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TIGERS AND THE TALKS

INTERVIEW The Eye of the Tiger

Velupillai Pirabhakaran



SHYAM TEKWANI

Colombo's peace initiative is an attempt to hoodwink the world. While talks were on, the military killed innocent Tamils

Newsweek

Pirabhakaran Clarifies LTTE's Stand

Velupillai Pirabhakaran, the Leader and military commander of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, clarifying LTTE's stand on the current peace talks between TULF and Srilanka declared that the Provincial Councils proposals submitted by Jayawardane Government was totally inadequate as a basis for negotiations. In a special interview given to NEWSWEEK (11th August) Pirabhakaran said that the "so-called peace initiative by Jayawardane is an attempt to hoodwink the world. That these negotiations are eyewash is clear from the fact that even while the talks were on the military killed 150 innocent Tamils".

Elaborating further on the Movement's position on negotiated settlement Mr. Pirabhakaran reiterated that the four cardinal principles enunciated at the Thimphu Talks should form the basis for negotiations. These four principles are: 1 The inalienable right to homeland of the Tamil people must be recognised. 2 The people of Tamil Eelam should be recognised as a nationality or a nation of people. 3 The right to national Self-Determination of the Tamils should be recognised. 4 The Plantation Tamils should have their citizenship rights. The LTTE leader emphasised that any framework for a political settlement, "should be worked out incorporating these principles. Then, we will consider negotiations".

Asked about India's opposition to LTTE's political goal of establishing an independent state of Tamil Eelam Mr. Pirabhakaran said: "The world is constantly changing. So is politics. We rely on the hope that changing circumstances will finally lead to India's recognition of our struggle. India has recognised various liberation movements. At a later

stage India may be compelled to recognise us as it did the P.L.O. and SWAPO". On the call for India's military intervention Mr. Pirabhakaran explained that it was unnecessary since LTTE commands a fighting force capable of dealing with Srilankan military. He also said that India's military intervention may allow other international forces to meddle in Srilanka and create chaos. Questioned about the possibility of direct talks between himself and Jayawardane, the LTTE leader commented that it is possible, "but only on the question of demarcation of our boundaries as two separate nations".

Mr. Pirabhakaran further said that discipline, personal morality and national patriotism are the essential attributes of the LTTE guerrillas and these qualities have helped to develop the Liberation Tigers as the most powerful and the leading national freedom movement of Tamils. The LTTE is strong enough to confront the Srilankan army and capable of carrying on a protracted guerrilla warfare, he said.

Democracy and Socialism

It is generally assumed that democracy and socialism are antagonistic concepts denoting two different mutually contradictory political systems. But in its original meaning both democracy and socialism are complementary conceptualisations denoting a rational political society where people have the right and power to decide their own political destiny. Then, how does this difference arise? What gave rise to this misconception? We can only assume that what is practised as democracy in western capitalist world and what is practised as socialism in the communist world has given rise to a misconception that democracy and socialism are mutually contradictory political projects. Let us examine this most closely.

The concept of democracy in its original Greek meaning implied the power of the people or rather the rule of the people. In its long historical path extended to more than two thousand years the concept of democracy has attained multiple meanings and has installed itself into a definite political practice in the Western capitalist social formations. Today, democracy denotes a variety of freedoms and rights guaranteeing the participation of all citizens in organising and directing the affairs of the community. Democracy upholds the principles of liberty, equality and justice. It upholds the freedom of thought, expression and belief. It upholds the freedom of press, the freedom of association and the freedom of organisation. It advocates elective competition and political pluralism. Democracy, while recognising fundamental rights and liberties of the individual aims at a system based on the sovereignty of the people, aims at a system of Government wholly determined by the people themselves.

As a theoretical construct democracy advances an ideal system of a rational polity, but as practised in Western bourgeois societies the system has miserably failed in realising social and economic justice. The noble principles of democracy are enshrined in the constitutions but what is actually practised under the slogan of democracy is an inhuman system of exploitation and oppression of broad masses, a system that perpetuates a worst form of social and economic inequality. In the name of pluralism, of competing political interests, what emerges is an authoritarian state structure wholly dominated by the bourgeois class. Elective representation as a mode of people's participation is none other than a deceptive practice utilized by the economically dominant classes to assume political power. As a systematic political theory rather as an ideology, democracy mystifies the reality of social contradictions in bourgeois society. As a political practice it represents the interests of the ruling class.

What can be deduced from the political experience of democracy in the western world is that authentic democracy cannot be realised in an exploitative

economic system of the capitalist mode of production. All the freedoms, rights and justice as enunciated in a democratic model become meaningless abstractions as long as the economic structure is founded on a system of social and economic inequality. It is precisely for this reason Marx and Lenin criticised bourgeois democracy as a deception, as a lie.

Authentic democracy can only be realised in a truly socialist social system, where there is no exploitation of man by man; where there is no class antagonism, where the means of production becomes public ownership, where there is social and economic equality. Democracy and socialism are complementary in the sense that each can enhance and develop the other in creating a radical, revolutionary social structure where human development and liberation is possible. Socialist democracy denotes an advanced stage of bourgeois democracy rather than the total negation of the latter.

What we find in some of the countries which have gone through the monumental historical process of socialist experimentation is the outright rejection of democratic liberties as mere bourgeois trash. This is a tragic paradox arising from a total misconception and misinterpretation of what Marxism preaches about authentic democracy and socialist democracy as opposed to bourgeois democracy. The criticism levelled against bourgeois democracy by the great socialist thinkers like Marx and Lenin does not entail a rejection of democracy as such. What they wanted to point out was that true democratic ideals cannot be realised in bourgeois society which is founded on social injustice. But they held the view that democracy in its original meaning as people governing their destiny can only be enhanced and developed in a socialist social formation.

The great historical achievement of socialism is the economic egalitarianism gained through social ownership of production. The liberating effect of such achievement can only be realised when socialism is reinforced by democratic liberties. Economic equality and political freedom are essential attributes of socialist democracy. Socialism without the emancipatory, humanistic ideals of democracy will lead to stateism, bureaucracy and totalitarianism.

We advocate socialist democracy as our political project. By socialist democracy we mean an authentic socialist social system structured on the principles of democratic liberty and social justice; an egalitarian social order where poverty, inequality and injustice are totally eliminated. Where the producers will have democratic control over their production, where the people will enjoy their fundamental rights and liberties and govern their own social, economic and political destiny.

Nelson Mandela; The Spirit of Freedom

One of the most remarkable features of the human world is what would seem to be its almost boundless capacity to perpetrate inhuman practices. The intransigence of the South African State on the subject of freeing the undisputed leader of 30 million oppressed black South Africans is the most poignant example of such inhumanity. Now aged 68 years, Nelson Mandela has spent 24 years of his life behind prison walls. He has emerged as a figure symbolising the enslavement of his oppressed people by the most barbaric and uncivilized practice of apartheid. But he is a man, a great man, embodying the triumph of the human spirit against incalculable adversity for the cause of freedom, justice and equality. The person of Nelson Mandela is locked behind the four walls of Pollsmoor prison in South Africa but the spirit of the man has evoked the conscience of humanity to effect a determined struggle for his freedom, the freedom of all political prisoners in the South Africa and the freedom of his people from the indignity and bondage of the apartheid system.

