

University Teachers

for

Human Rights (Jaffna), Sri Lanka

Report No 1

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Preface

The University Teacher for Human Rights (UTHR) was formed during the middle of 1988 in response to a growing need felt throughout the country. Its membership comprises university teachers from all universities. The need for such an organisation was thrust upon the university teachers in the course of views and problems aired at meetings of the Federation of University Teachers' Associations (FUTA). In time it was decided to form the UTHR as an organisation affiliated to the FUTA, but independent of it. It was natural that several leading figures in the UTHR turned out to be long term activists in the FUTA. It was universally admitted that the role of university teachers in this country in upholding human rights was inadequate, if not unheroic. As much as university teachers in the South could be lamed for their unconcern in the face of the militarisation of the state (in response to a political problem in the Tamil areas which developed into an insurgency), the university teachers in the north could equally be blamed for their silence on internal developments which culminated in internecine killings. It was recognised by the generality of teachers in the South that the meteoric rise of gross human rights violations in the South was a spill-over from the militarisation of the Sri Lankan state (in response to a problem that should have been dealt with politically), and the resulting debasement of the human psyche (see Appendix 2 for statement issued by the UTHR)

Violations of human rights in the Tamil areas have a long history going back to the 1970s. The problem simmered for some time and came to the boil after the racial violence of 1983. Although university teachers in Jaffna had been familiar with organisations campaigning for human rights, left to themselves it is unlikely that they would have gone back into this work at this point of time. The coming together of university teachers in this country and the effect it had on loosening inhibitions, fears and misconceptions was a key even in forming the UTHR, and the UTHR(Jaffna) as an organisation within the UTHR. That the UTHR(Jaffna) derives strength and inspiration from being part of the national organisations gratefully acknowledged.

The enthusiasm shown by the university teachers in Jaffna towards the UTHR was phenomenal once the idea was explained and had caught on. Because of our long experience, questions that are still unresolved in the South were quickly disposed of here in what was a broad consensus. Some of these questions are: Whether we should confine ourselves to persons related to the university or whether we should go into difficulties of the community at large? Whether we should only deal with violations by the state(s) or whether we should deal with violations independently of their source?

It had been generally held by human rights organisations which have been active in this region in the past that it is mainly violations by the state that are significant. The argument given for this stand is that the state represents the internationally acknowledged law-enforcing authority with resources, material and non-material, far exceeding that of any other group. It is thus the failure by the state to deal with problems justly and wisely that is the principal source of all the resulting violations. This view, which has much merit in it, is reflected in the practice of many international human rights organisations. In many parts of the world with which these organisations were initially concerned, the state exercised a virtual monopoly in the violation of human rights. This was true in Eastern Europe and in parts of the world where there were no armed rebel

movements. We have no doubt that the work done in this part of the world by human rights organisations in the past has brought relief and hope to countless numbers.

In our own context, this approach had some unintended effects. It came to be thought adequate in many quarters to expose the actions of the Sri Lankan State internationally, while little was done to build our own strength as people who stood by certain ideals and standards. In the course of the resulting passivity, the people lost the will and the ability to check both undemocratic and homicidal tendencies in militant groups which became increasingly hard to ignore. As terror by the Sri Lankan state claimed thousands of lives, people became increasingly passive, finding some relief in the growing military prowess of militant groups and in international campaigns on their behalf. The logic of accepting that the people were helpless was that it came to be thought wrong, if not risky, to criticise any action undertaken by militant groups. In time there were those who advocated human rights campaigns, directed against the state, as part of the militant struggle. In observance of human rights day, speakers stressed national rights- namely the demand for the Tamil separate state of Eelam- saying little or nothing of violations against individuals and groups and the harm done to the community.

The premise that one must not criticise those who had come forward to give their lives in protecting the population against the Sri Lankan state, brought in further confusion when internecine killings resulted in the course of militant groups vying for dominance. Large numbers of our young men who had come forward to give their lives for us had become fugitives in our own community, and were being hunted and killed without knowing why, or what had hit them. Had we nothing to say? The stated premise meant that one must observe silence and pay homage to the victorious group of the moment, now the 'sole protector' against the Sri Lankan state. Thankfully, such a premise was not universally accepted, and many unarmed civilians gave refuge to fugitives, placing humanity above ideology. The acceptance of such a premise would also have entailed that one must throw away all universal values and pledge oneself to the power of the moment. Thus, when gun power changed hands and the new victors asked 'What were you doing when we were attacked?', the question, together with the feelings it reflected, had a note of legitimacy.

Again, the more one looks at the problem, one can hardly ignore the fact that the panorama of human misery comprises all shades of people: Tamil, Sinhalese, Indian; guerrilla and soldier. Even those who represent states responsible for some detestable acts raise questions which must be listened to with sympathy. Can one shrug away the killings of policemen who were performing a civil function such as transporting cases between banks, or of soldiers trying to enable passenger trains to run? One cannot but feel some sympathy for a Gurkha or a Sikh soldier who complains that he was told he was coming here to protect the Tamils, and that he has no quarrel with anyone; whereas many people do not seem to like him, while others are shooting at him.

Daily, young lives are being snuffed out. The departed person may have been a friend to some, a friend to others and does certainly leave behind a void that cannot be filled. The young life may be that of a civilian, a militant or of a soldier.

We do certainly hold that states, as internationally accountable law enforcing agencies, are principally responsible for an anarchic state of affairs, which devalues life. While we can sympathise with some of their resentments, we could also ask them to go beyond these. Do their subsequent actions make life pleasanter for themselves or for others? No resentment can excuse a resort to depravity. Behind the impossible tasks faced by the Indian soldier is a history of unprincipled cynicism that governed mutual relations between the Indian and Sri Lankan states and the militant groups. There is also a history of conflicting expectations, which when disappointed led to greater instability. The logic of the Sri Lankan state's military approach to the Tamil problem was that in the end all Tamils were classed with armed rebels, whose extermination was desired,

There is little doubt that, but for international concern, the Sri Lankan government showed few inhibitions against practicing genocide.

We have documented a number of instances where the IPKF has shown a blind preference for a military approach in dealing with day to day problems at the cost of debasing politics. Even if one justifies inhumane practices on pragmatic grounds, the recourse of events suggest a heavy political price and displaced the Sri Lankan forces, the same methods are still being applied with much the same effects.

Our experience has also taught us that the community must develop its ability to stand up for values it holds dear, which alone can guarantee its dignity. This raises certain matters specific to our own situation, consequent to the marginalizing of all civilian political groups. We have a situation where the gun approach to problems has become the rule rather than the exception and there is no political impetus to question it. Thus anyone who wishes to question this tendency stands in isolation and cannot identify with any significant political grouping. This is an additional reason why university teachers have been cast into the role of questioning violations by non-state organisations. Perhaps in our context, it is only a human rights group that can question this tendency which has now assumed the proportions of an institution.

In presenting this report, we have avoided emphasis on numbers and have tried to show the human significance of each event. We have presented reports of violations, which came to our attention without bias. These associated with the university. Accuracy has been ensured, within reasonable limits.

Primarily, we hope that by trying to understand what is happening to this society and to themselves in turn, those responsible for these violations will change their methods and themselves, for the better. In addition, with the world so interlinked, no event is an isolated event. What happens in this society has a close relation with its interaction with the outside world. By trying to hide what our society really is, we can only deceive ourselves. While exposing what is being done to us, we are also giving and airing to the truth about ourselves. This we hope will challenge us to change for the better.

Introduction

The wake of the Indian offensive of October 1987 saw civilian deaths and disappearances on a large scale. The death toll is put at above 1500 by NGO sources. By all indications the strategy of the LTTE seemed to be one of wearing down the IPKF by guerrilla attacks and by paralysing the general administration of the North and East. A death penalty was presumed for those collaborating with the IPKF. Interpretations varied with local leaderships. The IPKF's strategy until the Provincial Council elections were announced in October appeared to be one of pressuring the LTTE through military action to come forward and negotiate for a position of influence under the terms of the Indo-Lanka Accord. To this end, India hoped to use other militant groups, all of whom, with the LTTE, had at one time been trained and armed by India. Shortly after the October offensive, notices went up near IPKF camps calling upon LTTE cadres to surrender and take up the 'golden opportunity' of rehabilitation. About the same time notices also went up calling members of other militant groups to report. It is known that a large number of members of other militant groups were disillusioned, especially after the LTTE cracked down on them in 1986, and they had tried hard to get back into civilian life or had plans of going abroad. Despite hard feelings against the LTTE, these persons were generally intent on resisting being dragooned into carrying arms again. But as it turned out, many of them were given little choice. Several of them who turned to extortion of bus passengers, embarrassingly close to IPKF camps, openly admitted that they would go abroad once they were in possession of the required funds. To many of them, this was the only realistic alternative to a life of the hunted.

An important group of persons who had taken over several of the functions of erstwhile elected MPs were members of Citizens' Committees, many of whom were elderly. By the end of 1986, most of those not having credentials acceptable to the LTTE were obliged to resign. Those remaining had to accept, at least implicitly, the LTTE's political dominance. Nevertheless several of these people, like the Mallakam Citizens' Committee, did to a commendable extent preserve their independence and continued their humanitarian work with refugees. The Mallakam Citizens' Committee decided to dissolve itself in March 1986, following the assassination of its senior member, TULF politician and former chairman of the defunct DDC, Mr. Nadarajah.

Several Citizens' Committee leaders were used by the IPKF as go—betweens in negotiations with the LTTE. On the whole, Citizens' Committee leaders gave voice to a widespread feeling that there could be no settlement without LTTE participation. Again, as with the majority of people, the role of the IPKF was accepted as a fait accompli, and was not challenged. Theirs was a passive demand for the antagonists to end hostilities and put a stop to civilian suffering.

