of an expanding population and although agricultural production had gone up, the income of the farmers had not increased, the Minister said.
- **A GOVERNMENT** communique issued on 17 September stated: 'The ongoing security operations have become necessary only to bring under control acts of violence against the people and destruction of property. This is a duty cast upon the security forces during the period of an emergency. If the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) and their associate the Deshapremi Janatha Viyaparaya (DJV) communicate their willingness to respond positively to the repeated call of the government for the restoration of peace and normalcy, then there will be no need for the forces to continue their ongoing security operations. In such an event the Government is prepared to set up a Committee to monitor the effective maintenance of the cessation of violence'.
- **SEVERAL BODIES** of youth were found at eight different places at Kamburupitiya on 15 September according to security reports. In the same area, on 16 September, five post offices and ticket collectors of five state-owned buses were robbed by armed gangs. At Pujapitiya in Kandy, a suspected JVP gang of youth set fire to two sub-post offices. Several 'anti-government subversives' were arrested - nine at Ambewela in Nuwara Eliya, 110 from St. Topaz Estate, and five at Kattiangala in Anuradhapura. An unidentified armed gang shot dead Mr. Sumanadasa Peiris, the Principal of the Handapangoda Maha Vidyalaya in Padukka. An Assistant Director of Janawasama, K.P.P. Karunanayake, was shot dead at Ellagala. Four bodies of youths dumped at the Mapegama bus stop in Kurunegala on 15 September had not been removed till the morning of 17 September and dogs were seen devouring the badly mutilated bodies. Seven bodies were found smouldering on the morning of 16 September at Kapuhenapola. Similar scenes were witnessed at Mabotuwana and Wakwella. At Wakunagoda in the Galle district, Premaratna Perera, a former private bodyguard of a UNP Matara District MP was shot dead. During the previous week, police recovered fifty-five bodies of youth from the Panadura river. The youths had been killed and dumped in the river by unidentified groups wearing uniforms and carrying firearms. Large crowds had gathered around the Panadura bridge to see the bodies floating in the river. Three unidentified bodies of young persons were found burning by the roadside along Galle Road at Molligoda in Wadduwa on the morning of 17 September.
- **TRAIN SERVICES** on most lines remained paralysed for ten consecutive days as railway guards and engine drivers continued to refrain from their duties on the ground of lack of security. According to a statement made on 17 September by a Transport official, only about 10 to 15 trains operated on a day during these days as against the normal 90 that should operate daily. Reports from outstations indicated that a large number of railway stations throughout the country were virtually closed as most trains were not operating.
- **A REUTER REPORT** datelined 18 September, quoting a senior Indian government official stated that a complete withdrawal of Indian troops from Sri Lanka by the end of the year will depend on whether the island's Tamils get the

required assurances about their safety. Stressing that the agreement between the Sri Lankan and Indian governments repeatedly referred to the safety and security of the people in the Tamil dominated North-East, the official said, 'Both sides have seen it as central to the whole arrangement. It is an integral document. You cannot take one paragraph on its own and delink it from any other paragraph'.

- **PRESIDENT OF MALDIVES**, Maymoon Abdul Gayoom, has commuted to life imprisonment the death sentences passed on four Maldivians and twelve Sri Lankan Tamils, alleged to be former members of the Tamil militant group PLOT, who took part in an attempted coup d'etat against the government on 3 November 1988. Addressing the nation on radio and television, the President said that he had made the decision after considering the issue when the sixteen convicted persons appealed for clemency. He said that his decision was made in the best long term interest of the nation and on humanitarian grounds.

- **IN A SIX-DAY** military operation ending on September 16, the IPKF launched attacks on nine LTTE camps in Kottukulam in the Trincomalee district killing 40 and wounding 28 LTTE cadres, a press release from the Indian High Commission claimed. Five IPKF men were killed and 16 others wounded; the CVF which also participated in the operation lost the lives of two men and 16 were wounded; and large quantities of ammunition and explosives were captured, the press release added.

- **THE NSSP** (Nava Sama Samaja Party) led by Vasudeva Nanayakkara in a statement issued on 18 September stated that on September 15 an armed gang abducted three of its party members, who are also trade union leaders, from the headquarters of the Janaraja Saukiya Seva Sangamaya.

- **AN OFFICE** of a tea estate in Badulla belonging to the state-owned JEDB was set on fire by an unidentified gang on the night of 17 September. The damage caused is estimated to be around one million rupees.

- **THREE CIVILIANS** were killed and 25 others including eight policemen wounded when a time bomb placed in a private van exploded near the Gampaha police station on 19 September. The explosion caused severe damage to adjoining shops and to the police station. The driver of the van is believed to have escaped after parking the vehicle about 15 yards from the police station.

- **ABOUT TWENTY** government buildings including fourteen sub-post offices were set on fire in the Matara and Anuradhapura districts on 18 September. The grama sevaka office at Bamunugama east in the Matara district was also set on fire. Eight suspected 'subversives' were killed and over 245 youths were taken into custody on 18 September. In another operation in Kurunegala 125 youths were rounded up and 19 of them were detained suspected of being connected with the JVP. A suspected JVP gang set fire to the telephone exchange at Wattegama on the same day. At Muddaragama in the Mirigama area eleven youths were killed and their bodies were set on fire by an armed gang.

- **SECURITY FORCES**, on 18 September, shot dead two suspected JVP men who were alleged to have attempted to flee after setting fire to a sub-post office at Dodanpahala in the Dickwella area. At Katoyawa (Track 9) in the Anuradhapura district, bodies of eight persons were recovered after being slashed to death by an armed gang. At Kandana, one youth was shot dead and his body set on fire by army personnel. Gunmen shot dead E.A. Siyadoris, a resident of Weligama Batawala colony on 18 September.

- **A GOVERNMENT** communique issued on 19 September stated that 39 'subversives' surrendered to the security forces in Colombo Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Puttalam. H.D. Jinadasa, 'a subversive leader' who escaped from the Magazine prison in Colombo last December surrendered with 13 others in Anamaduwa. In the Passara area, security forces recovered 375 stolen national identity cards,

NEWS ROUND-UP

108 radio licences and 41 TV licences from a 'subversive hideout'. At Udurawana in the Wattagama area, shotguns, cartridges, several rounds of ammunition, army batons, cap and collar badges of the Gemunu Regiment were recovered. In the Kurunegala district, 'subversives' set fire to the Muwankanda rubber factory and several government buildings. At Muriyankulama Mee Oya in the Puttalam area, security forces killed two 'subversives' and recovered shotguns, 80 kgs of explosives, cartridges, 24 detonators, batteries, wires and police and army uniforms. In the Trincomalee sector, the IPKF recovered a large number of mines and wires from LTTE bases. Four LTTE men who attempted to place a 10 kilo time bomb at the entrance to the Vavuniya Kachcheri building were fired upon by CVF personnel.