The Road to Struggle

The depth of Nelson Mandela's commitment to the cause of social justice and freedom of his people runs parallel to the systematic entrenchment of the practice of racism and white domination culminating in the absolute segregation of apartheid South Africa. Mandela was born on 18th July 1918. As a child, ploughing the fields, he learned of the potential of the fertile lands of his people. Listening to the elders of his community narrating stories of legendary heroes he learned of the glory of the African heritage. At school, however, Mandela was shocked to find the history books of the white missionaries depicting his people as savages and cattle thieves. Closer to home he heard of massacres by the whites of people who refused to move off their land.

By the time Mandela reached matriculation standard in the mid 30's racist social policies had profoundly affected the African population and politics was uppermost in his mind. Initially Africans were encouraged to believe that through education they would be granted full citizenship rights in an ever encroaching white dominated society. But, in 1936 an all-white Parliament disenfranchised the few remaining Africans on the electoral role. Further segregation bills were passed. Land was appropriated reducing millions of Africans to 13% of the land.

Mandela passed his matriculation and started to study for his law degree. He was soon suspended for his political activity. As a member of the Students Representative Council he joined a boycott protesting against the authorities for reducing the powers of the Council. By this time Mandela was 22 years old, a popular personality and a fervent

nationalist. He left home after rejecting a marriage proposal and set out for Johannesburg. His journey was a recap of the history of white colonialism in his country. As he moved closer to the city the hallmarks of racist oppression were evident. Landless, uprooted and unemployed Africans were segregated into overcrowded, insanitary conditions, with no electricity, running water or tarred roads, in stark contrast to the spacious environment of the increasingly affluent minority white population. As the whites grew richer, the blacks grew poorer. Exploitation, humiliation and indignity was the order of the day. More and more Africans were drafted as

Nelson Mandela



Walter Sisulu



Oliver Tambo



cheap labour in the gold and mineral mines, as servants in white man's houses, as street cleaners in white areas. The blacks were unable to move freely from one place to another without a pass, unable to work without a pass, unable to live in a particular area without a pass.

Mandela Joins the ANC

In Johannesburg Nelson Mandela came into contact with political giants in the African community, men outraged by the social system that was being imposed on the black population - Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo. Walter Sisulu (also in prison with Nelson Mandela) already a member of the ANC, gave financial assistance to Mandela to restart his law degree. Oliver Tambo (the President of the ANC today) was a maths teacher. This formidable trio, amongst others, were to eventually revitalise and reshape the struggle against the racist system.

The African National Congress, at this time, had lost many of its members. It was, according to this new brand of freedom fighters, too much of a gentleman's organisation asking for their rights, organisationally weak and unable to mobilise the masses for an effective struggle. They felt, however, that to leave the organisation was a wrong strategy, but rather, it was their duty to remain in the organisation and struggle within to bring about change and push their ideas. There was a need, they argued, to broaden the organisation into a mass movement representing the genuine aspirations of the people. They set out to organise the Youth League. Oliver Tambo became the Secretary. Mandela took part in formulating the final draft policies. Their aim, to transform the ANC into a powerful national liberation movement.

At this stage of his political life Nelson Mandela was a fierce African nationalist and an anti-communist. Although he had come into contact with Indian leaders and respected their ability and struggle, Nelson Mandela was determined that the ANC should go it alone and wage their own struggle. However, in 1948, the pro-Nazi Afrikaner National Party assumed power and codified the apartheid as a statutory system. State repression and oppression intensified and affected all persons with brown skin. The people were determined to resist the system.

Mass Movement

Mass upsurge began, organised by different organisations representing various sections of the oppressed people. The Youth League, feeling that the time was right for determined mass struggle against the system drafted a Programme of Action. The more cautious leadership of the ANC was confronted with the Programme. A crisis of leadership emerged and in the election for the President General of the Congress a new

leadership took over, a leadership representing the more militant views of the Congress. Mandela became a member of the national executive. All shades of opinion in the Congress endorsed the Programme of Action. Thus followed an intense period of mass upheaval drawing thousands of people into political agitation through demonstrations, strikes etc. Leaders and organisers saw the value of united action. When the next stage of the Programme of Action - the Civil Disobedience Campaign was formulated, Nelson Mandela was persuaded to embrace all sections of the oppressed people for the campaign. From that day onwards he never veered from the policy of working and mobilising people of all races for united action against a common enemy.

Mandela became the National President of the Youth League in 1950 and national volunteer-in-chief of the Defiance Campaign. He toured the country calling for volunteers and explaining the principles and practice of non-violent civil disobedience. In every corner of the land he addressed all sections of the people. His charisma became evident. His presentation spontaneously attracted large audiences. Mandela was a leader of his people

Freedom Charter

During this period of mass upsurge and the growing popularity of the ANC, the suppression of Communism Act was passed by State legislation. Under the wide reaching terms of the Act a 'communist' was designated as anyone trying to bring social, political or economic change by causing a disturbance or disorder. Since it was obvious that the ANC was advocating fundamental change and mobilising the people the Act was obviously aimed at suppressing the ANC. Mandela and hundreds more were eventually banned under the terms of the Act. He was confined to Johannesburg and prevented from attending gatherings. Publicly he was silenced, but he continued to work behind the scenes. He returned to his public political work when the ban had expired. He was later banned for 2 years out he continued to communicate with his people. At the ANC conference in 1953 his Presidential address was read out. He wrote articles criticising what apartheid was doing to his people. Oppression mounted until almost the entire leadership of the ANC was under banning orders.

In 1955, although Mandela was banned, a Congress of the People was called. At this historic congress the Freedom Charter, which forms the basis of ANC policy even today, was presented to the people. In brief, the Freedom Charter spells out that South Africa belongs to all who live in it; that there can only be a government based on the will of the people; all shall enjoy equal rights; land distributed to landless; education for all; housing for all; security, comfort, peace and friendship to all people.

Mandela's banning order expired at the end

of 1955 and he was promptly issued with another order. He continued to work illegally until in December 1955 when he was arrested and charged with treason. The entire leadership of the ANC including Sisulu and Tambo were also arrested.

The Spear of the Nation

Mandela was released on bail and continued his political and legal work. He married Winnie Nomzamo Madikuzele in June 1958, a woman, who, over the years has herself endured severe strain and hardship as she relentlessly struggled against the system while Nelson was in prison.