The manner in which Indian policy used the divided loyalties of a fractured society served to deepen both new and traditional antagonisms, bringing about suspicion, irrational hatred and murder. The opposite of the rehabilitation of the militant youth was set in motion. Many of them were forced to flee or to carry arms. Privately, Indian officers were often contemptuous of these unfortunate persons they were trying to use. Whether they would be given any power too depended on the LTTE. This was amply demonstrated when the September 28th 1987 agreement with the LTTE gave no representation to the other groups on the interim council.

From the end of 1987 the LTTE launched a campaign of assassination against civilians suspected of being collaborators with India or potential opponents of LTTE. Several of those killed were persons who as Citizen's Committee members had dealings with the IPKF to sort out the day-to-day needs of ordinary people (such needs arose from arrests of relatives, or from the gaining of access to homes they had fled during the war). Such persons were of a traditional political mould and often acted on the basis that whoever held power was to be respected or humoured. This was offensive to the LTTE when the power was not held by themselves.

Many of these assassinated were former members of other militant groups, killed on suspicion of wanting to re-associate with their former units. To many LTTE sympathisers this policy seemed justified in view of India's position on the matter. But for members of other militant groups it became a matter of choosing between a longer life or a shorter one. In the course of such a utilitarian approach, the IPKF's attitude towards civilians was instrumental. Civilian resentment was treated as a sign of approval of the LTTE. A major cause of this resentment resulted from reprisals against civilians in response to attacks on the IPKF by the LTTE. There came about a cumulative process in which the IPKF began to treat civilians as pro-LTTE, and the gulf of distrust widened. Civilians too found Indian ire against pro-LTTE sentiments puzzling, especially since India had given material and propaganda support for the LTTE scarcely one year earlier. India started blaming the civilians for the conspicuous failure of a policy of which India had been the prime mover, and in the course of which civilians had been marginalised. When India declared a ceasefire in September 1987 and called for Provincial Council elections, the tone of the Indian Ambassador Mr. J.N. Dixit's message, though unreal, was one of holding the civilians to ransom in order to bring the LTTE to the negotiating table.

When the LTTE did not come forward, India decided on backing the EPRLF for the provincial leadership. There followed a series of killings of persons seen to be sympathetic to the LTTE. Those killed sometimes included relatives. Down Sankilian Lane, in Nallur, the mother of an ex-LTTE cadre was killed by

electrocution. Mr. Sivanandasundaram and Mr. Rajasangari, prominent Citizen's Committee leaders, were assassinated during the course of October 1988. Many witnesses testify to having seen persons in Indian army uniform in the vicinity of several killings. The objective of these killings seems to have been to create fear among LTTE sympathisers and to cause them to flee. The killings diminished sharply after the conclusion of the Provincial Council elections on 19th November 1988. There is little doubt that the situation will continue to remain fluid.

The cases documented below are not meant to be exhaustive¹ but are intended to give some indication of the pattern and the human situation.

Mr. Vimalasweren — 25 years old - a student leader. 18th July 1988

Vimalasweren's name came into prominence when he led the last great campaign for fundamental rights by the students of Jaffna University in November 1986. The occasion was the disappearance of the student Vijitharan when the LTTE was the controlling power. The protest attracted large crowds, and Vimalasweren was one of the six students who went on a fast. Vimalasweren is said to have dropped out some time ago from the membership of a prominent militant group when he became disillusioned with its methods. Many accusations were levelled against the students, as working against the LTTE rather than for fundamental rights. But many who witnessed the proceedings from close quarters were left with the impression that the protest was genuine and arose out of deep feelings. In one initiative to settle the protest, some religious leaders persuaded the Jaffna LTTE leader, Kittu, to talk to the student protestors. Kittu spoke to Vimalasweren, but conceded nothing. Vimalasweren then said that there could be no reconciliation without a change of heart and a new approach. Some who were present said that Kittu had condescended to meet the students, taking time off from a busy schedule, while the students were ungraciously pitching themselves rather high. But, to those who felt for the issues at stake, Vimalasweren was right. It may also be remarked that the protest was forced on the students, who undertook the task with much trepidation. It occurred against a background of much popular sentiment for the LTTE as the physical defender of the Tamil' s. The protest was called off after ten days. A compromise was reached and the LTTE undertook not to harm the protestors.

Within about a fortnight the LTTE launched a campaign to suppress the EPRLF which had also supported the students' protest. PLOTE had, by then, voluntarily ceased functioning.

Word went around subsequently that the LTTE was looking for some of the student leaders including Vimalasweren, in connection with the embezzlement of funds from a refugee rehabilitation project handled by students. Several of those who knew Vimalasweren well testify to his integrity, and said that this was a ploy to terrorise. The question also needs to be asked that if there was genuine evidence of misappropriation, why was it not brought out two weeks earlier when it would have embarrassed the students, rather than waiting until all the opposition forces had been neutralised?

Vimalasweren and several other student leaders went into hiding and some were smuggled off to the South. Vimalasweren remained with peasants in Jaffna, who gave him protection for nearly a year. During the October 1987 IPKF operation he helped the villagers with the organisation of refugee camps and medical care. Subsequently he went home, to Pooneryn. When the University of Jaffna announced examinations in March 1988, Vimalasweren approached an LTTE leader in Kilinochchi who was personally known to him and asked him if there was any danger to him in going to Jaffna to sit for his final examination. He was reportedly told that there was no problem. He sat for his Examination and lived with his wife in Chavakacheri, in order that he could earn a living by giving tuition in Jaffna. On the afternoon of 18th July an assassin shot him dead as he came out of a tutory in Nallur after finishing a teaching assignment. The same

evening it was reported that two gunmen had entered the University of Jaffna, and had left after walking about for some minutes. The message to the students was clear.

A newspaper which had given Vimalasweryen prominence, during the student protest barely 18 months earlier, published a small item saying that a 30 year old man was found dead in front of a tutoring in Nallur. The students took no immediate steps beyond boycotting lectures the following day. Such was the state of fear. The first memorial meeting to be announced was cancelled. Subsequently another memorial meeting was held in the Kailasapathy Hall, on the 31st day after his death, where several students went onto the stage and paid their tributes. According to one student source Vimalasweryen had been tipped off, four days before his death, that his movements had been monitored and that there was danger. This was not heeded by Vimalasweryen, because of the assurance he had received from the LTTE leader in Kilinochchi. Why was he killed? Was he feared as too good an organiser to be left alive?

There are also some indications that Vimalasweryen's death may be linked with the underworld of slander and misinformation that straddles all levels of this chronically war-torn society. Following threats made to the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Jaffna in March 1988, the LTTE issued a notice saying that whoever was responsible, whether individuals or a militant group, would be dealt with harshly. This provided the impetus for whoever was responsible to try to shift the blame.

During this period there had been much speculation about the disappearance of Mr. K. Kanthasamy on 19th June 1988. Kanthasamy was a leading Company Lawyer who had dedicated himself to refugee rehabilitation and human rights work. On the 12th July 1988, six days before Vimalasweryen's death, the Murasoli (one of two daily newspapers in Jaffna) published a statement with the front page headline: "Kanthasamy cannot hereafter be seen -claims the Pasarai group". The statement claimed that Kanthasamy's disappearance was the first step in the destruction of evil forces which have permeated our institutions. According to this statement, the Pasarai group also accepted responsibility for actions to reform the university administration. This was no doubt a reference to the threatening of the former Vice-Chancellor.

But the Pasarai group was a defunct peasant organisation, whose former members were leading quiet lives. Some former members of this group feared for their lives and got in touch with LTTE contacts, who in turn told them that they were aware that the statement was a fake and knew who was responsible for planting it. It was clear that the editor of the Murasoli had, willingly or unwillingly, accepted that statement for publication from someone powerful.

The Colombo-based New Saturday Review, in its July issue, carried a report which said that the militant group EROS had had several encounters with Kanthasamy of an importuning nature. It also published a statement by EROS disassociating itself from Kanthasamy's disappearance. Given such an undercurrent of intrigue, many innocent persons are bound to be made sacrificial victims.

Mr. Vaithilingam Paramanathan - a community leader :1st October 1988

Mr. Paramanathan was a community leader from Myliddy. Some months ago Paramanathan had sheltered members of another militant group who were being hunted by the LTTE. Many in Myliddy had family connections with LTTE cadres. At 10.30 p.m. on the night of 1st October 1988 some youths came to his house and called him out. Though cautioned by his wife, Paramanathan went out saying that he recognised one youth as a person he had sheltered. A little later a shot was heard. Within a short time neighbours came out and Paramanathan's body was found. Angry villagers proceeded to barricade access roads into the village.

The following day the IPKF unit from Myliddy harbour, which attempted to pass through the village, was confronted by the villagers at the barricades. In the exchanges that followed the officer in charge denied any complicity in the incident by his unit. Later in the day the barricades were dismantled after the officer gave an undertaking that he would do his best to protect the village against such occurrences. Several villagers have said that at the time of the assassination they had seen persons in the vicinity whom they took by appearance and disposition to be Indian army personnel.

Saverimuttu Anton Douglas — 33 years old - Delft Island. 4th October 1988

Statement by mother, Saverimuttu Arokiam (60 yrs.):

“Some years ago my son Anton approached PLOTE and sought its help to retrieve some money that had been borrowed from him. In turn PLOTE made their help conditional on his joining them, and he did so. Anton later left PLOTE and became quite successful in the dry-fish trade. This made his former friend ‘A’ jealous of him, and ‘A’ petitioned the LTTE. He was taken in by the LTTE in September 1987, but was released with the help of an LTTE leader from outside.”

