

**THE UNIVERSITY TEACHERS
FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS (JAFFNA), SRI LANKA**

Report No. 2

March 1989

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PREFACE

The UTHR (Jaffna) had published its first report in January this year. It was felt necessary to come out with the second report within a short interval, because of the fast moving course of events surrounding the parliamentary General Elections. The ban on participation in these elections called by the LTTE in the North—East and by the JVP in the South, gave these elections a singular flavour. With high stakes and a prevalence of armed groups, official and unofficial, killings mounted to a national average of several tens per day. Even in a situation where little that is creative or constructive is visible, and humanity is on the decline in national life, it remains the task of any serious human rights organisation not merely to record violations of human rights, but also to question the conduct of forces and suggest alternative values. We do not, and it is not our task to, support any political group. But in performing our task, we have to say things, which have political implications. Our concern however is to do with values enshrined in the universal nature of human experience.

This issue contains accounts of incidents that took place in many parts of the North. During this period (January—March) members of the UTHR worked both as a team and sometimes as individuals to visit places where incidents occurred, interview eyewitnesses and to check on what had actually happened. The preparation of this report has involved wider participation from the academic community, students and individuals and organisations from outside, than before. Apart from the academic circle there were ordinary people who spared their time to collect information at our request. The UTHR (Jaffna) is very, grateful to all who had given verbal and moral support in bringing out this second resort. Then silence spectators come out as active participants leaving their foot prints on the “soggy path, it is a welcome sign for a society like ours, to create awareness and demonstrate that people are awake, at least to fight silently against injustice and inhumanity.

The situation has not improved in the North. Vadamarachchi continued to be a trouble spot, with attacks by the militants leading to reprisals. A similar situation exists in several parts of Jaffna.

At the time of writing heavy fighting is reported in Mullaitivu. So far no detailed reliable reports are available. Reports reaching Jaffna indicate much civilian suffering.

Two University students were shot dead on the 2nd February in a sequel to events beginning on the previous evening. This follows events with qualitative similarities at Jaffna Hindu and St. Patricks, thus bringing into focus the problems faced by the young. The running of places of education and factories pose severe tests for grass roots democracy. Leading persons in such institutions have been receiving rough treatment -and are sometimes spoken to as criminals.

A grave problem the people of the Worth face is the tracing of missing persons. When a boy is missing his parents have no idea where to begin. To start with, why he was missing may be a problem if he had trouble with a number of armed groups. They would have to go from one IPKF camp to another. If an arrested person succumbed under torture, the truth may never surface.

It is pathetic to see the plight of mothers waiting in hope for news of their sons in front of army camps. Many of them bear their grief on taut faces. Those who wail become objects of fun for soldiers on sentry duty.

The UTHR (Jaffna) does function in a culture where every endeavour is identified as being subservient to some force. We once again emphasise that we are a body bound only by common values. This may be difficult to grasp. Our continued effectiveness depends on whether or not we do our work impartially and honestly in terms of our declared values. Once again we have recorded all violations of which we received accounts, whose human context was instructive, on the grounds that all life is sacred. We value life irrespective of boundaries, national, racial or otherwise.

The UTHR (Jaffna) assumes total collective responsibility for the contents of this report. We regret any past association of individual names with our work. Such association was never sought. We are all clear in our minds that acting collectively, without seeking individual prominence, is important for maintaining a sense of mission at this time.

1. Reports

1.1 Incident At Pandeteruppu: 13th January 1989

Friday the 13th, it sounded ominous enough without things happening around to prove it. The hour was nearing half past two and most of the village folks had turned in for their forty winks when gunshots resounded through the sleepy little hamlet.

According to the eyewitness interviewed, about 300 m away from the Pandateruppu junction, 3 youths identified as the members of the LTTE were putting up a poster on a wall while another kept watch about 15 M away from the spot leaning against the gatepost of the house belonging to a senior citizen of the area, Mr. Singarayar. Army vehicles belonging to the battalion at Villan commanded by Major Sud, which were at that time coming towards the junction from the north along Keerimalai road were spotted by the youths who quickly left their bicycles standing awkwardly on the road, jumped over the parapet wall opposite the wall on which this poster was freshly pasted, and took cover behind trees, walls etc. of the adjoining compound.

The boy, posted for sentry duty dropped his bundle pamphlets and scuttled off through a footpath nearby. Captain Dohear, followed by other Army personnel, got down from their vehicles to inspect the poster in great haste. Bullets fired by the youth struck down the captain and one other soldier. That the number of military persons shot dead was two was attested by the fact that a helmet and a cap were found lying beneath the bicycles on the road.

Gunshots were heard in all directions for the next five minutes or so. Many people in the surrounding area had left their houses and had started moving into the fields nearby as soon as they had heard the gunshots fired by the LTTE cadres. By the roadside, just near the poster, was a house belonging to a daily wage earner who worked in the fields to eke out a modest living. The back entrance facing the road was covered with a metal sheet. This was kicked open by the army who charged in and went

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round the house to the front entrance where on the verandah were Grace Jenna (21) 8 months pregnant, her son Nicholas Surendrakumar (2) and Rita Kumuthini (13) crouched under a table in a corner. All three were killed on the spot. Rosemary who had covered away in a corner and warded off bullets from entering her head, received injuries on her upper arm, forehead and buttocks. Several others received injuries while trying to get to the neighbouring house. Grace Malar K 10) & Amirthansyagam (20) received gun shots on the hand. Anton Jeevanayagam (23), brother of the deceased woman, was also wounded. Their father: a daily wage earner who already had a disabled arm, was wounded on the leg. Anton Jeevanayagam and he were apparently the two bread winners of the family. Hunger and fear lurked in the eyes of these simple country folk who surveyed us with suspicion. There is a lot of talk about relief and compensation now that elections are around the corner, but they would have to wait and see whether it all materialises once the elections are over.

The lady staying in the house belonging to Mr. Singarayer said that she was just dozing off when she heard shots being fired and before they could decide which way to run the army had entered the house. Jenoo (18), student of St. Henry's College Illavalal who was sleeping in one of the bedrooms near the hall was dragged out and amidst screams of protest and was taken away. In the evening he was found near the house, shot on both legs and stomach. Jenoo has since recovered and is attending school. The owner of the house was asked to bring the parcel of leaflets and was taken to the camp under duress. The lady too received blows from the army. Houses along Keerimalai towards Villan were ransacked by the army, who broke into them and smashed up T.V. sets and other valuable articles.

1.2 Incident at Jaffna Hindu: 26th January 1989

On the morning of 26th January, the LTTE is said to have attacked IPKF men in Jaffna town and the ENDLF at Kottady. Two Indian soldiers were reportedly killed and an ENDLF van burnt. A chase was given. After firing at the pursuers at Pommaiveli, the LTTE dispersed in various directions.

The Vice Principal of the school; a short jolly sort of man, set off on his usual rounds, cane in hand, shortly after the drink interval. The time was about 11.15 A.M. This school had been his home as his head turned grey over the decades. The keen sportsman that he was, he looked forward to spending his afternoons with the boys on the sports field after late lunch and a snooze. The school had been founded by the Hindu Board on the British Public School model. The familiar rooms and corridors he now paced were once trodden by such indomitable Victorians as Nevins Selvadurai, and had faced several vicissitudes in his own lifetime. The school had been a refugee camp during the Indian army's October 1987 operation. Many ordinary people were grateful to him, to the Principal and to other members of the staff, for their unremitting hospitality during those difficult days. For— nearly a century, his school had produced, besides numerous professionals, youth leaders and public men of all hues from the Youth Congress of the 1920's, which was inspired by the Indian National Congress, to militant leaders of today. He could recall the time of the youth insurgency of 1971 when he was stopped by the Ceylon Navy, while carrying food cooked at his house for four boarders from the East who were unable to get home. A curfew was on at that time. After a brief inquiry, he was issued with a curfew pass and they subsequently arranged to take the boys home. One of those boys is now the Finance Minister in the EPRLF led provincial government. It counts amongst its alumni, an MP from the EPRLF as well as the late Mr. Thileepan from the LTTE. It is this school that is being branded a 'Tiger' school by today's military authorities.

The Vice Principal was proud of his school's discipline and its high academic standards. The old philosophy, that 'a few timely well aimed cuts on the back, were a beneficent admonition against

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more costly indiscretions in later life,' still had its admirers. As his cane swayed' to the motion of his gait, he may have been dimly aware that he was following a very old tradition. Mr. Orator Subramaniam, an eminent educationist and Youth Congress figure, fondly recalls his schooldays 75 years ago, when the Principal, Nevins Selvadurai, used to follow the same routine. The venerable figure would sometimes stride out of the school premises to the nearby tea kiosks, and the loiterers would left in no doubt about the Principal's dexterity with the cane. Schoolboys playing truant from .neighbouring schools too would suffer the same fate as their hapless mates from Jaffna Hindu.

The Vice Principal's reverie was broken by the sound of a shot. From upstairs, where he was, he immediately looked onto KKS Rd. and saw people and traffic rushing northwards from town. He took the gunshot to have come from somewhere near Vaideeswara College. This signalled trouble in town which was south of the college. Shortly afterwards he heard two, more shots which sounded pretty close. Sensing trouble, the Vice-Principal went into action. He warned those in the Art class and the Library upstairs, to keep their heads down. He then ran. downstairs anti warned those in the science 'laboratory and in the class—rooms adjoining the road to get down if any further noise was heard. When going towards his office, he met some teachers who were unaware of the firing noises. He advised them not to be out unnecessarily and took them into his office to help him with the timetable.

Mr. Mahesan was a retired teacher from the school, who was on his way back after Visiting a former colleague in Ilavalay, when he met another retired colleague, Mr. Nagalingan, near the Jaffna Hindu junction. Mi.Nagaingam was going in the opposite direction. The two of them thought it a happy co—incidence and went into the old alma mater to catch up with each other over tea in the tuck shop.

Shortly after 12.00 noon, the Vice Principal was startled out of his office by a loud racket. He saw a gunman standing on the steps of the. building opposite and firing with his automatic into the corridor' linking the tiass rooms in that building. He then shouted, "My god, stop, those inside are our teachers and students." The gunman looked at him and said, "We will see about you later".

Just then an IPKF vehicle arrived at the main gate, a short distance away. The Vice Principal spotted an officer and shouted at him, pointing to the gunman, "He is shooting at our teachers and students'. The officer ordered:" Stop firing". They came to know later that the officer was from the railway station camp. The gunman was from a party of about 8 persons from the EPRLF, who with the IPKF party were in pursuit of 3 persons , one tarrying an automatic and two other limping from wounds.- They charged that these persons from the LITE had entered the school through the main gate and were hiding there.*

When the older was given; the firing ceased and most of those who came dispersed to search the school. The Principal, who had also been in his office the Vice—Principal, Mr. Mahesan and som3 others went into the corridor to see what had happened. They were followed by the same gunman and some IPKF soldiers. Three teachers who had received gunshots were lying on the floor, one of whom said that they needed medical attention. Mr. Mahesan remonstrated with the gunmen, who proceeded to belabour him with a rod. The Vice Principal protested and the gunman hit him with the butt on the loi4r part of his skull at the back. The gunman then raised his gun as if to shoot him. Immediately, an Indian soldier put his boot to his back and pushed him into a class—room, where he joined the Principal and some others. On looking back over the events, the Vice Principal is convinced that this -act saved his life.

It was the discovered that Mr Shanmugalingam, the teacher in the corridor lying closest to the outside entrance had died. A little later, they came outside and saw the officer coming their way. When they told him that there were wounded who had to be taken to hospital, the officer asked them to get a vehicle. When the Vice Principal made to go, the gunman moved threateningly. The Vice—Principal appealed to the officer, who told him to ignore the gunman and proceeded to lead him by the hand.

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Other soldiers stopped a vehicle and the two wounded were taken away.

Shortly after the shooting; a gunman came upstairs and: asked everyone in the library to go down. While going downstairs, the gunman asked a senior staff member whether the person killed was a teacher. The staff member said that, he did not know anything and he was going for the first time. The young man sat on the stairs pensively, letting his chin drop on his fist. The staff member asked if he could go back to close the library and then return. "There is no need", replied the young man worriedly, "we are the only ones about".

Several teachers and students were assaulted during the search. According to teachers, the two EPRLF men who went to search the library were decent and concerned, and apologised later. But the conduct of about four of them had been atrocious. They thought that the IPKF party had acted creditably.

They added that the school had come under unwarranted suspicion; and that for some time, they have had the feeling that some of the groups opposed to the LTTE have been waiting for a chance to come in and let go. A few days back, two boys at cricket practice had been assaulted by gunmen hovering near the premises. A senior teacher said that had the IPKF arrived 3 minutes earlier, nothing would have happened. had they arrived 3 minutes later, the scene would have been unthinkable, He added that the gunman who fired at the teachers could not have been mistaken about what he was doing. The victims were waving their books and shouting 'we are teachers'.

The senior teacher added that a visit paid by a delegation of the staff to the Town Commandant's office was a disconcerting experience. There was little in the way of concern or sympathy for what had happened. Nor was the discussion very relevant to the future of the school. They were treated to a homily along these lines: to be determined to hold the general elections on the 15th of February. We have flushed out the Tigers from their hideouts. But some people are sheltering them and are giving them food. From the outskirts, they come into town, shoot at our boys and run away. When our soldiers return the fire, innocent people suffer. As long as people harbour the Tigers, incidents like this will happen. If you see Tigers, ask them to go to the jungles and join the others.

This has become more or less the official line. Another example of the IPKF's sensitivity was given by a retired professional end NGO official, who dealt with numerous affected persons. He was trying to put across to the leading Indian military official in this country the heaviness he felt in his heart, shortly after a relative had been killed. In concluding, he cited several Indian leaders who were long admired here. The military man replied sternly; "You have mentioned nearly all the Indian leaders that one could think of except Rajiv Gandhi. He has done so much for the Tamils"

Both the students and the staff of Jaffna Hindu are yet to recover from the trauma. Several staff members avoid going into town, because they are afraid. At several encounters between the IPKF and members of the school, the latter have been referred to as members of a Tiger institution. According to the school authorities the IPKF Major at the nearby camp has tried to be helpful and encouraging, as was the officer from the railway station. The former promised that he would do his best to prevent a recurrence and wanted the school to resume normal activities. But, the parents are afraid to allow their children to use the sports field. The school is the only one in Jaffna not to have begun its cricketing season. Rs.25,000/— worth of sports goods have been purchased and dumped.

Mr. Shanmugalingam who was killed, was said to be quiet men with no political links, and an excellent teacher.

2. Incidents At University of Jaffna: 1st And 2nd February.

On the 1st of February at about 5.30 r.n.. 2 IPKF vehicles commanded by the Major from the Thirunelvely came went past the University entrance towards Kaladdy, west wards. On seeing a youth carrying a parcel coming towards the University road along Coomarasamy road, the second vehicle stopped and called the boy. The boy immediately ran through the main entrance of the University, across the playground diagonally towards the library and found his way out through the back entrance of the University on the northern perimeter. At the time there were about 20 students in the football grounds about to begin playing. Other students as well as security guards were about the place after their days work was done. The soldiers opened fire from outside the gate and followed in pursuit, still firm— from the main entrance. Bullets went in all directions. That the firing was random is attested by the fact that bullet marks were found on the gate, security booth, security office and other buildings. Some bullets went through the windows of the library where over a 100 students were present The bullets covered a range of 120m. The students in the football grounds promptly fell flat. Four students on the main thoroughfare 73 m. from the entrance felt bullets while past them. Umashankar one of them, was injured in the thigh. The soldiers ran across the football field after their quarry, hitting the players, towards the library. Once they had reached the library a lecturer in mathematics came with his hands up and talked with the commanding officer. Checks were conducted on students in the library and the army was seen out around 6.30p.m. Soldiers left picking up tee empty shells as they went. One of the shells found later was that of a Dum-Dum bullet which explodes upon entry. One of the members accompanying the army was identified as Jappan formerly a member of the LTTE and now believed to be with another movement. During the Operation, about 15 students were taken out, made to lie down on Ramanathan Road and trampled.

2nd February

At general body meeting of the students was celled at 9.03 a.m. to discuss the shooting and to decide on a form of protest A meeting of the action committee comprising of all academic staff, employees and student's unions was fixed for 10.00 a.m The student leadership called for a sit-in protest inside the University. Some members urged a strong a protest in the form of a peaceful roadblock. It was said by -one student leader that if the-re were not a sufficient number of students, who were willing to go to the function, they would decide on a sit-in but if there were a sufficient number of students, a roadblock could be considered. The student leaders then left for the action committee meeting and told the committee that t they had decided to have an hour a sit—in protect just outside the University entrance. Another representative of the medical faculty said that they had decided en a roadblock as a form of protest. Some of student leaders had gone to; get their :placards ready When the students came out of the Kailasapathy Auditorium most of them wanted to wait for the leaders before beginning the protest Other students were by this time moving towards the entrance. It must be mentioned that at no time was mood of the students confrontational. Once near the entrance, after 20 minutes some students present urged others to move towards Parameswara Junction. They believed that when they moved towards the junction the army would . meet them and they would explain their grievances to the army before getting back. That this was indeed the case was attested by the fact that, when two IPKF vehicles commanded by the Thirunelvely Major, responsible for the previous days actions came past the University towards Kalladdy there was no attempt made to stop them.The students on the road moved, aside and let them pass. Having passed the students the vehicles stopped and the major told the students in strong tones to get back to the University or else there would be trouble. The vehicles then turned and went along the Coomarasamy Road towards the South. More students including girls then joined the procession. The action committee members arrived on the scene 10 minutes of tar several students not to go on to the road. But it was too late to recall those who had left.

The procession went up to Palaly Road and the students consisting largely of female students were seated at the bend of the road where Paremshwara Road meets Palaly Road. Within a few minutes the same Major's party came along Palaly Road from the South and called the student leaders to come forward. Soon, a second year physical science student went to him and told him that the protest was against what had taken place the previous evening and that they had planned to have an hours peaceful demonstration and that since already 40 minutes had elapsed they would return to the University in an other 20 minutes. The Major for Thirunelvely district started abusing him and told him that another three minutes would be given for the party to disperse and if not he would not be responsible for the consequences. The student went back to consult his fellow students and then came forward and asked him to please explain the previous days incident to them. The Major shouted that the demonstrators should get back in 30 seconds. He personally assaulted Soori and his army personnel followed suit, beating up the students with their gun butts, hands and sticks including broomsticks from nearby shops. The students were now backing away fast. More army personnel came forward with pieces of firewoods, broomsticks etc. A senior student was stabbed and many others received slashes drawn with Gurkha knives. The students were about 100 yards away from the main camp. Stones were then hurled at the students by soldiers who came chasing after them. Some of the students picked up the stones and threw them back at the army. Four army personnel then positioned themselves 60 m away from the students one knelt down, two others were standing and the three of them opened fire at the crowd. There were no warning shots but bullets were fired from their guns, some upwards and others straight ahead into the crowd at the same time. The firing lasted about 5 seconds. Some students report having heard an officer issue the order "open fire".

Twelve fell victim to the gun shots of which two succumbed to injuries later on at the hospital. These who died later were first found lying 27 m away from the main entrance. They bled for nearly 5 minutes. T.Sathiyenthira (22), Jaffna, 1st year in Medicine died of a bullet piercing through his back and entering his heart. S. Jeganathan (23), Purhukudiyireppu, 1st year in physical science died of injuries in the head. 8 others injured had reportedly received gun shots above knee. Two hours later members of the C.V.F(Civil Volunteer Force) and the IPKF went along the lanes in the vicinity of the campus and threatened the lives of those who would continue to house University students. The body of T.Sathiyenthira was brought to the University at 1.30 p.m. the following day and taken to his house followed by a silent procession of students and staff members.

It was felt that an avoidance of rhetorical gestures would best revere the occasion, and demonstrate that we were capable of honouring our dead with discipline and dignity.

After being brought to the University at the same time as that Sathiyenthira, the body of S. Jeganathan was taken to Mullaitivu by hearse, accompanied by members of the university travelling in a route bus the next morning.