● **TWENTYTWO BODIES** were recovered from different parts of the country on 19 September – eleven bodies from Matale district, three at Habarana and five from Polonnaruwa and Matara districts. A chopped body believed to be that of N.R. Udenis, a resident of Hakmana was also found on the same day. Three bodies with gunshot injuries were found on Galle Road in Ratmalana on the morning of 19 September.

● **AN ARMED GANG** set fire to all documents in the offices of the Mayor and the Legal Officer of the Dehiwala-Mount Laviniya Municipal Council on 19 September. The Mayor who arrived at his office when the attackers were inside the offices was threatened at gun-point.

● **IN ACCORDANCE** with the agreement between India and Sri Lanka, the IPKF suspended offensive military operations against the LTTE from 0600 hours on 20 September. General A.S. Kalkat, Commander of the IPKF in a press statement issued on 19 September stated that the IPKF would however (a) take appropriate action to ensure maintenance of law and order and security; (b) take action against any person or party indulging in military activity or attempting to disrupt normal life or communal harmony; and (c) take action against any person or parties carrying weapons/grenades/explosives, except as is necessary for the protection of leaders, MPs and Provincial Council Members. In such cases, prior intimation should be given to the local IPKF authorities. The statement added, 'It is my earnest hope that all groups will adhere to the conditions laid down for the suspension of offensive military operations by the IPKF and contribute towards ushering in an era of peace stability and progress in the North-East province of Sri Lanka'.

● **1800 SUPPORTERS** and activists of political parties of whom 1600 belonged to the ruling United National Party had been killed since August 1987 by anti-government 'subversives', the Minister of Industries Ranil Wickremasinghe told Parliament on 19 September. Unidentified gunmen attacked the residence of Sarath Gunawardene, a UNP Provincial Council Member, in Hikkaduwa on 19 September. At Morawaka, suspected JVP men set fire to three houses belonging to security service personnel after the occupants had been chased away. At Kottawa fifteen youths were killed and their bodies set fire reportedly by pro-government death squads. At Mabima close to Sapugaskanda, a number of unidentified bodies with burn injuries were recovered.

● **THE LIBERATION** Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in a statement issued on 20 September stated, 'The LTTE has already indicated its willingness to effect a ceasefire with the Indian army. We will observe ceasefire if the Indians cease all armed operations against our cadres. We reserve the right to self-defence if the Indian army or its quisling armed groups launch any armed action against the LTTE... Though we have our own reservations with regard to the ulterior motives of the Indian strategy in Sri

Lanka, we hope that the Government of India will complete the withdrawal of troops by the 31st of December 1989, which will facilitate the resumption of peace and normalcy in the Tamil speaking region. We also wish to point out that the LTTE reserves the right to reconsider its decisions and re-evaluate its strategy in case the Government of India reverses the course of peace and de-escalation of conflict and opt for the policy of military occupation by suspending the agreed process of troop withdrawal'.

● **A FAMILY OF SEVEN** including five children were shot and hacked to death by an armed gang at Colombara in the Uda Walawe area on 20 September. The victims have been identified as A. Wijesundara, A. Adrawathie and their children, three boys and two girls. The assailants set fire to the dead bodies before they fled. In a separate incident at Essalla in Veyangoda, the residence of a security forces commander was set on fire. An unidentified armed gang of youths raided the residence of SLFP MP, Gunawathie Dissanayake and shot dead a police constable and seriously wounded two others before setting fire to the house in Moneragala.

● **M. SIRIPALA**, described as a local leader of the JVP, was shot dead on 20 September by the security forces while allegedly trying to escape after stabbing an army officer attached to the Angunukolapalessa. At Piliyandala, gunmen shot dead V.U. Ranasinghe, a former member of the JVP. On the same day, a young Buddhist monk with alleged JVP sympathies residing in a temple at Maha Vihara Road, Wadduwa, was kidnapped by an armed gang. A producer of the Sri Lanka Rupavahini (TV) Corporation, Rohan Weliwita was abducted from his Padukka residence on 20 September by an unidentified gang when he was with his family. His whereabouts are not known.

● **A GOVERNMENT** communique issued on 21 September stated that security forces conducting cordon and search operations throughout the island took into custody 528 'subversives', 250 of them from the Ratmala area. In the Gampaha area several sub-post offices were robbed and set on fire. At Hiriwadunna in Kegalle District security forces on ambush killed one subversive and recovered three rifles, shotgun cartridges and ammunition from a 'subversive hideout'. At Kottegoda in the Dickwella area, an unidentified armed gang stabbed to death a family of four.

● **THE LTTE** in a statement issued on 21 September accused the Indian government 'of calculated actions to violate the ceasefire agreement'. The Indian armed forces had constructed new army camps at Urithirapuram, Kandapuram, Akarayan junction and Kanagapuram; they rounded up villagers in Kopay and Varani on 20 September for investigations; and the Indian army and the EPRLF have warned the Tamil public that capital punishment would be meted out to all those who participated in the second anniversary celebrations to Thileepan which fell on 26 September, the statement added.

● **FOUR GIRLS** were among forty others killed in violence in separate incidents on 21 September. At Badagamuwa on the Kurunegala-Dambulla road, three girls were hacked and shot to death; the bodies of two young men were also recovered at the same spot; the faces of the victims were disfigured making identification difficult. At Dambokka, three miles off Kurunegala, eight youths were shot dead and their bodies set on fire by an armed gang. At Naiwala in the Pethiyagoda area 31 persons including women were killed by unidentified armed persons; the victims had been shot with automatic weapons at point-blank range before the killers set fire to their bodies. All these killings are believed to have been carried out by death squads associated with the security forces. An armed gang, allegedly belonging to the JVP, set fire to the headquarters of the Primary Courts in the Kurunegala District; all work in the Kurunegala, Dodangaslanda and Kadulawa have come to a standstill. In an attempt to disrupt the tea industry, armed JVP gangs set fire to tea factories in the Kamburupitiya-

Marawala areas in the south. Enforced strikes organised by the JVP have brought disruption to tea production in the Uva province

● **A GOVERNMENT** communique issued on 21 September announced a 72 hour ceasefire beginning 6 am on 27 September. It stated, 'The Government and Opposition delegation discussed measures that would further expedite the restoration of peace. It was agreed as an immediate step to call upon all armed militant groups to desist from acts of violence and sabotage. At the same time, the Security Forces will observe a suspension of counter subversive military operations for 72 hours commencing from 0600 hours Wednesday the 27th of September in the first instance. If the armed militant groups respond favourably to this joint call and refrain from acts of violence and sabotage, this period of three days would be further extended.

During this period all steps will be taken to receive those who wish to make use of this opportunity to give themselves up. They could do so by reporting to the Government Agents, Assistant Government Agents, Army Camps and Police Stations. All such persons will be afforded adequate protection and rehabilitation facilities'. An independent Committee would be established immediately in consultation with the Opposition Parties to monitor the steps taken, the statement added.