“On 4th October 1988 Anton was walking when he was pointed out by ‘B’ to two members of the LTTE at about 1.00 pm. My husband Saverimuttu (65 yrs.) who later went in search of him found him tied to a palmyrah tree with his arms stretched around the trunk. The two LTTE boys, identified as Kutti and Injur, were bludgeoning him mercilessly with poles. Anton was seen to be in a pretty bad state. My husband went up to our son, hugged him, and pleaded with his attackers. He was given a whack with a pole and chased away. The attackers asked him to come back with the arms his son had hidden. My husband went back at about 4.00 pm and found our son and his attackers missing. It has now been surmised that Anton had died of the beating he received and was then buried. I heard that his attackers too subsequently died in action. Injur is said to have been the leader for the seven islands. I am told that he died in Karainagar in late November.”

Note: from the time the LTTE disbanded other groups it is known to have been very sensitive about hidden arms. Anton was probably a victim of this fear, coupled with local jealousies.

Justin Thevaraiah (‘Thevan’) - 19 yrs old - Chundukuli. 12th October 1988

The reason for Thevan’s killing is not clear. Thevan personally had no compromising connections. His home was almost opposite to an IPKF camp. It is not uncommon for persons living in such circumstances to come under suspicion of passing information. Thevan’s family is Hindu, but Thevan had been converted to a Christian sect while a refugee in India, three years earlier. Thevan’s brothers had found work abroad, and the *family* was basically dependent on them. Thevan’s faith consumed all his energies. He turned down his family’s moves to send him abroad. He had told his mother that he wanted to be a pastor. When not going for Bible studies and meetings he spent his time at home in handicrafts such as ornamented Bible verses — ‘God is Love’, ‘The Lord is my Shepherd’ etc. On the 12th October 1988, after spending the morning at home, he had a bath and set off for ‘Trumpet Sound’ on Nallur Kacheri Road, with a Bible strapped onto his bicycle carrier. An assassin shot him dead near Rakka Road junction, leaving his fallen body in a pool of blood. His assassin is said to have been a young man who put his weapon back into his shoulder bag and went away. By the nature of things it is impossible to assign reasons for such killings. There was one rumour to the effect that it could have been mistaken identity.

Incident at Iddaikadu - Killings of Kasilingam Sivasubramaniam (40 yr) and

Kanapathipillai Velmurugan (42 yrs). 18th October 1988

Sivasubramaniam was a resident of Iddaikadu, near the army base at Palaly. During the time the Sri Lankan army was active, Sivasubramaniam and his family used to help the LTTE with food and shelter. This is something that many people gladly did at that time. It would be hardly surprising if the LTTE had been calling at his place for food, even after the arrival of the IPKF.

On the night of 18th October 1988, at about 10.30 pm, gunmen entered his house and attempted to drag him out. His brother-in-law, Velmurugan, went up to him and hugged onto him, pleading and crying. The gunmen first shot Velmurugan in the head. They then shot Sivasubramaniam and went away.

The following morning Sivasubramaniam's cousin-brother had to face an interview at a public institution. A kindly senior civil servant, an Orthodox Hindu, who was on the interview board, noticed that the young man was distressed and inquired why. The young man came out with the story and broke down crying. The civil servant comforted him by telling him that whatever happens is already written from the beginning of time; and if one understands that, it may provide a cure against breaking one's head.

Sivasubramaniam and his wife Sivarani (36 yrs.) have two daughters and two sons: Kayalvili (14), Yalini (12), Sivaseelan (9) and Dwarakan (2).

Velmurugan and his wife Parameswari (35) have a son and four daughters: Ganeshavel (13), Chitra (12), Subathira and Susnithira (twins, aged 8) and Sarithira (6).

Note: It seems that this incident follows another killing. It is said that in Iddaikadu there was an understanding between LTTE and EPRLF cadres not to attack each other since almost all the members of the village are related to each other. This understanding was broken when Sarny, an EPRLF supporter was gunned down only 19 days after his wedding. This shooting took place a few days before 18th October 1988.

Clayton Selliah - 22 years old — Jaffna. 22nd October 1988

Statement by mother, Rosemalar Selliab (48 yrs) of 18 Convent Rd., Jaffna.

“My son Clayton was the family's breadwinner. My husband is a bad asthmatic. We have, besides Clayton, three daughters and another son aged 28, who is a psychiatric patient. On the 22nd October my son Clayton was playing volleyball in the field opposite the Holy Family Convent at about 5 o'clock in the evening. Three young men approached my son and asked for Clayton. When my son owned up to that name, one of them pulled a pistol out of his bag and fired once at my son. Clayton fell on the ground and screamed. The attackers shot him again and went away. The others playing volleyball ran away in fear.”

Note: Clayton's mother was emphatic that her son had no militant ties. Other neighbourhood sources said that Clayton may have been suspected of LTTE links. His friend, who was an LTTE activist, had been killed a few weeks earlier. They added that Clayton had been in hiding for some weeks and had been forbidden from

leaving home. Having tired of confinement, Clayton had left saying that he would go nearby and return shortly. Even if Clayton had LTTE links, it would have been in a very minor capacity considering that he had stayed at home.

Amalesh Ariarajah - 19 years old - Jaffna. 30th October 1988

Amalesh was an active member of the LTTE until the IPKF operation in October 1987. When the IPKF occupied Jaffna town, Amalesh and another LTTE cadre had reportedly taken shelter in a house which had once been an LTTE camp. This is believed to have led to the well-known case of the disappearance of the lady of the house Mrs. Sangaralingam, and her three daughters, after they had been taken in by the IPKF. Amalesh was subsequently arrested and then released around Christmas 1987. From that time he was an active member of the Ceylon Pentecostal Mission (C.P.M.). He was anointed a full member of the Pentecostal Church a few days before his death. He was active in spreading the message of his Church. In October 1988 EPRLF cadres were brought into the Jaffna town area under the protection of the IPKF. In the evening of 30th October 1988 Amalesh was cycling along Hospital Road, near the Railway Station, when he was stopped by individuals believed to have been from the EPRLF. Amalesh screamed and local residents came onto the road. The cadres then made him get onto the bar of a bicycle and they went towards the EPRLF camp, near the Mahatma Gandhi statue (now refurbished by the IPKF). On hearing this, his father Rev. Ariarajah contacted the IPKF. According to Rev. Ariarajah, an IPKF officer told him that they had arrested no such person and that they had nothing to do with internal quarrels.

Amalesh's dead body was found with a gunshot injury on his head, in front of the William Harvey Hospital, Chundikuli, the following morning.

Two civilian tragedies. 9th November 1988

Chundikuli: About 6.00 a.m. a car described as a black Volkswagen was parked opposite the late M.P. Mr. Vanniasingam's house at the junction of Kandy Road and Old Park Road. This was about 80 yards from the Kachcheri. All versions of events agree that the driver was a young man, who is said to have gone away after saying that there was some difficulty and that he would be back with a mechanic. Shortly after 8.00 a.m. a powerful bomb inside the car exploded. This was a time when the area is normally crowded with school children and others coming for official business at the Kachcheri. Four died immediately and two succumbed later in hospital. Amongst the dead were two boys from St. John's College, one girl from Convent Girls' School and the father of a pupil at Chundikuli Girls' College who was returning after dropping his daughter at school.

It is a reflection of the general impression created by the IPKF, because of its methods and attitudes, that many persons thought it possible or even probable that the IPKF could have engineered the incident. But information available from several sources about the movement of persons and vehicles in the area for a few days up to the incident strongly points the finger elsewhere. Why explode a bomb at this particular spot at that particular time? The IPKF sentry points were too far inside Old Park to suffer from the explosion. Perhaps some IPKF officials were expected to pass that way. Maybe this was meant to be a part of a larger attack where the driver had panicked and parked the vehicle in the wrong place. It may be a long time before anyone knows.

The casualties were transported to hospital in IPKF vehicles. This time, for once, they did not beat up or threaten civilians in the area. A gentleman in religious orders who accompanied the dead and the injured to hospital had this to say:

“A well dressed man came up to me and asked if these were all the casualties. I replied in the affirmative. He asked: ‘Not a single Indian soldier?’ I said: ‘What did it matter - a life was a life’. He contorted his face and wrung his hands expressing strong disappointment. He sounded as if the whole outrage would have been justified if one Indian soldier had died”.

That gives some indication of the moral debasement of the community in the course of this conflict.

Nelliady: About 10.30 a.m. a grenade was flung into an IPKF truck which was parked in front of the IPKF sentry point, just east of Nelliady Junction on the Kodikamam Road. The soldiers, it is said, jumped out and escaped with minor injuries. The attackers, believed to be the LTTE, then fired at the IPKF from near the first bend on the Kodikamam Road. The area was crowded with shoppers, many of whom ran inside shops and closed the doors. Others lay flat on the ground. The IPKF opened fire killing five civilians, amongst whom were a plantain seller, a lady vegetable vendor, a shop assistant and a young mother. The attackers reportedly got away. The IPKF also fired a shell into Jamuna Stores, a wholesale agency where many civilians had taken shelter. No one died because they were shielded from the explosion by sacks of provisions. The inmates started screaming when the sacks caught fire. The IPKF captain in the camp opposite ordered the firing to cease and asked those trapped to come out.

Subsequently the people were ordered out and violently herded to the market. Those lying flat on the ground in fear were beaten and asked if the LTTE had taught them this. The people were released after being displayed before informants.

Many civilians, who wondered why a shell was fired into Jamuna Stores, when the firing came from elsewhere, put it down to a personal grudge. While Indian ‘top brass’ are said to purchase large quantities from the trader, requests for purchase on loan by other ranks are said to have been discouraged.

Incident at Thirunelveli Market. 13th November 1988

Name: Sundaram Vaikunthanathan

Occupation: Tax Collector in the Thirunelveli Market

Age: 46 years

Marital Status: Married with three children; 2 girls and 3 boys (eldest 16 years, youngest 6 years)

Vaikunthanathan went to work on the morning of Sunday 13.11.68 as usual. He started his work at the market. His brother (Shan), who is an active member of EROS and was a member of its central committee until November that year, had got the lease for the market from the village council. It is he who had employed his brother Vaikunthan (as the victim was known by his friends) to collect the daily taxes. That morning Shan was also in the market, but at a different place.