Note: This account of the events was compiled after interviewing a large number of students, staff, officers of the university security, local residents and shopkeepers; who related what they had witnessed.

Note on the killing of University Students (2nd February)

There are several aspects to this event that pertain to the continuing difficulties of this community in its struggle to establish more participant. democratic way of life.

Over several sessions and over several hours of hard talking the University did establish an Action Committee comprising senior representatives of all staff, student and employees unions, together with

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serious university officials, including the Vice-Chancellor. This body grew out of the process of negotiation an end to a former crisis involving students and non-academic staff. To accomplish such a task in a community brought to the threshold of disintegration requires much effort, imagination and goodwill. To make such a body, work army be even harder.

To the present generation of students elected student unions are n n concept, after these had been of officially banned from 85-88. Again securing votes is very different from representing student's interests responsibly, without becoming cornered by one becoming partisan or the other. This is a process that -requires continuous interaction with responsible and concerned members of the staff. In our experience, the student leadership had been responsible and moderate. Despite confusion and calls for a stronger form of protest, a consensus was secured to protest near the university entrance The Action Committee decided that all unions would join the protest.

These structures are nascent in their functioning and technical lapses could be pointed to in retrospect. The gravity of the situation was not anticipated because students had been on peaceful demonstrations earlier without having problems with the IPKF.

Several occurrences were unforeseen. After the student meeting the student leadership went to attend to other tasks, such as placards bearing slogans and the Action Committee meeting Several students wanted to await the leadership to begin the protest, but variety of forces wanted it to begin immediately. Some would have been simply high spirited. Some may have simply wanted to discredit the new elected leadership and there may have even been agitators with deeper political motives. Once the protests began the same combination of forces would have urged a section of the students to go towards Play Road, against the counsel of the larger body.

Again, had the Action committee meeting been fixed earlier instead at 10.00 am or if the Action committee had joined the protestors just 10 minutes earlier, the situation would have been control. Even after the students had started marching towards Parameswara Junction, their conduct towards the IPKF

Was moderate and conciliatory. When the IPKF party under a major approached them, a student had explained to the Major that the protest will be over in 21 minutes. Notwithstanding the Major's rude reply, the student again, a second time, pleaded with the Major to address the students while soldiers assaulted them. The Major's approach consisted of arrogant abuse and, no doubt, his men took the cue from him.

If the IPKF was trying to restore a political process and was even a little sensitive to the approach of elections where it wanted a certain pro-Indian groups to win, there should have been some attempt to brief the officers to alter their conduct. Many; incidents in recent times suggest that the IPKF's attitude is one of contempt for the people and their approach is one of blunt force with an attempt to immediate. Had the manor politely told the students, that the had orders to clear the road and had negotiated for the students to leave a earlier time, there would have been no incident. When asking civilians to call at an IPKF camp for a chat, messages may come in very Grammatical English: "So and

so wants to see you at such and such a time at such and such a place. You are advised to stick to the times". When such officers deal with students, the resulting situation is bound to be explosive as it turned out. Had officer been polite in the first instance, the students may have left. For young persons, the natural reaction to his hectoring and abuse, would have been: " Who is he to order us about in our country?".

Just after 5.00 p.m. on the evening of the incident, Brigadier Kahlon, the Town Commandant came to the University with Brigadier Gill (Operations) and Colonel Sashikumar (Gurkha Regiment). The initial thrust of Brigadier Kahlon was to try to floor us: It was your fault. You should have

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telephoned me at the first incident. An army camp is not the place to protest. A soldier is only trained to do one thing, which is to shoot. Your students surrounded the army camp. Of course soldiers will shoot when a crowd comes near them. Who will guarantee that the students will not grab the guns from -the soldiers and shoot at them? etc.

The student who had spoken to the Major then gave the version of the story, which we have presented after checking and rechecking. This was not challenged by the military officials who at times went as far as to say that they accepted it.

It was clear that the students had not surrounded any army camp. They had been mainly on a public thoroughfare north of the Parameshwara Junction camp and separated from it by a row of shop houses. The students were not fired upon with automatic when they moved towards the army, but when they were in full and sullen retreat from the junction towards the University, after being assaulted and had gone 50 yards from the junction. One of the students killed was near the University about 80 yards away. Moreover the students had been fired upon by soldiers who had followed in pursuit.

The key questions were dodged by the officers. Why were warning shots' not tried? Why was not teargas tried? Did the soldiers fire upon being ordered to do so? One answer given was that soldiers were only trained to shoot and that firing of teargas was a police affair.

A senior IPKF official confided privately that he disagreed with the manner in which the affair was handled and that the IPKF was equipped with a teargas unit. Perhaps they had gone by a handbook on crowd control and had made the standard procurements. But in a general situation where firing and assault are resorted to all too readily it is hardly surprising that officers would be mentally conditioned to think of things like teargas as superfluous nuisance.

When asked about the shooting of school teachers at Jaffna Hindu College one of whom was killed, when an LTTE cadre was pursued into the school on 25th January; a reply was: " I have told the school principal several times to keep the gate closed."

It was pointed out that the IPKF treated the civilians as though they were trained at a military academy, conducting themselves according to very stringent norms; while no questions were raised about whether there were corresponding rules for the IPKF, and whether normal military rules were enforced.

The Town Commandant followed his usual tactic of being conciliatory after being tough. Arrangements were agreed upon for the conduct of funerals. He also agreed not to disallow the publication in the press of a statement by the University. One assurance given was that they would do their homework.

The following morning a delegation from the University met Major General Sardeshbande on invitation. There was no hint of remorse. Instead there was a lecture on the psychology of a soldier. This was followed by a story that the LTTE had sent letters to members of the IPKF in Tamil Nadu, threatening to kill them and rape their wives. To those in delegation, it was clear that there was a refusal to listen, to understand and to take measures of reform. They were up against a force whose conduct has less to do with psychology than with arrogance.

It must be said that these talks led to some limited accommodation on the matter of funeral arrangements and on fear spread amongst students after some landlords were warned by soldiers not to keep students. The IPKF's message was:

'We will help you with problems pertaining to the running of the University. You do your job inside,

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and let us do ours outside.”

The consensus within the University is that it did not wish, at any cost, to separate itself from the community of which it is part, and from which it draw strength and legitimacy. It could not wish to be in ivory tower enjoying dubious patronage.

2.1 The Town Commandant's Office

It retrospect one may feel that the tragedy could have been avoided if the Town Commandant had been contacted soon after the first shooting incident in the evening of 1st February. This was said so by the Town Commandant, who also added that he came into the picture only after the killings had occurred. If this was a lapse, amongst many other incidental factors which contributed to the tragedy, it owed much to the diffidence that has grown upon the civilian population over months of experience in dealing with the IPKF. Though under a senior Brigadier, the Town Commandant's office has come to be seen at best to be well—meaning, but only of limited effectiveness.

One would have expected that the IPKF would routinely keep its own Town Commandant informed of serious incidents, such as the firing in the University on 1st February. But this does not seem to be case. When the Town Commandant's office was informed of the disappearance of Mrs. Sangaralingam and her 3 daughters after being, retained by troops from the 6th Guard Unit, under an officer named Ramanujam, on 19th November 1987; their reaction was that they had no jurisdiction over the matter since this elite unit had moved to Vavuniya.

When a large number of LTTE sympathisers started getting killed from October 1988, sources from the Town Commandant's office indicated that they were helpless in the matter, as the initiative was now with operations, rather than with the civil section. Up to the middle of last year the University had approached the Town Commandant's office on a number of occasions,-including one where a number of student's were detained and beaten, and help was duly rendered.. But the current practice when students were detained, is for University officials to go direct to the camp concerned, rather than telephone the Town Commandant's office. The impression that grew was one of inter—force rivalry in the process of which the Town Commandant' s office had lost authority. Confidence building is a two way process.

2.2 The Media

On the evening of the incident, the BBC quoted the Indian embassy in Colombo to say that the IPKF had opened fire when the students rioted, and that two students died. All India Radio said the following morning that two students were shot dead by unidentified persons. The AIR said in the afternoon that two hard core LTTE men were shot dead at the University by the IPKF. Even if there was no intention to lie, it is easy to believe that the Indian Embassy, the AIR and the Prime minister of India are no better informed than the Town Commandant in Jaffna.

3. The Problems of The Young

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In a variety of ways the problems of this country centre around the problems of the young. This is so painfully true in the north and south of this country. The government's approach in the South has been described as one of systematic warfare against the young. The situation in the North, though lesser in extent, has qualitative similarities to the situation in the South. While the hideous extent of the brutality in the South has surfaced in the press, it is less well-known that such things also happen in the North. The hatred between rival Tamil militant groups has grown to such an extent, that at times simple killing was considered inadequate. There have been cases of killing after painful prolonged torture and sometimes of dismembering of limbs one by one before the victim dies. The rival forces involved in such acts are sons of the same soil, sharing common origins and are in many cases from one family. One thing common between the North and the South is that the force representing legal authority articulates the interests of outsiders who cannot share the tragedy of thousands of bereaved families or understand their feelings. The armed forces operating in the South, represent predominantly the ruling Colombo based elite. The counter—insurgency forces in the North—East are ultimately subject to Indian interests. It is also notable that the security apparatus now operating in the South was built up to prosecute a campaign against the Tamil youth of the North—East are ultimately subject to Indian interests. One does feel on reflection, that the history of this country would have been very different if a healthy federal form of government had been in place to allow regions to sort out their own problems, long before these became chronic.

When an outsider views these developments, they are seen as irritations to be got out of the way as expeditiously as possible. There is little effort to understand the people concerned, accompanied by impatience with anything that does not promise immediate results. This is in essence the military approach.

Though the schools and the university have been, perhaps just, functioning in the North, almost every other incident is a reminder of how dangerous it is to be young. This is clear from our reports. (See incidents at St. Patrick's, Jaffna Hindu, Pandeterupu and the University).

some of today's problems go back to the precipitate growth of the militancy after July 1983. Up to this time those who joined the militancy had been fairly mature persons. When India started pouring money and training facilities into the Tamil militancy, several hundreds of school children ran away in groups to join one militant faction or the other. From Hartley College Pt. Pedro, a school renowned for high academic standards, an entire class, many of them with good A. Level grades, joined the TELO This was a period when principals, educationists and parents lost control. The resentment against the Sri Lankan state for the July 1983 anti-Tamil program and the subsequent repression was such that the militant phenomenon had general public approval, and India's role was seen as benevolent. The LTTE itself received material and propaganda support from India right up to July 1987.

Divisions between militant groups can be traced back to divisions within the Tamil community itself. Any sound political process should have been cited at healing these divisions. The manner in which India used these divisions had the opposite effect. When the LTTE refused to play ball, the other groups which had real grievances against the LTTE used to crack down on the process of brother being turned against brother reached unprecedented heights.

The LTTE's bigotry has much to do with its own weak position today and with trapping members of other groups who were equally dedicated into playing a role subservient to the Indian army. At the same time its image of uncompromising suicidal valour and the resentment created the conduct of India, have tended to strengthen the LTTE's a reputation as a patriotic force, despite the fact that its

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own conduct and methods of terror have forced the Tamils more firmly into Indian hands. The reality today is that every institution which deals with the young — educational institutions, schools and factories

are bound to have at least a smattering of supporters of the LTTE, besides supporters of other groups feuding with the LTTE. Such institutions have, both the opportunity and challenge, to function as places of reconciliation that is the key to any democratic process.

The numerous incidents recorded by us, show that this is not how the IPKF sees the problems of youth. India does not feel a moral responsibility towards the cruel fate of the young of all militant factions that its involvement brought into arms. In India's military approach it is dangerous for a young person to be found near an incident. A young person, who gets picked up and is later found dead or disappears, is just an awkward statistic in pragmatic calculations made in Delhi.

The incidents at St. Patricks (26.11.88), Jaffna Hindu (26.01.89) and the University of *Jaffna* (1 & 2 Feb. 89) demonstrate the paranoid attitude of a military farce towards institutions dealing with the young. In the last two instances, pursued LTTE militants sought cover by running into the institutions. When on 10 February, soldiers in pursuit of one youth opened fire at random from the main entrance of the university, it reflected the impact on a soldier's mind of suddenly being confronted with several young men while in a mood of pursuit. One could hardly imagine what would have happened if there had been the slightest provocation from anyone. The manner in which the following day's protest was handled by the IPKF has all the hallmarks of a war on the young. Despite IPKF calls to forget the past, these events are representative of the repetitive character of IPKF operations from October 1987, and a philosophy of contempt for the local civilian population.

No doubt, the IPKF gets regular information of LTTE influence and sometimes even of activity within institutions that deal with the young. Quite often when a young person is detained and the authorities from the institution have to deal with the IPKF; intimidatory thrusts are made, accusing the institution of harbouring the LTTE. There is little or no appreciation by India of the vast problems of such institutions, for which India must bear some responsibility. The tendency is for such institutions to be cowed into an all round passivity, where they may once again give up trying to deal with the key problem of reconciliation and returning the young to normal living. In the resulting drift serious misunderstandings tend to develop. Not infrequently, IPKF officers use the expression 'Golden Temple' in connection with such institutions. The fate of Jude Zachearias, the organist at the Cathedral at St. Patrick's, is one tragic result of such a mentality.

Such an approach, by categorising: the young as one uniform mass, fails to recognise the large variety of character and opinion as in any other community. It also denies then a history₁ a history in which the noble is mixed with the ignoble — like in any other time and place. Those with set prejudices may do well to remember, that in 1906, senior students at Jaffna Hindu were amongst those intimidated by the LTTE for joining the university students in protesting the disappearance of Vijitharan. The same thing happened to students from other schools. The University of Jaffna did produce several LTTE leaders in the early 1980's — nearly all of whom, incidentally, left in disillusionment or died. The university is also, the place where students gave the lead in questioning human rights violations by militant groups. To intervene in such a situation without understanding, and without reference to morality or political wisdom, can only spell long term chaos, which will not be just confined to this region.

3.2 Arms And The Young

It is often contended that the strength of an insurgent movement is positively related to the repression

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to which the population is subject. While this is generally true, in the Tamil context, at least from the mid—80's, the relation between repression and an individual deciding to take up arms is often an indirect phenomenon mediated by so many unconnected factors. This is particularly so because those joining the insurgency at this time are mainly boys in their early teens.

Once India became simultaneously the patron of a number of warring militant groups under the supervision of Indian agencies, military capacity increased by bounds at the cost of political sagacity. By the end of 1985 disillusionment had crept in, although repression by the Sri Lankan state remained a vivid reality. By then, many of the mature militants started leaving and the age of the child warrior had begun. The problem was exacerbated when the LTTE had cracked down on other militant groups and the number of militants opposing Sri Lanka forces diminished sharply. The articulate sections of society were not sensitive to this phenomenon as the children affected were mainly from the poorer classes.

What happens at present is that the IPKF's conduct with the civilian population creates an atmosphere of resentment. Elders in conversation may air their anger by saying that they can now understand why the LTTE is right or what they may do had they been younger. At places where the young gather, they are exposed to propaganda calculated to discredit the older folk as passive and cowardly. The children who get pushed into carrying arms are usually from poorer homes and from homes where the child—parent relationship is strained. Lost children who are affected have no inkling about the values involved or a cause. We give below some examples, which may, at least intuitively, serve to explain what is involved.

N is a boy of 15, eldest in family of 9 children, from Vadarmaratchi, who are all very intelligent. The father is a farmer and the mother is a very effective housewife. N was doing well at school, particularly in Mathematics. But the father was not *very* pleased with him and was sometimes harsh towards him. The reason was that his second son, while good at school, was both an instinctive and expert farmer on whom the father could rely; but N had no affinity towards farming.

Soon after the IPKF's mass beating campaign on 1st June 1983, after the LTTE shot dead two soldiers who were shopping, and during the aftermath, the LTTE recruited many schoolboys. He told a lady in the neighbourhood who was affectionate towards him, that he wished to join the 'Iyakkam' (the LTTE). He could give no reason and only kept repeating that two boys in his class had run away to join the LTTE and that he and some others had thought of following them. The lady told him that if he wished to do some good to his community, he should first study and become a steady man. Fidgeting with his fingers and twisting his body in a nervous manner, N replied softly that it had nothing to do with the community. He 'just' (summa) thought of going.

It was fortunate that N was dissuaded from going. Had done so, he may have spent some months distributing notices and running minor errands. He may then have been given a pistol and asked to assassinate someone. Then there would be no turning back. The ordinary shy and pleasant boy seeking maternal comfort from the lady may have become a seasoned murderer. In a community where leaders have been shy to emphasise values and live by them, it is not too shocking to hear a middle—class boy from a leading school remark: "It has been rather dull these last few months. It is about time I landed someone through the skull".

K was 16 whose father was disabled and his mother had become highly strung and had quarrelled with most of her neighbours. In the early *part* of 1987, shortly before the Sri Lankan army's "Operation Liberation", **K** used to frequently leave home to associate with LTTE sentries. It was a big day for him when he was allowed to handle an AK 47 and hear a voice at the other end of the walkie—talkie. His great ambition was that he would one day appear in one of those larger than life

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posters on cardboard, similar to cinema advertisements, commemorating the militant dead.

R (17) was a locally trained member of the LITE in Vavuniya. He was sent off to Jaffna when life became hot after the redeployment of the TELO. His relatives tried to find him a job to rehabilitate him. He lost several of them because he found the new discipline difficult to bear. He is now with a kindly building contractor who lets him come to work when he chooses and pays him accordingly. When asked why his group decimated the TELO, a fellow Tamil group, R could only say: “if our leadership says someone is our enemy, he is our enemy; and we will go for him. That is all.”

The life of a child warrior today is far more hazardous than it had ever been. Their lenders too are boys in their teens. For several of them, swallowing a cyanide capsule may be their first and their last military operation. They do of course receive advice, support and perhaps instructions from older persons who have better cover and are better able to look after themselves. For the child—warriors rood is hard to come by and cover is practically non—existent. Their stubbornness and their anger against all others may sound irrational. Given the IPKF's present policy, they are trapped whichever way they go. The golden opportunity of rehabilitation promised by the soon after the October 1987 offensive never carried conviction. Several youths who were released from IPKF custody were later assassinated. These boys cannot simply forget the whole thing and go back to their homes, for amongst other reasons, many of their homes are watched. Such is the tragedy that underpins the brazenness and subordinates of today's child— warriors.

Nor are things any better for the young of other militant groups used henchmen by the IPKF in its dirty war. They too cannot go back to homes from which they were dragged out by a variety of inducements and pressures not least from the LTTE. They too are equally trapped, while many of them feel the humiliation keenly.

Four miserable looking young boys from the Killinochchi district arrived recently at the Jaffna Kachcheri with their haversacks. There was no mistaking who they were. Their knowledge of Jaffna was scanty. They explained to an Indian officer that they had come to join the Citizens' Volunteer Force (CVF). The officer in turn tries to show the way to Hotel Ashok. These boys looked nervous and did not move. A civilian who was summoned to explain to them in Tamil, told the officer after speaking to them, that they seemed to need transport as they were afraid of falling into LTTE hands on the way. The officer replied indignantly: “They are civilians” They can move around like other civilians. He one is shooting at you”. This amongst many other incidents carries the message that it is a matter of indifference to India whether our boys lived, died or ended up on the scrap heap. The EROS had just done well in the Parliamentary general elections. Perhaps, it was nearing time for someone else to receive India's Midas touch.

3.3 The Militant Phenomenon Today

It is important to keen in mind that the responses *described* are part of the present phase of a larger phenomenon — all connected with general repression. In the first phase up to 1985, the militancy was unquestioned and recruitment was fairly independent of social divisions. Then came the second phase of internal killings, disillusionment and the withdrawal of the more mature and articulate. These dissidents who have been through the mill are recognised by militant groups as being amongst the most potent critics of militant politics, and are sometimes dealt with harshly. The second phase culminated with “*Oparation Liberation*” in June 1987 leaving in the public mind grave doubts and widespread disenchantment with militant politics. It had reached its logical culmination, where there was no pretence about democracy or egalitarian values. Its appeal was religious, based on the supreme leader and an elysium or exclusive to departed members of the group. The disillusionment

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was so complete that Vadamaratchi proved barren ground for militant recruits until the IPKF provoked resentment with its mass beating campaigns and shootings from June 1988.