The treason trial opened in August 1958. The trial itself drew out the leadership ability of Mandela as he conducted his defence. The trial itself became a platform for Mandela to present the case of his people against apartheid and he was to prove himself a man of great ability and quality. The case was dismissed and defendants freed.

In the meantime, the ANC had been banned and the Sharpeville massacre had taken place. Mandela decided to go underground and work for his people. A warrant for his arrest was issued. He became known as the 'Black Pimpernel.'

It had become increasingly apparent to Mandela that peaceful campaigns would not bring about any change in the system and that they were ineffective methods in the face of the violence perpetrated by the State against political agitations. After a careful appraisal of the situation Mandela decided that violence could only be met with violence. The ANC decided to opt for armed struggle. Mandela was charged with the task of organising Umkhonto We Sizwe (Spear of the nation) the military wing of the ANC. Sabotage was to be their mode of military operations. This, they felt, would involve fewer civilian casualties.

Life Sentence

For 17 months Mandela evaded captivity and continued to organise while he was under-

Winnie Mandela



ground. This fact alone inspired the people. He moved from one place to another, disguised and often alone. Tragically for Mandela himself, the oppressed people of South Africa and the world, Mandela was eventually caught. Following a tip off, the car in which he was travelling was intercepted by the police and Mandela was arrested. It was August 1962 and the beginning of a life sentence in prison.

Mandela was charged with inciting African workers to strike and leaving the country without valid passport. He conducted his own defence and again used the dock as a platform to articulate the grievances, aspirations and struggle of his people. As yet the State had no evidence of his activity with Umkhonto We Sizwe. He was sentenced to five years imprisonment with hard labour.

The struggle continued and acts of sabotage were committed. Repression continued and eventually Walter Sisulu was caught by the State forces. Mandela was again to be tried along with Sisulu and others. The dock became a forum for political statements where they could adequately expound their ideals. In the last instance the State produced a witness who had betrayed Mandela and the ANC men. It was now a question of defending their actions and the organisation - their lives were at stake. When Mandela took the stand he admitted his part in Umkhonto We Sizwe. He addressed the court for four hours and in conclusion commented.

"During my life I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination and black domination. I have cherished the idea of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

Mandela, Sisulu and five others were found guilty of high treason. They were emotionless as they heard the sentence of life imprisonment. They turned and smiled to the crowded public gallery. Mandela gave the thumbs up salute. He descended to the cells and started his life sentence.

The ideals for which Nelson Mandela has relentlessly struggled for, both inside and outside prison, transcend the boundaries of nations. That such a human being should be subjected to appalling injustice as he has been throughout his life is an indictment on the civilized world. His continued imprisonment however, stands as a lesson to all human beings who value and struggle for justice, equality, peace and friendship between people. It reminds us of the power of forces that exist to ensure that such ideals are not realised this world today, that we must struggle, that we must sacrifice if our cause is to be won as his certainly will be.

LONG LIVE NELSON MANDELA



Massacre at Mandaitheevu

Diary of Death and Destruction

1.7.86

At Vakarai in Trincomalee district 3 Tamil civilians were brutally beaten to death by Sri-Lankan soldiers. Fifteen Tamil fishermen including, 12 Islamic Tamils were shot dead by the Sri Lankan army at Pesali in Mannar district. Two civilians were killed when the army opened artillery fire from Jaffna Fort.

Sri Lankan forces and home guards went on a rampage.

11.7.86

At Elupamkulam in Trincomalee district 6 houses were burnt down by the military personnel.

Tamil villages were completely destroyed by the orgy of rampaging troops who left a trail of looting, arson, rape and mass murder.

17.7.86

At Nedunkeni in Mullaitivu district Sri Lankan forces opened fire indiscriminately on the innocent civilians killing 7 people on the spot and seriously wounding several others.

In another incident 9 innocent Tamil passengers were killed when a low flying helicopter gunship launched a missile attack on a passenger bus.

3.7.86

In an outbreak of racial fury 5 Tamils were burnt alive, 35 houses and 28 shops were burnt to ashes by a rampaging mob of Sinhala thugs in Kandy. These brutal acts of murder and arson followed an incident when 12 Tamil youths were freed from police custody following protest from the people demanding their release. Three hundred families fled from the area as refugees.

13.7.86

In Killinochchi district 3 innocent Tamil civilians were killed by Sri Lankan soldiers. At Thirunagar Bomber planes and two helicopter gunships bombed and strafed these areas.

At Adampan in Mannar district the Sri Lankan army went on a rampage and hacked to death 40 Tamils including 20 Islamic Tamils. They also burned down 15 houses and 20 shops.

20.7.86

At Sampaltivu in Trincomalee district Sri Lankan troops shot and injured many Tamil civilians and burnt one Tamil to death in his car.

5.7.86

In Kokadysolai, Batticaloa district 10 Tamils were killed and 15 houses destroyed when the area was bombed and strafed by bomber planes and helicopter gunships.

14.7.86

At Sarampalai in Amparai district 3 farmers working in a paddy field were shot dead by Sri Lankan military personnel.

22.7.86

Several students were killed at sea when the boat in which they were travelling was sunk by the Sri Lankan navy. Three boats of students were travelling to Trincomalee from Mullaitivu district to sit for their examinations, when they came under attack by the Sri Lankan navy. The remaining two boats reached Trincomalee safely.

7.7.86

Residents in Killinochchi area were subjected to shell and mortar fire from the army camp. Many civilians were injured and many houses damaged.

15.7.86

At Pavatkulam in Vavuniya District 10 Tamil civilians were hacked to death by the Sri Lankan army.

16.7.86

Forty Tamil civilians have been brutally massacred by the Sri Lankan armed forces who went on a wild rampage in Muthur. Sri Lankan troops attached to Muthur, Dehiwatte, Seruwilla camps, launched a massive search and destroy operation in the villages of Manalsenai, Peruveli and Thatchanoor. The rampaging army fired indiscriminately at the innocent civilians and burnt down several houses and shops. In the Tamil village of Manalsenai army personnel surrounded a refugee camp and shot at random senselessly slaughtering the refugees including women and children. The three

30.7.86

At Iruthayapuram in Batticaloa district the Sri Lankan army rounded up a large number of young men. Their whereabouts is still unknown.

Two Tamil lorry drivers were brutally hacked to death by Sri Lankan homeguards at Poonawa in Madawatchi. The two men were transporting fish from Mullaitivu to Colombo when they were intercepted by the homeguards and murdered. The homeguards absconded with the lorry and the fish.

8.7.86

At Paranthan in Killinochchi district a jeep in which a priest and his assistant were travelling was strafed by a helicopter gunship. In this incident the assistant was injured.