While Vaikunthan was working he was approached by unarmed men who took him towards the entrance of the market. According to a friend who was also there when the incident took place, someone told him that Vaikunthan was being taken out by some youths. So he went to see what happened. As he walked towards the entrance he heard three shots and then he ran away.

Vaikunthan’s brother, on hearing the shots, went to see what happened and found his brother’s body. According to him there was no provocation whatsoever which could have led to this incident. All he can suggest is that there have been allegations to the effect that EROS is helping the LTTE. But he assures that nothing of that nature has taken place in the market. According to this same source, EROS contacted senior persons in EPRLF concerning this killing. The latter denied any connection between their group and the killing.

Search of University Student Hostel:19th November 1988

The IPKF entered and began a search of the University of Jaffna male students' hostel at 5.30 a.m. There had been several indications in the past week that University premises were going to be searched both from words of officers as well as from searches of students' private residences. Given this atmosphere several students as well as staff had left the area in fear. In the past few weeks several civilians who were sympathetic to the LTTE had been murdered. It is fair to surmise that those students staying in the hostel had no compromising links and would have been unaware of anything lethal hidden in the premises. It is known that some students were staying in the hostel because they were afraid of physical harm after the killing of former student leader Vimalaswery the previous July. The sub-warden of the hostel had been on leave for some time.

In the course of the search the army is said to have found some rounds of ammunition in the rubbish disposal area.- After this the absent sub-warden's room was broken into and about 20 walkie-talkies and some timers are said to have been found. Only the latter finds can be authenticated by those present. Subsequently, about 7.30 a.m., the army proceeded to beat several of those present. Amongst those worst beaten were Joseph Ravindran, from the academic staff of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, who had assumed duties as part-time warden just a short time earlier. He was asked for the location of arms, made to bend down, and was beaten with a stiff rod on his buttocks and shoulders. Some students were beaten when they refused orders to dig up the ground. Others were badly beaten when they were ordered to lift the concrete slab covering the septic tank and were physically unable to do so. Many of the neighbours heard the screams of the students. Amongst those badly beaten were those living in fear of the LTTE. Students said that some members of another militant group who had come with the IPKF were more terrifying in their conduct than the IPKF itself.

The beatings stopped when the Vice-Chancellor with the Deans of Arts and of Science arrived around 9.30 a.m. The students, many of whom broke down, begged not to be left alone. The Dean of Science undertook to remain with them. In the meantime hundreds of other students with some staff arrived in procession and refused to budge. In the afternoon the army agreed to release those detained after the Vice-Chancellor, the two Deans present and several staff members gave guarantees that any one of the inmates would be available if required for questioning.

Incident at St. Patrick's 26th November 1988

On the morning of 26th November 1988 started a series of events which led to the tragic death of a 17 year old church organist, Jude Zacharias, who according to people who knew him well was not involved with any militant group. During and after these events several innocent persons, including two priests and students of St. Patrick's College, were assaulted. These events point out the sad plight of innocent civilians caught in the middle of the internecine warfare between militant groups and the undisclosed policies of the IPKF.

It is said that a number of robberies had happened in the vicinity of St. Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna, preceding this date. On the morning in question, it is said that a group of LTTE cadres were confronted by EPRLF cadres near the Cathedral. There occurred a shoot-out and a chase, with one militant running through the church. In the gun-battle at least one EPRLF cadre and one LTTE cadre are known to have died. Soon the IPKF

— arrived in the area and cordoned it off. All male workers in the Bishop's House and adjoining church offices were brought to the compound of the Cathedral along with the priests inside the Bishop's House. During the gun-battle the church organist had been inside the church practising on the organ. There had also been several others praying in the Cathedral. The organist was arrested inside the Cathedral. In the grounds of the Cathedral the priests were addressed insultingly by Indian officers, while the organist was assaulted severely in front of the gathered people.

Meanwhile some army officers and EPRLF cadres searching the nearby hostel of St. Patrick's College had found fresh blood-stains belonging to a student injured by a stray bullet from the shooting. Intensifying their search they found two empty grenade cases, a few empty cartridges and three live cartridges collected by students. Following this a few students and a priest had been assaulted and were taken to the Cathedral grounds. A few students and the organist were taken to the Railway Station Camp of the IPKF. The parish and other priests from St. Patrick's College were asked to report to the IPKF camp at 4.00 p.m. At 5.00 p.m. the parish priest and one other priest from the College were released. The mother of the organist who went to the Station Camp in the evening saw her beaten and battered son being cruelly mishandled. Two priests from the College were detained overnight and one of them was severely beaten; it is not clear who his custodians were.

The two priests have so far refused to talk about what happened to them, presumably due to fear. They were released the next day. The students too were released. People living near the Cathedral heard gun shots during the night of the 26th, and in the morning they found the battered dead body of the organist Jude Zacharias lying on the road. His body showed signs of torture. Some of his nails were missing, he had a fractured skull and his leg was broken. The official post-mortem report states that his death resulted from ante-mortem brain damage due to gun shot injury. Also recorded in the report were details of bruises, fractures and internal injuries.

Given below are two statements. The first is a compilation of the eye-witness accounts of several persons, and the second is the statement of the mother of the deceased organist.

On the morning of the 26th of November, mass started as usual at St. Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna, at about 6.15 a.m., and it was over by 7.00

a.m. Although the mass was over, at least three ladies were praying inside the church and there were one or two men standing behind the church. At this time shots were heard from around the church. A few militants belonging to opposing factions were having a shoot-out; one ran across the breadth of the church leaving a hand grenade behind. The organist was practising on the church organ.

The parish priest of St. Mary's Cathedral heard the shots while he was having his breakfast, and he came out of the room and surveyed the Cathedral compound. It was about 8.30 in the morning. He noticed that about 10 army men had cordoned off the area; he attempted to get inside the church but was prevented from doing so by the soldiers. By this time all the workers from the Bishop's House, the press and the Cathedral Centre were brought to the compound of the Cathedral. The parish priest was standing in front of his presbytery. Six armed EPRLF men followed by another ten walked into the compound. One of them asked the parish priest to go into the church and open his room.

However, before he could open it they had broken open the door and entered. The organist Jude Zacharias (aged 17), who was playing the organ inside the church all this time, along with the others who were inside were brought out, and Jude was assaulted by the soldiers. Though the parish priest raised objections the assault continued. Then the parish priest left the area and joined the priests who were standing under the margosa tree. Then the army wanted to check the parish priest's rooms, but he refused to give the keys.

Half an hour later two EPRLF cadres came and asked Fr. Pilendiran, Prefect of Studies in the College, the whereabouts of the injured LTTE boy. Then two Indian soldiers came to assault Fr. Pilendiran, saying "You LTTE bastard", but the EPRLF boys stopped them. They wanted to search the desks first. They pulled out four hostellers, and while searching the second desk they found a bag containing two empty hand grenades and three live cartridges: there was another empty cartridge in another desk. Then they assaulted Fr.

Pilendiran and the hostellers. The EPRLF boys had hit Fr. Pilendiran for the first time. Five hostellers including Wilson, an A-level student from Navanthurai, to whom the second desk belonged, and Fr. Pilendiran were marched out and taken to the Cathedral compound. A soldier hit Fr. Pilendiran while on the road. This was witnessed by people who were standing on the road.

Then one officer approached Fr. Pilendiran and asked him to go and stand with the other priests, but a different officer approached him and said “You bloody bastard, this is the last day you see daylight. Your bloody Bishop can write to the Prime Minister or Rajiv, I don’t care”. He wanted to check the boarding again. He brought Fr. Pilendiran back to the college and when he saw a few drops of blood in front of the rector’s room (from the injured hosteller who had been carried by that way), mistaking it for the blood of the injured LTTE cadre, he caught Fr. Pilendiran by the collar and asked “Where is the pistol of the dead LTTE?” When he replied that he did not know, the officer, Major Sharom, gave him about ten slaps. It was when they were taken to the lower school building that the Rector came back from the hospital after admitting the injured student. Fr. Pilendiran, along with Fr. Ranjendram and the parish priest, Fr. Jesunesan, were asked to appear at the Camp at 4.00 p.m. It must have been around 1.00 p.m. when the army and the EPRLF cadres left. They tied Jude Zachcharias with a rope, and took him along with the other hostellers to the Railway Station Camp.

The Mother’s Statement:

I was at the EPRLF camp, Hotel Ashok, at 2.00 p.m. They told me “Come tomorrow because two of us are dead”. I went alone to the Railway Station Camp at 4.00 p.m. I sat behind the four priests who were already there. I introduced myself to the army as the mother of the boy who was arrested at the Cathedral. They asked “Are you the Acca (elder sister]?” I said “No, I am the mother”. They said “Santhirakumar has been taken home to get the weapons. He will be back in 20 minutes”. At 5.45 p.m. the jeep came into the Station and they brought my son. His face was covered. He was carried by two soldiers who held him by the shoulders. They threw him from the 1st platform over the railway track to the next platform where his body fell and was hanging from the edge. Another soldier kicked him on the leg. He turned a little so that his face could be seen. He shouted Amma four times. I said “This is my son, Lord save him”. An army officer approached me and spoke in Tamil, saying “There are many accusations against him; we have retrieved arms from the church and from his house; come tomorrow”. He then chased me out. I left the camp at 6.00 p.m. When I returned home I found out that he had been brought by jeep to a third compound near, my home, and was beaten with—sticks and was pricked with pins on his head. This was at about 5.00 p.m. He was also taken to the Cathedral compound where there is a coola tree, and was asked to climb and take hidden arms from there. —But he couldn’t, for he had not the strength to climb. I was also told by those present that before being taken to the camp, he was asked to pick up a hand grenade that was lying on the ground and a photograph was taken. We came home around 10.00 p.m. We heard some shots at 5.30 a.m. Someone brought me news that my son’s body was lying a few hundred yards from my house. I ran and put him on my lap. I noticed that there was a lot of blood on my lap and found blood oozing out of his head. At 7.30 a.m. we took him to the hospital. The police took charge. From 10.00 to 11.00 I faced the inquiry by the coroner, Ketheswaran. There were 13 gun shot wounds through the forehead and temple. The rib cage had been smashed. The toe nails were missing and his hand and leg had been broken. There were pin-prick injuries all over his face.