● **THREE SOLDIERS** and a couple were wounded when a gang of 10 'subversives' who arrived at a house adjoining the Boralesgamuwa-Dehiwala Road, held the family members hostage for several hours until they mounted an attack on an army patrol. An Elf van abandoned by the attackers was fitted with two improvised guns capable of hurling several kilos of shrapnel at a pursuing vehicle.

● **IN HAMBANTOTA** an armed group allegedly belonging to the JVP set fire to the buildings of an oil mill and many vehicles belonging to Cabinet Minister Dr. Ranjith Atapatu on 22 September causing damage estimated at two-and-a-half million rupees. In Gampaha, 'subversives' set fire to the Galthoramulla Electricity Board building along with nine lorries. In a separate incident at Kalutara the Relawatta Tea Factory and a lorry were set on fire. In the course of a cordon and search operation in Moneragala, two 'subversives' were killed by the security forces and 50 detonators, 90 torch batteries, 15 electric switches, locally made hand bombs, shotguns, gelignite and a quantity of explosive material were recovered, according to a government communique. On the same day, a laboratory employee of the General Hospital Blood Bank, R. Wijeratne, was shot dead by three gunmen close to the De Soysa Maternity Hospital in Colombo.

● **ELEVEN DEAD BODIES** of youth with gunshot injuries were found at Kundasale and Cemetery Road, Mahaiyawa in Kandy on 23 September - eight were found in Kundasale and three at Cemetery Road. A house belonging to a police officer was burnt at Heerasgala following the killing of eleven youths on 21 September. Earlier it was found that the father of a serviceman had been killed in the same area. People living in the vicinity were reported to be fleeing their homes fearing violence from both 'subversives' and death squads. An attempt by 'subversives' to burn down the cabin room of the Kandy railway station was thwarted by the police when they opened fire; several were arrested while some escaped. In a separate incident, the stores of Produce Transport Co. in Peradeniya, one of the leading transporters of tea were burnt down. Two lorries loaded with tea and a parked van also were set ablaze. At Enderamulla four more dead bodies of youths were recovered; they had been shot and set on fire.

● **SEVENTEEN POLICE** constables and four civilians were wounded when an unidentified gang flung hand bombs at a group of policemen at Matara on 22 September. In a separate incident in the same area, an armed gang hacked two brothers and set fire to their homes. Attackers had also

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shot dead a person near the residence of Dayananda Wickremasinghe, Minister of State for Textile Industries. At Hinuduma, the Grama Sevaka of Weerapana, identified as D.K. Dharmasena, was killed by an armed gang. At Katukurunda in Haraduwa police found the bullet-riddled body of an unidentified man. At Kamburupitiya, police found the headless body of a man. At Walasgala in Dickwella, a businessman identified as D.N. Muthukumara was shot dead. Three sub-post offices were set on fire at Puwakgandawa in Beliatta. Offices of Grama Sevakas in a number of villages in Beliatta and Hambantota were also set on fire.

● **A PATIENT TRANSFERRED** from the Prison Hospital to the General Hospital in Colombo was shot on the head on 23 September. The victim Wijewardene who police claimed to be a 'subversive' had been admitted to the Prison Hospital. Because of the seriousness of his condition he was transferred to the General Hospital. Shortly after his admission a gang of six persons went to the ward and shot him. The victim, identified as Bandula Wijewardene was believed to have been involved in the killing of prominent UNP politicians, according to police sources. Questions have been raised as to how the killing was carried out when a six-man police team was in charge of protecting him in the hospital.

● **THE UNP ORGANISER** of Panakaduwa in Urubokka, Premasiri Abewickrema was shot dead at his residence allegedly by a JVP gang on 23 September. At Kotegoda, the Sarvodaya Centre was set on fire while at Mawarella the sub-post office was set ablaze. At Beralapanatara two dead bodies were recovered, one of which had been identified as that of A. Piyadasa. At Poddala in Galle a businessman identified as R.M. Rukman was shot dead by unknown persons.

● **THE LTTE** in a statement dated 24 September has complained of ceasefire violations by the IPKF. It alleged that on 20 September two civilians were killed in Vavuniya by EPRLF members who were in the company of IPKF personnel; on the same day Indian soldiers confiscated boats belonging to fishermen in the Batticaloa district; and on 21st in the same district 10 civilians were arrested by the IPKF.

● **A LADY DOCTOR** identified as Mrs. Gunawathie Rantanayke was among twenty persons killed in violent incidents on 24 September. The doctor was reported to have been shot and hacked to death by an unknown gang at Walasmulla. A government communique claimed that twelve houses and three government buildings were set on fire and destroyed in the southern and central areas. The houses were set on fire in the Werapitya area. Nine youths were killed by armed persons; of the nine six were killed at Bembmulla in the Gampaha district and the bodies of the victims had been set on fire. The other three were killed in Ragama and Badulla. The Principal of a leading school in Moronthuduwa in the Wadduwa, identified as L. Amaradasa Alwis, aged 52, was gunned down by an unidentified gang at his residence.

● **POLITICAL ADVISOR** to Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), Mr. Sri Kanth said in a press interview on 24 September that it was imperative that the LTTE be brought into the North-East administrative process. If the LTTE agreed to enter the democratic process, the TELO would even agree to the North-East Provincial Council being dissolved and fresh elections called to accommodate the LTTE.

● **THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH** is presently considering a proposal to obtain the services of foreign Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) specialists to overcome the current shortage. There are presently only 10 ENT specialists for the whole island who are serving in the Colombo, Kalutara,

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Kurunegala, Kandy and Badulla hospitals. The rest of the island's hospitals lack such specialists and at least 35 more are required to meet their requirements.

● **A GOVERNMENT** communique issued on 26 September stated: The Kalawewa Railway Station in Anuradhapura was set on fire by 'subversives'; at Seeladola in the Badureliya police area N. Nimalachandra alias Kalumathaya who was arrested two weeks earlier in connection with the murder of three persons was shot dead when he tried to grab a weapon in an attempt to escape; a soldier who had retired on medical grounds was arrested at Debakgama in the Aranyake police area for engaging in 'subversive activity'; at Dampahala, the Regional Sarvodaya Centre was set on fire and office equipment and documents were destroyed; at Ganetenna in Badulla district, security forces recovered from a 'hideout' shotguns, gelignite sticks, explosives, rifle magazines, ammunition, safety fuses, electric detonators, welding lamps etc.; at Teripaha 'subversives' shot dead two brothers identified as Piyadasa Nissanka and Kumarasiri Nissanka; several sub-post offices in parts of the south and central provinces were set on fire; and eighty-five 'subversives' were arrested by the security forces during the previous 24 hours. An unidentified gang shot dead two persons, identified as K.S. Sisira Priyankara and M. Liyanage Jayantha, and injured another identified as Suni Shantha at Bogahagoda in Habaraduwa.