9.7.86

In Trincomalee district 19 innocent Tamil civilians were hacked to death and 10 women were seriously injured when the

The remarkable victory won by the Liberation Tigers in the Battle of Jaffna Peninsula marked a historical turning point in the National Liberation war for Tamil Eelam. The battle assumed the character of an all-out war in which the guerrilla formations of the LTTE confronted the combined units of the Sri Lankan armed forces in several fronts and fought pitched battles finally defeating the massive offensive. With meticulous skill, superb tactics and iron determination our fighters have put up fierce resistance to the invading army of 3000 troops and forced them to retreat. The battle of Jaffna which erupted on the 17th of May lasted continuously for three days and finally ended in the humiliating defeat of the Sinhala forces. By foiling the Sri Lankan offensive our fighters have asserted their military power and consolidated their control over the Peninsula.

The fact that the Jaffna Peninsula was administered as a liberated zone and the army camps in the area were put under siege by Tiger guerrillas posed a serious challenge to Jayawardane government. The troops were kept practically as prisoners within the confinement of the camps without land mobility and supply routes cut-off. This military situation in the North was very humiliating to the racist regime which desired total military subjugation of the Tamil people. Therefore, the Sri Lankan State planned a massive military offensive to break the LTTE's military stronghold and to bring the peninsula under army's total control.

In accordance to this objective, the racist hawks in Colombo made massive military preparations. Three thousand combat troops with the most sophisticated weaponry including armoured vehicles, tanks, artillery pieces and mortars were moved to North. Naval surveillance around the Peninsula was strengthened. Naval personnel in large numbers were brought to naval bases by ships. New bomber planes and helicopter gunship were moved to the peninsula. An offensive strategy was worked out to launch a combined attack by land, sea and air.

Having anticipated an impending offensive our movement drew a concrete plan for defence. The general public was also warned of the oncoming assault. Both the guerrillas and the people jointly engaged in military preparations to meet the offensive. Civilian masses helped the Tiger guerrillas in landmining the major routes, digging trenches, erecting road blocks and building defence fortifications with sand bags. In the meantime, the propaganda unit of the LTTE telecast video films explaining civilian defence methods to counter aerial bombardment. Thus, our movement made all preparations for a defensive war to confront the impending invasion.

The combined forces of the Sri Lankan army, navy and the airforce launched the major offensive on the morning of Saturday 17th May. Armed forces from the Jaffna Fort garrison, Palali, Elephant Pass, Killinochchi, Valvetturai and navy personnel from Karainagar naval base took part in the assault. The land forces were supported by bombers and helicopter-gunships. The immediate objective of the offensive was to surround and take over the northern capital city of Jaffna, the stronghold of the Tiger guerril-

las. As soon as the troops came out of the camps, the commando units of the Liberation Tigers switched to action and engaged the invading forces in several fronts. Fierce gun battles erupted everywhere and the whole peninsula turned into a huge battle ground.

Troops Mauled at Iyakachchi

The main thrust of the invading force came from Elephant pass army camp. On the 17th of May, around 9 a m, a large contingent of troops with armoured vehicles and heavy artillery came out of the camp and moved towards Jaffna. This military unit was halted by Tiger guerrillas at Puthukadu junction near Iyakachchi a few kilometers from the camp. A fierce gun battle broke out and lasted for more than four hours. Our fighters used mortars and rockets and put up stiff resistance. Five soldiers were killed and several wounded in the attack. Unable to sustain a well-organised resistance the troops retreated to the barracks.

On the following morning about 400 soldiers moved out of the camp in 40 armoured vehicles. The advancing column was halted by our fighters near Iyakachchi. Intense fighting broke out. Our fighters fought heroically using sophisticated weaponry. The battle raged continuously for 24 hours. In this fierce fighting 17 military personnel were killed and

several seriously injured and two armoured vehicles were destroyed. Though bomber planes and helicopter gunships provided cover to the ground forces the army suffered heavy casualties and could not advance. Finally on the 19th morning the troops withdrew to the camp in total disarray. On our side we lost four young guerrillas. Akilan, Antony uncle, Jothiravi and Rahu attained martyrdom.

Fierce Fighting at Palali

The second major military drive towards Jaffna was attempted by soldiers from Palali army camp. On the 17th morning at about 7 o'clock a column of 500 troops in 30 armoured vehicles moved from the Palali army camp towards Jaffna. Our guerrilla units stopped the advancing column within few kilometers from the camp. Heavy fighting broke out and continued for 48 hours. Our fighters fought bravely and resisted all desperate attempts by the soldiers to break our siege. Bombers and helicopters constantly bombed and strafed our positions. But the planned advance to Jaffna was foiled. In a desperate effort a military unit broke into Vasavilan Mahavidyalayam (school) and entrenched their position. In the meantime the main column unable to advance and break the guerrilla resistance retreated to the barracks. In the two days of fighting the army suffered heavy casualties (the exact number of the dead and injured still unknown). On our side, we lost a young fighter named Kesikan.

The fighting in Jaffna.

On the 17th morning, a military contingent with armoured vehicles moved out of the Jaffna Fort garrison and was met with fierce resistance by Tiger guerrillas. Heavy fighting raged for several hours. Having faced with heavy casualties, the soldiers withdrew to the barracks.



In the meantime, an army unit in 3 armoured vehicles were trapped and surrounded by our fighters on the Pannai causeway near Jaffna town. The trapped soldiers could not move for 48 hours. Finally, with intense aerial cover the besieged soldiers escaped to the barracks.

The military personnel attached to the Fort camp again made another futile attempt to advance to the town. Heavy rocket and mortar fire from our fighters pushed the soldiers back into barracks. Meanwhile a group of retreating soldiers took refuge in one of the buildings of the old Jaffna Police station. Our fighters immediately surrounded the building and in the heavy fighting several soldiers were killed.

Military personnel attached to Valvettiturai army camp made two attempts on the 18th and 19th of May to move out of the camp and their attempts were foiled by our fighters who offered strong resistance and killed 9 soldiers in the two days' fighting.

Fighting with the Navy

On the 19th morning a contingent of naval personnel in five gunboats landed on the beaches of Valvettiturai. Our commando units in the coastal area launched a fierce attack on the landing forces. Sophisticated weapons including rockets and mortars were used by our fighters. In the fighting 10 naval personnel were killed and several injured. One of the naval gunboats was sunk in the rocket attack. Another boat was heavily dam-

aged. Finally, the naval personnel withdrew from the scene.

A naval unit of 200 sailors landed on the island of Kayts from Karainagar naval base on the 17th of May. Our fighters engaged the navy men and heavy fighting went on continuously for 24 hours. The navy personnel finally withdrew after suffering severe casualties.