The following is a statement by Rev. (Dr.) G.F. Rajendram of the Department of Zoology, University of Jaffna, who resides at St. Patrick’s College:

At about 11.00 a.m. I heard some altercation and came out of my room at St. Patrick’s College and saw some IPKF soldiers in the corridor. The leader of the IPKF questioned Fr. Pilendiran and slapped him a few times. I was ordered to come to the Cathedral compound.

As soon as I entered the compound I pointed out to the leader of the IPKF operation that one of those arrested was a heart patient. He and two other boys were released. I saw Jude Zacharias being bound with his hands tied behind the back. After the officer left, the hostel boys and Jude Zacharias were kicked repeatedly by the IPKF soldiers.

At 4.00 p.m. I went to the IPKF camp along with three other priests. The Commander of the camp berated us for aiding the terrorists. He then ordered Fr. Pilendiran and Jesunesan to go upstairs for further questioning. The mother of the boy Jude Zacharias was seated behind us. We were allowed to leave the IPKF camp at about 5.00 p.m.

Note to the incident at St. Patrick's:

Within a week of the incident details of it were broadcast on the BBC's Tamil service. There is little doubt that this was done with at least the passive approval of the Church in Jaffna. But the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Jaffna has chosen to maintain silence on the matter, much to the chagrin of its flock who are smarting helplessly under the humiliation. The Cathedral and the surrounding establishments mark the seat of the Bishopric of Jaffna.

This brings to mind two killings attributed to the Sri Lankan forces in late 1984, in which the Christian Church was intimately concerned. These were the killings of the Roman Catholic clergyman Fr. Mary Bastian, and of Rev. George Jeyarajasingam of the Methodist Church, both in the Mannar District. Both these happened during a period of escalation marked by the attempt to settle the Tamil problem by putting into practice a scheme by the then National Security Minister, Mr. -Lalith Athulathmudali. The scheme as stated envisaged settling a large number of Sinhalese, from categories such as fishermen and those with criminal records, in Tamil areas. Over 80 Sinhalese settled in Kent and Dollar Farms (which had been set up for Tamil refugees, who had been driven out) were killed by Tamil militants. Over 100 Tamil residents in the farming area of Murunkan were killed by Sri Lankan forces.

Statements by a number of witnesses left little doubt about the identity of the killers of Fr. Mary Bastian. The National Security Minister denied that his forces had killed Fr. Bastian. He said that the Police had spied him getting into a boat and going across to India. The American Cardinal, who preached at a memorial service for Fr. Bastian in Boston, promised to pursue the matter and get to the bottom of it. The matter was then dropped and was lost in a web of silence. Had the Vatican intervened? It is not hard to imagine how the Bishop's Conference in Sri Lanka would have advised the Vatican. Its statements left the impression that its perception of the Tamil problem was not too different from that of the Sri Lankan government.

Rev. Jeyarajasingam had been in Murunkan during the aforementioned massacre. He was about to leave for England on a year's sabbatical. He is said to have protested strongly to military officials about the incident. About two days later he is said to have been summoned by the army. There are strong indications that while travelling in his vehicle they were stopped by the army and he and his Sinhalese driver were killed and burnt. As Rev. Jeyarajasingam was to travel to England shortly, he is said to have taken video pictures of the army's handiwork.

This matter too was not pursued to any conclusion, though many individual Sinhalese Methodist clergy felt deeply about the matter.

However, by the end of 1986, leading representatives from all main Churches in the South had joined in a Sri Lankan Armed Forces Day service, to the singing of "Onward Christian Soldiers", which was given a

countrywide airing on national television.

It is understood that the Bishop of Jaffna had been previously ‘pulled up’ by the Sri Lankan Bishops’ Conference for being forthright about his views on the actions of the national army. Since mid-1985 he has seldom spoken out. It is not hard to guess what forces would have been at work in ensuring the Church’s silence locally on the recent incident at St. Patrick’s.

We cannot comment further without knowing the full facts. Whatever the considerations that motivate the local Church to be silent, there are some inescapable facts:

Ordinary people see the Church in Jaffna as a powerful, highly organised institution with a following of around 300,000 persons. It gives them an identity and represents perhaps the dignity of the larger community which has no comparable organisation. When the Church chooses to be seen to remain silent in the face of a public outrage committed at its very institutional centre, ordinary people will conclude that this giant, which is potentially a source of immense moral authority, is in fact effete and cowardly. Hundreds of thousands of persons, who are driven to helplessness and humiliation, begin to look upon and admire the handful of young men who risk much, perhaps everything, ‘shooting at the symbols of their humiliation. These young men in turn become the symbols of their dignity, regardless of the consideration that their ultimate tendency may be undemocratic and anarchic. People begin to feel that these young men —believe far more sincerely in their guns than does the Church in its God.

Such omissions in the form of silence, in the face of violence from internal and external causes, will in time cause the Church to lose both its moral authority and its esteem. Standing up for justice and dignity of the common man becomes thus a public duty, inseparable from spiritual office. Failure here means that the Church becomes more and more compromised with time, becoming part of the onset of anarchy.

Many public institutions have collapsed under the weight of moral dilemmas. A reason often given for silence is that they may be too embarrassingly compromised to thrash out matters in public. This is again a form of cowardice. A public airing often restores a necessary sense of direction.

Death of Nirmalan, a Farmer aged 29 years. 3rd December 198

Nirmalan, known as ‘Anna’, lived with his family consisting of three members, in the village of Karukampanai just two miles from Tellippalai Junction. Since his father is no more he was the only male family member who gave moral support to his mother and two sisters. He was a tireless social worker, and for the people of the village a function was not meant to be a function without him. About a couple of weeks before his death he played an important role in establishing a School of Nursing for the women of the village. Thus he got involved in various social activities.

Like every other militant he also had an urge to contribute his part for the struggle for independence. Subsequently this drove him to become an active member of PLOTE in the early 1980s. Though he tried his best to make it a success, he became desperate and disillusioned with its methods. As a result of this he left the movement in 1986. In 1987, when the LTTE Jaffna Commander ‘Radha’ was killed at Punnalaikaduvan, Anna was asked to make a speech at the cemetery. In his speech he said that “I am telling you pretty clearly, I neither belong to the PLOTE nor to the LTTE. I have come here as a representative of my village - purely as an independent man”. This was his only association with the LTTE.

On the day of the incident, around 3 o'clock in the evening, his house was surrounded by some unidentified youths. They are said to have come in three vans shouting "Anna, Anna", and they entered the house. At that time he was not at home and his sister told them that he had gone to the farm. Then they started scolding her in a very indecent manner. They kept on asking her whether Anna had any arms in his possession. Having taken an album with them, they set off to the farm, which is half a mile from his house, at high speed. Anna, who was irrigating the farm, was able to see the vans coming towards his farm, and not knowing what to do he came up to the gate. There his destiny was decided. The gunmen caught him and started to assault him mercilessly; the neighbours were able to hear his screaming. When he was lying half dead in an unconscious state they shot him through his eyes. Leaving the dead body behind, they got into the vans and vanished.

A large number of people gathered at the cemetery. An old man among the gathering merely heaved a heavy sigh and said "Who will come and succour us in times of need? No one can fill Anna's place. The village saw its grandest funeral within living memory.

As usual, the IPKF was very prompt in doing its 'round-up' after everything was over. A couple of days after his death, a rumour was spread in the village to the effect that the killing could have been a 'mistake'. It seems impossible for an average person to believe this rumour.

Death of Umashankar. 19th December 1988

Umashankar, of Palaly Road, Jaffna (aged 29 years) was a helpful person who was willing to help anyone who asked. It is said that he helped some friends of his in putting up LTTE posters.

On the 17th of October 1988 the IPKF took him into custody at Ariyakulam Junction, along with some other youths. When he failed to return home that day, his parents got worried and started to search for him in several IPKF camps. Yet they could not trace him. On the 22nd of October one of the boys who was caught along with him was released. It was he who revealed the news of his detention at the Jaffna Railway Station Camp. Immediately, the parents went to the camp and talked to the Commander. To satisfy them he said that Umashankar was ill, and that they were giving him medical treatment. He assured them that Umashankar would be released only when the treatment was over. He was released after two days. His legs and arms were found to be swollen and blood clots were also found on his arms and legs. The parents gave him medical treatment for about two months.

On the 19th of December 1988, the day of the Presidential elections, he went to Kalviyankadu at 8.30 in the morning in order to attend to some work. The whole day he was missing. On the following morning the parents went and complained at the EPRLF camp. At that time the Chief Minister for the North and East, Mr. Varatharajaperumal was there. He inquired of the parents and told them that the EPRLF had nothing to do with this arbitrary arrest. But he promised them that he would take immediate action to trace him. The parents handed over his photograph and other details about him and left the camp. The parents then started to trace him on their own. But all their attempts were in vain. At about 11.30 in the morning a stranger came and told them that there was an unidentified body at the Kannakar junction - Kollumputhurai (Colombogam). On hearing this his brother immediately rushed to the spot. When he got there, one of the neighbours came and told him that the body had been taken to the General Hospital. The brother then rushed to the hospital in a few minutes and made inquiries at the inquiry section. They directed him to the mortuary, where he identified Umashankar's body. The post-mortem report revealed that Umashankar had injuries as a result of severe assault and he also seemed to have been given 'electric shocks'. There were also gunshot injuries on his forehead. The body was given over to the brother at about 2.30 p.m.