● **PRO-GOVERNMENT** death squads and suspected JVP/DJV gangs killed at least 58 people on 26 September in the Central and North Central provinces, a day before the ceasefire announced by the government came into operation. Eight persons including three women were killed at Medawachchiya and Anuradhapura. Bullet-riddled bodies of youth were found in the towns of Wategama, Kossina, Panwilla and Galgedera - 35 bodies were found in the Kandy district alone while the balance were recovered from Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. The bodies of two sisters were found adrift in the Seeduwa lagoon. A government communique dated 26 September claimed that 297 'suspected subversives' were taken into custody within the previous 24 hours and four area leaders of the JVP were killed identified as Kithsiri - area leader of Anamaduwa North; Piyadasa, a prison escapee; Mangala - leader of Wennappuwa and Bandara Nilame, another organiser in Anamaduwa.

● **JUST TWO HOURS** after the government's ceasefire commenced on 27 September, an unidentified gang in army-type uniforms ambushed two vehicles transporting two UNP politicians on the Badalkumbura-Passara road killing two National Auxiliary Force personnel; the politicians escaped unhurt. At Kamburupitiya in the Matara district, an armed gang beheaded a civilian identified as Chandradasa aged 52. The government claimed that nearly 400 'suspected subversives' had surrendered since the commencement of the ceasefire. Unknown gunmen shot dead the father and two brothers of a suspected JVP activist who surrendered to the security forces a few days earlier in Medawachchiya; relatives of the family of the victims had later retaliated in an attack on another family believed to be related to the killers.

● **AT LEAST FOUR** persons including a SLTB employee received serious injuries when a time-bomb allegedly planted by the JVP/DJV exploded in a SLTB bus at Katukele on the Kandy-Peradeniya road on 28 September. Nearly ten buses had been damaged in attacks since the government's ceasefire commenced.

● **AFTER CONSULTATION** with opposition parties, the government announced on 29 September the extension of its ceasefire for a further period of 72 hours ending at 6 am

on 3 October. In Nuwara Eliya a suspected JVP armed gang detonated a bomb planted inside a jeep belonging to the former UNP Mayor of Nuwara Eliya, Edmund Rajapakse on 29 September; a timber depot belonging to him was also set on fire. A sub-post office at Boralesgamuwa was set on fire. The Padugoda Grama Sevaka office and Matugama Development Council offices in the Kalutara district were set on fire. At Karaputugala off Kaburupitiya, one police constable and two men of the National Auxiliary Force received gunshot injuries when an unidentified gang attacked them. In a separate incident in the Hambantota district, a landmine explosion destroyed a police jeep and wounded three security service personnel. A Buddhist monk, Nika Attegama Seelarathana Thero was shot dead by unknown gunmen at Pohorawatte in the Kurunegala district.

● **AT KATUGODA** in the Galle district, a suspected JVP armed gang attacked the residence of Food, Co-operatives and Transport Minister of the Southern Provincial Council, A.H.N. Anwar, killing a soldier; a repeater shotgun was removed by the attackers who escaped in a van on 30 September. Nearly ten police and security service personnel were injured in separate ambushes at Walasmulla, Kamburupitiya and Hambantota. Three passengers received serious gunshot wounds when an unidentified gang opened fire on a private coach at Molagoda in the Kegalle district. At Angunakolawewa in Tissamaharama an armed gang shot dead a Buddhist monk named Thiranagama Ratanasara Thero who was a prominent Buddhist scholar.

● **A BUDDHIST MONK** identified as Dematapitiye Chandrananda Thero was abducted by armed persons from a temple in Weligama on 1 October. A number of dead bodies with gunshot injuries were recovered from the Dandugam Oya (river) at Weligampitiya. At Sooriyawewa and Passara two persons, identified as Ariyadasa and G.D. Seelawathie, were shot dead. A Grama Sevaka, his wife and two children were killed and burnt in their own house at Demathana in the Tambuttegama area. The reason for these murders has been attributed to the fact that another son of the Grama Sevaka was serving in the police force.

● **TWO SOLDIERS** and six suspected 'subversives' were among over twenty persons killed in separate incidents during the previous 36 hours ending noon on 2 October. During this period 14 sub-post offices, two AGA's offices, two Provincial Council offices and a number of vehicles were set on fire by suspected 'subversives'. At Veyangalle six youths were killed and a soldier and a child seriously wounded when an army patrol travelling from Mahagam in Girikola repulsed an ambush. At Yatala in the Tissamaharama area two soldiers were killed when an armed gang ambushed a combined police and army patrol. At Kirindiwela a person identified as T.A. Piyatilleke was killed by an armed gang. At Nittambuwa, a person identified as P. Jayaratne was killed. A person named Samarawickrema, father of a serving police officer, was shot and hacked to death by an armed gang at Thureliya. At Kandy father of A.K. Rajith Priyal of the Sri Lanka Navy and A.K. Chandrapala of the Air Force was shot and killed. Among the others killed were a Doctor in Hakmana and a twentyfive year old woman named Tuliya Menike. Officials claimed that, since the government's announcement of ceasefire on 27 September, over 125 state-owned buildings and vehicles had been set on fire and destroyed and over 40 persons killed. Government sources claimed that a total of 1120 'subversives' surrendered during the period of the six day ceasefire.

● **THE UNITED STATES** has given Rs. 19.6 million as foreign aid for construction of roads in the North-East Province and another Rs. 1.73 million for construction of Irrigation Department buildings, said K.T. George Seneviratne, Provincial Minister for Irrigation and Housing. The money would be channelled through the Ministry of Rehabilitation and this aid would be utilised for rehabilitation work in the Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi, Trincomalee and Vavuniya districts, he added.

VIOLENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Reggie Siriwardena

I should like to begin by referring to the fact that the Kanthasamy Commemoration Committee has included at the end of its memorial volume my poem 'Waiting for the Soldier'. The reason for its inclusion apparently is that a friend sent it to him in Jaffna shortly before his tragic end. The poem was written towards the end of 1987 at a time when the hopes of peace kindled by the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord were guttering low as violence swept the country again. What the poem expresses is a sense of impotence to influence the public world – a feeling that one could only withdraw into one's intellectual interests, while being aware that one's private life might at any moment be overwhelmed by the disorder and violence outside. Why I refer to the subject of the poem here is that Kanthasamy's life offered an example of a very different response to the dark time through which we are living. Here was a man to whom it was open to devote his outstanding talents and abundant energies wholly to his professional vocation, and to enjoy the satisfaction and success to be derived from it. He chose instead to dedicate himself to the cause of fighting injustice and succouring the victims, of tirelessly striving against the erosion of humanity and reason in our society; and for that dedication he paid with his life. No, the only thing that Kanthasamy's death has in common with that of Archimedes is the triumph of brute force over the civilised virtues, and 'Waiting for the Soldier' therefore can't really be an epitaph for him. Perhaps I may offer instead these lines of the English poet W.H. Auden as an expression of my own feelings about his life and death. The modest and muted tones of Auden's lines seem to me appropriate to this man who did so much quietly and unassumingly and shunned heroic and rhetoric:

*When there are so many we shall have to mourn,
when grief has been made so public, and exposed
to the critique of a whole epoch
the frailty of our conscience and anguish
of whom shall we speak? For every day they die
among us, those who were doing us some good,
who knew it was never enough but
hope to improve a little by living.*

When I had the honour of being invited by the Kanthasamy Commemoration Committee to deliver this lecture, I chose 'Violence and Human Rights' as my subject. I selected it as being best fitted to commemorate a man who lived to protect the rights of his fellow human beings and who died by violence in doing so. But I chose it also because no subject can be of more pressing concern to us at a time when the most fundamental of human rights – the right to exist – is violated each day in our country. The form of this lecture is determined by the very nature of the situation we confront. Human rights are violated today by the agents of the State in the name of democracy or of the protection of the security and integrity of the country. They are violated also by militant groups in the name of national or social liberation. It would be evasive and dishonest to deal with one and not with the other. My lecture therefore will fall naturally into two parts, in which I discuss first State violence, and secondly, militant violence. But before I proceed to deal with this dual nature of the violence in our society, there are some preliminary considerations I wish to present.