Given the traditionally pro—Indian sentiments or the Tamils and the conduct of the Sri Lankan state, Indian social and economic. Penetration of the Tamil areas may have proved very acceptable, but for the conduct of the IPKF from October 1987. Even today, amongst the social elite and the political groupings, the greater tendency is to accept Indian patronage with some token protest, as witnessed by the number of appeals still going in hone to Messers Dixit & Rajiv Gandhi. But amongst the young who feel the harshness of India's military approach and the social humiliation most keenly, and who look for a leadership, there is likely to result a natural affinity for the LTTE, as the only force that seems to offer an alternative This a is because of the ineffectiveness and lad: of principle a they see in all other political tendencies and centres of authority. Particularly in rural areas where not even the individual alternative of going abroad exists, the dedication of recruits can be vary strong. This is the third phase.

Recruitment free the nature and educates is today a minority phenomenon. Even when committed to the LTTE in some way, their cultivated intelligence is such that they cannot help having doubts about the LTTE's politics. They would often play a role in recruiting and pepping up child—warriors. But when they see trouble, they are quite likely to take the alternative of going abroad as many have indeed done.

4. Indian Perspectives

When one discusses there problems with members of the Indian intelligentsia, one often comes across such a vastly different way of looking at the problem:

You are a fractured community. What else do you expect? You have so many militant groups. That was your fault" "The IPKF is a blunt instrument. They are an army of frightened men, daily taking casualties. Some of those soldiers have told us that after every passing night, they greet the morning with amazement at being alive. You have few other options. 'There was a time when you were all praising India for its support for the militant groups. Why are you then complaining now?' 'India must counter attempts at destabilisation by interested foreign powers"

Perhaps, most significantly, such an outlook. lacks a moral standpoint. If popular feeling is the measure of justification *popular* feeling in the absence of values is both dangerous and volatile, as will as subject to much manipulation. It is also double edged, as seen by India s setbacks after the initial welcome. It is far more difficult to detect from here, attempts by foreign powers to destabilise India, than to see the conspicuously destabilising character of India's conduct this country.

When one looks at the whole picture India's role cannot be described as simple benevolence. India is so powerful and has so many options, that it can shrug off mistakes which are irreversibly damaging for others. India is in a position to use blunders by others, while its own can be covered up. It can pick up militant groups and drop them. It can influence matters in elections₁ so that even a so—called protest vote cannot go wrong for India. It can use and thereby exacerbate enmities in our society, and then dismiss it as our problem.

Its powerful media can raise Indian emotions on the Tamil issue and then switch them off. This can be seen in the sharp change of policy after October 1987 by Indian radio & television, and even a large number of Indian academics, journalists and the prestigious Madras Hindu which earlier took a different line. The muted response to Indian actions by the international media is also significant. here

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again Indian journalists who would not rock the boat, have sizeable influence. While these games are played by career minded persons in high places, a large number of young men and women, and sizeable sections of the community continue to end up on dunghill.

As fellow beings, Indian casualties are certainly a matter *for* concern. We have always maintained, as all our evidence suggests, that the Indian army is by no means being helpful to itself by using methods where innocent people suffer, and by such undisciplined conduct in times of enter, where not even pregnant women, young mothers and toddlers are spared. (see incidents at Udupiddy and Pandeterupvu in this report, *where* such parsons were shot at practically point— blank range.)

Options For The Community

For the foreseeable future, institutions dealing with the young will have to lead a tenuous existence, managing several crises and catering for many disturbed and even deranged youths. Their main thrust will have to be in the moral sphere, which can only be achieved by creating trust and loyalty within the institution, based on wholesome values. Those discharging responsibilities will have to demonstrate by courage and activity, that their values have practical content and represent a sound road to liberation. There have been many encouraging results, with some of the most unlikely persons opening up, when they feel that they could have trust and sympathy, rather than rejection -and betrayal.

These institutions will also have to examine their past for causes of their present difficulties. Today it has become fatalistically acceptable to watch and do nothing while boys in armies die one by one, giving their lives not to liberate, but to enslave. Hardly any leaders from our churches, educational establishments or trade unions, ever told them, when there was time, that their methods were suicidal for the community, assassinations were wrong or that killing Sinhalese civilians was wrong. There were rather those who would go up on platforms; and in flights of oratory, erect on such tragic and fragile material as child warriors, edifices of Tamil national symbolism reaching into aerie regions. They would then praise their leaders; whose sense of pride and honour was such that, to safeguard these, they thought it fitting to heap humiliation and misery on everyone else.

If there is any measure of seriousness in anyone about liberating the community, far greater understanding should be shown towards these institutions and their independence respected. If these institutions fail, their leaders would have failed and those wishing to liberate the Tamils would have failed.

Vadamaratchi: A Sinking Feeling

The northern coastline of Vadamaratchi between Pt. Pedro and Valvettithurai has some remarkable features. It has agricultural villages (Thickham and Viyaparimoolai) interspersed between fishing villages (Chakkottai, Polli kandy etc.). At places you can see onion patches separated from the sea by the road, contain in a land strip 20 yards wide. This is a reflection of the rich and complex social fabric that underpins Vadamaratchi. Its interior is a *maze* of lanes and place names, no doubt music to the ears of the Vadamaratchi man, but bewildering to an outsider, leave alone a foreign army. It is a place awaiting its Thomas Hardy to write its Wessex tales — the impact of *modern developments on what is still a very traditional society*. *There is a 'Vadamaratchi identity — popularly thought of as industrious, stubborn, pugnacious and tribal, often to the point of failing to identify real interests. Things have moved very fast in the last six years and it would be hardly surprising if this common identity is subject to strains. One cannot fail to notice today the widening disparity in perceptions*

between PtPedro and Valvettithurai.

From the point where College road hits the coastal road, one could survey an enormous scene of destruction reminiscent of scenes from the world wars. The finishing touches are given by abandoned barbed wire, sand bags and sentry booths. This area once represented the educational hub of Vadamatchi, consisting of Hartley College and Methodist Girls High School, founded by pioneering Methodist missionaries. Being schools with very high standards enjoying an island-wide esteem, they did much to forge the Vadamatchi identity. Pupils topping class lists from all parts of Vadamatchi came to these schools to study and play. Several of the well known militant leaders of all factions are counted amongst the alumni of Hartley. This scene of destruction leads to some of the disturbing questions about the future of Vadamatchi, and in a wider context, that of the entire North—East. -

It is known that large sums of aid money for reconstruction will be forthcoming and in anticipation some of the big Engineering and Accounting firms are feeling their way towards setting up branches or subsidiaries in Jaffna. Having been a top school in the Mathematical disciplines; one would estimate that Hartley would have produced 600—1000 engineers alone in the last 30 years. If one asks how many professionals are left in Vadamatchi, one would hardly get beyond the fingers of one's hands. Even the rest of Jaffna hardly has the infrastructure to handle the kind of reconstruction required. Whenever the violence ends or fizzles out to a whimper, reconstruction is likely to begin with Colombo based or foreign firms coming in with professionals and labour from outside in a big way. Anyone who knows anything about contracts in this country will be in no doubt as to who gets the cream. Those left here are unlikely to have either the professional or the political muscle to articulate how and where the money is to be spent.

Except for the handful of doctors, there is little professional work for the few professionals left here. They, in the company of some public spirited retired men, are mainly involved in public welfare on a voluntary basis. By now they are tired men and women. Some of them had identified projects where living standards of communities can be improved with the expenditure of small sums of money — such as providing basic amenities for milk distribution. An engineer described the uphill struggle he faced in dealing with government departments. There was a time when the government's welfare machinery worked smoothly — particularly in Vadamatchi where there was commendable public spiritedness.

There are other conspicuous signs of the weakness of the whole society. Young men on the streets are relatively few. Women are urging young men to go away' even for paltry jobs in the Middle—East, in order that they may at least stay alive. Women are increasingly playing a leading role in the life of the community. Amongst the younger doctors, some of the women have become public figures because of their pluck in difficult situations. Women are increasingly in evidence in social work. Many of the homes are managed by women. For an area which would have produced over 200 doctors in the last 30 years, it would not have had a surgical unit if not for volunteers from Medicines Sans Frontiers. Whichever way one looks at it, Vadamatchi seems set for a poor deal.

A region which led the struggle for a separate state, may finish up without a semblance of self determination or even dignity.

How much dignity the people are given by either party to the conflict is evident from our reports. At the time of writing (early March), both the LTTE and the IPKF seem to be strengthening their numbers. It has become common practice for the IPKF to fire back with shells whenever fired upon. Since the LTTE attacks from civilian areas, the victims are almost always civilians. Chain vehicles fitted with cannon have been used in patrols along the coast road near Pt.Pedro. Civilians are living in

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fear of a repeat of 'Operation Liberation', with the difference that there may be nowhere to run. After the killings of two sisters at Udupidy, the question, 'will the women be spared?' is being widely asked.

Valvettithurai

The town of Valvettithurai paid a heavy price for its reputation as a centre of militancy. It produced some of the pioneer figures of the LTTE and TELO, groups which later turned to fratricide. It was bombarded from the sea in 1984, had a massacre in May 1985, just preceding the Anuradhapura massacre, and was barrel bombed 43 times during Operation Liberation. Many of its sons would describe its reputation as a home of smugglers and Tigers as sheer prejudice. They would point out that most of its citizens are ordinary people, leading ordinary lives as labourers, traders, fishermen and professionals.

The public interests of Valvettithurai are today represented by the doughty band of person comprising its citizens committee. That they do feel an obligation and concern for the LTTE is evident. They know the risks involved, particularly after the killing of Mr. Sivanandasundaram. The most vivid single incident of recent times was the assault and humiliation of about 300 persons, including staff and patients of Oorani Hospital (The details are given elsewhere in this report). Dr. Pathmalosini who is in charge at Oorani Hospital; said that 1 or 2 persons are treated for assault daily. The RDHS, Jaffna described the scene at the hospital after the January 19th attack as one after a major plane or train crash. The lady doctor who is not a native of Valvettithurai has been adopted by the town as a mark of gratitude. Having completed 4 years, she has no thought of moving. Ten days after the incident, she was summoned to the IPKF camp at Udupidy and was told that she was to be taken to Palaly for questioning. She stuck to the stand that she was answerable only through the RDHS, Jaffna. She was not taken to Palaly.

Members of the citizens committee related the recent ordeals of the townsfolk. During October 1988, Mr. Krishnakumar Kittu and several other disabled LTTE persons were brought from India and were handed over to the citizens' committees at Jaffna hospital without prior notice. This was regarded as being cruel besides being inconsiderate, since a campaign to assassinate LTTE sympathisers had got under way. These young men had nowhere to go. When asked, they expressed a wish to be taken to Valvettithurai. This was done, and the VVT committee found homes which volunteered to have them. They had regarded this a sacred obligation in view of the cause for which these boys had suffered and had been rendered defenceless.

Then came other problems. Citizens suspected of LTTE links were picked up and taken for torture. The standard treatment was for them to be hung upside down and beaten, as the victims jerked and rotated in the fashion of punch bags used in boxing practice. To escape the agony, the victims gave some names. These persons were in turn brought in, and it went on. Many people took to sleeping in houses of others to evade night callers. It did not take long before those homes that gave shelter to the disabled LTTE cadres came under harassment. Those taken for the treatment returned with prominent ring marks around their ankles, and it took a long time before proper blood circulation was restored.

The citizens were left with little choice, but to move the LTTE disabled into Oorani Hospital. They complain that the homes which sheltered these helpless persons were branded LTTE and no': the hospital and its staff are branded LTTE This now in part explain the rampage of 19th January.

The disabled LTTE cadres staying at Oorani are from various parts of the North—East. Though many of them have parents who would like to have them, they cannot go. Some of them have grave anxious faces and some of them smile. Their dilemma is faced by many young men of all factions, disabled or not.

Another complaint of the citizens is that time and again the TPKF has given guarantees after something serious had happened, but these do not seem to mean much. After the incident of 19th January, a guarantee was given that the hospital will be out of bounds to troops. But, then the doctor was wanted for questioning on the 29th. A few weeks later, soldiers entered the hospital compound saying that the LTTE ran that way. A word was also given that the IPKF would identify the target before opening fire. But then a fisherman was shot dead as he came in from the sea on 24th February. A few days earlier, soldiers from the IPKF party who came to see the citizen's committee president, ran round a nearby corner and opened fire. On inquiry, the president was told that the LTTE ran that way. He immediately went, to speak to persons about and found out that the apparent target had been an ordinary frightened boy. The IPKF had acquired such a terrible reputation for beating, that small boys simply run away.

Vadamaratchi: General

On 18th February, a young man, Mathialagan, was killed at Manthikai, when a soldier's gun went off while assaulting detainees. Mathialagan was a pleasant boy, Well known in that area because of his skill in repairing household contraptions. K was a boy of that area due to sit for his *G.C.E. O.L.*'s. He loved his mother, but was greatly distressed because his mother quarrelled with many and was ill spoken of. He maintained a secret relationship with his neighbours, despite a maternal ban. A neighbourhood child had his birthday on the 20th. After sunset, the birthday boy's aunt secretly gave K a piece of cake through the fence. K had a dejected look, and accepted the cake gratefully with 'the remark, 'I thought you had forgotten me). The following morning K was missing from home, to become one amongst the several children from the area to join the Liberation Tigers. Another young lady from the area said, I have observed K for several months. I think he somehow wanted to die.

A very senior educationist in Pt. Pedro said that the boys who had recently joined the LTTE are mainly from grades 8, 9 & 10. He felt that the A.Level students kept aloof because they were mature enough to know that this was a dead end. Everyday, he lived in fear of not getting home safe. He cited his recent experience of having supervised O.Level examinations. "The IPKF", he said, "was on one side of the examination hall, and the LTTE on the other. If the former had known about the latter's presence, I fear to think what would have happened". He thought that an effective inducement given for boys to go for training is that the IPKF is in any case going to attack them.

A lady who is looked upon for leadership, with wideranging social contacts, living in another area, confirmed the senior teacher's impressions. She was aware of some boys in her neighbourhood from that age group, who had joined the LTTE in the last two months. She added that there appeared to be some connection between this phenomenon and disharmony in the home. With many others who expressed concern over assault and the increasing resort to punitive shelling by the IPKF, where the main victims were those least able to get away quickly.

Against this backdrop of several hundred boys in this area having joined the LTTE in the last few weeks amongst ordinary people there is a state of panic, as attacks on the IPKF by the LTTE become more frequent and the conduct of the IPKF becomes harsher and more inconsiderate. Rounding up young men, making them lie down on the road and beating them has become a frequent spectacle — signifying to the people their collective humiliation. While there is room in many hearts for the school—boyish pluck of the young men who avenge their humiliation, they are in general at a loss to understand what the LTTE is aiming at.

People have gone through times when the Sri Lankan army roamed about; then came the period when it was confined in camps and indulged in shelling. After "operation Liberation", they felt they were

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back to where they had started minus many lives and several institutions in ruin. They cannot see a rationale for going through all this again. To many it seems plain enough that their suffering is actively connived at. Civilian cover is used for attacks on the IPKF. Grenades are thrown or guns are fired, from peoples' houses. Domestic power supplies are used to set off land mines. One often hears the 'question, "Isn't there anyone to talk sense to these boys?" The vast majority of Vada.maratchi's educated sons, who could have been a stabilising influence are abroad, many of them romanticising the violence at home. To many it appeared as though they are dealing with several alien armies at once. People are not protected by their would—be liberators. The latter get away in time leaving the protection of the people to the residual good sense of a foreign army, which is itself terribly wanting.

The result is to weaken the people to such a point that many start accepting the arguments of the Indian army. Concerning the assault on persons and the burning of shops in Pt.Pedro on 13th February, a senior IPKF officer told a leading citizen: "I escaped death 'by a fraction of a second. It takes a long time to set up a land—mine. Still, no one came to inform us. When our men are angry, orders will not stop them. They will stop when they finish what they are doing".

The ordinary people find themselves in the awkward position of parents disowned by their own children and consequently despised by everyone else. Many of them find themselves asking: 'If our own boys whom we once called liberators treat us like this, what more can we expect from a foreign army? or "What do they mean by setting off a mine or throwing a bomb and running away without staying around to defend us?" The more important questions relating to the Indian presence are forgotten: That if the Indian army is here as an undisciplined army like the discredited Sri Lankan army, to terrorize the people into submission, then we can understand its conduct. But if it is going to fall into every vice that beset the Sri Lankan army, and achieve only a hopelessly broken society besides Indian casualties, what then is the rationale for its presence?

Indeed, in many known instances, people are unaware of devices buried or attacks planned near their homes. Anyone accidentally finding out may be intimidated from giving the neighbours a tip—off. If the attack does take place, the Indian army would run amok or shell the place. More boys will then go for training.

Fear: Everyone' s constant companion.

It was close to 8.00 p.m. Those at home end in the houses nearby were either chatting studying. They were mainly women and children. Of the men in the house two worked outside 'Jaffna and the one remaining was to leave for the N Middle—East. Of the three young boys in the neighbourhood who sometimes slept there and kept their morale up, one had joined the LTTE and another had been detained—both in the last few days.

Suddenly the barking of dogs was heard. The barking of dogs too had acquired a note of fear. The lights went off and the neighbourhood fell silent. Whoever came was likely to be both unwelcome and unfriendly. A two year old girl started crying, 'army shoot'. A loud thump was heard, followed by a shout "iyo". The women speculated that the visitors had entered so and so' s house and were taking away someone. Judging by the direction in which the barking receded, the women surmised that the visitors had been Indian soldiers. Everyone stayed indoors. No one dared to communicate with neighbours that night.

It was confirmed the following morning that soldiers had indeed come that way. The thump cane

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from a drunken man being hit on the back. An elderly man had shouted, "Iyo, I have four daughters", when soldiers hammered at his entrance. Nothing further had happened,

One morning, it was the talk in the market places that there was an intense gun battle at Manthikai. It turned out later that the EPRLF and TELO were being given shooting practice.

Large numbers quitted several parts of Vadamaratchi after rumours and allegedly handbills got around that an LITE attack on a nearby IPKF camp was imminent. Some received consoling counsel from soldiers: "wherever you go, our shells will come". Unable to bear the strain of imposing themselves on others and the thought of their homes being looted, many of the refugees returned in about two days.

Thus proceeds life in Vadamaratchi. The ability to leave Vadamaratchi and stay in Jaffna has become a kind of status symbol, as it was in earlier times for educated or influential persons to obtain Canadian or Australian visas. For many others there is a noble diffidence of fate that comes in part from the mind not contemplating an alternative. Ammachchi is a hospital employee in her early 20's, the first in a row of ten. The parents were farmers and roughly the top half took after the parents. Hopefully, the younger ones will be hacked by enough resources to see them through school. Ammachchi with her Rs. 1300 plus overtime is the only one with a steady income. When asked whether they would stay on, the young lady replied in her pleasant cheerful manner 'I like my work and am committed to it. The doctors treat me well. We are staying here. Are there not troubles everywhere?'

The fear, the uncertainty, the dominant ideologies have all steadily weakened the community. It is not the strong rebellious community that has been romanticised to its detriment. This was evident in the aftermath of 'Operation Liberation'. People were tired hungry and afraid. After the shelling and the murder, Sri Lankan soldiers systematically broke open shops. Crowds fell over each other to loot, able men pushing women and children aside. These and many other instances testified to the breakdown of social discipline, where people were prepared to demean themselves before the victor. One is reminded of similar scenes in Jaffna after the IPKF operation a few months later. Indian soldiers stopped a jeep before a food queue in front of the Kachcheri and threw down a tin of powdered milk. In the ensuing rush, a hefty man got the tin after trampling over children. Such displays no doubt give satisfaction to the conqueror, though little may he realise that vying to rule over a broken society, easily subject to manipulation, can be very costly.