The tales of two young men

The recent history of the community saw many young men fired with noble feelings. Many of them were caught up in tragic dilemmas, where their lives became threatened by others once involved in a fraternal cause. Even so, they kept much of their nobility to the very end. We sketch below the stories of two such young men.

The first was a government employee from a remote village, who was a member of the EPRLF until December 1986. He was arrested by the LTTE about the middle of 1987 and was tortured very badly to force the disclosure of locations of hidden arms. Being a strong person, this young man kept his mouth sealed. He saw and heard many terrible things in the LTTE camp. One of his more kindly captors told him many things and said that he was disgusted. The LTTE released this young man around the time of the July 1987 Accord. He was very bitter at that time. Through mutual friends, persons in the University helped him to get medical treatment. He showed several symptoms of torture, including recurrent pains in the head and limbs.

He returned to the village and led a quiet life. When the EPRLF was promoted for the North-East provincial leadership in October 1988, the LTTE was suspicious as to whether he would rejoin the EPRLF. They sent messages to test his intentions. On one occasion he was asked to report at the IPKF base at Palaly. The young man ignored all these. He knew a good deal about the LTTE in his area. He felt that the LTTE ought to be challenged, but not with the help of foreigners. One day, a friend of his who had helped him in the past was killed by the LTTE. The same night the young man fled his village and subsequently rejoined the EPRLF elsewhere. When he found that some LTTE supporters in his village were on a hit-list, he sent a message asking them to flee to Colombo. This was because he felt that these supporters were essentially sincere men as well as good men. Just before he went back to the EPRLF, he told a friend that he had little sympathy for what the EPRLF stood for at present. But he added that he would keep his independence and teach the LTTE a lesson. What became of him later is not known.

The second young man is Antony from Kurumbasiddy. At one time he used to help his friends who did sentry duty for the EPRLF during the days of the Sri Lankan operations. He was then for a short time with the now defunct militant group the RELO. Antony then worked for a hardware merchant.

In December 1988 the villagers told Antony that a well-known LTTE assassin had inquired of him from them. Sensing danger, Antony joined the EPRLF, vowing to get the assassin. He knew what there was to be known about the LTTE in his village, and he did what he could to protect its helpers from harm. He had warned several of them to get away and had told others that they were safe while he was around. Antony was later killed in a shoot-out between the LTTE and the EPRLF.

Vadamarachi

Introduction

Vadamarachi consists of the landmass in the north-eastern corner of the Jaffna peninsula, separated from the rest of the peninsula by a three mile strip of moorland extending from Thondamanaru Lagoon and running northeast. This was the home of several key figures of the Tamil youth militancy in the 1970s. Although the bulk of militants today are largely from Tamil rural areas outside the

peninsula, Vadamarachi continues to be associated in many minds, Tamil and non-Tamil, as the heartland of the militants. The Sri Lankan army assault during Operation Liberation, which lasted five days from 26th May 1987, was a devastating experience for the people of Vadamarachi. Their sufferings did not end with the indiscriminate bombing and shelling. A large number of youths, some of them picked up from officially designated places of refuge, were summarily killed.

When the IPKF launched its Operation Pawan in October 1987, Vadamarachi remained largely unaffected except for some shelling. Ironically, a large number of civilians sought refuge in the precincts of the Sri Lankan army camp at Hartley College, Point Pedro. After the experience of Operation Liberation and the conduct of the Sri Lankan army, the people of Vadamarachi welcomed the IPKF in July through to the end of 1987 with undisguised enthusiasm.

Despite the IPKF assault in October 1987 and the deteriorating situation elsewhere, relations between the people of Vadamarachi and the IPKF remained fairly good until the 1st June 1988. The manner in which relations deteriorated raises deep questions about the capability and competence of the IPKF for anything like a peace-keeping role. By its readiness to descend to low levels anticipated by the adversary, the adversary all too easily wrested the political initiative from the IPKF.

On the morning of the 1st of June militants, believed to be from the LTTE, took cover behind an Urban Council van and shot dead two IPKF men in the Point Pedro bazaar. The soldiers were apparently shopping prior to going home on leave. The very same day, starting in the afternoon, the IEPKF rounded up a large number of males, running into thousands, and assaulted them indiscriminately. The men, old and young, were picked up from as far afield as Thumpalai and Manthikai, more than two miles from the incident.

Those beaten included Urban Council employees, doctors, engineers and clergy. Old men who could barely walk were seen being herded along roads and made to run by soldiers swinging at them with rods. Those who were treated at Point Pedro hospital for broken bones and assault injuries numbered several tens. The fact that these reprisals began several hours after the incident occurred points to deliberate high level policy - a conscious decision to terrorise. The following is the statement of a young professional rounded up in a group of 800 at Manthikai at about 3.00 p.m. that day:

“We were herded along to Point Pedro camp that evening, and made to run a gauntlet consisting of a corridor formed by soldiers flailing —with rods and sharp objects. I was in great pain, bleeding from my head and back, and my shirt was torn. We were given neither medical attention, food nor water. As the night wore on I felt faintish due to a loss of blood. I managed to make my way to an Indian officer and told him that I needed medical attention. He abused me, called me a bastard, and told me that I could die there for all he cared and that no one would cry for me. I went back and did what I could to stop the —bleeding with my torn shirt. We were given water to drink after the guard changed at midnight. We were released the following afternoon. I disposed of my blood-stained shirt so as not to upset my family and —went home in my sarong. My family, who had been in the throes of anxiety for more than 24 hours, found release in crying. I too cried’

Attacks by the LTTE and reprisals against civilians then became a regular feature. The LTTE, for its part, killed several civilians. One would normally surmise that the victim was accused of being an informer. But in a number of known cases the victims turned out to be persons innocent of compromising involvements - victims rather of intrigue, rivalry and village gossip.

Many people gave vent to their resentment against the IPKF by responding to the LTTE’s calls to observe anniversaries and commemorations of dead militants. These demonstrations were mostly peaceful. Sometimes women resorted to shouting and throwing sand if Indian soldiers arrived on the scene. These were

tolerated by the IPKF until early October, when, outwardly at least, hopes of negotiation with the LTTE were given up. What happened subsequently is described in the general introduction.

Civilian suffering and reprisals against them in the wake of clashes between the LTTE and the IPKF reached a peak around the time of the incident at Nelliady on 10th November, described elsewhere. On hearing noises of explosions or firing, the first thought that comes to males of all ages is to get away as soon as possible. Several have been shot or beaten up by soldiers while attempting to get away. Many of them, when questioned, refer to the IPKF's record of indiscriminate beating. They said that they would rather get shot and killed while trying to get away, than stay and get beaten by soldiers. Such is the reputation of the IPKF for beating civilians. Many of the victims killed, injured and maimed and from the labouring class. This has resulted in several homes being deprived of breadwinners, where the women, on top of their sorrow, have to manage as best as they can.

The sight of men, old and young, getting down from their bicycles (which they are not obliged to do) and cringing past soldiers at the sentry points in Nelliady, is a strange comment on what is still, officially, a relationship between the 'protectors' and the 'protected'.

The following sample cases give some insight into the human situation in Vadamarachi:

Miss Chandradevi Chelliah ('Chandra Teacher') — 40+ yrs: Karanavai, 9th June 1988

Chandra Teacher was a resident of Karanavai South near Nelliady, and was a teacher at Sacred Heart School, Nelliady. She had mostly worked in the South and her last posting had been in Galaha for eight years. Amongst her colleagues she was outspoken in her views, which were often critical of the way things went. Her friends too were often English-speaking, and were of a cosmopolitan kind. While she was very much respected as a teacher, her qualities also made it possible for those who did not like her to indulge in careless and malicious gossip.

A series of coincidences surrounded her death on 9th June 1988. Towards the early part of that year two leading LTTE persons were hidden in a house in front of hers, under the care of the LTTE's local leader, 'Chukla'. On one occasion the IPKF had apprehended the helpers who had gone to fetch food for the V.I.P.s. This led to the arrest of 'Chukla', who had gone in search of them. The V.I.P.s got away, after being warned by a helper who had escaped.

Chandra Teacher lived with her elderly mother and a domestic help. After the Vadamarachi Operation she had also kept two young boys, ex-militant helpers, whose parents had sought her help in rehabilitating these boys. The boys were attending school. It was once rumoured amongst the LTTE helpers that a walkie-talkie had been found in her chicken coop. Her relatives contacted the LTTE leadership, who in turn told them that there was no problem. After this, Chandra Teacher had told the two boys not to be at home when she was not there.

Later Chandra Teacher sold a piece of land and deposited the proceeds of 300,000 rupees at the Nelliady People's Bank. This was to provide the dowry for her sister, who was to be married soon. A malicious rumour got around that the IPKF had paid her the money, for information supplied. A few days before she died she went to talk to her surveyor who lived near the Mandaan IPKF camp. This was because she had wanted a piece of land surveyed prior to sale. Again, a rumour got around that she had visited the IPKF to give information. On the 8th of June the IPKF did a round up of her area.

On the morning of the 9th of June, Chandra Teacher went to her brother's place to return her niece, who had been staying with her, to the parents. In the afternoon, when she was returning from school on her bicycle, she is said to have been pushed down and eight bullets were fired into her body. It is said that she took some time to die. When her relatives contacted the LTTE leadership, the first private reaction was reportedly to the effect that there could have been a mistake. Old rumours then started to resurface. Many people talked uncritically. Even educated persons passed on rumours that she had been paid 300,000 rupees by the IPKF, without asking themselves whether a person would give publicity to such acquisitions by depositing the money in a local bank.

Incident at Udupiddy. 15th September 1988

Mr. P.R. Suntheralingam, a lawyer from Udupiddy, was around 58 years of age when this tragic end befell him. Udupiddy is a place in the neighbourhood of Valvettiturai. He was a Tiger sympathiser, though not an ardent supporter. In earlier days he sincerely gave food parcels and other forms of help in some measure.