It is possible, in looking at the phenomenon of violence in Sri Lanka, to examine its larger social causes – to analyse the struggle of different ethnic groups and economic classes for distribution of power and resources, for social mobility and for control of the State. I don't question either the

K. Kanthasamy, lawyer, relief and rehabilitation worker and human rights activist, was abducted in Jaffna on 19 June, 1988, and is presumed to have been killed.

Reggie Siriwardena's lecture on **Violence and Human Rights** was delivered at Colombo on 19 June, 1989 to mark the first anniversary of the abduction, and the release of a Commemoration book.

validity or the necessity for such analyses. But this is not the way in which I shall be looking at the phenomenon of violence. The underlying social causes making for division and conflict in our society are very real. But there is no fatalism about the way in which these conditions, and the issues arising out of them, translate themselves into widespread and continuing violence. The transition from conflict to violence of that nature is dependent on decisions made by the choice and will of leaders – of those in control of the apparatus of the State as well as those contending against it. It is dependent on judgments made by the former about what is legitimate in maintaining the security of the State and by the latter about what is justified in opposing or in subverting it. Often the decisions in this respect by one of these forces evoke a countervailing reaction from the other, as we have seen in the cycles of State violence and anti-State violence in recent times. It is this area where conscious decisions, which can raise or reduce the level of violence in our society, are made by political actors that I am concerned with in this lecture.

When I say 'conscious decisions', I am not claiming that the decisive agent – the head of a government, the leader of a militant group, or any other – is always aware of the ultimate consequences of his actions. His decisions are often motivated by considerations of immediate expediency. But it is all the more important, therefore, to bring into focus the wider and long term consequences of such decisions.

Let us consider, for instance, the fateful day in 1956 when the Official Language Act was introduced in Parliament. The adoption of the Sinhala only policy was itself one of those momentous decisions that have changed the course of Sri Lanka's history. Some of us may wish that S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike had possessed the courage and consistency of his liberal principles that Jawaharlal Nehru showed when he desisted from imposing Hindi on the South. But it isn't this aspect of the events of 1956 I want to discuss but another which has a more direct bearing on the question of violence. On that same day when the Bill was introduced Tamil opponents of the Bill staged a peaceful satyagraha on Galle Face green, and were assaulted by thugs who had been transported there. The head of the government not only permitted this to happen but ordered the police away when of their own volition they had arrived to keep the peace. This was the first of a series of occasions in the fifties and sixties when peaceful protest by Tamil political groups would be met with violence. The long-term consequences of this response would become apparent in the seventies and eighties when a younger and more militant Tamil generation emerged to pursue their struggle by other means.

Let me compare these events with others which took place in the area not of ethnic but of socio-economic conflict. In 1978 and 1979 there were several cases where striking and picketing workers and demonstrating students on the university campuses were attacked by thugs, sometimes with extreme brutality. The right to picket and the right peacefully to demonstrate had until then been regarded as normal democratic rights. They were now met with violence.

What was the thinking behind those in power when they dealt in this manner with minority satyagrahis, workers and students? Perhaps they said to themselves, 'We'll teach them a lesson they won't forget!'. But the lesson learnt was very different from the one intended. The leadership of the Tamil political movement and of the working class and student movements had been drawn from parties and organisations which worked within the constitutional and democratic framework. The effect of the violence used against them was to undermine their credibility. By crushing democratic and peaceful opposition, it promoted the belief that the only effective weapon against a State ready to resort to violence was counter-violence. The notorious referendum of 1982, with the widespread violence unleashed on the Government side, extended this conviction into a far-reaching scepticism about the main mechanism of democracy – the electoral process itself. Thus, in both North and South, State violence actually promoted extremism and strengthened those whose methods of dissent were the AK-47 and the T-56.

Once the State was faced with armed insurgency, a different rationale was adopted to justify the resort to unrestrained violence. The very survival of the State was threatened; therefore all methods were permissible against those who sought to subvert it. 'There are no rules in war': one often heard this self-justifying maxim from those who held the power of life and death over the people. On this basis, torture, arbitrary killings, use of terror against non-combatants, could all be legitimized as necessary when the State had to fight for its existence.

There is in fact a deadly symmetry between this logic of ruling powers and the logic of militant groups engaged in mortal combat with them. Both believe that the end justifies the means. In the one case, it is the end of preserving democracy, restoring law and order, protecting national integrity; in the other case, it is the end of national liberation or social liberation. In either case, the lives of individual human beings are considered to be a small price to exact for the cherished end.

What makes this logic unacceptable are not just humane considerations, which some people will dismiss as sentimental moral squeamishness. It is the fact that the means you use determine the end you reach. As the German socialist Lasalle wrote in the last century:

*Show us not the aim without the way.
For ends and means on earth are so entangled
That changing one, you change the other too.
Each different path brings other ends in view.*

I shall deal later with the practice of militant groups, but first, the insane logic of preserving democracy by undemocratic methods and upholding law and order by breaking the law must be questioned. An elected government has certainly the right to defend itself against attempts to overthrow it by force. But a democratic state cannot use illegitimate methods even in fighting terrorism and insurgency without becoming indistinguishable from what it is fighting. Consequently, in resorting to such methods it alienates the sympathy and co-operation of those whom it claims to be defending. Civil wars are won not merely by guns but by the support of the people. In that political battle every victim of torture, every person arbitrarily executed, every village terrorised, is (whatever the short-term effects) a gain for the other side in the long run. That was demonstrated in the North and East; it has since been confirmed in other parts of the country.

I must now confront the logic of militant groups whose chosen method of political struggle is violence. The issues which arise here are different, in certain important respects, from those which relate to State violence. Governments which are elected within the parliamentary democratic framework claim to adhere to political principles that exclude arbitrary violence. When they resort to illegal

terror, one may argue with them on the basis of their professed principles. But militant groups make no secret of the fact that violence is their means, and that they hold this to be the necessary way of changing society.