Aerial Bombardment

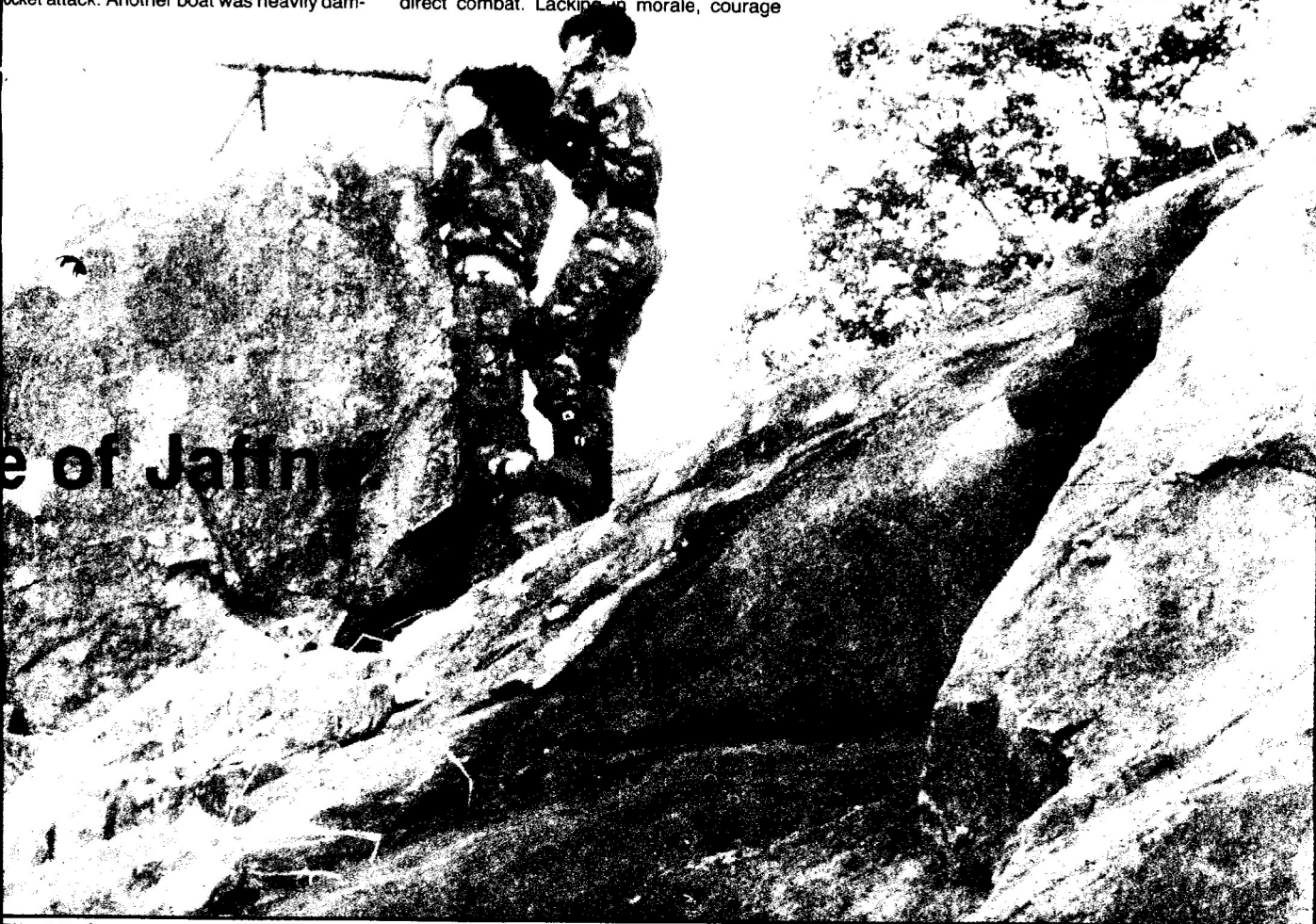
The most cowardly act of the Sinhala armed forces in this military misadventure was the senseless slaughter of the innocent civilians in a series of aerial attacks on civilian targets in the peninsula. Jaffna city and the coastal town of Valvettiturai suffered the worst, where high explosive bombs were dropped. A wing of the Jaffna hospital was severely damaged by aerial attack. Napalm bombs were dropped on Valvettiturai. Helicopter gunships started indiscriminately and killed several civilians.

Though about 50 civilians were killed and about 200 injured in aerial bombardment, heavy civilian casualties were averted by the intensive propaganda campaign launched by the LTTE on civil defence.

The offensive a total disaster

The objective of the offensive was to take control of the Peninsula and to destroy the military infra-structure of the Tiger guerrillas. It was during this campaign the armed forces met the full weight of the LTTE fighters in direct combat. Lacking in morale, courage

and discipline the Sri Lankan army could not match the will, determination and commitment of our fighters who were prepared to sacrifice their life for a noble cause of national freedom. The Sri Lankan soldiers were defeated, humiliated and the offensive was a total disaster. One of the Sri Lankan military commanders confessed that the offensive campaign was a serious set-back. The world press and several independent observers praised the heroism and superb military tactics of the Tiger guerrillas. The most absurd and ridiculous statement came from Mr.S.C.Chandrasekaran of the PROTEG, who claimed that the military campaign of the Sri Lankan armed forces was successful and the siege of the Jaffna peninsula was complete. Having realised his mistake that the army was defeated and withdrawn, he made a subsequent statement that the army was called back as the consequence of India's warning. (The Govt. of India did issue a warning that she would withdraw her mediatory role if Sri Lanka pursued a military solution. But the warning came after the offensive was defeated). Mr.Chandrasekaran who was an ardent supporter of the TELO, could not stomach the glorious military victory won by the LTTE in defeating the offensive and asserting its military superiority. This alienated individual, who champion for Indian military intervention, might have been deeply dismayed that the LTTE freedom fighters have the courage, ability and determination to fight and win the liberation of their homeland.



1.7.86

Three army personnel were killed during a clash with the Liberation Tigers at Valvettiturai in the Jaffna district. The army withdrew to the barracks.

At Vakarai in Trincomalee 3 army personnel were killed when their vehicle ran over a land mine set by Tiger guerrillas. Four soldiers were seriously injured and an armoured vehicle was completely destroyed.

5.7.86

Ten soldiers including an army Colonel were killed and 10 injured in an assault on the Mankeny army camp in Batticaloa District by the Liberation Tigers. Two camp buildings were demolished. To prevent military reinforcements reaching the camp two bridges, one at Panikamkeni and Kayalkeni were blown up. The police commandos who attempted to reach the area from Valachchenni army camp were ambushed by our guerrillas. One police commando was killed and several were injured. Another contingent of commandos ran into a landmine and 2 of them were killed.

11.7.86

Six military personnel were killed at Poovarasmkulam in Vavuniya in an ambush by Tiger guerrillas.

One soldier was killed when our guerrillas launched an attack on Point Pedro army camp. One camp building was damaged by mortar fire. One of our guerrillas attained martyrdom.

13.7.86

Several army personnel were killed when our guerrillas ambushed the troops at Adampan in Mannar district. A military contingent of 200 troops were forced back into their barracks when they confronted

fierce resistance by Tiger guerrillas in Killinochchi.

Several soldiers were killed and 3 injured in an ambush by the Liberation Tigers when the troops came out from Pandykudiyirupu army camp in Trincomalee district on a search and destroy mission.