The question that must be asked of anyone who means well is, what is to be gained by making people go through all this again? What can it prove'?

It is a universal rule that once so broken, society acquires strange sectional interests that make peace and normality far more difficult. Jaffna society may not have been a nice society, but it had a work ethic. But when families suffer so much destruction of life and property, find that their trades do not pay or are unable to practise them, they begin to think very differently from normal people.

Protection of life may cease to be the priority. Refugee money can become a way of life. Registering for relief in as many places as possible and spending once time getting it can become an occupation. If a family had sold its last jewels to send a member as a refugee to Europe or to Canada when there was real fear for his life, it also becomes important that the -member remains refugee to reimburse their expenses and become a source of income. These would create vested 'interests for the war to go on. For the West, this would be a kind of nemesis for arms dealing, meddling and unfair policies towards the Third World. This would all so blend well with the local militancy by providing it with additional sources of income.

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With the loss of any prospect of self determination, the seeds of external domination have taken deep root.

The Future of the Struggle

It is seldom that the original intentions of a struggle survive a debilitating war. The logic of an ideological standpoint of a permanent gulf between Tamils and Sinhalese created conditions of intolerance and insensitivity leading to growing divisions within Tamils themselves. The gulf between the North and East is already evident. In Vadarnaratchi itself the sense of identity created by geography and a common educational system is under strain. Reports of many incidents acquire a sectarian colouring. Even within 3 miles of Valvettithurai, people who profess a lack of information about a serious incident there; would add that their problems are different.

Many persons in Valvettithurai, without always agreeing with the LITE, have been loyal to it in a manner, which demands admiration. But deep inside many of them have a feeling that something has gone terribly wrong. A prominent citizen, a professional who had worked abroad said: 'I suffered badly during the 1983 race riots. I was conscious of this having happened. to me because I was a Tamil and that I could not work or move freely in the South again. I could have gone abroad. But because I underwent this terrible experience on account of my Tamil identity I decided to get back home, 'and do what I could to make ourselves a place where we will not have to undergo this humiliation again". Such were the noble sentiments that were the driving force behind the militancy at that time. The speaker added with a note of sad irony: "But now I 'do not feel myself free to travel to Jaffna and back ."

The political line of many, by no means extremists, who backed the LTT'E in 1986 was to ignore real grievances and fratricidal differences and unitedly back the LTTE, so as to get Eelam first. Democracy, it was said, could come later. For those who have stuck to this line, the envisaged end today is not Eelam, but to press India for the best possible terms under the Accord. It is the politics of pragmatism, ignoring fundamental moral principles; with previously un contemplated compromises being forced on, as problems deliberately ignored fester, and affect the ground reality.

Rev. Tharmakulasingam of Udupiddy recently saw two of his sisters, both young mothers with one of them due to give birth, murdered before his eyes by Indian soldiers. He said later: Having seen this, I do not mind dying". Rev. Tharmakulasingam believes in a higher calling, and his response is likely to be creative. But not only in Vadarnaratchi, but in many parts of this country, people are driven to destructive violence by such despair. A large number of Sinhalese men, women and children have been killed in border areas in a gruesome manner and reprisals against Taint-is have begun. Tamil militant groups may deny these killings; but in the absence of any principled stand on the matter by any section of Tamils, and in view of well known instances of massacres of Sinhalese by Tamil groups the role of Tamils in these hideous killings is not going to be convincingly disputed. We have created amongst many Sinhalese the same kind of desperation and misery felt by Rev.Tharrmakulasingam.

It was feelings like this, in the wake of July 1983, that gave the militancy a pressing legitimacy. We would have helped to elevate Tamil baiting from a pursuit of venal politicians and Hitlerian chauvinists, to one with a semblance of legitimacy.

At the same time, no Tamil group has demonstrated an ability or the confidence to be able to mobilise and lead the people under conditions of peacetime politics. This may explain the history of LTTE negotiations with India and its search for firmer guarantees of its position. All militant groups by

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their conduct have rejected the people as an asset and have progressively weakened them. Indeed, it is the weaker sections of society, such as children, who should have been protected and who could little understand what they are doing, that have been used as engines of war and as cannon fodder. While any healthy political development should draw its strength from the people, who are themselves strong, Tamil nationalist politics from the heyday of the TULE has evinced the opposite tendency. Ultimately leaderships stood or fell depending on what outsiders were kind enough to offer.

What can one then expect with the people so weak and despised and with no approach to the Sinhalese, whoa we have to live with, on the basis of mutual respect and comes humanity? Strange as it may sound, there can only be one logical interpretation to the Tamil cause as represented by today's war:

It is one of bashing Indian soldiers (and the people in the process) so that India will come to an agreement guaranteeing the position of the group against Sinhalese hostility from the South and in the face of the weak and volatile mass of Tamil people within. Whether such a 'guarantee could possibly be viable for any length of time has and will remain the catch.

While Tamil civilian suffering is far from being confined to Vadamaratchi, it represents a crucible where some of the best as well as the worst of Tamil qualities have been at work. It also represents perhaps, the schizophrenic nature of humanity, where children are taught to feel for the serene innocence of a calf and to eat its mother next. It also brings out a deep seated Tamil tendency which has almost brought life to a halt — a tendency for pragmatism devoid of moral content, Even heroism is rendered futile. Youth and a capacity for violence are wasting assets; while a life based on principle, humanity and sensitivity to others acquires a dignity, that survives old age and even death.

IPKF Attack on Civilians on Thursday, 19th January 1989

Report by the Citizen' s Committee of Valvettithura²³

Incident which provoked the attack

I.P.K.F. soldiers on foot patrol from the Polikandy Camp were said to have been ambushed when an explosive device exploded in a lane about 4- a km east of the Govt. Hospital, Valvettiturai, injuring two of them.

The nature of attack on civilians

Soon after-the incident which took place at about 10.00 a.m. additional soldiers from the Polikandy camp commanded by Capt. Menon and another batch of soldiers from the Valvettiturai camp under the command of Major Dinesh Kapoor rushed to the spot. They entered the houses in the locality betting up the inmates end setting fire to the cadjan fences and houses burning everything to ashes. Clothes collected from the houses were used to make lighted torches which were freely-thrown about. A new lorry was completely gutted. Some vehicles were damaged. The people ware not given time even to remove any of their valuables or cash. In one house a bundle of cash amounting to Rs.40,000/— was burnt almost completely. From there onwards groups of soldiers launched attacks on civilians. People were dragged out of their houses and a number of soldiers surrounded each person and beat him up with big sticks, cycle chains, rods and even rice pounders. A. number of

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people fainted and even those people who were limping and unable to walk were forcibly marched towards the junction beating them all the time.

On the way Capt. Marion and his frenzied soldiers entered the Govt. Hospital and unleashed a scene of terror assaulting the people there, picking out the hospital staff including Dr.V.Appohurai, R.M.P and the hospital clerk for particular attacks accusing them as L.T.T.E. supporters. The soldiers even threatened the lady Medical Officer in charge

of the hospital. When Major Pathmanabhan entered the scene and tried to restrain Capt. Menon who appeared to have gone completely off his senses, Capt. Menon is said to have stated that he will go to the Valvettiturni junction and took along with him a number of people from the hospital including nine members of the hospital staff to continue with his sadistic beating spree. The assaulting spree by the soldiers continued even beyond the -junction towards Thondamanar and Udupiddy along the main roads and lanes branching from them. Hundreds of men; women, children and old people who got caught to the gang were beaten up. A number of prominent citizens such as the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages Mr. Rajendran Inquirer into Sudden Deaths Mr. Velupillai, the Grama Sevaka (Village Officer) Mr. Kanapthipillai, Electrical Engineer Mr. Sivapragasan, Medical Practitioner Dr. Muttucumar, who is 70 years old were beaten up mercilessly. The Registrar who is a heart patient had disclosed his identity and his ailment but Capt. Menon had beaten him repeatedly saying, "so you are a heart patient" The Grama Sevaka when he fell down due to the severe beating, was trampled by Capt. Menon who placed his foot on the head of the fallen man. Both Capt. Menon and Major Kapoor abused the people of Valvettiturni in vulgar language while they continued to beat the hapless victims.

Area and duration of attack

The attack on civilians covered an area of about 3 square km from around the place of the incident including the new colony nearby and stretching westwards up to Valvettiturai junction and a little beyond, covering all

lanes and by roads to the junction and up to Theniambai on the Udupiddy road. The soldiers entered every house in this area and assaulted every inmate including females. The assaulted males were marched to the junction for special treatment. The duration of the rampage lasted for more than 3 hours from 10.00 a.m. to 1.30 p.m.

Injuries caused

A man and a woman received gun shot injuries. 112 *persons* were admitted to the Valvettiturai hospital on this day and were treated for fractured limbs, multiple contusions, lacerated wounds etc. About 50 persons received outdoor treatment. A number of people received native treatment. A few females were treated for bite marks on their breasts and cheeks. The hospital over—flowed with patients and was immobilised as the hospital staff themselves became patients.

Some injured taken into custody

Capt. Menon, while leaving behind his victims fallen on the streets to be transported to the hospital in carts and vans, took along with him to his camp the badly beaten up hospital staff. Major Kapoor also

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took about half a dozen of his victims to his camp and. when he released them later in the evening, they were unable to walk and had to be transported to the hospital.

Action taken

When members of the citizens committee and the Medical Officer in charge of the hospital met the Commanding Officer at Udupiddy at about 4.00 p.m and brought to his notice the grave situation, he said that it was he who brought the rampage to an end when he visited Valvettiturai junction in the afternoon. To impress on him the gravity of the situation he was requested to visit the hospital and see for himself the serious injuries caused to the people. He kindly sent his deputy to the hospital. Although, at the request of the Medical Officer to release her staff, the C.O stated that he had already ordered their release, when the Medical Officer returned to the hospital with the members of the citizens committee and the Deputy Commanding Officer and his men, her staff had not been released. The Deputy Commander had to contact Capt. Menon again on the phone and the staff who *had* been incapacitated were brought to the hospital only by about 6.00 p.m. when the Deputy Commander and his *men* were at the hospital.

Incident at Udupiddy-The deaths of two sisters: 15th February 1989

Until an unexpected twist of events led to the murder of his two sisters, it had been a very ordinary day for the timely of Rev. Tharmakulasingam. Rev. Tharmakulasingam (47) was a clergyman attached to the Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India, popularly known as the American Mission. The IPKF had established camp at Udupiddy junction in such a way that Rev. Tharmakulasingam's church was situated within it. In view of this he came into contact with officers regularly and had a polite relationship with Lt. Colonel Sharma, the local commandant. His family home was situated about 250 yards west of the camp, along the Jaffna road, a continuation of the Malisanthy—Udupiddy road. Access to the home was through a short narrow lane to the left of the road, looking west. There are no other houses in between this house and the road. The presence of foliage gives the small house a cool, shady feeling. The house is composed of two separate buildings — (1), which is nearer the road containing a bedroom and kitchen; and (2) with two bedrooms and a verandah facing west. The two sections are joined together by a corridor parallel to the road. Their roofs, sloping downwards, are joined by a V—shaped tin sheet which acts as a drain. The V is about 4 ft. above the ground and would cause an average person to bend considerably. Those around were accustomed to army patrols passing through their premises to avoid possible traps on the main road.

It was election day, and the polling booths at Udupiddy had closed at 4.00 p.m. without incident. The voter turn out had been extremely low. Since the LTTE had called for a boycott, the IPKF hierarchy viewed a high voter turnout as a symbol of their success. For this reason, the mood amongst the army at Udupiddy was not said to have been good. An army escorted convoy was to transport the ballot boxes to Jaffna and election officials to points near their homes.

The following was the experience of a schoolmaster, who after election duty, was seated in a bus in the convoy that was about to leave from the Udupiddy IPKF camp: We suddenly heard a great deal of firing noise and objects seemed to be falling around. A soldier, showing us something that he had

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picked up said, “See, we are giving you protection and the LTTE is firing at us”. I then saw more soldiers moving down the Jaffna road. When they returned, we were told that they had killed two Tigers.

There were a number of partial accounts of the incident, all of which were presumably true, which served to throw confusion about what had actually transpired.

We give below the most important evidence in the whole affair — what the family itself actually experienced:

The time was about 5.15 p.m. The family of Rev. Tharmakulasingam was at ease and some members were seated chatting west of building (1) (away from the IPKF camp), near where the access lane comes into the compound. Rev. Tharmakulasingam lived with his wife and children a few houses into the interior, but had come home as was his habit, to collect his bottle of milk. Amongst the others at home were his aged mother, who always sat on the verandah of building (1); his brothers V.G. Kanagasingam (49), owner of a shop at Udupiddy and V.O. Balasingam (42), employee of the Ceylon Electricity Board at Udupiddy; and Mrs. Jeynranee Vijoyathanan (37), with two sons and MrK. Athisaynranee Thavarasa (32), with a 31/2 year old son.

The husbands of the two sisters were employed in the middle East. Athisayarenee was to due deliver a child at the Green memorial Hospital, Manipay, on 17th February, and would have left if not for the uncertainties caused by elections and the absence of transport, Her maternity clothes were packed in a suitcase in preparation for the journey. The family was known to the IPKF, whose patrols sometimes stopped for water, and had little to fear from them.

The IPKF had sent out an advance patrol in a bid to ensure the convoy’s safe conduct out of Udupiddy. In accordance with familiar practice, in view of the worsening situation in Vadamaratchi, the petrol set off west in three lines — line A along the main road, line B through the premises on the left and line C likewise on the right.. Line B would normally have passed to the left of Tharmakulasingam s family’ s home, but on this occasion a single trooper passed through the corridor between (1) & (2). Whether because this trooper would have had to bend down hard to avoid the tin sheeted conduit, or for some other reason, his gun went off, the single shot piercing the tin sheet above. 5 seconds later, a second single shot was heard, from a direction recollected by Rev. Tharmakulasingam as further west (towards Jaffna) town the main road, but within a few tens of yards from his house.

Immediately, the concentration *of* the man of the house become occupied with getting everyone into the house. Troops were about. They then remember a continuous racket of troops firing. Rev. Tharmakulasingam, through the window saw a soldier fixing a grenade onto his rifle and firing it upwards. Then troops from lines A and B mingled in front of the house and circled it a few times. It was an eerie drama for the members of the household. Once the younger sister, alarmed at not seeing nor sister shouted for ‘Akka’ from the end road in (2;. From the room in (1) facing west (the other was the kitchen), Rev. Tharmakalasingam waved through the door signalling that she was there and save.

In the sequel, the troops accused Balasingam who was carrying his 31/2 year old child, as being LTTE. Balasingam tried to explain that he was a CEB employee known to the IPKF with an IPKF pass to work on the transformer next to their camp and also held an IPKF curfew pass. The two sisters then came out of their rooms to join their brother and explain that he’ was innocent. Rev. Tharmakulasingam witnessed the whole scene, but was prevented from joining in the defence of his brother by 3 troopers who held him at bay. There was some difficulty of language in communication. The brothers were asked whether they did not know that the LTTE was firing. Rev. Tharna

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kulasingam was kicked and a blow was aimed at his elder brother. When the soldiers made as if to shoot them, their two sisters pleaded. The troops then turned round to continue their journey. They had hardly walked 15 ft towards the fence on the western boundary facing the verandah of (2), when an order rang out, presumably in Punjabi. The soldiers made an about turn and two of them were seen firing at those on the verandah of (2). Of the two shots fired at Balasingam one missed hitting the horizontal beam of the wooden door frame, and the other again hit the door frame wounding the child he was carrying. Jeyranee and Athisayaraneer died immediately. The bullet aimed at the latter pierced her stomach, going through the head of the child that was to see our world of turmoil in two days' time. Her little son who was with her began crying, not fully comprehending his loss.

Members of the household felt the kind of defiance that comes with sorrow and despair that find no human means of expiation. Rev. Tharmakulasingam cried at them, "You killed *my* innocent sisters in cold blood. Kill the rest of us also and go". They were dimly aware of some commotion amongst the troops. Perhaps they realised that they had done something terrible. The first officers to arrive said that the LTTE had done the killing. Subsequently an officer arrived and Rev. Tharmakulasingam proceeded to remonstrate in the same vein. The officer spoke, the first part being a most odd piece of advice coming from an Indian officer, "Come, come do not be emotional. First bring the injured child, we will treat it at our medical post". This was done.

Rev. Tharmakulasingam was then requested to see Lt. Colonel Sharma who was in charge. The latter *was* on the phone talking to his superiors in Hindi, probably in order that the former could not understand. It was clear from occasional words like 'padre' what the drift was about. In the meantime the military clerk had typed a letter. The telephone consultation ended, the Colonel produced the letter and wanted Rev. Tharmakulasingam to sign. Rev. Tharmakulasingam did not wish to look at the letter, leave alone sign it. But he gathered from what he was told that the letter was to the effect that the LTTE had done the killing, *and* he was to be the recipient of a certain sum of money. Rev. Tharmakulasingam told the Colonel that he was not going to party to covering up such a dastardly act, and if he wished he could kill everyone left at home. During the interview the Colonel had offered to parade the men so that those who did the shooting could be identified. Rev. Tharmakulasingam replied strongly that this was nonsense. He said later that in all good conscience, he could not pick out two from amongst many bearded turbaned figures with the degree of certainty required. He was indeed quite right here. If the Colonel was serious, it would have been easy for him to pick out whoever gave the order. Not wishing to prolong the interview with inanities, Rev. Tharmakulasingam told the Colonel, 'I will make move', and came away.

An odd circumstance observed by Rev. Tharmakulasingam was that soon after the shooting of his sisters, one of the Sikh soldiers present had been crying conspicuously. An incident was reported in Pt. Pedro some months ago where an Agricultural Officer who was roaming nag around after night curfew was shot dead by soldiers, apparently waiting in ambush. His body was taken to a nearby house for identification. Then the Sikh soldier hugged the body and started crying aloud. One wonders if Sikh soldiers are subject to peculiar stresses when they cross the thin line and are able to relate the situation here to that in the Punjab.

Rev. Tharmakulasingam is sceptical about an LTTE presence during the time of the incident that could have resulted ^{in a} provocation. He thinks it almost certain that the first misfire by the soldier which went through the tin sheet resulted in confusion and in a game of chasing one's own shadow. He has reason for this — the general nervousness of the troops. He quotes an incident where at night a few days earlier, the army had flashed pare lights and fired a shell. He discovered that the provocation was that a man had lit a torch and had attempted to set fire to a hive of wasps on a palmyrah tree — a familiar operation done at nightfall. At the same time, another man had been cutting foliage off a fence for his goats. When he went to his church the following morning, some officers told him that they had fired at the When he corrected them, they seemed to see the funny side

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of it and laughed. He added that the land along the road west of his house is relatively open and that for the LTTE to fire and escape would have been difficult.

Other sources in the neighbourhood, including perhaps a *most* reliable source, have indicated that the LTTE had been in the area; and had fired at least one shot into the air in symbolic opposition to the elections and had run away. By the manner in which the troops were deployed the firing could only have been done *from* a point further west down the Jaffna road.

There is also the circumstance that several neighbours had left the area. No army casualties had been either claimed or reported. It has also been suggested that the army from its lookout points would have noticed people leaving the area. Thus when the patrol set off, it may have *been* mentally prepared for a confrontation with the LTTE.

From the evidence available, one *might* surmise that the first shot by the soldier through the tin sheet was a misfire and the second shot heard 5 seconds later *was* the LTTE's symbolic opposition. This is probable, for when soldiers open fire in such a situation, it is likely to be copious automatic fire and not just a single shot. The firing which followed *was* a continuous racket. One must also keep in mind that soldiers do recognise fire from their own guns, and such patrols have been commonplace without mishaps of this kind.

Many questions remain. Why did the soldiers pick on Balasingam? Did Balasingam at any time move away on **seeing** the advancing patrol, causing them on reflection, to think of Balasingam as an LTTE accomplice? Or had the suspicion anything to do with Balasingam going regularly to the transformer near the camp? These *are* subjects for a judicial *inquiry*. There is no denying that the killing; was totally unjustified and barbaric. The family is keen that this should not be covered up as too many things are being covered up.