Militant groups in fact present themselves in the aura of a historical tradition of revolution as an act of liberation. Next month, France and the world will commemorate the bicentenary of a great revolution, and the Russian and Chinese Revolutions, and yet others after them, all make the same appeal to our faith in the right of people to overthrow unjust and oppressive rulers. Whether everything that happened in those revolutions was desirable can be questioned. But, with whatever qualifications, the liberating character of the great revolutions has to be recognised – not least, in their capacity to reassert and regenerate themselves after periods of reaction. How then can we take the position that violence in all forms and in all circumstances is to be condemned? Or must we, on the other hand, concede the claim of militant groups that whenever violence is committed in the name of liberation, it has to be accepted as justified?

I am not one of those who regard Marxist theory as a body of sacred scriptures whose canonical authority can't be questioned. In fact I don't like today even to hang a label round my neck and call myself a 'Marxist'. But on this specific question of violence, I think there is a great deal that is valid and useful in the thinking of the classical Marxists, and that can guide us in making a judgment about the violence of militant groups today.

The classical Marxists made a clear distinction between popular revolutions in which the broad masses intervene to overthrow the existing state, and all forms of coups, putsches and conspiracies in which an organised minority acts to take control of the state into its own hands. They also distinguished between the methods used in one and the other form of overthrowing the state. Mass agitation, demonstrations and other actions involving popular participation, the mass uprising, are revolutionary forms: terrorist acts, such as explosions of bombs in public places, sabotage and assassination of individuals, are the work of groups seeking to substitute themselves for the people as the agents of change. This doesn't mean that in popular revolutions people acted with pure spontaneity: they were always organised and led. But people in the mass don't rise unless it is clear to them that they have no other means of changing their condition. This is the moral justification of the violence of a popular revolution when it occurs: that the masses, by their action, have shown that they have no other way out.

But when a minority, determined and ruthless as it may be, seeks by its own terror and violence to change society, with the people as onlookers, then we must ask not only, 'Does the end justify the means?' But also, in terms of Lassalle's question, 'Do the means lead to the end?' If the end is liberation – which, if anything, must signify a freer, more just and humane society – can this be achieved by planting bombs regardless of whom they may kill, by massacring defenceless and innocent civilians because they speak a different language, or by eliminating those who are in a different political camp, and even wiping out their families? The practice of this indiscriminate and unrestrained violence coarsens and brutalises those who participate in it, those who order it and those who carry it out, and if they come to power it will leave its stamp on the society they create. What kind of society can that be except a regimented one, run by a political leadership freed of popular control in which all dissent will be ruthlessly stamped out? To call that 'liberation' is possible only in accordance with the linguistic practice of Lewis Carroll's Humpty-Dumpty for whom words meant just what he chose to make them mean.

I should like to dwell a little on the subject of individual assassinations because it is relevant to the fate of the man

Continued on Page 19

NATYA MANJARI

The Commonwealth Institute and its auditorium – costily situated among the surroundings of the Kensington suburbia very rarely sees a Tamil Cultural performance where Tamils gather in large numbers. Nearly ten years ago the Institute's Hall with its projection theatre was used for the screening of Tamil films imported from Madras by Tamil entrepreneurs in London. But with the dawn of the video era the screening of Tamil films at public places has died a natural death.

So, it was a welcome change for many Tamils to gather once again at the posh surroundings of Kensington, enter the air conditioned auditorium and to sit in the sloped seats with rear stalls at a higher elevation than the front stalls. The event was **Natya Manjari** presented by Laxmi Arts Centre. Srimathi Selvaluxmy Ramakrishnan, the directress of the Arts Centre who has the credit of producing some of the finest young dancers in the field today, presented this variety programme and thrilled the audience, who had more or less packed the auditorium, for nearly two hours. The chief guest for the evening was Mr Ranjit Dheer the deputy leader of the Ealing Council.

The first half of the programme consisted of items in the traditional order of Bharatha Natyam with the Thillana just prior to the interval. The second half commenced with two folk dances. The first a Krishna with Gopis dance which was the most appreciated by the audience maybe because the Krishna and Gopis with their dazzling colourful costumes were barely older than eight years! The



VANATHI, SUMATHI & SAPNA in a scene from **THIRU SAKTHI** (ballet)

next item also was a folk dance from Tamil Nadu – Pinnal Kollattam which is rarely performed in this country. It was interesting to see the young dancers holding the coloured ropes and dancing to the tune of the Kol (stick).

The climax of the evening was a dance drama (a ballet titled **Thiru – Sakthi**), again an unusual item in UK, but an appropriate story with Navarathri round the corner. The story is about the dilemma of Mother Tamil as to what was important to her children – Education? Wealth? or Courage? This is shown in the form of a rivalry between the three Goddesses Saraswathi, Luxmi and

Durga competing to bless the Tamil children. A conciliation is brought about and Parasakthi who is a combined form of the three Goddesses blesses the children. Chithra Satkunanathan as Mother Tamil is unforgettable. Her facial expressions were superb. The same must be said of the other three dancers, Vanathi Nithianathan as Luxmi, Sapna Billimoria as Saraswathi, and Sumathy Ponnampalam as Durga. Credit should be given to the Luxmi Arts Centre for the dramatic (or rather was it cinematic?) smoke effect created during the scene in which the three goddesses appeared and danced. I wish more and more dance organisers utilise the latest facilities to create special effects in stages like Commonwealth Institute, Logan Hall and the like.

The entire performance was brilliantly choreographed by Srimathi Selvaluxmy Ramakrishnan. Sri Lankas 'melodious voice' Srimathi Ambika Thamotheram rendered the songs for the performance. Her son Dr T. Nimalraj relatively a newcomer to the London stage, but now a very sought after performer provided accompaniment on the flute. Dr Srimathi Lakshmi Jayan and Sri Muthu Sivrajah an exponent from Trincomalee provided notable performances on their violin and mirudangam respectively.

Last but not least the timekeeping of the Laxmi Arts Centre should be commended and should be followed by other organisers. The performance scheduled to start at 7pm started around 7.02pm and ended by 9pm.

Wimal Sockanathan

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we are commemorating today. I think everything we have gone through in the last decade confirms the wisdom of those who ruled out assassination as a legitimate method of pursuing liberation of any kind. You may start by killing unpopular politicians or oppressive agents of the State, and claim that their killing is just retribution for their crimes, and perhaps few people will shed tears for the victims. But once you have started on this slippery slope, there is no possibility of stopping anywhere. You will go on to eliminating police informants and feel justified again. But you won't stop there because you have already convinced yourself that the sacred end of liberation justifies the killing of anybody who is an obstacle in the way. And you are also certain that you and your group possess the only right formula for achieving liberation. The combination of complete certainty of your infallibility and total ruthlessness with regard to your means is a terrifying thing. So, armed with this logic, you will go on to kill even members of other parties or groups who claim to be working for the same ends but are doing so (according to you) by the wrong methods. But you won't stop there either. Because by the same logic, even those who disagree with you in your own group are traitors to the cause and must therefore be eliminated. And there is no reason to suppose that this process will end with the seizure of power. What it prepares the way for is a society of permanent purges, torture chambers and execution camps.