14.7.86

Six army personnel were killed by our guerrillas in an ambush at Manthai in Mannar district.

Troops who came out of the army camp under the cover of helicopter gunships were engaged by our guerrillas at Valvettiturai in Jaffna district. 6 soldiers were killed in the clash.

Three army personnel were killed in an ambush by our guerrillas at Ervalnakulam in Trincomalee.

15.7.86

Sea commandos of the Liberation Tigers blasted a Sri Lankan naval gunboat by detonating a sea mine. 12 sailors were killed on the spot. The incident took place at Karainagar naval base.

16.7.86

Three soldiers were killed and several wounded during a fierce battle between the Liberation Tigers and the Sri Lankan military personnel at Nedunkeni in Mullaitivu district. The retreating soldiers ran into a landmine set by our guerrillas and 8 soldiers were killed in the explosion. On our side two of our guerrillas attained martyrdom.

19.7.86

One soldier was killed in a clash between the army and the L.T.T.E. guerrillas at Paranthan in Killinochchi district. Forty army personnel who came out on a

search and destroy operation were forced back into the barracks after a fierce battle between the Sri Lankan troops and our guerrillas. The incident took place at Thangavelayuthapuram in Amparai district.

20.7.86

Twelve army personnel were killed in an ambush by Tiger guerrillas at Vadamunai in Batticaloa district.

Several army personnel were killed when our guerrillas ambushed the Sinhala troops at Sampaltivu in Trincomalee district.

23.7.86

In a clash between Tiger guerrillas and the Sri Lankan army at Nochimotoi in Vavuniya five soldiers were killed.

28.7.86

Over 200 Navy personnel from the Karinagar Naval base were forced back to their barracks after they confronted heavy resistance by our guerrillas. The Navy personnel withdrew to their barracks carrying their dead and wounded. Six Air Force men from Pankulam Air Force base were killed on the spot when their convoy ran over a landmine laid by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

30.7.86

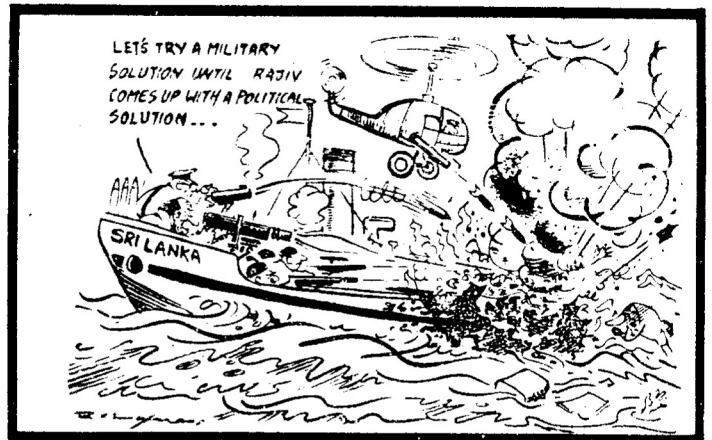
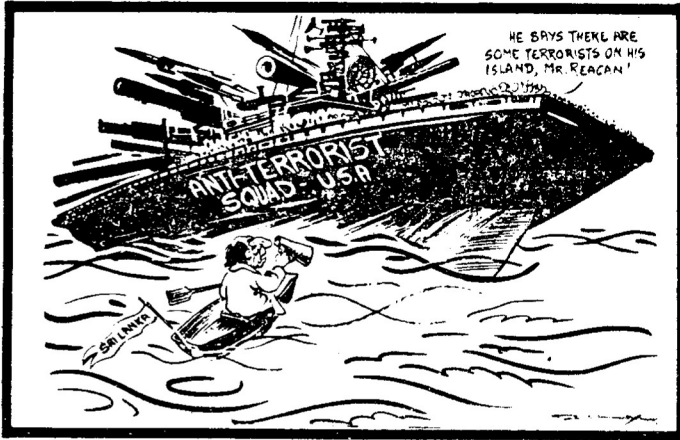
Seven Sri Lankan soldiers were killed and 5 injured when an army convoy was ambushed by Tiger guerrillas at Tharanikulam in Vavunya district. On our side two guerrillas attained martyrdom.

31.7.86

In a confrontation between Police commandos and the Liberation Tigers at Chenkaladi in Batticaloa district 3 Police commandos were killed and many were injured.



Diary of Combat



It has been confirmed that British mercenaries are employed by the Lankan Government for its genocidal war on the Tamil ethnic minority living in Jaffna and Batticaloa regions. These mercenaries have been nicknamed "dogs of war" and it is estimated that their number has gone up from a mere dozen 2 months ago to about 75 in the first week of May. More are being recruited by Colombo government.

The 'dogs of war' have been assigned the job of flying aircraft and helicopter gunships on bombing forays over the Tamil areas. A dozen of them have been retained for training a new generation of pilots in Colombo.

- News Today. 7.6.86.

According to some military experts here, the LTTE cadres have displayed considerable tactical skill in using their limited fire power more effectively against the better armed but poorly led Sri Lankan security forces. They were able to prevent reinforcements reaching the beleaguered army camps under cover of troop rotation by blowing up culverts and mining the roads at all strategic points.

The demoralised Sinhala Army units which ventured out to engage the Tamil militants have been driven back to their camps where they remain bottled up not knowing what to do next to regain the lost initiative in this militarily embarrassing situation.

- The Hindu. 25.5.86.

British helicopter pilots are operating against Tamil guerrillas in the north and east of Sri Lanka. Three pilots, two Britons and one South African have been seen manning helicopter gunships which regularly bomb rebel positions in and around Trincomalee and Jaffna. Other, unconfirmed, accounts say that former Special Air Service officers are leading ground raids against Tamil hide-outs.

The first direct evidence of the Britons' involvement came last week when they were

News in Brief

discovered piloting Bell 212 helicopters for the Sri Lankan airforce at Palali air base near Jaffna, and the China Bay air station near Trincomalee.

- The Sunday Times. 11.6.86.

We don't call them terrorists. We call Jeyawardene a terrorist not Prabhakaran. Jeyawardene has been using state terrorism for last eight years to crush Tamil and Sinhala leftist politicians. They kill Buddhist monks, university students and employees. They assault Supreme Court judges. This is state thuggery. I don't call Prabhakaran a terrorist because he is fighting for a genuine cause. He is a freedom fighter.

Vijaya Kumaranatunga, in an interview to Sunday 20-26 July. 86

Jaffna became a battleground as Sri Lankan armed forces tried to wrest control of the area from the Tamil militants. In the week-long pitched battle, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE], which has emerged as the Tamil major fighting force, scored a significant victory over the armed forces which launched a well-planned combined offensive-aerial, naval and ground attacks to overthrow the militants. The LTTE repulsed the attacks effectively, inflicted heavy casualties on the armed forces [about 75 Sinhalese soldiers were killed in combat] and was even able to push the security personnel back into their camps. The outcome of the fierce fighting established beyond doubt that the LTTE was and continues to be in complete control of the peninsula.