The sequence of events leave open the possibility that there *was* some longstanding prejudice against this family. There have been a number of incidents *where* Christian clergy *have* come *in* for rough treatment from the IPKF. Christian clergy have been active in approaching the IPKF for the release of 'detainees on requests made by their families. This has exposed them to coming under suspicion, made easier by prejudices of religion.

We asked the technical questions not to find excuses for what happened, but just to *point* out that there is often some perverse logic to madness of this kind. This is not an ordinary crime which is a matter to be resolved by punishing a *few* Jawans, who too are often victims of circumstances and of the motivating principles *of* the institutions they represent. Such acts are a recurrent theme in Indian military operations in this country. Arrogance, deceit, suspicion and barbarity are different facets of the outlook that governs India's presence here. While civilians are asked to accept explanations of such acts in terms of the basest of human emotions coming from an allegedly disciplined army; civilians are not credited with a right to emotions and intelligence on their part.

Death of Rasiah 40 yrs: Iddaikkadu-4th October 1988

Rasiah Kanavel (40 yrs.) a farmer, known as Samy was an active EPRLF (EROS *before* the split) supporter in late 70's and early 80's. He is from Iddaikadu, a village near Atchuveli, where like many other villages in *Jaffna*, most of the inhabitants are related to each other. During the armed struggle several youths from this village have joined one or the other of the liberation movements. When his brother—in—law died in 1934 because of snake bite, Samy left the movement to look after his sister (and her 5 children) who was living in Neerveli about five miles from Iddaikadu.

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On the day of the incident when the killing took place (04.10.88) Samy was at the Iddaikadu Kalaimagal Library watching TV with several others. At about 3.30 pm. he was approached by an LTTE member, also from Iddaikadu, who took him on a bicycle towards Athiady junction. On the way two others followed. Samy was shot on his head and died half an hour later. This was only 19 days after he got married. He married a girl from a poor family who had no father and without any dowry. After this incident his wife tried to commit suicide twice. In one case she jumped into a well but was rescued with a broken leg.

On the next night, two LTTE sympathisers (Velmurugu and Subrainanlam) were shot dead by EPRLF men who came from outside the village. It is pathetic to note that Samy and these two men are friends and had no rivalry between them. Velmurugu helped a lot during Samy's funeral and when Velmurugu and Subrainaniam were shot on the next day the same cotton wool bought to treat Samy was used to treat them. Subramniam owned a shop to which Samy was a regular customer.

Two days later *about* 10 armed LTTE men came to the village and there was a heated argument between the People and them. They told the people that they won't kill some one without any reason and alleged that Samy was an active member of EPRLF and he was shot on the charge that he was an informant. There were many there who knew that Samy goes to Neerveli to visit his widowed sister whom he was looking after. They only requested the LTTE men not to continue this type of revenge killing. Even when the LTTE members visited the dead LTTE sympathisers' family to convey their condolences, that was the request they received.

Note: A young man and his brother in law were subsequently killed in Iddaikkadu. (See Report No. 1). This is thought to be a reprisal for the killing of Samy.

Reports: Vadamartchi

Death of Nathialagan — Manthikai; 12th February 1989.

On the day referred to, the ENDLF was having a propaganda meeting at Maruthady in Pt Pedro when they were attacked by the LTTE. There was considerable exchange of fire. A party of IPKF troops from the Manthikai camp left for the scene of the incident avoiding the main road and travelling through the interior. At a place known as Naruvaly, they detained Kanagasabai Mathialagan and some others. These persons were taken towards Manthikai, and were made to sit in front of Kanthappar's shop. There they were subject to assault with gun butts and sticks. When a soldier hit Mathialagan on the head with the point of his gun, the gun went off — whether this was accidental or deliberate is not known. Mathialagan slumped lifeless onto his neighbour's lap.

It is reported by persons of the area that at least three lads who witnessed this incident; left home to join the LTTE.

Incident at Polikandy: Mid-February 1989.

The LTTE entered the house of a conductor working for the CTB and from the premises threw a grenade at an IPKF patrol. It is reported that a soldier and a member of another militant group died. This house was one amongst a cluster of houses, mostly occupied by relatives. The conductor collected his family and fled. his brother's wife, living in a neighbouring house had just been

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discharged from hospital and was at that time being visited by a female relative. This household too was in the process of flight when a shell fired by the IPKF, presumably from the Polikandy camp, landed; killing the brother's wife, her visitor, her daughter who was soon to get married and a 10 year old boy who was with them. Three others were injured. Needless to say, that those for whom the shell was nominally intended were nowhere near when it arrived.

Incident at Pt.Pedro Bus Depot: 11th February 1989.

Cadres from the EPRLF were coming from Pt Pedro town towards the Puloly Coop on the main road putting up election posters. Unknown to them, they were followed by LUE cadres who tarred each poster with used engine oil. The engine oil had been taken from the Pt Pedro CTB depot, and the employees would certainly have been in no position to stop it.

In the evening Indian troops arrived at the depot and shortly afterwards started belabouring the employees. They were beaten very badly and humiliated. Many of them were asked to lie flat and inch forward on their stomachs. Those who raised their backs were hammered.

A number of employees stained with engine oil, were later seen proceeding laboriously for treatment at Manthikai hospital. Inevitably, the bus service was halted for several days as a number of employees were incapacitated. The LTTE scored a further point when the story got about that private transport operators too had been asked to stop work as a measure of solidarity. Vadamaratchi was thence cut off for a number of days. It is notable that the IPKF was keen that a pro—Indian political grouping should win the elections 4 days away.

According to a senior citizen, an IPKF official who later apologised had said that the troops were drunk.

Incident at Upayakathirkamam: 13th February 1989

Upayakathirkamam is a village on the Manthikai — Vairavarkovil road. On returning home, a man who had gone to play volleyball found some LTTE militants at home. He inquired what the matter was. They replied: "Nothing annai". But the man spotted some Ares connected to his supply terminals. He took alarm, collected his wife who was expecting, his children, and fled his home. The militants stopped a lorry and asked the driver to inform the IPKF that they were there; What the driver did is not known. However an IPKF foot patrol arrived subsequently. The LTTE detonated the mine and fled. The soldiers fell flat and only two were injured. The area was then subject to a bout of shelling. Several people left their homes and joined a 93 year old lady who was confined to her chair. The asbestos ceiling was their only protection while the area was rocked by explosions. A bulldozer was brought later and the volleyball player's wall was knocked down. His house survives with broken windows and other signs of having been near explosions. There were no civilian casualties either.

Incident at Valvettithurai: 23rd February 1989

Close upon mid—night on 22nd February, the IPKF announced at some places along the coast near VVT that a curfew was to be in force the following day. According to responsible citizens, the announcement was made in such a way that a large number of people could not have known about it. More importantly, fishing vessel which went out in the evening and returned in the morning had no way of knowing about the curfew. In the morning soldiers were on the shore with powerful guns. A fishing vessel was fired upon when it rounded Thickham point and came within range. The body of a dead fisherman with entry and exit wounds was brought to Qorani Hospital and then released.

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Owing to the situation, no inquest was held.

Incident at Kallikai Junction (near Yakkarai): 23rd February 1989

Sources from Pt. Pedro hospital said that the IPKF brought the bodies of 2 women and 2 girls to the mortuary at 5.00 p.m.. An injured girl was admitted for intestinal surgery and survived. The 'Murasoli' (25th February) identified one of the dead women as Velupiliai Pushpavathi (22) and the girl survivor as S. Sumathy (13).

Relatives who came to the hospital later had said that about 3.00 P.M. the LITE fired at the IPKF camp at Kallikai Junction from a nearby temple and got away. The IPKF replied with several shells. This was the time a number of women went out to draw water from a common well water being a problem in that area. Several of these women fell victim to the shelling. They added that there were other bodies which had not been brought to the hospital.

Incident at Nelliady: 20th February 1989

Some LTTE cadres hijacked a lorry carrying sea sand for construction and approached the Nelliady check—point from the South East, along the Jaffna— Pt. Pedro road. They parked the lorry to the left near the petrol station so that it could only be seen from the nearest sentry booth (in front) and there was an escape route to the left. In accordance with procedure an Indian soldier came forward to check the vehicle. A gun man hidden inside the lorry shot him dead. Other LTTE gunmen in the lorry simultaneously fired at the sentry booth in front, and all of them escaped towards Vathiri along the lane on the left.

There were at this time a substantial number of people in the commercial centre of Nelliady, beyond the sentry point just attacked. The area had several gun placements. Immediately, soldiers shouted 'Padu~(Lie down) and then opened fire. What they fired at is not clear as the quarry had escaped. But no one in town was hurt.

However fire from the soldiers struck Mr. Selvanayagam, a poultry farmer, approaching Nelliady along the road from Jaffna on his motorcycle, with his wife and two children as passengers. Mr. Selvanayagam was admitted to hospital and one of his hands was amputated. The other hand too had been badly hurt.

Note: our Report No.1 had an account of the incident at Nelliady on 10th November 1988. In response to an attack by the LTTE, the IPKF had opened fire indiscriminately killing 5 civilians and wounding several others. It is evident that the IPKF had done some "homework" and a procedure was adopted to call upon the civilians to lie down before opening fire. The intention must be commended. These however are bound to remain broken threads in a tapestry that is hardly altered unless a conscious decision is taken to respect civilians, In the absence of such these will remain ad hoc tactical measures taken to minimise bad publicity. Under more severe tests, the IPKF is yet to prove that it can do better than the Sri Lankan army. Attitudes to shelling seem very similar.

As an army with a mission to protect civilian life, the shooting at Mr. Selvanayagam and family cannot be justified even on grounds of self—defence. The attackers were by then well out of the way.

Incident at Kallikai Junction; 4th March

The LTTE entered the residential premises of the owner of Janaki Textiles, Pt. Pedro and took up positions. The people of the house fled — the only thing they could do. An IPKF patrol was reportedly attacked later. The owner of the house was later summoned to the IPKF camp at Manthikai. The owner expected to be taken to task for not informing the IPKF of the LTTE's presence.

Pt. Pedro 8th — 12th March

On the night of 7th March, the LTTE cut the IPKF's communication wire in front of Dr. Rasamaikkam's Clinic in Pt. Pedro town, and buried a mine underneath. Business in the morning went on as usual, the people being unaware of anything amiss. Broken wires were common enough. The slightest whiff of some thing untoward would have closed the shops and sent people scurrying. The landmine was set off when two soldiers casually tried to join the wires, causing one to be killed and the other to lose a leg. Other soldiers beat up people plying, their trades, causing damage to premises. Dr. Rasananikkam, an elderly man retired from government service, is said to have been badly assaulted. A poor man running, a tea kiosk had his things broken. Rajah Tailor, who had left for the Middle East when the Sri Lankan army made life impossible had returned to ply his trade. With the deteriorating situation here, he had been wondering whether to go back to the Middle East where business was good. He too had suffered damage.

One might argue that these persons could have fared much worse had the Sri Lankan *army* been around. But the end result may be substantially the same. These persons would have had absolutely no sympathy for planting bombs. When anger is expiated by attacking those who keep the life of the community going, both services and the economy grind to a standstill. Dr. Rasamanikam's predecessor, Dr. Shanmuganathan, went abroad though he was not the money making type and was very committed to Point *Pedro*. Skilled workmen, like Rajah Tailor, too may leave. Economic life has been deteriorating with people having to pay more for shoddy workmanship compare say the highly skilled woodwork of a generation ago, with the best available today. Many of those who try to keep services going complain with justice, that performing their task under existing hazards requires more heroism than setting off bombs and running away.

On the morning of the 10th, residents in a large area west of the Jaffna road were woken up by the IPKF firing into the air at 5.00 A.M.: Then at 6.00 A.M. loudspeaker announcements were made. The intended message was for people to leave their houses open and proceed to Veerapathira Kovil in Alvai (3 miles from Pedro town). The old could stay in their houses, and at least one person should remain in each house. There was much confusion, and in some areas, to avoid taking chances, people left their houses open and proceeded to Alvai. Others went to nearby temples, thinking it unreasonable to order them to take their infants and elderly and trudge 3 miles. Most people were asked to get back home as soon as soldiers arrived at these places of confinement. Several young men were marched to various army camps. One group of soldiers marched with 50 young men and lost their way trying to do map reading with an ordnance map-. The lanes proved too much for them. The young men who were hungry; tried to show them the way. The soldiers were apparently distrustful. The group kept moving until they hit upon a larger group of soldiers marching with 200 detainees. The young men estimated that they would have marched 10—15 miles to cover the 1 mile from where they were detained to Manthikai. The soldiers stopped once for a meal, and later broke into a shop near Vetheri, and helped themselves to aerated water. The detainees did not share these privileges. Nearly all of them were released from Manthikai after 2.00 p.m. At Alvai, except for about 3 boys, the rest were asked to disperse by about 10.30 A.M. by the Deputy Commander of

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that area. A pregnant woman who had developed labour pains after trudging a long distance had to be sent in a car. No major mishaps or thefts were reported, although contents of several wardrobes had been spilled. A 65 year old lady ran away in fright when a soldier asked her to go ----- not entered into. One house where an old couple had remained reported the loss of a gold chain.

The purpose of the operation is not clear. It would have required a very large deployment of manpower to comb that area thoroughly in so short a time.

Substantial shelling from Yakkarai was resorted to on the 11th. According to sources from Pt. Pedro Hospital the bodies of a man, a woman, and a boy were brought there. These persons had been killed by shell blasts. Many injured persons were admitted for treatment. At Nelliady, the sentry points are not manned after dusk. Transport proceeds knowing that they are being observed from covert positions. If barriers are down, volunteers have to move with trepidation to undo the barriers and put them back. It is an eeriness that makes one admire the yeoman service of transport workers, both in and out of Jaffna.

At about 8.00 P.M. on the 11th, some residents along the Jaffna road who cared to investigate the barking of dogs saw the LITE dismantling the IPKF's 40 telephone wire. Such primitive communication is an endless source of trouble for both soldiers and civilians alike. In the past civilians, who fearing reprisals had gone to inform the IPKF of cut telephone wires, had been warned by the LITE. After a sleepless night it was made known in the morning that the telephone wire all the way between Manthikai and Point Pedro had been removed. Common sense prevailed and the IPKF kept its cool. Shops cautiously opened their doors late. By 10.00 A.M., a rumour got around that a land-mine had been installed in Pt. Pedro town. There soon began a closing of shops and a flight of vehicles. The rumour turned out to be a false one.

After 4.00 p.m. a response to the stolen telephone wire came in the form of a large assorted column of the forces of Democracy and Normalcy, marching from Manthikai to Pt. Pedro. Other columns too were reported along the approaches to Pt. Pedro. The column moved slowly, restoring the telephone wire. A loud speaker announcement was being made as it moved along. The voice was South Indian, but the Tamil was not quite the Sangam variety. The loudspeaker blared: "This wire has been stolen several times. This will be tolerated no longer. If near *one house wire cutting*, we will attack the people nearby. We will shoot we will hammer and we will break their bones. We will maul them. If a length of wire is stolen, we will impose curfew and do likewise to everyone in that area".

A Tamil soldier told a family near the bus depot, of course the people cannot do anything about these wires. They are unarmed. Wire stealing is the LTTE's way of marking its attendance register. Such homely wisdom does not seem to guide the motions of the upper reaches of the IPKF. There is little doubt that wire will, be stolen for the nth time. If the promised circus goes into action, the prospects for another recruiting campaign seem bright. When information of more recruits gets around, there will be more harassment of schoolboys. Insults thrown at school heads, followed by more shelling and costly military operations in Mullaitivu and Vavuniya where recruits are trained. Such is the thorny road to the elusive goal of democracy.

It is also notable that Vadanaratchi was given a new command barely a week earlier. Citizens' representatives were summoned and were told that the IPKF will no longer harass them. Some restrictions at sentry points were lifted. Within a matter of days, expectations had hand been soured.

Whether things are building up to something big or whether life is going to drag on like this is a matter of speculation. But people are becoming unnerved and are increasingly sending their young away. The desultory attacks and reprisals do resemble the build up to 'Operation Liberation'.

The Old Lady's Pluck — Tellipalai: 1st March 1989

About 20th February, at Kollankaladdy a small boy carrying a plastic bucket full of food, dropped the bucket and ran away on spotting the IPKF. On examining the contents, the IPKF concluded that the food was meant for the LTTE.

On Thursday, 23rd February, at 8.0.0 A.M., *the IPKF* surrounded the house of Mr. Subramaniam (aged 64) and arrested the old man and his son S. Sivapaladevan (24), an employee of the Kankesan Cement Works (KCW). The two were immediately beaten and accused of supplying food to the Tigers. It appeared that someone had given false information.

At the Tellipalal camp, father and son. were hung upside down and beaten. When the son's head was to be immersed in a bucket of water, he protested in fear that he was asthmatic. The father's head was then immersed in water, and the son screamed at the sight of the father's agony. A soldier gave the son a heavy blow causing him to lose consciousness.

When he regained consciousness it was late in the night. He was lying naked in one corner of the room, while his sarong was in the other corner. The father was in the same room. The father *was* released on Saturday evening to attend the funeral of a relative.

Mr. & Mrs. P are an old couple living at Kollankaladdy, both retired teachers and practicing Hindus. Mr P had been a school principal. Their daughter who was the Chemist at KCW, went to the army camp to ask for the release of Sivapaladevan in order to enable his to attend the funeral. This was allowed. The father and son were to be returned to the army camp in the evening. It was clear that the army had no evidence against them. Mrs. P. accompanied Subramaniam and son to the camp in the evening. When they had not been released by Wednesday morning (1st March), Mr. & Mrs. P thought that they should find out what was amiss. Mr. P felt that the IPKF would not listen to him and that he may just lose his temper and make matters worse. Mrs. P decided to go on her own. When she asked for their release, the officer in charge at Tellipalai replied in strong terms, "If you were not an educated lady, I would not even have bothered to hear you".

Mrs. P went into the attack, "You boast that India is a democracy, and you will only listen to educated English speaking ladies. Do not the other 90% have even a voice with you? India is even called a Holy Nation and almost everything we see is to *the* contrary. See what you have been doing".

The officer's face fell. He then blamed the population for supporting the Tigers -, "Yes", said Mrs. P, gave the Tigers Jewellery and money. But you gave them shelter and training, and armed them. Then when you have a quarrel with them, you put us at the receiving end. She went on authoritatively, "You must go to your detention centre at KKS and make a close study of the young men there. 90 % of them are innocent. They are also sons of poor helpless people. Those who gave substantial money to the Tigers also used their money to send their children abroad. I insist that you do this. I know Sivapaladevan. He is an innocent boy and you simply mistreated him. Being a probationary employee, he stands to lose his job by prolonged absence. You ought to release him".

The officer quickly promised to give a letter to the works manager of KCW stating that Sivapaladevan would be released by about 6th March and asked Mrs. P to send the other lady from KCW to collect the letter the following morning. Mrs. P's daughter collected the letter as arranged.

Mr. & Mrs. A eked out a living from a small business where their children sometimes helped after school hours. Their house was situated on a well used road. Next to their house were the remains of a dwelling, abandoned to the elements for several years, with foot paths running on either side between the building and the boundary fences. The footpath adjoining Mr. A's boundary had become a kind of public thoroughfare. Mrs. A was a house—proud lady who while sweeping her compound in the mornings, also swept the adjoining foot path.

One morning, while sweeping the foot path, she noticed that she had swept over and broken what looked like thin white threads. When she mentioned this to her husband, he had a look and summoned a neighbour. The latter noticed that the thread had a thin strand of metal running through. After further investigation, he found four landmines hidden along the foot paths on either side of the disused dwelling. Sensing trouble, Mr. A began moving his personal belongings away to houses nearby. Ordinary folk who always have their antennae out for signs of trouble, started arriving to see what had happened.