In this light we can see why Kandiah Kanthasamy had to die. He believed in the freedom of the individual conscience and judgment, and was not prepared to sub-

ordinate it to any political group or leader. In reading the memorial volume, I have been particularly struck by some passages from his own hand, which I could not have read earlier, and which state precisely and forthrightly his commitment to independent and unfettered thought and activity. One is his admirable memorandum and project proposal for the founding of 'Saturday Review'. In the course of it he wrote:

This is not intended to be a political paper, nor a partisan one. It will be a forum for all opinions so far as they concern Tamil rights and race relations in this country, but yet not parochial in content. . . While the style of journalism will be individualistic, the approach will be liberal and catholic.

Later he said in a letter:

We should take extreme care to preserve the freedom of the press which is achieved more by publishing conflicting views rather than suppressing any.

And three weeks before his abduction, already facing threats to his life, he wrote regarding the TRRO:

If we cannot carry on as a free organisation, we should close it down.

It isn't difficult to see that the very existence of such a man was a challenge to any group which was seeking to enforce a coerced uniformity of opinion. Kanthasamy can rightly be honoured as a martyr in a cause which too few people are prepared to defend today in this country.

Continued From Page 7

forcibly recruited. EPRLF sources denied that any force was being used; unless they consented they were not recruited; and students in particular were allowed to leave if they wished. Despite these denials, residents in the North-East confirm that conscription was continuing, but they admit that it was being done more discreetly now. A Batticaloa resident was quoted as saying, 'What is happening here is tragic and heart-rending. Young boys are being forcibly driven into militant training camps while grieving parents watch helplessly'.

Initially, the recruitment was for the Citizens Volunteer Force (CVF) which was done by the provincial administration with the blessings of the Sri Lankan government which provided the required funds for the purpose of setting up a force to carry out law and order functions. The recruits to the CVF were paid a monthly salary. However, now the intentions of these militant groups have become clear; statements by some of their leaders make it apparent that they want to set up a Tamil National Army to take charge of security matters in the north-east once the IPKF leaves and that they do not want the return of the Sri Lankan security forces.

But the main reason for these groups to mobilise such a large number of recruits and put them through a course of training in the use of weapons is attributed to their fear that, once the IPKF departs, the militarily superior LTTE would seek to

physically eliminate them. These groups have been the target for elimination by the LTTE prior to 1987 and the proscription order made by the LTTE against these groups have still not been rescinded. Parents and community leaders fear that these young Tamils are being subjected to enforced militarisation and will simply become cannon fodder in the event of widespread armed conflict among the Tamil militant groups.

A religious leader from Batticaloa, who was reluctant to be identified, said that the answer to this human problem lay with the Tamil militant groups. 'they should get together; if they can't at least they must publicly renounce the use of weapons or force among themselves; a categorical assurance from the LTTE that they would not attack the other groups after the IPKF leaves will go a long way to stop the ongoing tragedy', he added.

18 BEHEADED BODIES FOUND IN UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

Eighteen unidentified dead bodies were found at various spots in the Peradeniya campus on 5 October. Most of the dead bodies had been decapitated and the severed heads were found elsewhere in the campus. Whether the beheading was carried out while the victims were alive or after they were shot dead has not been established.

It is believed that these killings were carried out by death squads consisting

of security service personnel or so-called anti-JVP vigilantes in retaliation for the murder allegedly by a JVP gang of an Assistant Registrar of the Peradeniya University, Mr. D.E. Nagahawatte, on 4 October. Mr. Nagahawatte was also a Captain in the Second Battalion of the Sinha Regiment (Volunteers).

Fifteen more dead bodies were recovered from the Kandy district on 6 October - two from Leula Ketawela in the Ampitiya police area, 11 on the Peradeniya Gampola Road, and 2 on the Kadugannawa-Alawatugoda Road.

In separate incidents on 6 October, the Hakmana Branches of the Peoples Bank, Bank of Ceylon and the National Savings Bank were set on fire, a few minutes before the banks opened for the day, allegedly by JVP/DJV gangs. The buildings continued to burn for several hours causing extensive damage.

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PEACE COMMITTEE FOR NORTH-EAST

President Premadasa has appointed the 'Peace Committee' envisaged in paragraph 4 of the Agreement dated 18 October between the governments of India and Sri Lanka (see Tamil Times September 89).

A communique issued from the Presidential Secretariat dated 20 September invited 17 political parties to nominate three representatives from each party. But a further communique issued three days later added a list of a further 11 political parties to be included in the Peace Committee. Hence the Peace Committee is now composed of 28 political parties which would be entitled to nominate three representatives each.

The political parties invited to participate in the Committee are:

All Ceylon Muslim League
Ealam National Democratic Liberation Front
Ealam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front

Ealam Revolutionary Organisation of Students

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam
Sri Lanka Freedom Party
Sri Lanka Muslim Congress
Tamil Ealam Liberation Organization

All Ceylon Tamil Congress
Tamil United Liberation Front
United National Party
Sri Lanka Mahajana Pakshaya
United Socialist Alliance
Mahajana Eksath Peramuna
Democratic Workers Congress
People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Ealam

Ceylon Workers' Congress
Illankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi
Eksath Lanka Janatha Pakshaya (ELJP)

Peoples Liberation Front (JVP)
Desha Vimukthi Janatha Pakshaya
Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP)
Democratic People's Liberation Front

Muslim United Liberation Front
Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP)

The Liberal Party
Sri Lanka Pragathisheeli Peramuna
Communist Party of Sri Lanka

The Secretary of the Peace Committee will be extending invitations to the representatives of these Political Parties to attend sittings of the Committee commencing with the first sitting on the 9th of October, 1989.

The terms of reference of the said committee shall be to -

- (1) recommend measures to achieve amity among all political and ethnic groups within the said provinces.
- (2) review the progress in the implementation of the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lanka Constitution.
- (3) recommend steps to make provincial councils more effective.
- (4) work towards the achievement of the aspirations of the people of the northern and eastern provinces while preserving the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka.
- (5) recommend measures to ensure the physical safety and security of the inhabitants of the northern and eastern provinces.
- (6) recommend to the appropriate authorities measures to bring within the democratic framework all groups and interests in the northern and eastern provinces who had not participated in the Provincial Council Elections of 1988, and the Parliamentary Elections of 1989.
- (7) and such other and further matters as the committee may consider relevant.

The said committee will be chaired by Mr. A.C.S. Hameed, Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology.

All decisions will be on the principle of the consensus of the membership to which the chairman and the secretary shall not be a party.

INDIAN TROOPS LEAVE MALDIVES

One hundred and sixty-two Indian soldiers, the last of the 1,200 who were rushed to crush a coup against President Abdul Gayoom, ten and a half months ago, will return home on November 3.

This was announced by Gayoom himself at a press conference here this evening at the end of his two-day official visit to India.