LTTE displayed its strengths-flawless planning, swift strikes and speedy getaways. Un-

able to apprehend the guerrilla fighters, the frustrated and resentful Sinhalese troops began unleashing terror and violence on the helpless, innocent Tamil Civilians.

One of the biggest mistakes made by the TELO was that it was not very selective when it came to recruitment. Soon, the TELO was infiltrated by anti-social elements, whose only interest in the armed movement was to loot the public for personal gain.

The TELO men began a spate of robberies, including temple jewellery-alienating the Tamil masses who were outraged that the Eelam liberation movement had degenerated into banditry.

- The Telegraph 1.6.86.

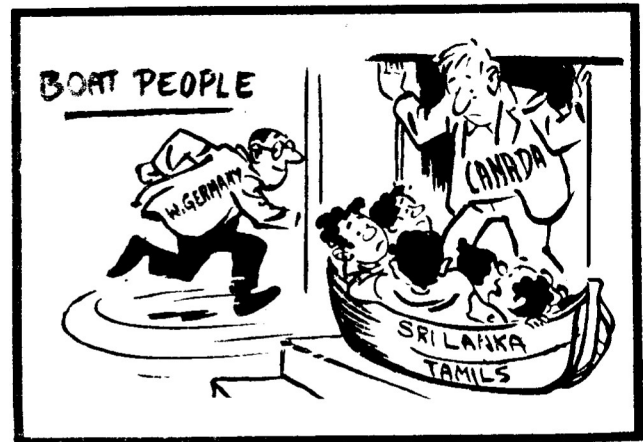
The Sri Lankan military, once understaffed and ill-equipped, has lately become a force to be reckoned with. Major recruitment drives have boosted the ranks of the army, navy and air force over the last year from 28,000 to about 40,000, about half of whom are deployed in the north. A defence budget of more than Rs 10 billion [about \$ 360 million] eats up 20% of the nation's total budget. It lately has supplied the military with 150 armoured cars from South Africa, 21 American built helicopters from Singapore, six light aircrafts from Italy, as well as 50 patrol boats and some 40,000 land mines. Thousands of Sri Lankan officers have gone to Pakistan for military training and British and Israeli security experts have been brought to Colombo to train troops as well.

... "We are sorry that so many died [in the fighting] but now we will not be harassed any more". Said another: "They [TELO] knew everything about all of us and extorted us. The LTTE never did that".

... Much of the lawlessness has been blamed on the less-disciplined TELO rebel faction.

- Asia week. 1.6.86.

The government strategy collapsed in the face of the swift strikes by the Tigers against



the garrison forces trying to break out. The invading force was also halted by the Tigers who barricaded the routes with sand bags, laid with the help of local villagers. The armoured cars of the government troops were thus intercepted and blown up. Non-armoured units were destroyed by land mines. The landing at Kayts was also disrupted by heavy gunfire.

- *The week* - 8-14 6.86.

The largest, oldest and most disciplined rebel group is Prabhakaran's Tigers. Most Tiger recruits are youths who struggled up the educational ladder only to find there were no jobs for them. Each wears around his neck a glass ampul containing potassium cyanide, to be used in case of capture.

Tamil Eelam liberation Organization, which was notorious for its violent internal power struggles and criminal activities.

The problem, says a senior Sri Lankan official, is that "we have some of the worst armed forces in the world.

- *Time* 9.6.86.

The LTTE strategy in this regard consists of posting "sentries" near the army camps in the peninsula. These "sentries" watch the camps continually and if they detect any sign of the troops moving out, they immediately alert the main LTTE force who are ready and waiting elsewhere. The LTTE forces then rush to the spot and engage the advancing troops in fierce combat and push them back to the camps.

This would indicate that the Sri Lankan army has not quite finished with its attempt to link up troops stationed in the various northern camps and it is only the force of the LTTE resistance that is preventing this strategy from taking effect.

- *Front Line* May 31-JUNE 13, 1986.

The first is the military debacle. The army's

attempt in May to break the hold of the main guerrilla force, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE], on the northern Jaffna peninsula ended in humiliation.

- *GLOBE AND MAIL* 15.7.86
Canadian national paper.

"The LTTE had tightened its control over the peninsula in recent months and I hardly saw representatives of other militant groups in Jaffna town"

"The LTTE's involvement in Jaffna society extended from running children's nurseries and model animal farms to dissemination of news through black boards put up at street corners. It was also running a television station which telecast programmes for three hours every Saturday evening."

- *HUMPHREY HAWKSLEY - BBC Correspondent.* 8-8-1986.

We are representing the political aspirations of our people. We don't think the government of India will go against the aspirations of our people. India's support is important to us. But we also have a right to self-determination.

From Prabhakaran's interview to India Today.

The TELO rank and file turned to anti-social activities like indulging in temple robberies, kidnapping, blackmail, extortion and hijackings.

The LTTE is the only group that can boast of an ideologically committed cadre-LTTE members carry cyanide capsules strung on chains around their necks.

- *Sunday.* 1 - 7 June 1986.

They (LTTE) have also espoused Marxism and regard the Palestinians and the blacks in South Africa as their comrades in arms.

- *Today* 4.5.86

"It is not true that the LTTE's attacks on TELO have alienated the people from the LTTE. The TELO had attained a very bad name as a set of indisciplined ruffians, who went about robbing people. The LTTE would

also ask people to pay up, but not snatch or rob. They ask for contribution, each family to give according to its means...

... Vehicles taken for operations would be returned after use", felt Sivanayagam.

- *News Time* 26.5.86

The troops withdrew to their camps in the face of stiff resistance offered by the Tamil guerrillas. But given the fact that the guerrillas have the support of the local population and are well armed and motivated the Sri Lankan army is unlikely to succeed in its objective of ending Tamil guerrilla control of the northern part of the Island.

- *Deccan Herald.* 22.5.86.

After a week-long, three pronged, well timed offensive by Sri Lankan armed forces in the middle of May to wrest control of the northern Jaffna peninsula, the Tamil militants, especially the powerful Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), proved that their control over the region could not be challenged.

- *Sunday* 8-14, June 86.

The Sinhalese army's ruthless campaign is to win control over the region and clear out the Tamil inhabitants.

This isn't war. Its a series of massacres.

In ruthless, but effective campaign, the Government has driven the Tamils out of their homes in Trincomalee District and into refugee camps or to the predominantly Tamil northern province.

- *The Guardian,* 15.6.86.

The LTTE is the largest and most militant of the main Tamil insurgent factions fighting to create a separate state in the north and east.

It was the LTTE who did most of the fighting against the government forces in Jaffna last week.