On the 15th September 1988 he attended a wedding in Valveti, mainly to write down the dowry particulars. As usual he went on his motorbike, wearing a silk Veshti and a long chain. His family did not see him alive since then.

When he came out from the wedding ceremony some youths, believed to be from the Tigers, called him and took him with them. Coincidentally, one of his daughter's friends saw him taken in a van, driven by two militants. When she saw this she shouted "This is my friend's father. Where are you taking him?" They scolded her back to keep her mouth shut, and went away.

The family and his brother contacted a few people who have connections with the LTTE. For about four days they could not get a reply. They denied having anything to do with it.

On the morning of the 20th September someone came and gave a message saying that Mr. P.R. Suntheralingam's body was floating near the Valvettiturai seashore. The body was floating upside down, and they could not identify it immediately. By the time they went again with some other people they were told the body was taken and buried in the nearby cemetery. The daughter was very keen that she should see the body. Then they dug up and removed the body. Suntheralingam's body was barely recognisable, considering all that it had been through. It showed signs of torture. Several of his front teeth were broken and his right forearm was also broken. They took the body to the Point Pedro Government hospital for the sake of getting a death certificate, and cremated the body the same day.

After three or four days the Tigers sent, through an intermediary, some cash and Suntheralingam's ring, which were amongst his belongings. Members of the LTTE said in their remarks that he deserved this punishment. But his close relatives could not think of any reason, except that on a few occasions he had been critical of the LTTE in private conversations.

Another speculation is that his death may be connected with a family feud within the goldsmiths' community to which he belonged. His sister is said to have been killed by the Sri Lankan army a few years ago while she was travelling from Trincomalee to Jaffna. His cousin Kandasamy was also assassinated on 25th December 1988.

S. Sivanandasundaram 21st October 1988

Sivanandasundaram, leader of the Tamil Makkal Manram, a retired government servant and leading citizen of Point Pedro, was amongst the three persons nominated by the LTTE for chairmanship of the ill-fated interim council for the North and East, in September 1988. His organisation is known to have taken the stand that the LTTE were the legitimate heirs of the Tamil National cause, and the other groups were even termed 'traitors'.

The 'Uthayan' in late September 1988 carried a report in which Sivanandasundaram described the recent meeting he had had with the Indian Ambassador Mr. J.N. Dixit, where he had reiterated his position in no uncertain terms. Mr. Dixit had also been told that the withdrawal of the IPKF would not be a loss to the Tamils.

On the 21st October Mr. Sivanandasundaram addressed a meeting in Arialai on the invitation of the Citizens' Committee of Arialal. The meeting was to commemorate the late Mr. Santhosham of the LTTE. After the meeting Mr. Sivanandasundaram set off to Point Pedro in a passenger van. This van broke down at the beginning of Vallai-Veli. Mr. Sivanandasundaram then transferred to the CTh bus which had been hired from the Point Pedro depot to carry some school children to the meeting at Arialai. Some of the parents of the children had accompanied them. Mr. Sivanandasundaram had earlier avoided travelling in that bus because of advice he had received. On this day IPKF forces were deployed about Vallai-Veli (an open moorland three miles in length). What follows is the statement of a witness travelling by a van behind Mr. Sivanandasundaram's bus.

"Our van was stopped, apparently for checking by IPKF soldiers, at the palmyrah grove past the Valvettiturai fork in Vallai-Veli at about 3.30 p.m. One hundred yards up the road we saw a bus stopped and a man being taken away from the bus by a youth. A little later a gun shot was heard. The civilians followed their accustomed reflex action by falling flat on the ground. A little later a Tamil-speaking soldier told us that what had happened was a matter of one of our own people killing another of his own kind. He said that in five minutes he would let us go. When we reached the end of Vallai-Veli the bus in which Mr. Sivanandasundaram was traveling was seen halted. We passed his dead body on the way. The driver of our van stopped the vehicle and proceeded to berate the other driver. He was told that he should not have left the old man alone and driven off. The other driver explained that the bus had been stopped by three youths and one of them came and asked Mr. Sivanandasundaram to dismount. he added "The youth then asked me to drive away. I was hesitant. Then some of the parents amongst the passengers expressed the view that the matter was not our quarrel, and was a quarrel between two militant groups and hence did not concern us. I was urged to drive. I reluctantly did so". My driver told him that in such a situation he should have stopped the vehicle and then asked the passengers to scream. Had they done so the IPKF could not have pleaded ignorance".

Incident at Yakkarai - a village in Karaveddy. October 1988

Mr. Thangarajah, a mason around 26 years of age, is married with two children. He lives close to the army camp. Two months back, in October, he went out to ease himself at 3.00 a.m. While he was in his compound some IPKF soldiers jumped into the compound and shot at him, saying he was an LTTE. He *was* left there injured and unnoticed, but. the soldiers jumped over the fence and went on their way.

The wife, who could not afford to hire a car, nonetheless hired one and took him to Point Pedro hospital. He had received two bullet injuries, one near his shoulder and another in his stomach. He looked pale and lost. He was so depressed that he could hardly talk about the incident. Such people hardly know what is going on in the world. They are people, who struggle hard to earn a little to support their families. That is their world. They simply attribute such misfortunes to fate. Thangarajah's main fear is that he may be disabled and thus

prevented from supporting his family.

Incident at Athiamalai. near Valvettiturai. 13th November 1988

Vadivelu Murugesan, 24 years old, is a resident of Polygamdi and is married with a 2 year old daughter. He is a carpenter and has his workshop at Athiarnalai, two miles from his residence. On that day there was a clash between LTTE boys and IPKF soldiers. There was tension in that area. Vadivelu and his colleagues who work together in that shop closed up their shop and hurried to get back to their homes. While they were going, they met another group of IPKF soldiers who came in the opposite direction from Thondamanaru — Vallai—Veli. They caught these people, took them into a house and gave them a severe beating, without any word being uttered. Vadivelu and his colleagues pleaded. Later they were ordered to go out. While they started walking one soldier shot Vadivelu in both his legs. Later another group of soldiers came from Valvettiturai and took him to their camp. He was then bandaged and they left him in the 'Oorani' hospital. The relatives later took him to Point Pedro hospital. He fears that though one of his fractured legs may be alright, in the other leg the thigh bone is very badly smashed and he will be crippled throughout his life. When asked how he was managing, his reply was *that* they are managing with the small quantity of jewels which the daughter and mother have. He was an active member of the Newton Sports Club, which contributes 1000 rupees to the needs of affected members. he does not have any other income. He has not got even the refugee relief paid by the government. The IPKF never inquired into what happened, nor does it seem to care.

Incident at Pannaikaddai (near Point Pedro town). 10th November 1988

A grenade was thrown by the LTTE at IPKF soldiers, while they were patrolling along a lane in Pannaikaddai around 8 o'clock in the morning. Later the IPKF admitted that three soldiers died on the spot. As usual the place was surrounded by the IPKF soldiers from neighbouring camps. The people were in a panic and some who ran to their backyards and down their lanes were attacked.

Among the victims was one Rajendran. He was shot on his buttocks and was bleeding. He has a pharmacy at Nelliady, and luckily among the soldiers who came that way one was known to him at Nelliady. He spoke to the other soldiers and left him with his people. The others were taken away. He could not be taken to the hospital until 4 o'clock in the evening. He was still in hospital at Christmas.

A group of soldiers who came in the opposite direction saw some people going down the lane and shot at nearly 12 of the youths and took them in.

Several of them were injured in the legs and in the back. Many of them are poor. All those who were rounded up were kept in a common place. Aingaran, Karunanithy Master's son, who was a CTB worker aged 22, was one

among them. He must have remembered how the IPKF beat the people. He thought of escaping, and tried to run away. He was shot dead by a soldier. The soldiers showed some remorse by releasing immediately his brother, who was also taken in by them.

Many were released the following day, but those who had received gunshot injuries were not released but were subject to more interrogation.

Nanthakumar was shot in the back and continued bleeding. He showed signs of severe torture. His legs have burn marks from being given electric shocks. He said the experience was as though he was dying, but did not

die. He was still in hospital at the end of the year. He is relied upon by the mother as breadwinner and counsellor. His father left the family when he was young. Nanthakumar looks after his brothers and sisters on his small income at a bakery. He looked dazed and lost when we met him. The main reason for his anxiety was his brother, who was taken' along with him and was not released since then. The latest word on his brother, by the IPKF to his mother, was that while he was being taken to Killinochchi the truck got caught in a land-mine and Thillainathan, his brother, died. But the people near that area told the mother that they believed that Thillainathan died while he was beaten, and was buried near the camp.

Incident at Katkoyalamn - a village next to Point Pedro. 7th December 1988

Sivaganeshan Somasunderam, 20 years old, is a school leaver who could not sit for the O-level examinations due to the Sri Lankan army operations at Vadamarachi. He has now joined his father in fishing.

On December 7th 1988, while he was going towards Point Pedro to eat 'Rotti', he was asked by a young pedestrian that he too would like to join him, as the bus service was very poor in that area, and this being a common practice in these parts. While they were going towards Point Pedro they saw some soldiers coming in the opposite direction on foot patrol. Immediately, out of panic, the boy who joined him extracted cyanide capsule; broke it and swallowed it. He fell down, got into a fit of shivering and slowly died. The IPKF came into the scene and without asking any question beat Sivaganeshan, accusing him of being an LTTE member. The soldiers were Hindi speaking and could not understand Sivaganeshan's plea. Two soldiers held his stretched arms and another soldier came close to him and shot at him thrice. One hit his neck and he was bleeding. He then fainted. Then came a truck into which he was thrown. The dead body of the other boy was then thrown on top of him. Then he sighed out of pain. On hearing this a Tamil speaking officer asked, "Boy are you still alive? Don't worry, I am here to help you". He then went to the front. The Hindi soldiers were rude to him, then kicked him to assuage their anger.