Suddenly 3 LITE men popped in through the back ways. Mr. B, who was a retired gentleman and by common consent a spokesman for the neighbourhood, attempted to speak to them. He was severely asked if the house was his. When he replied in the negative, he was told to leave after being warned that they would see about him later. Another girl was ordered to be on the lookout for the IPKF. Mr A & Co were then asked who made the matter public. Mr. A replied that he did not on purpose go about telling people. The LITE left after picking up the landmines and warning Mr. A that the next time this happens action will be taken against him. They added that there was bound to be an attack in the area sometime. The episode left a sense of panic in the neighbourhood, especially in those homes with infants and aged, who would find it difficult to get away in a hurry.

Several women observed that the militants were from their area and had been at school with their sons, nephews etc. In place of some understanding and light, friendly talk, the militants had behaved like aliens in a very disconcerting manner. One person thought that the purpose of the mines was to give the locals a scare. He had heard one of the LTTE men say with a laugh, 'If you do not let us sleep in your homes, these mines may find their way back here. But for many others, the pattern of events suggested something different.

One neighbour said that he had noticed some boys talking on the road at 4.00 A.M., and had dismissed it as nothing unusual. The envisaged scenario seems to be as follows: One or more militants, shoot or throw a bomb at an IPKF patrol from somewhere nearby and run away using the footpath by the side of Mr. A's house. When the army follows and soldiers are on the footpaths on either side of the house, another militant in waiting will set off the mines and run away. Since the deployment of patrols is such as to minimise casualties, at best one soldier will get killed on the road and two by the mines. Going by the present pattern of retaliation by the IPKF, there is a good chance of the area being shelled, killing cows, goats and humans who could not get away.

The reasoning here seems to be that if someone had a problem, like a land—mine sitting on his neighbour's doorstep, he could slip away quietly. But to give others a tip off which might save their lives, and risk spoiling the attack, would be considered a serious offence.

The incident given here is not an isolated one, but represents the general pattern. It is a form of liberation warfare where people are discouraged from having a sense of responsibility even for one's neighbour. In other words it tends to isolate and weaken them into selfish and pliable individuals. That in part explains the state of the community. The original weakness however, was inherent in Jaffna society. The struggle instead of eliminating such weaknesses, was built on them. The

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ineptness of the other side ensures that landmine attacks help recruitment.

Others have observed the singular success of landmine attacks in this part of the world. That perhaps *says* something about Jaffna society. Frequently a person coming to know of a landmine being planted in a place would not say anything to those placed in Jeopardy. But would at the same time find it irresistible to tell someone of his premonition. He may then tell someone living a mile away with gravity, 'Look, there is going to be trouble at this place. Do not say later that I did not say so?'. Similar things happen in the upper reaches of society. One may tell another: 'I heard A say that B is an agent of the RAW You know A's connections. That means trouble for B'. The story will go round and round B, until at length B finds out fantastic accounts of his connections and that a number of persons had bemoaned his prospective *fate* without caring to put him wise, so that timely action could be taken to defuse rumours.

KILLINGS IN ARIYALAI:Murugaiah(1st January 1989)&Annamalai(12th January 1989)

Rajadurai Murugaiah(45):

Murugaiah was born in Trincomalee in 1940, into a humble family of 5 boys and a girl. He came and settled down in Ariyalai, Jaffna, after the 1983 racial violence, as a displaced Government officer. He was a Tamil nationalist bearing the DMK stamp — The DMK in South India was a secular Tamil nationalist movement of the lower strata of society, which viewed the Brahmin dominated upper strata as an external imposition. Murugaiah was a member of the DMK and had a commanding personality — a dark, well—built man, with jet black hair combed backwards, sporting a bushy moustache, red shirt and black trousers. In keeping with his ideals, in spite of his having attained to middle—class status, in 1972 he chose a bride *who* was the daughter of a dhoby (washerman). Through his wife Sarojinidevi Somasundaram (born 1947), he had four children— Aelventhan Ravanan(15), Thevi Uthayarani(14), Anparasan Sankilian(13) and Thamilarasan Kulakkottan(11). The names of the boys, taken from Tamil Kings renowned for military prowess and valour, give some insight into his sentiments He was an avid reader of the Jaffna based English weekly, The Saturday Review, of which he possessed bound volumes.

On coming to Jaffna just after July,1983, he took up residence in Stanley College Lane Ariyalai, and was employed by the YMCA in refugee work until the end of the year. From 1984, he worked for the Tamil Refugees Rehabilitation Organisation, TRRO, where he rose to become the head of the Relief section. This section dealt with applicants whose families, for reasons of death or injury, had lost means of income and were in need of cash for immediate expenses.

Although the LTTE was the militant group enjoying the largest support in Ariyalai, Murugaiah belonged to a small community where the militant group TELO had a base. Murugaiah' s early militant links were with the TELLO. He had been involved in promoting the Tamilar Miahilir Peravai, a TELO sponsored women' s organisation. When the LTTE decimated the TELO in May 1985, Murugaiah sought links with the LTTE.

Subsequently Murugaiah' s name came to be linked with the LTTE. It is hardly credible that the LTTE would have come to trust an erstwhile supporter of a militant group with which it had a bloody feud. But, whatever the link was, it was one which Murugaih and the LTTE found mutually useful. Mlurugaiah' s subsequent loyalty to the LTTE was almost complete.

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It is a well known phenomenon that relief organisations functioning under conditions of conflict are faced with various groups pressurising them to allocate funds to projects or front organisations of their choice. To smoothen such dealings, a pragmatic measure often adopted is to have within the organisations, persons enjoying at least good diplomatic links with such groups. (The alternative is the demanding task of having a highly motivated organisation with its house in order, with an ability to go direct to the people and establish a case for complete autonomy.)

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When such pragmatic measures are adopted, things can often run fairly smoothly, with the money reasonably well spent. Those within the organisation who function as intermediaries would tend to grow with the organisation, getting to know its weak points; which knowledge in turn would increase their indispensability.

There is little doubt that Murugaiah's influence within the TRRO was fairly strong. After May 1986, the TRRO adjusted itself to the new climate of LTTE dominance. Following the October 1987 IPKF offensive, the LITE's capacity to influence public life directly, greatly declined while those of other militant groups which had earlier felt cut out, increased.

At this point Mr. K. Kanthasamy, a founder of the TRRO and its chief fund raiser arrived from Britain, and threw himself into the work of the TRRO with plans for massive rehabilitation work. A signed statement by the Directors of the Central British Fund for Tamil Refugee Rehabilitation (29th June 1988) indicates that the EROS attempted to fill the *vacuum* and had meetings with Mr. Kanthasamy where demands were made in intimidatory fashion. Mr. Kanthasamy was a strong person who resisted these demands and disappeared after being kidnapped on 19th June 1988.

All this goes to indicate *that* like most public institutions in Jaffna, the TRRO was functioning in an atmosphere where weaknesses had crept in through attrition and where complete *trust* was lacking.

In his work *for* the TRRO, Murugaiah was known to be a stickler for rigid bureaucratic norms to the point of often being rude and insensitive to applicants for relief. Those who admired him, maintain that this was because there were many coming with bogus claims and he was thus forced to be strict. The organisation found itself able to do little about his public relations.

On the other hand, he acquired a popular image in Ariyalai as a bold and forthright backer of the *LITE* and became secretary to the Ariyalai citizens' committee. He was blunt when confronting the IPKF, in spite of being counselled by his friends to be more diplomatic. He was one of the chief organisers behind the public meeting to commemorate the LTTE militant, Santhosam's 1st anniversary on 21st October 1988. Murugaiah was one of the main speakers. Mr. Sivanandasundaram, the chief speaker, was assassinated on his way back to Pt. Pedro after the meeting. The latter had said at the meeting that his organisation the *Thamil Makkal Mantram*, would issue a public pronouncement the next day, calling upon all citizens' committees to *turn* the LTTE's fight into a peoples' fight.

Sometime in mid—December, several leading citizens of Ariyalai were invited to the IPKF camp and were 'questioned'.

At 2.00 A.M. on New Year's day (1989), some youths called at Murugaiah's home. He was then interrogated about various persons and organisations. He was questioned about a women's organisation, the *Mahalir Avai Onriarn*. At one point he was told that they knew about the Mother's Front, a women's organisation started in 1985 by women from the social elite to protest against the activities of the Sri Lankan army, and which declined amidst divisions after mid—1986.

Murugaiah was questioned about a number of persons and was asked for the whereabouts of the Citizens Committee president and the local SALT (an LTTE sponsored *students'* group active in schools mainly during 1987) organiser. Murugaiah tried to shield them and gave negative replies. (When LTTE supporters started becoming targets from October 1988, many Citizens' Committee leaders and those associated with the LTTE went into hiding, particularly at night time). The interrogators seemed to become impatient at repeatedly hearing 'I don't know'. At 2.55 A.M, he was asked to come out with the youths and direct them to the house of P. Suntheralingam, the Citizens' Committee president. Mr. Murugaiah protested that the latter did not sleep at home, but his coming was insisted upon. The last time his wife saw him alive was when she gave him a shirt and saw him out.

A pistol shot was heard at 4.25 A.M at the junction of Hospital Road and Temple Road. Murugaiah's body was found there early in the morning.

The place of Murugaiah's murder was 1 1/2 miles from his home. This would have been unusual if immediate killing had been intended, suggesting that Murugaiah's abductors had started with a different motive. In the absence of any process of the law, the ordinary Ariyalai citizen expresses no doubts as to who is responsible.

MR. ANNAMALAI

Annamalai was an affable lawyer in his 50's living near the Paasayoor end of Pungankulam road in Ariyalai. He had returned from Britain towards the close of the 1970 to work for the leftwing NSSP, a breakaway group of the Trotskyite Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP); and now a member of the United Socialist Alliance, comprising parties of the political left LSSP, NSSP, SLMP and CPSL. With other NSSP leaders Annamalai had links with the Militant Tendency of the British Labour Party. Annamalai functioned as the secretary of the NSSP in Jaffna, and his party enjoyed considerable esteem amongst students in Jaffna because of its unequivocal anti—racist stand. His party started at a time when anti—Tamil sentiments were the norm in the South, that it did not, like others, say one thing in the North and something else in the South. It kept this promise as part of an acid test, when its leader, Vasudeva Nanayakkara, fought in 1984, a southern by—election on a stridently anti—racist platform. The challenge was taken so seriously that President Jayewardene took the unusual step of campaigning for the ruling UNP at a by—election. The result was close and it was widely believed that, but for the thuggery of the UNP Mr. Nanavakkara would have won. The NSSP was the first party to campaign for self—determination for the Tamils as a means to solving the 'National Question'.

Annamalai's first trouble with the LTTE was when in early 1983, the NSSP put down candidates for the Municipal elections, in the face of a boycott call by the LTTE Annamalai was whipped by some youngsters who called at his home.

During the period following the 1983 racial violence, Annamalai kept out of active politics. But he was active in the Movement for Inter Racial Justice and Equality, particularly in the area of care and legal help for political detainees. On a number of occasions he had expressed the feeling that in a situation such as the one prevailing, politics seemed irrelevant and that one seemed to be driven by scenes of grief and misery towards humanitarian work. He was a friendly, kind hearted man, and it was easy for those with ideological differences to work with him. Shortly after the July 1987 Accord, the NSSP tried to approach the LTTE in Jaffna . Annamalai too had been with his party

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members. It is reported that those approaches were unsuccessful. It was not uncommon for the LTTE to be deeply suspicious of those who sought good relations with them.

Many members of the Left in the South had a deep sense of guilt after the July 1983 anti-Tamil violence. This led them into a generous attitude towards the Tamil militant groups which held up even through massacres of Sinhalese civilians. The LTTE's rejection of their overtures (except for a brief interval when Kittu was in charge of Jaffna) has been to them a constant puzzle.

Annamalai had been reportedly very critical of his party's soft line towards the IPKF and the EPRLF, particularly in view of their role in human rights violations. During his last party meeting, he is reported to have protested to the point of almost disrupting the meeting. It is a mark of the respect his party had for him, that in spite of differences, he was placed on the national list for the forthcoming general elections. According to a party member he had been advised to stay in Colombo until the elections. But he came to Jaffna for 3 days to spend Thaipongal with his family. He was shot dead on 12th January by some youths, shortly after he had returned at 5.30 PM from a trip to Pt. Pedro with some party workers. Mr. Annamalai leaves behind his wife and 9 year old daughter.

A worried party member said that as soon as news of Anna's death was out, his father in law had rushed home to ask him to give up politics. He added as a mark of consolation, "There were Narodniks in Russia who had tried to assassinate Lenin. But they disappeared."

The Sunday Times of 22nd January quoted an LTTE spokesman as saying that they had killed Annamalai not because he had defied their ban on participation in the General Elections; but because he had spoken at a public meeting for the Socialist Alliance's presidential candidate Oswin Abeygoonasekera in early December. It is notable that 42000 Jaffna men and women voted for Mr. Abeygoonasekera at the Presidential Elections, giving him majority in several electorates. This was done as a mark of respect for the Alliance's anti-racist stand against heavy taxes in difficult times, and has little to do with any knowledge of Annamalai or what he had said.

Mr. Annamalai was an able and educated man who could have easily left this country, but instead made a deliberate decision to remain with his people and serve during their darkest days. His death will be mourned by many who do not share his political views. It is ironic that in a kind where opportunistic and cowardice abound, a person like Annamalai should be killed as part of a liberation struggle.

Incidents: General Vaddukottai : 8th December 1988

A passenger van from Karainagar bound for Colombo reached the IPKF's Bicknell pavilion sentry point at 5.30 a.m. An officer asked all the passengers to get down, accusing them of breaking curfew, and several of them were assaulted. Some were then tied and made to sit on the road. It was generally known that the curfew was lifted at 5.00 a.m. The two IPKF notice boards at Vaddukottai junction and at the pavilion end, one said that the curfew was off at 5.00 a.m. while the other said 6.00 a.m. While getting down from the van, a university man told the officer firmly that the curfew was off at 5.00 a.m. The officer who was hitting passengers one by one, changed his mind and asked the university man to sit down. The van was allowed to proceed at 6.00 a.m. Many of the passengers were angry. The conductor asked a Tamil soldier with whom he was acquainted roughly, "At what time does curfew end?". The Jawaan replied apologetically, "Iyah, what can we do?". One elderly man observed, "If these fellows can drive us into a violent mood at our age, just imagine what they will do to the young?". An old man added, "This treatment is not enough for chaps who welcomed

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these fellows with garlands”. The driver had received a cut on his forehead and terminated his journey in Jaffna, saying that he was in no state to go on.

Instant Bomb Disposal Expert Incident At Ampanai, Tellipalai 3rd January 1989:

What follows is the experience of Mr. Mahalingasivam a surveyor by profession from Tellipalai and a father of three children who had to become a bomb disposal expert in order to protect his accredited protectors.

On 3rd January while returning from work through post office lane near Ampanai, he saw some Indian soldiers demanding something from a woman. When they saw him, they let the woman go and stopped him. A soldier asked him to open a parcel lying on the other side. From the way they looked at the parcel, he thought it could be bomb. Through fear, he simply refused. Immediately he was threatened at gun point. He said to himself, “I had to choose one of two kinds of death”. He added, “the pictures of my wife and children ran in front of me. However death, he thought was inevitable. Yet there was a faint chance of escape if it was not a bomb. He opened and to his surprise, some broken bottles brought him to life again. The soldiers then came up to him and didn’t allow him to proceed. They asked him to go back and he had to find a round about way to go home.

Thinnevely : 27th January 1989

40 girls were getting ready to leave the textile factory in a lane opposite the Farm School at 6.00 a.m., when gunfire was heard. It was later reported that the LTTE had fired at the IPKF, killing a jawaan and wounding 3 others. After the noise had subsided, a young man at the factory went out to see if it was safe for the girls to leave. As he was re-entering the factory, he was spotted by an IPKF patrol which had Pushed to the spot. The patrol came into the factory, badly beat up the young man and the elderly watcher, and took them away to the Kondavil camp.

The 40 girls promptly trooped to the Kondavil camp and were told by the IPKF that their colleagues will be released the following morning. The girls said that they would then sit there until the two men are released. The IPKF responded by requesting them to go away, promising to release the men by 5.00 p.m. The girls said that they would wait until 5.00 p.m. or whatever the time of release. The two men were released by 2.00 p.m.

St. Mary's Church (Cms), Kopay 28th January 1989

The parish priest of the church was to get married on the 1st Feb. On the 28th January there were some youths who were helping the priest to write out invitation cards and wrap the wedding cake. Around 7 O’clock in the night the priest went to have dinner at the house opposite to the church. While having his dinner there was an explosion, followed by a commotion. The priest took off his cassock and wanted to sleep there to avoid crossing road in a tense situation. In the mean time the soldiers who were stationed nearby at Kopay junction came running towards the Church and entered the premises. Immediately they caught the youths who had been helping the priest, and along with them they stepped into the parsonage and saw some unwashed dishes left on the dining table. This caught the eyes of soldiers and prompted them to jump to the conclusion that the LTTE would have eaten there and that therefore the youths were LTTE. The boys were beaten very badly. Then IPKF went to the house opposite and called the priest. The priest came out in his cassock and he too

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was taken. A little later they all were taken by the army.

The army claimed that a missile, had been fired at the Kopay camp from the Church. How the army came to this conclusion is not known. While locals admit hearing the noise, they doubt that it was from the Church. The case was plain enough, except for minds blinded by suspicion. The wedding cake and cakes were there. Boys involved in preparation for nuptial festivity are not going to be accomplices in firing a missile and then remain there to get the works.

High-level approaches were tried using leading locals to explain matters to the army. The Bishop of Colombo is easy to have. used his clout with Ambassador Dixit. The army relented when given the plight of the anxious bride. Rev. Jeyarajah got married on the 2nd Feb. with a fractured finger, looking like a man from a knock out in the boxing ring transported straight to the alter. The army had told another clergyman that the others would be released in time for the wedding. This was not done. But the church's success in releasing the bridegroom was talked of as a triumph of high level diplomacy. Even after mid - February the church keeper and an O/L student had not been released. It is usual for the army to detain innocent people to give time for signs of torture and maltreatment to heal.

This incident must be compared with the pluck of the factory girls who followed their gut instincts and got their colleagues released from the same Kondavil camp in a matter of hours - Low level diplomacy as opposed to High level diplomacy.

The Death Of T. Gajan 29th January 1989

T. Gajan is a 23 year old boy from the Mannar district. Apparently prior to the Indo - Lanka peace accord he had had connections with the LTTE. But before the accord was signed he had left the movement and had joined the Jaffna College Technical Institute of Vaddukodai, Jaffna, where he had followed a technical course at the mechanical workshop for one year. After finishing the course, he joined as a Trainee Instructor at the same institute and has been working there for about a year. His colleagues say that he had scarcely left the College hostel ever since the operation 'Pavan' in late 1987.

He had earned about Rs. 3,500/- by working on orders taken by the workshop. On the 29th of January he had gone to Jaffna town to buy himself some clothes. After doing the shopping, he was returning to Vaddukotai in a crowded mini bus, and was standing at the foot-board of the bus. Somewhere between the Oddumadam junction and the CRPF camp, by the roadside, a boy in civil who was talking to an Indian jawan had recognised T. Gajan, on the foot-board. He ordered the bus to be stopped, asked Gajan to get down; -and then ordered the bus to leave without him. This incident was seen by two other students from the Jaffna College Technical Institute who were travelling in the same bus. This happened at about 4.30 p.m. The two students who had seen the incident had gone and reported it immediately to the acting director of the Technical Institute; who contacted the ENDLF camp at Oddumadam. The ENDLF denied that they had made the arrest. Later the boy's dead body with bullet wounds was found at Kombayan junction, not far from the point of arrest.

The JCTI authorities described Gajan as a model instance of one who had returned to normal living.