The President of the Indian Ocean island nation said the Indian troops arrived in Male at his request on November 4 last year, within hours after a group of Maldivians and Sri Lanka Tamils tried to topple his government.

The conspirators fled the capital as the Indian Air Force planes began landing at the airport. They were later captured by the Indian Navy. After a

long trial, 4 Maldivians and 12 Sri Lankan Tamils (belong to the People's Liberation Organisation for Tamil Ealam - PLOTE) were sentenced to death. However on September 17, Gayoom committed them to life imprisonment.

Seven hundred of the Indian troops returned home on the very evening of November 4 after averting the coup. India kept 500 of its soldiers back in the Maldives at Gayoom's request.

This number came down to 250 and to 162 six months ago. The troops stayed back while the trial was in progress.

During their stay in that country the Maldivians took their help to reorganise their security forces.

Now that the trial of the conspirators is over and the President has stayed their execution by converting it to life imprisonment, the Maldivians feel confident enough to let the Indians return home.

Gayoom said he decided against executing the criminals because 'we do not have the tradition of executing people to death'. The last time a man was executed was in 1951 for committing a murder.

CONSCRIPTS TO BE RELEASED FOR STUDIES

The EPRLF, TELO and the ENDLF were among the organisations present at a recent meeting convened at the Jaffna Secretariat to discuss the forcible conscription of young men for military training.

The meeting, chaired by the Jaffna District Political Co-ordinator, A. Muruganesan, decided that students already under training will be released this week if they wish to continue their studies. Their parents and representatives of the Schools Development Societies Union will be present on this occasion.

Other participants at the meeting were representatives of the Jaffna GA, school principals, divisional educational officers and schools development societies.

It was decided that schoolgoers will not be forcibly conscripted for military training; those arrested on suspicion will be released after inquiries; and those students already under training will be released if they wished to continue their studies.

It was stated at the meeting that 138 students were conscripted by militant groups other than those who attended the meeting at the secretariat. It was urged that they should be released too.

The meeting also decided that all students must attend school and advised parents to send their children to school without fear.

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WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate the following couples on their recent marriage.

Mohanadas son of the late Mr. & Mrs. Arulampalam, Notary's Lane, Naval Road, Jaffna and **Saraswathy** (Baby) daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Sabaratnam, formerly of 36th Lane, Wellawatte, Sri Lanka at Archway Murugan Temple, London N6 on 10.9.89.

Raviraj son of the late Dr. T.Tharmaratnam and Mrs K.Tharmaratnam of Ramakrishna School Lane, Kondavil East, Sri Lanka and **Malathi** daughter of Mr & Mrs N. Gunaratnam, Periya Vilan, Sri Lanka at St John's Church Hall, London SW19 on 16.9.89.

OBITUARIES

M.V. Rajaratnaam of Kokuvil and formerly of C.G.R. Sri Lanka; husband of Kanmany Urumpirai, Sri Lanka), father of Dr. Natkunam (Mt Isa Base Hospital, Queensland 4825, Australia), Satkunam, Accountant (Zesco, Lusaka) and Nitkunan, Engineer (104 Munster Avenue, Hounslow, Middx TW4 5BJ, U.K.); father-in-law of Dr. Annalakshmi, Malini, and Uma; grandfather of Dr. Ketheesan, Yasodha, Uma, Radha, Ananthahi, Arani and Tharani died in Australia on 7.9.89 and was cremated there.

Navaratnam Brodie retired Police officer, Sri Lanka, son of the late Mr. & Mrs A.M. Brodie; beloved husband of Luxshumi; father of Dinesh; brother of Mrs Leela Sabaratnam (Sri Lanka), Mrs Kamala Johnpillai (Bermuda), Mrs Saras Kanagasabapathy (Canada), A.M. Brodie (Australia), Thiru (Sri Lanka), Mrs Pathma Yogarajah, Mrs Gunawathie Shakespeare (both of U.K.), the late Singarajah, & Mrs Pushpa Kandiah (Sri Lanka); uncle of several nephews and nieces passed away on 14.10.89 in Gampola, Sri Lanka - 296 Alexandra Avenue, South Harrow, Middx HA0 9DA, UK.



Sivakumaran (Bhojan) formerly of M/S Samuel & Sons Ltd., (Kilinochchi), son of the late Sivagnanam (D.O.A., P.W.D., Sri Lanka) and Mrs Sivagnanam (U.K.); beloved husband of Kamalambika; father of Sivajanani; brother of Sivarajan (New Zealand), Dr. Sivapalan, Sivakanthan, and Mrs Sivatharini Sahathevan (all of U.K.) died on 3.9.89 and was cremated in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 7.9.89 - 49 Byworth Walk, Sussex Way, London N19 4BN.

The Nomads

For though we have come so far,
Like the earth from a cold, shining star,
We have emerged.
Poverty and fear submerged.
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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

November 5 7.30 p.m. Violin by Dr. L. Subramaniam with K. Shekar and Ustad Alla Rakha at Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank Centre, London SE1. Box Office 01-928-8800.

At Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ Tel: 01-381 3036/4608

Nov 3 7.45 p.m. Sitar, Sarod, Tabla by Parthasarathy, Shuendu Rao & Abhiman Kaushal.

Nov 5 6.30 p.m. Kathak by Pandit Durgalal & musicians from India.

Nov 10 7.45 p.m. Odissi by Sanjukta Panigrahi with musicians from India.

Nov 12 6.30 p.m. Flute by Hariprasad Chaurasia.

A CALENDAR PROBLEM

I seek the assistance of your readers to solve the following problem without using a computer.

There are 31 times 7 equals 217 bags. They are numbered thus:- Sunday 1, Sunday 2, Sunday 3 and so on up to Sunday 31. The remaining bags are numbered in the same way using the remaining days of the week.

Imagine that a coin was put in bag numbered Monday 1 on 1st January 1900, which was a Monday, another coin was put in bag numbered Tuesday 2 on 2nd January 1900 and a third coin was put in bag numbered Wednesday 3 on 3rd January 1900. This process was continued regularly every day for 400 years from 1st January 1900 to 31st December 2299.

How many coins would there be in each bag?

S. Vaithianathan,

10 Kendor Avenue
Epsom,
Surrey.

IN MEMORIAM

Mrs Florence Ariyamalar Rajasingham
Born: 24.07.1922.



Rajasingham Manoharan
Born 30.07.1949

Killed: 16.10.1987

We miss you both more than we could have ever thought.

As each day dawns the despair and the anger grows.

Until, the treacherous hand that killed you both

With his 'Peace Keeping Force', and

Left your bodies seven long days for dogs to feast,

Is unmasked to reveal his role in these murders most foul,

Our hearts will know no peace.

We pray that your souls have found the peace we so sadly lack

Fondly remembered on their second death anniversary by

C.Rajasingham, Vasuki Manoharan, Saratha and Priyan Manoharan, Dr. Narendran, Manohari Thevathasan, Selvi Rajendran, Neela Navaratnaraj, Jayadevan and Gowri Surendrakumar.

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