The supremacy of LTTE, popularly known as the "Tigers", and its chairman, Prabhakaran.

is unquestioned, particularly after they reconfirmed their near-total military control over the Island's northern peninsula. Prabhakaran's might now runs supreme in the north.

Prabhakaran is the chief architect of the highly-disciplined and well-entrenched military set-up of the LTTE that has been modelled on Fidel Castro's original guerrilla movement.

— *India Today*. 30.6.86.

The Sri Lankan President, Mr. J.R. Jayawardane, has warned that he would mobilise the entire nation for war if the current peace efforts failed.

— *FINANCIAL EXPRESS*. 5-8-1986.

"The Sri Lankan Government has always used the words Tamil and separatist as though they were interchangeable. It would neither be an assumption nor a surprising discovery if all those 90 persons killed turned out to be innocent Tamil civilians. One should remember that in Sri Lanka, the security forces have the right to shoot, kill and dispose of bodies without recourse to any form of judicial inquiry."

"But the past few days have been a further stepping up of the genocide being committed by the Sinhalese government of President Jayawardane in Sri Lanka against the Tamils, as the government of Sri Lanka attempts a military solution to a communal problem in Sri Lanka.

— *MR. HOLLIS M.P. for Throsby - In Parliament of Australia on 17-2-86 and 22-5-86.*

Sri Lankan armed forces, beset by armed insurrection by Tamil separatists continued the rapid build up of its helicopter strength in December with delivery of four Bell 412 gunships.

The machines were militarised under tight security at Heli Orient's Seletar Aerodrome facility in Singapore, where armed guards were brought in after a sabotage threat by a separatist group.

Two 212s delivered early last year have been damaged in recent accidents during operations against insurgency.

— *ASIAN AVIATION*. January 1986.

The Tamil guerrilla movement fighting for an independent homeland in the North and East of Sri Lanka has evolved from a ramshackle gang of about 30 youths to one of the most effective rebel forces in Asia.

— *THE GUARDIAN* (London) 18-6-86.

Among the people affected by the days and nights of violence was the poet Anna Ranasinghe a German Jew who had fled Nazi rule as a child, married a Sinhalese scholar and came to live in Colombo.

Mrs. Ranasinghe shocked by the ethnic violence, felt haunted again by her own past. In a poem "July 1983" she mused that she "used to wonder about the Nazi killers, and those who stood and watched the killing."

She continued :

Forty years later

Once more there is burning

The night sky bloodied, violent and abused.

In July 1983 the world was alerted to the bloody, repressive character of President Jayawardane's Sri Lankan regime when Sinhalese gangs murdered over 2000 Tamils in a racist pogrom.

— *INTERNATIONAL* (London)

Sources in Jaffna say the fighting started after a local commander of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam was kidnapped by militia men from the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO). The sources suggested the commander was abducted because his group had been winning too much grass roots support from local people.

Mr. Pirabakaran by using traditional guerrilla tactics has won the support of many of the people of Jaffna.

"The Tigers are considered to be the most hardline but also the most disciplined anti government group. They have a reputation for keeping a tight grip on the behaviour of their men. Their leaders would have to play a major part in any negotiations which take place."

— *THE AGE* (Australian News Paper) 1-5-86

"This week, the Sri Lankan army's closest experience to all out war ended in stalemates as the troops' push into the rebel-held Northern Jaffna peninsula, the Tamil heartland was stopped by the guerrillas mostly members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam."

— *THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN* 24-25, May, 1986. Reported by Sinha Ranatunga from Colombo.

Tamil Eelam demand stays: Prabhakaran speaks to Hindu

The leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Mr. Velupillai Prabhakaran, today said nobody had so far suggested any reasonable alternative to the Eelam demand. Hence, there was no need for them to give it up till such alternative was put forth.

In an interview here after the top leaders of the five militant organisations met the Union Home Minister, the External Affairs Minister and the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister at the latter's residence in the city. Mr. Prabhakaran said the LTTE would not put a spoke in the peace talks between the TULF and the Sri Lankan Government. The LTTE did not object to these negotiations. But, at the same time, the Tamils in the North and East of the island had full trust in the militants and they had to clarify certain issues to the people there.

Right to clarify: The Tamils in the North and East were confused over the TULF holding talks with Colombo and then having discussions with the LTTE in Madras. This confusion existed among the cadres of the LTTE also. It had led people to suspect the militant

groups' motives and the LTTE had the "freedom of expression" to put forth its views, to clarify the situation.

Explaining his stand, Mr. Prabhakaran said Colombo had already ruled out a merger between the Tamil-dominated Northern and Eastern Provinces. But the TULF leaders insisted that they would not resile from the concept of a Tamil linguistic unit. "Then, why does the TULF participate in talks with the Sri Lankan Government? We suspect the TULF. We don't understand the plan.

After the first round of discussions in July between the TULF and Colombo ended, the TULF said it did not discuss the merger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

The groups already shared the opinion that there was no connection between them and the TULF holding discussions with Colombo. They tried to bring out such common points through a mediator (Mr. V. Balakumar of EROS acted as the mediator) when they were in Delhi. This was also aimed at precluding the groups from expressing their views sepa-

rately on the issue. This was only a starting point.

The militant organisations might not immediately forge a common action programme. There was also no chance of the LTTE joining the ENLF now. The unity talks were essentially aimed at the groups taking a common stand on the peace processes.

On the discussions between the militant leaders and the Union Ministers in the city today. Mr. Prabhakaran said he had assured the Ministers that the LTTE would not be a stumbling block to the peace processes. But it had to remove certain suspicions and confusion among Tamils in the North and East. He had also said that the Sri Lankan soldiers' use of artillery on Jaffna from inside their camp had "incensed the people over the talks" in Colombo. But the TULF was trying to create an "image" that it was involving the militants in the talks, he said.

(Hindu 22.8.86)

Liberation Fighter

*Sometimes my back feels heavy,
my machine gun cold as steel.
But death is the friend of those
who love deeply; so I go fearless.*

*Trudging the hillsides with the heavy
tread of my belief,
I struggle to remain hidden
while most men yearn to be known.
I am a shadow.
Only my actions are real
an explosion that rocks a general's sleep,
or a missing soldier.
"My people are my mountains"
and they hide me in their caves.*

*One day, it may happen
that I will be taken
quietly, stealthily to the reverse side
by uniformed men, the general's men
and be destroyed;
without witness without audience.
But they will only destroy a shadow.*

*No poets will write about me;
but the villagers will remember me
my friends in the chai shop
wondering why I threw up a wall
of silence around them.*

My body will never be found.

*At night, I'll rise with the water
seep down as mist over the valleys.*

*And when my friends are thirsty,
they will find me glittering in a well.
They will drink me up
and continue the fight.*

**-MAHMOOD JAMAL.
From 'SILENCE INSIDE
A GUN'S MOUTH'**

**LTTE (U.K. Branch)
BM box 5973
London WC1 3XX**