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Mrs. Punithavathy Ratnasabapathy (45), Meesali 30th January 1989

Mrs. Ratnasabapathy was a teacher at Vigneewara Mahavidyalayam, Meesalai - Chavakachoheri, who hoped to be made principal when the post fell vacant. Instead, Mr. Sellathural was appointed. The grounds for his appointment was that though he possessed fewer years of teaching experience in that school, he had an M. A. Mrs. Ratnasabapathy felt unfairly deprived and complained to the local EFRLF, who reportedly questioned Mr. Sellathurai. The LTTE who came to know about this. took particular objection to the implicit recognition of the EPRLF which headed the provincial administration as the legitimate authority. Mrs. Ratnasabapathy is said to have been warned by the LTTE on three occasions not to go to the EPRLF and to take the matter up with the local education authority of the central government. These were not heeded. On the morning of 30th January, while Mrs. Ratnasabapathy was sweeping her compound, she was called out by some youths, who then shot her dead.

Mr. Sellathural has said that he had at no time contacted the LTTE on the matter.

NOTE: The average Jaffna man would dismiss such an incident as sad, but as foolishness on Mrs. Ratnasabapathy's part. Such debasement of life is part of a value system where people like to avoid personal responsibility, as well as unpleasant things which stalk everyone.

In this society, it is commonplace for people to feel very strongly on matters such as promotions and can become unbalanced particularly when the system is such that an individual cannot get a fair hearing. This part of the general administrative breakdown and the rise of the patronage system which predate the militancy. At present it is very much the norm for senior civil servants, Directors and Councils not to be accountable to anyone. Deeply felt grievance: painstakingly written down often elicit terse, negative replies without any reason being adduced. The individual is often up against a brick wall unless he or she stooges. It is in this kind of culture that individuals see the gun and gunmen as the most appropriate remedy.

We are not commenting on the merits of Mrs. Ratnasabapathy's case or on the suitability of Mr. Sellathurai. Things may have in order in this instance. But it is important to note that we are living in a System where such tragedies can occur again and again. Many teachers are regularly driven to despair over matters pertaining to their career.

The All Ceylon Teachers' Union and Northern Province Teachers Association, once very influential and active in both teachers welfare and the maintenance of professional standards; are now just shadows. Indeed, Mrs. Ratnasabapathy's tragedy and killing of the teacher at Jaffna Hindu, the teacher aroused little interest or concern in local teaching circles.

THINNEVELY EARLY FEBRUARY 1989

Mr. Kandiah of Idaikkadu a retired principal of the former Teachers' Training College at Thinrievily and resided near the Farm School. At 6.30 in the morning, when he had barely risen, loud gun fire resounded near his house. It transpired later that the LTTE had fired at an IPKF patrol wounding some men. The LTTE got away and the soldiers went back after scouting around briefly.

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Sometime later a larger party returned and searched the area finding empty cartridges under a mango tree in Mr. . Kandiah's house. Mr. Karidiah and a young man boarded with him were badly beaten. The man, advanced in years, tried to protest that he was helpless if someone climbed a tree in his house before dawn, when all were asleep, and used the covert position to shoot at passer by, but to no avail. Mr.Kandiah closed up and has gone to live indaikkadu.

INCIDENT AT ATCHUVELI 5TH FEBRUARY 1989

On the morning of 5th February gunmen fired at a minibus carrying passengers to Jaffna. Five died on the spot and five others were admitted to the Jaffna Teaching Hospital with severe injuries. Although no one has openly admitted responsibility for this act, the circumstances clearly point to the identity of the gunmen.

An EPRLF meeting was scheduled to take place at Atchuvveli on this day. Several important leaders of EPRLF were expected to address the gathering. Gunmen were waiting in the vicinity of the road near the Industrial area. Many farmers at work had seen them and were aware of their identity. At the same time there was a rumour spreading amongst those passing through Atchuvveli that the passenger vans were being diverted to the place where the meeting was arranged. This particular van (29 SRI 2946) was going to Jaffna from Point Pedro through Valvettitural and Thondamanaru. The driver heard this rumour on the way and decided not to go through Atchuvveli and took a different route, From the Thondamanaru road, instead of going straight towards Atchuvveli he turned into a byroad through which he crossed the Vasavilan road and went into the Industrial Area. The passenger van then became the target of automatic fire. One farmer saw a gunman shooting at the van with his automatic weapon. The gunmen left and rumours soon spread to the effect that EPPLF had shot and killed bus passengers. These were believed or disbelieved depending on one's sympathies. Those who believed it, talked about it with faltering assurance, until they ceased to talk about it at all.

The dead included a mother (Sarojinithevi, VVT) and her son (Kamalathas) whose husband (Rajavdu) and two daughters (Vasuki and Pamini) were among the injured. S. Arulampalam(VVT), .Selvaratnam(VVT) and M. Thevarani(Chunnagam) also lost their lives. Among other injured are S. Jeganathan(Point Fedro) and T.Suthakaran(VVT).

It is reported that the van concerned was sometimes taken from the owner and used by the EPRLF. Only one gunman was seen firing at the van. Evidently, it was soon realised that a mistake had been made.

Election Day:15th February 1989 :Rocketed To Vote

About 8.00 a.m., an IPKF convoy was proceeding from the polling station at Yarlton College, Lighthouse road, Karainagar, towards Jaffna, when it was fired at by a group of 4 LTTE men. The area was bristling with the IPKF and immediately there was indiscriminate return fire from various points. A member of the university resident in the area, promptly busied himself getting the three generations of inhabitants under cover as bullets ricocheted around. One rocket exploded at his entrance flinging some of its lethal contents onto his baby's cot which was empty at that time. Another rocket fell without exploding. When things were quiet, some militants operating with the

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IPKF came there. When he pointed to the unexploded rocket, they said that it was from their side and brought some IPKF men to take it away. Then an Indian officer came with a beaming smile and invited the members of the house to cast their vote. The university man replied indignantly, pointing to the traces of missiles, “ You almost killed us and now you want us to vote?”. He later went alone to vote leaving the elders at home. At the polling booth, a young man told him, We know who you are, vote for such a symbol”. Inside he was told by an election official, “ Vote for the Elephant”. “No”, he thought, I shall vote for the Rocket, and for more of them”.

The mood for the elections was neither free, fair nor voluntary. Many voters who were not registered close by, went to some station and requested that the assigned finger be stained with ‘carbon ink so that they could-claim to have voted.

At Udupiddy, an area which was considered supportive of one group was placed under curfew by another group. At Myliddy, an area with a heavy armed presence, but not in general considered supportive of a particular group, voted apparently for good neighbourly relations.

The LTTE fired in the vicinity of polling stations at Kokkuvil Tech., Maviddapuram and in several parts of Vadamaratchi. The first resulted in panic at the ‘ university boys’ hostel, from near which the LTTE had fired. One student who left the hostel to contact the IPKF was detained and tortured. At Maviddapuram, a boy from a house nearby was taken away by the IPKF. At the time of writing, the mother had been unable to trace her son. At Point Pedro, a retired surveyor who went, to past his vote in nearby booth was killed in crossfire.

At Usan, the LTTE fired into the air from 8.00 — 9.00 a.m. to discourage voters. Next the IPKF arrived and fired into the air from 10.00 - 11.00 a.m and knocked on doors. Voting was brisk in the afternoon. In the environs of Jaffna town, the voting was brisk as well as voluntary.

There were a number of reports of persons receiving unused polling cards from one group and voting for another group. There were so many factors at work, that it would be futile to quantify the extent of irregularity.

Death Of Mr. Anirthalingam, Newspaper Proprietor 1st February 1989

Mr. Amirthalingam, a District Land Officer, was a UNP candidate at the 1977 General Elections. He later became the founder proprietor of the ‘Eelarnurasu’, a daily which successfully caught up with its more established competitor, the ‘Eelanadu’. The editor of the ‘Eelamurasu’ left, apparently owing to some differences with the management towards the fall of 1986, to become the first editor of the ‘Murusoli’; a paper closely identified with the LTTE, then rising to sole dominance. By the end of 1986, the LTTE had taken over the ‘Eelamurasu’ as a kind of official organ. With some political supervision, the same staff was retained. An inside source said that Mr. Amirthalingam received some money in payment for the takeover.

It may be recalled that the IPKF raid on the ‘Eelamurasu’ and ‘Murusoli’ marked the commencement of the offensive in Oct. 1987, following which journalists and workers from these establishments were detained. Mr. Amirthalingam was also detained for alleged collusion with the LTTE, although he evidently had no control over matters. He was then under pressure from the IPKF to restart, the Eelamurasu. Such a message was communicated to all proprietors of journals. Reluctance stemmed from multiple sources of covert censorship in place of the one which had existed.

Amirthalingam was too experienced a man not to have realised that the LTTE would have been sensitive to the manning of its flagship by other hands, albeit under its legally recognised proprietor. What, if anything, passed between him and the LTTE is not known. The paper was due to come out on the fateful Saturday. All arrangements were complete. Different pages had been printed at different presses. Only the front page was to be printed. Mr. Amirthalingam was shot dead as he went home for lunch.

Murunkan Mid - February 1989

A boy sitting for his G.C.E(O/L)'s, was proceeding from Colombo to his home in Arippu, by van to sit for his examinations, when he was detained at Murunkan by the EPRLF. He was carrying Rs.46,000/- which his father's business partner in Colombo was remitting to his father. Arippu is a fishing village on the mainland coast, south of Mannar. Two ladies from Arippu who were in the van told the boy's parents of what had happened. When the parents went to Murunkan and inquired, both the IPKF and the EPRLF denied having detained the boy. Another person who was also detained in the EPRLF camp that night said later that he had heard a single shot in the night. When the IPKF came over and inquired, a reply was given that a wild animal had been fired at. The body of the boy was recovered from the jungle several days later. It was said that if the ladies travelling with the boy had appealed, it would have been difficult to harm the boy.

Polonnaruwa:2nd March 1989:Death Of John Selvarajah

It had been reported that about 200 Sinhalese civilians living in areas bordering the North - East had been during February. In the last of the killings near Polonnaruwa 40 Sinhalese men, women and children are said to have been killed in a gruesome manner.

John Selvaraja (46) was librarian for the public library at Batticaloa and was in charge of the branch of Christa Seva Ahram at Kiran. He had written a book on Batticaloa and both his work and character were highly commended. After visiting his family at Navalay in Jaffna, he set off for Kiran on 1st March. The CTB bus was turned back at Habarana owing to the tense situation. He returned to Vavuniya and took a private van the following morning, thinking it was safe enough. At Polonnaruwa, the Tamil passengers were ordered to get down by thugs and were attacked. His body was found lying in a gutter. Later it had been dumped in a cemetery. The Police recovered the body and it was brought back to Navalay for burial, almost a week later, in highly decomposed state. Four other bodies were said to be in the Polonnaruwa mortuary when friends from Batticaloa went there for the body. The IPKF had escorted them to the border of the North — East, and the Sri Lankan STF then escorted them 20 miles inside.

The Death Of N. Sabaratnam, Karainagar:11th March 1989

Mr. Sabaratnam (63) was a benign figure in Karainagar. A retired teacher, he was a familiar figure at local functions, at most of which he spoke. The title of 'Viththuvan' from Annamalai university was a mark of his linguistic facility. He had an intimate knowledge of Karainagar, including the lineage of all its residents. This made him the natural choice when an occasion demanded an orator. He owned a printing press which naturally enough printed booklets and invitations connected with functions. He did the proof-reading himself, giving a good service with his personal touch. He got his customers, but it was money well spent. Many temples counted him a member of their board of trustees. As president of the local citizens' committee, he was accessible at all times and would readily accompany those wanting help to the IPKF camp even at

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10.00 p.m., when others dare not stir. Local residents say that his weakness -were to do with publicity and money. With this slight reservation, people 'generally regarded him with personal affection.

There was also a feeling that Mr. Sabaratnam had got too close to the IPKF for his own good. When Thileepan's death anniversary was observed in Karainagar on 26th September 1988, Mr. Sabaratnam had offered to garland the IPKF colonel who called. But saluting an LTTE hero and garlanding the IPKF just metaphorically describes what a large number of public men do in Jaffna, and is hardly something to be taken amiss. He is said to have taken an understanding attitude to IPKF's fence burning. Stories did get around that he was party to financial deals concerning detainees where the beneficiaries were himself and the IPKF. In the absence of evidence, this must be treated as gossip. Perhaps his reputed weaknesses contributed to such talk. The LTTE did suspect that he had passed on information and is said to have warned him at least on two occasions.

He was abducted on 8th March. During his 3 days of detention, he was seen being conveyed on a motorcycle. His screams asking whether no one could help him were also heard. But people were afraid. Information went quickly both ways in Karainagar. The new LTTE cadres in Karainagar were not local, and hence less approachable. If the IPKF found out that someone had contacted the LTTE, this too may cause trouble. At length some persons did approach the LTTE and pleaded with them to warn Sabaratnam if they wished, but not to kill him. This was not acceded to. It was thought that the LTTE kept him for 3 days in order to test public reactions. Mr. Sabaratnam was shot dead on 11th March.

His funeral was well attended and the grief was said to be deeply felt. One speaker said, Mr. Sabaratnam was a good man who had helped so many and had relieved their distress. But he had taken a liking for sweets."

The LTTE is said to have been concerned about its high casualty rate in Karainagar. This can be explained in part by the fact that Karainagar is an island. Mr. Sabaratnam is described as an enigma, there being few others like him. He could be seen dressed in immaculate white and looking fresh, almost simultaneously at four-different weddings. He was also bold. At the height of the IPKF offensive around Karainagar in early November 1987, he had accompanied 3 ladies to a funeral in Jaffna, and had received a bullet wound in his thigh.

A disappearance

Mullaitivu: 23rd December 1987

The disappearance given below relates the experience of an ordinary woman in those parts whose husband went missing. The experience is relevant as military operations are still going on there and information is scarce.

Deceased: Sinnaththambi Pillainayagan

Unit 4, Yogapuram; Mullavi (Near Oddusuddan)

Place of incident: Mullaitivu.

Mr. Pillainayagam.(Age 57) went to the People's Bank in Mullaitivu on 23rd December 1987 to withdraw some money he had in that bank.

When he reached Mullaitivu it was after 3 p.m. The bank was closed at that time. Hoping to go to the bank the following day he was going to stay the night with his nephew who was staying close to the town of Mullaitivu.

He was going that way without knowing that the people from that area had been evacuated by the IPKF at that *time* and the area had been cordoned off.

It is said that he was shot dead by the army personnel in an ambush. When it was inquired of the people who were close to that area, this is what they told his wife who went in search of her husband after a few days, as he had not returned.

All the attempts to assert his death were in vain. His wife has approached the IPKF officials concerned but she was harassed many times, not receiving proper information about his death or arrest.

She was tired of going to the IPKF camp and stopped going there after she had heard from the people. that her husband was shot dead and burnt by the army. -

His wife Parvathippillai Pillainayegam is now undergoing great hardship to maintain her family.

Since the mysterious death of her husband she had become the breadwinner of the family. Invariably she finds it difficult to manage her children with the meagre income she gets iron new land. She is now 53 veers of age and is sickly.

Of their children two girls got married to boys related to them, recently. She has to share her small plot of land the only source of her income, with her daughters who received part of it as dowry.

One daughter named Sugantha (13 yin.) and the youngest, the only son (15 yrs.) are the other dependents.

They are schooling in their village school. In a rural area such as their ' they can not expect help even from their relatives. Everyone has to eke out their existence and live from hand to mouth. She says that she still had not received anything from the Government or from non Governmental Organisations in the form of relief or assistance.

The General Elections And The Tamil Speaking People

Sri Lanka had witnessed one of its long expected, yet undramatic parliamentary elections on the 15th February 1989. After eleven years of blunder and plunder the common people of Sri Lanka were given a chance to paint their little fingers with carbon ink.

The election was a fair and just one in the eyes of the people who wanted it to be so. Even the internationally reputed Election Monitoring Committee had expressed their firm of commitment would be more appropriate. He had said that "this election is a fair and democratic one, just like an

The impact of the oncoming Parliamentary Election the Tamil speaking people of the North and East was not very dramatic. For a member of tradition bound Jaffna community the election hinted a way out of political and economic lethargy. For an academic it promised entertainment for their otherwise dull and humdrum lives. And for the more mobilised and activist youth of the North it was only a stumbling block in the path to “absolute freedom”. Although there were mixed feelings about the approaching elections it is true to say that it suggested a hint of entertainment for the otherwise bored community. The excessive precautionary methods taken by the IPKF and the present government of North and East too gave an undue importance to the oncoming elections.

The parties which contested in the North and East to capture the seats provided yet another chance to test the mood of the people. Apart from the traditional UNP and ACTC the other parties and their members provided further entertainment to the observers. The EPRLF, ENDLF, TULF coalition was a remarkable example for the changing trends in the Sri Lanka politics.

The pre—election mood of the people of the North and East and the difficulties they faced regarding the elections should be taken into account before any type of analysis can be done. It is more explicit that the people of the East faced a more complex and paradoxical situation than the Northerners. The ethnic composition. of the East would have entailed grave consequences in the wake any ill—considered action. The East contained a fair share of Sinhalese and Muslims and this multi—ethnicity made it clear that neither the LTTE nor the Indian government could play it cool and safe as they did in the North. Though the cities like Blatticaloa and Trincomalee suffered severely under the Sri Lankan government, the IPKF ‘s actions towards this province appear to be more calculated and carefully planned when compared to the North.

With such a background the parliamentary elections were looked upon as a possible means for survival for the ordinary people of the East. For they felt that it would be suicidal not to participate in the elections. To prohibit the people from participating in elections in the Eastern province was interpreted by many as LTTE’s immaturity in politics and lack of strategy. In this regard the warning put out by them by way of posters were simply cast aside.

But the Northerners showed more attention to these posters not because they reject the present political trends, but because they were disturbed by the conduct of the present provincial government and the IPKF. It should be taken into account that the recent fratricide, and homicide committed by all parties concerned had led the Tamils to the end of their tether.

All they wanted was a way out. Though the civilians of the North wanted to take part in the elections it should not be believed that they were very interested in the so called democratic process. Though almost 75% of the people were not keen supporters of LTTE; it cannot be denied that they admire them and still have a soft corner for that movement. It can be said that many parts of the North -were kept in a kind of euphoria because they were protected from the army for a brief period in 1986. Though all the movements did their share in keeping the Sri Lankan army in the barracks, the LTTE got most of the credit, particularly after eliminating the ether groups.

Therefore it can be said that the people were more in sympathy with the LT TE, than with any other movement. The undisciplined and inconsiderate behaviour of the IPKF and groups allied to it had tended to develop pro—LTTE feelings amongst the people of North. Therefore the ban on elections by the LTTE would have been successful for reasons of both consent and fear if its not for the role of the EROS. But to the average man, the EROS and its motives have always been a crossword puzzle.

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It should be mentioned that the intellectualist image of the EROS too had a profound impact on the people of North and East. The Tamils place a very high value on education and qualifications and it is said that by manipulating this false value, the EROS had articulated itself as some highly sophisticated saviours of the oppressed Tamils. Apart from this reputation, the EROS has had an impact on the estate Tamils too. But, above all these it cannot be denied that the EROS had placed its confidence more on tactics than on principles. For in the past the EROS had time and again showed that its main concern was with tactical survival. Some should like to call this type of politics opportunism. Many felt that when the Tamil people needed strong and principled leadership which can stand for truth and justice, even on a superficial level, the EROS had failed them. Not only were they afraid to speak out on specific issues but they were quite diplomatic about their statements too. Whenever there was a well publicised violation of human rights, the EROS had surreptitiously kept silent, or gave out vague statements like 'we generally condemn such acts which might hinder the growth of the struggle for freedom'. Many activists who faced the brunt of the LTTE's actions felt in this regard, that they can appreciate the stand taken by the EPRLF on a number of occasions. Because when the LTTE embarked on its 'purifying process' by eliminating other groups, the EPRLF had raised its voice in protest, but the EROS had almost kept quiet. The recent disappearing of an eminent Tamil human rights activist and social worker, Mr. Kanthasamy of the TRRO, too points an accusing finger at the EROS. Though incriminating evidence pointing at the EROS was made public after Kanthasamy's disappearance, the EROS did not make any attempt to clarify its role. It is often wondered; in making a virtue of tactical survival, the EROS like many other organisations seems to have failed to ask: Survival for what? For the good of the people?

With such a background it will be simplistic to attribute the success of EROS to its credibility. If we have a closer look at the pre and post election mood of the Tamil speaking people, we can conclude that the success of EROS arose from two different factors. In the North, the rumour that LTTE was supporting EROS's contest in the elections, had definitely left an imprint on the minds of the people. For the public knew that the IPKF and the present Provincial Council administration would ensure that the public did participate in the elections. On the other side the LTTE had put up posters about death sentences to those who would participate in the elections. But, the last minute rumour of LTTE supporting the EROS had clearly shown a way out of the paradoxical situation. The result was the immense majority of the EROS.

Implications For Human Rights

For those concerned with human rights, it is relevant to ask what these elections have done for the quality of democratic life, so that there can be public *discussion* of the pressing questions raised by human rights violations? The answer is that the elections made no impact, except in helping to institutionalise such violations. It is said that a new leadership has emerged, although this claim would be meaningless unless such questions could be addressed. There were well known violations on election day itself; The huts of a community of some of the poorest of people were burnt at Kokkuvil barely a week after the elections, the people having been prevented from rescuing their meagre cash savings at gun point; People are used as shields; They are routinely subject to all kinds of hurt and humiliation; Shelling continues to claim its toll. None of these have been condemned by any section of the new or even the old leadership. The section of the new leadership which was present at the hut burning has even benevolently announced plans for rehabilitating the victims through the press.

The very pressing question of killings of Sinhalese civilians in border areas (nearly 200 in February) is being treated as a none issue. The editorial dismissal of the issue by a local daily could only serve to blunt public sensibilities on the matter. It quoted an allegation attributed to the JVP that Sri

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Lankan forces were themselves responsible and left it at that. The fact remains that no Tamil political force and no Tamil group with a record of killing Sinhalese civilians, apart from denials, has come forward to condemn such killings and take a moral stand on the matter. All human experience which motivated consciousness of human rights, declares unequivocally that there can be no dignity, freedom or self-determination for the Tamils, unless the Sinhalese are treated as fellow beings deserving of the same. Such irresponsibility, coupled with reprisals against Tamils even on a minor scale, would only ensure the need for foreign protectors at a heavy, and morally debilitating price.

The inability to voice concern for human rights is a pitiful comment on the utter debasement of Tamil political life. Perhaps, given their past records, none of the Tamil groups wish to rock the boat by talking about human rights. It also represents the extent to which they have, been compromised by their past. The EROS which the elections brought into prominence is yet to explain the outrageous public killing of Kathiramalai, considering that people have generally attributed higher standards to them. For is it explained how the 'Murasoli' published on its front page on 12th July 1933, an alleged statement by the 'Pasrai' group in which it accepted responsibility for the disappearance of K. Kanthasamy and for the threatening of the former Vice Chancellor of the University of Jaffna. The Pasarai was a defunct group whose former members were unarmed and were living in fear. These are the vicious methods of our new democracy where ordinary people are accorded neither respect nor credit for intelligence.

This brings us to the bizarre nature of General Elections in the North, which is undoubtedly a reflection of its political life. Any party which wanted to give credibility to the elections as a means providing a new leadership should have demanded that they be free and fair, as the Opposition in the South had done. Killings of candidates and intimidation of contestants by the LTTE should have been condemned. The EROS did nothing of that kind. It even went through the motions of withdrawing from the contest. Then it reappeared three days before the polling under an aura of mystery, and walked away with the mantle of a new leadership. Local wags have likened it to a pupil walking away with the attendance prize after coming to school just on the last day.

Further evidence of the poverty of placing tactics before principle follows from the EROS's manifesto. It said in effect that the main enemy remains the Sri Lankan government, which through its wiles had tricked the LTTE and India into enmity. Apart from being a poor comment on both India and the LTTE, it is a charming formula for being nice to both of them at the same time. But, it does not touch on the predicament of the Tamils. It could however lead to campaigns of boating dead horses which could tickle hearts. The EROS has demanded the repeal of the Sixth Amendment as a condition for its members sitting in parliament. The truth is that the amendment which banned politics of separatism as a means to safeguard the country's sovereignty is a non-issue after the arrival of Indian forces. Even if one grants that the issue has symbolic value, the EROS has failed to take up far more pressing matters.

Unless the political forces amongst Tamils find the courage to come clean before the people on past errors and make a firm commitment to human rights, the desultory show will go on. They will continue to exude a false sense of power, giving out false hopes which vanish like bubbles. The people will deteriorate confused and volatile. Their accredited leaders having no base in a robust community will in the final analysis remain mere actors whose roles are interchangeable or even dispensable. All the skeletons in their cupboards will be rattled to keep them in thrall. (The IPKF did take a keen interest in the Kanthasamy affair).

In conclusion, it could be said that the Provincial and Parliamentary elections did throw up persons into positions of leadership. It is better not to talk about legitimacy, because it is a loaded term, and the conditions for its use do not exist. They can choose to do something constructive if they wish.

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Their performance so far does not give this confidence.

Incident at Thirunelveli: Bomb attack on the IPKF and its sequel:

21st — 23rd February 1987

The 21st Tuesday February, around 9.30 P.M there was an explosion of a cylinder bomb at Palaly Road near Thinneveli farm. According local sources one soldier died and four were injured. On the following morning the whole area *was* cordoned off and people were asked to gather at various places. Two youths were assaulted very badly in front of the people and one died on the scene. Nearly 30 youths were arrested by the IPKF and later most of them were released.

On the same night at about 9.30 P.M. the people living in a colony near Potpathy Road heard some gun shots.

On the 23rd the IPKF along with the CVF brought the boy who was taken into custody on the 22nd round up and ordered the boy to identify the LTTE supporters and also show places where they' had stored arms. The IPKF asked the people to come out and set fire to the huts. The people who begged to go and collect their belongings and hard earned money were forcibly stopped from approaching the huts which were still not set on fire. Altogether 23 houses were burned down and 43 families were affected. Most of them work as casual labourers and now they are accommodated at St. Joseph's, Roman Catholic Church as refugees. The only allegation made by the IPKF is that the LTTE cadres have been around that area.

According to local sources, one girl from that area is being held by the CRPF (women's division) on the charge of having supplied food to the LTTE IPKF patrols had been occasionally provoked from the surrounding coconut groves, sometimes by the firing of crackers. The resort to such drastic collective punishment against a community representing the poorest of this society) is a tragic comment on the political wisdom that is being exercised. There is no evidence of widespread support for the LTTE from that community. Such communities formed the natural support base of the EPRLF before its disbandment by the LTTE. After the IPKF's October 1987 offensive, persons from such colonies have been assassinated on suspicion by the LTTE. This makes it all the more ironical that the EPRLF was present and party to the hut burning.

Perhaps out of belated realisation, the EPRLF led provincial government announced relief for the victims in a press statement, but was slow to move.

Local sources said that the Roman Catholic Church found funds with which to put up. structures and roofs for new huts. The victims agreed to find material for the sides. As this offer was to be executed, the EROS came in with an offer to build entire houses. On the problems faced by communities which once formed the support base of the EPRLF, it may be worthwhile recalling the death of Mr. Daniel, a Cement Corporation employee.

Soon after the disbandment of the EPRLF in December 1986, many *of* the low ranking cadres who had been left in the lurch took refuge in such villages, and the mood amongst women and elders was often defiant. The LTTE was sensitive enough not to attempt to enter several such areas for a long time. After the IPKF offensive, within a year, the LTTE's priority changed to one of survival, from wanting to rule with an acceptable image. Daniel was from an area near Pandeteruppu where the EPRLF was once strong. Shortly after the October 1987 offensive, the LTTE buried a sizeable

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quantity of arms under Daniel's vegetable patch. Daniel's only option, if he had known, was to keep quiet in the hope that the arms would be moved elsewhere. Early in 1988, an arrested LTTE associate brought the IPKF and showed them the arms. Daniel was taken by the IPKF from the KKS cement factory. In the evening his family was told that he had been released. Next morning, his dead body was found near Villan junction.

Such brutality, combined with insensitivity and a refusal to understand local conditions, no doubt cost the *IPXF* dearly in the long run. It is even sadder when militant groups who are from this soil take after the IPKF in their attitudes to people.

THE UNIVERSITY

In the aftermath of the October war amidst the feeling near complete collapse (structurally, functionally and spiritually), the University community was ready to clutch at any straw. Thus, unlike in the past the university community was ready to listen to arguments for non partisan attitudes and collective action. The first moves to assert institutional self-will, and collective activity started against the currents of the external situation of IPKF's pervasive presence and terror, LTTE's boycott campaign and the internally debilitating culture of patronage. It was also felt that the University should not only put forward its case, but also the case of the larger community, especially in instances of human rights violations. Though at first these suggestions were viewed with antipathy, the reality of the entwined destinies of the University as a community and the voiceless of ordinary people convinced the majority.

Moreover, the realisation of our position became clear when we started regular sessions. The problems that our students and employees faced became part of everyday life of the institution. This led the University community to organise and act with its limitations of its members. This process led to much disagreement, as well as debate. It was held by many that the principal aim of the University was to survive, and must therefore desist from getting involved with problems of the wider community. Concentrating only on problems specific to the University. The view that finally held sway was that: Survival for its own sake was meaningless unless it was survival for the good of the community. We could not therefore separate ourselves from it. Moreover, outside our narrow walls we too were ordinary citizens.

Discussions also took place with the officials of the IPKF to insist on some procedures in the event of detention of persons from the University: for example, communication with University authorities, the right of the University to represent and to be listened to. Though the IPKF officials agreed, their compliance with the procedure was somewhat capricious and in many instances grudgingly done. Even the little hearing given was due to our continual insistence on these rights, and persistent representations. These efforts helped in creating an atmosphere of dignity for the institution and the University community.

Concurrently we strove to strengthen our unions, tried to organize our energies to approach problems in a wider context. One could not say that the going was easy. Past experiences, mistrust, in built frustrations and prejudice were in the way of coming together. Again reality proved that moves in this direction were our only hope of survival.

On another but complementary direction we started a process of self criticism through dialogue and discussion and tried to re-examine our past and look into future — not directed by fear, but by fundamental principles of justice to the people. Thus we were critical of local militant groups, both with regards to their

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terror and murder as well as of the actions that create the conditions resulting in wanton, purposeless sacrifice of ordinary people.

The IPKF And The University: Walking The Tight Rope

It is within such an atmosphere one should view life in the University. One would not be wrong in surmising that the IPKF in its bid to portray a return to normalcy and democracy would try to preserve a semblance of cordiality in its relationship with the University. Contrarily, our students and employees when arrested were always beaten up, and invariably tortured. Sessions of detention and torture running into days were instituted on the basis of charges that ranged from possession of Rs. 2,500/ to dust and oil marks on their shifts. Though there are an infinite number of possibilities & for such impressions of culpability, the IPKF seemed to cling onto simply on concept — that is, all University students are one of tigers, potential tigers or potential sources of information; and thus torture paid.

Moreover, the experiences of University delegations that represented the interests of the detained gives a grasp of the attitude of the Indian army.

Running In Circles

Though the procedure negotiated with IPKF should have enabled the University to obtain information regarding detention and the location of detention without much difficulty, the reality was exactly the opposite. Hardly ever were we informed, moreover, when we tried to locate the detained we were sent from pillar to post. We have faced the extremely frustrating process of circulating among the various camps in the Jaffna district before hitting the correct target. These detention camps invariably would be ones we had visited before, but on our first visits the officers, suppressed or denied knowledge of detention. And when a visit to the camp where the individual is confined is made, the delegation is made to hang around for hours together; meeting with a responsible official to make our case known - one of the most difficult tasks. Furthermore some times, while still holding on to the person, (either in the camp or after transferring to another camp) they would even claim that the person had been released. It is our past experience with IPKF which made us wary of such stories and this made us continue to insist on information.

This process of running round in circle starts in the morning and goes well into the evening and usually for two, three days continuously. And when the person is ultimately released we know the entire saga is ridiculous, and while we were being warded off and moved around those detained were being tortured, often information of the delegation's visits are given to those detained.

The tactic of non-cooperation along with withholding of information, and duplicity in dealings seem nothing but a ploy to exhaust our energies and frustrate our efforts. This shows the lack of regard for the University. If such a key institution is treated thus the suffering of ordinary civilians in such situations need not be explained.

The approach of elections brought about a sharp increase in the arrests and torture of students.

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Prelude To The Parliamentary Elections Deaths Of Students

During the period preceding the parliamentary elections the entire community experienced an escalation of tension, e.g. incident at Hindu College etc. The University and the area around experienced a worsening of relations and intensification of tensions. One could sense the anger in the army as the University became the only institution that had *not* buckled under their intimidation or smooth talking.

The internal politics of the community was also becoming more brutal. The frustration and vindictiveness brought forth a rash of desperate actions which did not take into account the life of ordinary people. 1st of Feb. incident at the University (see report) was typical of IPKF's attitude. The incident on the 2nd of Feb. occurred because it was a university. A peaceful sit-in became adhoc demonstration, but still peaceful. The two students died and 10 were injured because IPKF's tactics never changed and their attitude towards people did not even motivate them to genuinely construct institutions and procedures to handle civilian situations such as protests.

The days following the deaths revealed the attitude of Indian Government and its agencies to the situation in Tamil areas of Sri Lanka.

The IPKF

Discussions with the top brass of IPKF, revealed their total lack of thought on matters relating to civilian situations. Furthermore, the indiscriminate reprisals on the civilian population following disturbances were not even acknowledged as a permissible routine, but blamed on the civilians as a consequence of the ingratitude of the population. Though, the Brigadier in charge gave us permission to publish our statement on the incident, it was surreptitiously suppressed. Therefore our statement had to be produced illegally. The statement of the University students teachers and employees is an impartial and critical of the IPKF as well as being self-critical. It had been hailed by everybody concerned as an important and courageous document for its critical attitude not only towards the IPKF but towards all militant groups, the LTTE inclusive. But the IPKF banned it. The irony is that no meeting of the IPKF with the civilians population goes without expressions of reprimand and bitterness about the non committal attitude of the population to the LTTE's provocation. When a public document, airing the voices of the community is produced, which is honest and impartial - it gets suppressed. How can one dream of democracy with such ignorance?

The Indian Political Apparatus

The Vice - Chancellor of the University after his investigations, sent a report to the High Commissioner of India. The reply to it by the first secretary was a curt dismissal. Not only of the protest but the Vice - Chancellors account of the incident itself. First secretary letter claimed that it had its own investigation and from it, it had found the IPKF's conduct satisfactory.

However, the worst part was the lack of even a note of sadness in the letter, and the discourtesy displayed to a letter by a highly respectable public official from one of the highest seats of learning in this country.

The Indian Media

The Indian radio which reported the incident gave a twisted version and changing story day by day.

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However, its report on the day of the fast by the University students held to commemorate the dead students was a classic. The radio announced that the Jaffna University students were fasting in a dispute with the University administration and that the secretary general .of EPRLF Pathmanabha was negotiating between the parties !

These attitudes convinced the University community of the Indian Government's contempt for this community; It also showed the arrogance with which India took for granted the Tamil peoples' passive and subdued acceptance of any kind of position taken by India vis--a vis the Tamil people of Sri Lanka.

Ever since then, there has been a growing sense of ugliness in IPKF's dealings with the University. It was one of animosity, with charges of the university being a second golden temple and with accusations of its harbouring the Tigers. They seemed adamant in holding the simplistic view of the entire student community as supporters of LTTE. Though the IPKF continued to say that they would keep their word by staying clear of the premises, they mounted a campaign of insidious harassment, and detention of students - most of the occasions of detention being for 2 - 3 days and torture seemed to be administered on very flimsy charges. The rationale seemed ultimately the fact that they were Jaffna University students nothing less, nothing more.

The officers talking in smooth English, while outwardly proposing to defuse the situation, were actively or deliberately building up an irrational fear about the University and creating a generalized attitude of suspicions and hatred regarding students. Sadly such feelings were building up when the University as a collective body was taking a courageous stand not only regarding the IPKF but also concerning all the militant groups, inclusive of LTTE. While the misconception by the IPKF can hardly be understood it could only result in fostering a situation of crisis which would result in inordinate violence.

As alluded to in the earlier part of this account, the University community as a collective body made a determined effort to clarify issues at community level. Questions of building for legitimate freedom, importance of a long term perspective, self dependence, in contrast to short term goals, propaganda coups subjugation were all openly discussed. Arising from these positions there were pleas for greater commitment to the people and their institutions as well as social accountability from the internal forces. But to date we see little progress in any direction from IPKF and the local militant groups.

Therefore at present, we know we are standing at the edge of a precipice. The authority of a university cannot stem from compulsion. Particularly in an environment that has experienced much social and physical destruction, it remains the task of the University to offer honestly and courageously alternative ideas that can alter the destructive trend. If this long term goal is lost sight of and the University is treated as an embarrassment on one hand as a security risk on the other, it betokens ill for everyone concerned.

Death of Manivannan: Polonnaruwa: 1st March 1989

A ray of hope amidst despair

K.Manivannan(22+),a 2nd year Agricultural Faculty student of the University of Batticaloa and a resident of Naval, was battered to death off Polonnaruwa on 1st March.

He had set off from Trinco, where he had gone to. visit his kith and kin, by *CTB* bus to Batticaloa.

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The bus did not go beyond a certain point as a hartal had been declared at Polonnaruwa in observance of the death of Sinhalese villagers who had been slaughtered a few days earlier, allegedly by Tamil militants.

Instead of turning back to Trinco, Manivannan got into a private lorry which was proceeding to Batticaloa. The others in the lorry were 2 Muslim youths and a young Muslim girl, all from Trinco, proceeding to Batticaloa, but not known to each other.

Of f Polonnaruwa, the lorry was stopped by a gang of thugs. Tamils *were* asked to get down. Manivannan got down. He was surrounded by the gang who started hitting him with clubs. He was answering in English and they dubbed him a Kottiya(Tiger). The Muslim youths jumped out of the lorry and boarded a private mini which was passing by at that time. Manivannan also broke away from the gang that was belabouring him and managed to cling on to the footboard of the mini which by now, was gathering speed. The Muslim girl came running behind and appealed for help. Manivannan got off the footboard to help her get in. But the driver of the mini fearful of the gang which had gathered. drove off leaving Manivannan and the Muslim girl stranded.

The gang hit the Muslim girl on the head and she fell down. Manivannan started running into a lane, unfortunately a lane where the bodies of some Sinhalese victims of the militant slaughter were being kept, prior to burial. He was assaulted there too, He ran into a house and asked for water. This was refused on the grounds that he was a Kottiya(Tiger). Some doused him with petrol and attempted to set him on fire.

In the meantime, a Police patrol had picked up the injured Muslim girl, who was taken to Polonnaruwa hospital. There she had given information about what had happened to Manivannan. The Police patrol rushed back and was just in time to put out the flames and rush Manivannan to Polonnaruwa hospital. He was alive for about 8 hours, but lack of blood transfusion facilities led to his death. If he had been transferred to a major hospital, he may have had a chance of survival.

The news of his death was conveyed to the Batticaloa University: the students contacted Peradeniya Medical Faculty and a group of medico (both Tamil & Sinhalese) rushed to Polonnaruwa hospital and embalmed the body. The parents went to Trinco and appealed to long — standing Sinhalese friends to help them to get back the body. Two Sinhalese volunteered, went to Polonnaruwa and brought back the body, despite some objection from a section of Sinhalese in Polonnaruwa. The IPKF too was helpful and the body was brought back to Navalay for cremation on the 5th.

In his unbearable grief, the father of Manivannan was not blaming the Sinhalese. He put it down to fate. He took a balanced view and said that he was able to understand the feelings of Sinhalese in that area when their women and children were butchered while sleeping. Few can own up to such nobility.

Help rendered generously by Sinhalese friends and medical students, together with the medical and police services, must be taken as a ray of hope. Manivannan's father had also commended the helpful attitude of the IPKF.

End