He was half conscious when he was taken to the camp. When the commander appeared, he shouted with all his strength that he was innocent. lie was then given immediate medical attention, and was then taken to hospital. He is not yet recovered, but the parents have an additional fear, since the IPKF came and wanted to have the boy back once he is recovered. The boy was also very nervous and uncertain about his future.

Incident at Navalady. 17th December 1988

The general feeling created in the public mind by the attitude and behaviour of the IPKF and its associates is that whoever is even a mild supporter of the LTTE will be killed. This has perhaps: resulted in several unnecessary deaths on both sides. When cornered, the usual feeling of an LTTE cadre is that he has no other option but to tight to the death.

The following incident illustrates the point. It took place at Navalady, an area in Alval, a place next to Nelliady.

Mohan, a young boy, who had been promoted to be the LTTE's area leader, was hiding in Alvai. He had been hiding in houses of. his supporters. The girl with whom he was talking when the place was surrounded is believed to have been his cirifriend. As soon as he sensed it, he hid himself behind a cupboard inside the house. An IPKF man, believed to be an officer and two other EPRLF boys entered the room, and one of the EPRLF boys asked him to come out. In reply₁ Nohan threw a grenade. The IPKF man, an EPRLF cadre and Mohan are reported to have died in that grenade blast. The other EPRLF cadre was very badly injured below his hip, and was later admitted to hospital. Nohan's girlfriend was reportedly killed in the shooting that

followed.

Incidents at Udupiddy and Nelliady. 25th and 26th December 1988

Mr. Kandasamy (65 yrs), a senior citizen of Udupiddy, was at home with his daughter at 5.30 p.m. on 25th December when four gunmen appeared. Two waited outside and two came inside and identified themselves as LTTE. They said that they were after shooting some persons in Valvettiturai. and expressed their intention of doing the same to Mr. Kanciasamy. His daughter knelt in front of him and pleaded with the gunmen. Not heeding this plea, the gunmen shot Mr. Kandasamy dead and went away.

Mr. Kandasamy was a trustee of the Udupiddy Pillayar Kovil. where he spent his evenings, and was not known for any militant-related activity. Perhaps he was a victim of times when even relatives of those having militant connections are becoming affected. Some of the most painfully affected are families with different members belonging to rival groups.

The press later reported that two dead bodies were found in Valvettiturai.

At 6.10 a.m. on the morning of 26th December, Mr. Kugaprakasam (40 yrs), a trader at Nelliady, was in town. Others, about eight of them, waiting at Nelliady junction were passengers and their friends, waiting for the Colombo bus. Two youths, identified as EPRLF cadres from Nelliady, made for Kugaprakasam, who began shaking and protesting in fear. A bicycle was commandeered from a man who had brought his daughter for the Colombo bus, and Kugaprakasam was asked to get onto the pillion. One EPRLF cadre rode with Kugaprakasam and the other came along on another bicycle. They rode past the IPKF sentry point towards Vathiri junction. At Vathiri junction they shot at him. Observing this one of Kugaprakasam's friends, who happened to be there, screamed. The two gunmen quickly went away. Kugaprakasam, who had received a few gunshot injuries, told his friend who came to his aid, that he would be alright, but to hire a car and quickly get him to hospital. This was done. But half an hour after being admitted, he died.

It should be noted that Kugaprakasam was taken past an IPKF sentry, and along the way he had been heard pleading that he had a wife and children. But hardly anyone dared to come out and protest.

The traders at Nelliady had formerly been importuned for funds by the LTTE. The LTTE too had reportedly warned them against giving money to the EPRLF. Kugaprakasam was formerly treasurer to the Nelliady traders association. Mr. Ponnampalam, the last secretary, has reportedly gone to Canada as a refugee. Kugaprakasam's mother went to meet the IPKF commander at Nelliady the following morning. When she was unable to get through, a well-wisher told her that the IPKF will not provide an interpreter when they wished to avoid an issue. She was advised to come back with someone who could speak English. But, given the state of fear, this was bound to be a task with hardly any takers. The mother then gave vent to her grief at the junction by crying and throwing sand about.

APPENDIX I

The Snares of Violence

The recent spate of human rights violations cannot be understood without some knowledge of the motivations and mutual relations of the various factions that bear arms. India's sponsorship of Tamil militant groups in 1983 and the manner in which the latter were militarised at the expense of political vision has been written about elsewhere. Help given to Tamil militant groups received widespread approval. In consequence of the 1983 racial violence and the subsequent military action by the Sri Lankan state, the Tamil minority was seen as defenseless. This militarisation reflected itself in the ruthless manner in which internal dissent within militant groups was dealt with. In early 1985 the Indian press came out with sensational revelations about how the PLOTE had killed several of its own cadres on Indian soil. Dissident sources have given figures varying from several tens upwards. Less well known, but well authenticated, are several internal killings within other militant groups.

By the middle of 1986, the LTTE had eliminated the TELO from the militant scene and its bid for sole dominance became evident. The number of TELO cadres killed by the LTTE is put at 90 upwards. Leading EPRLF men in Jaffna told a senior Citizens' Committee figure that its leadership in Madras had asked the LTTE leadership for its terms of cooperation. But no answer had been forthcoming.

It was generally assumed that the LTTE would take on the EPRLF at an opportune moment. In November 1986 the EPRLF confronted the LTTE politically by backing the outcry over the disappeared student Vijithiran. Knowing that the LTTE would respond militarily, the EPRLF was singularly unprepared. By 14th December 1986, the LTTE had taken on the EPRLF. In Jaffna, the EPRLF vacated its camps leaving behind large quantities of weapons. Outside Jaffna, particularly in the Eastern province, fighting between the LTTE and the EPRLF continued sporadically. Perhaps out of deference to a feeling of public horror at events during the LTTE-TELO clash of May, scenes of public outrage were not repeated. But several EPRLF cadres were killed. A number were tortured, particularly for information on hidden weapons.

It is notable that a large number of members of the public, particularly from the lower classes, took great risks in providing shelter and succour for TELO and EPRLF cadres on the run. Many of them are the very same persons who did likewise for LTTE supporters, when they felt hunted after October 1988. The EPRLF, which was then not known for notoriety in dealing with dissent, failed to settle the costly breach between its leader Padmanabha, and the leader of its military wing, Douglas Devananda. This provided the LTTE its opportunity.

It was widely felt that the LTTE's actions had seriously weakened the militants. This received confirmation when the Sri Lankan armed forces made rapid gains in early 1987. The EPRLF had been becoming increasingly effective in the East in the few months before its disbandment.

At the end of March 1987 the LTTE's Jaffna leader, Kittu, lost a leg in a bomb attack. The attackers were not identified. Widespread speculation remains that the attack was prompted by internal differences. On the following evening, 18 EPRLF prisoners held at the Brown Road LTTE camp were killed. The LTTE described the incident as an escape attempt. The

'Saturday Review' quoting LTTE sources, said that in the few days following Kittu's incident, about 50 prisoners held in LTTE camps were killed. The BBC reported a higher figure.

From March 1987 the fighting between the Sri Lankan army and the LTTE became increasingly vicious. A large number of Tamil civilians fell victim to aerial bombing and shelling by Sri Lankan forces. Over 200 Sinhalese civilians fell victim to two attacks during the course of the week commencing with the Sinhala/Tamil New Year of April 1987. One was a massacre in Kituluttuwa, near Trincomalee. The other

was the car-bomb attack in Colombo.

The feeling of relief with which the IPKF was welcomed by Tamil civilians in July 1987 and the subsequent events have been described elsewhere.

In the face of an increasingly unfavourable balance of forces, the LTTE chose to shore up its position by making rhetorical claims of exclusiveness. Other militants were branded as traitors, who had in addition become agents of India. The last must be viewed in the light of the LTTE itself having received arms and training from India. Its leader was resident in India until early 1987. Also, facilities in India were crucial for the war against the Sri Lankan state. However, while the LTTE opposed the physical presence of Indian forces, in part because of the threat to its claims of exclusiveness, it kept asking for additional (and more sophisticated) arms from India.

At another level, the LTTE quite successfully carved out an image for itself through extraordinary displays of military prowess and some sensational acts of violence. This was underlined by the suicidal valour of the Black Tigers; the attack on Kankasanturai harbour (22nd April 1987); Miller's suicide attack on Nelliady camp (5th July 1987) and the surprise assault of 12th September 1987 in the Eastern province, which left a reported 70 militants from other groups dead. The last took place in the relatively relaxed atmosphere soon after the Accord. Many of the dead were unprepared and unarmed. While the LTTE acquired an image, its political objectives in the face of ground realities became more nebulous. Nevertheless, it also exposed the political weakness of other forces, particularly the Indian and Sri Lankan states. The LTTE could keep up its reputation only at great cost to the civilian population. It too lost the ability to deal diplomatically, particularly with other militant groups.

For the other militant groups, given their past political and military failures, an Indian presence provided an expeditious means of reestablishing themselves. People generally acknowledged the crucial role played by other militant groups in keeping back the Sri Lankan forces. After the arrival of the IPKF, the other militant groups began to be redeployed, often in close proximity to IPKF camps. Within a month internecine killings had started. Instead of making a political approach to win over the people, the message people usually got in dealings with other militant groups was that the people were being blamed for the fate they suffered at the hands of the LTTE. The hatred and thirst for revenge they felt towards the LTTE thus seemed to extend to the people who were classed with the LTTE. This view came to be reflected in the attitudes of the IPKF after the October offensive. All this went towards reinforcing the LTTE's propaganda claim, that the other militants were traitors and anti-social elements, once rejected by the people and now making their appearance under IPKF patronage.

Such a view of the civilians persisted even after the EPRLF became the major party representing the Tamils in the North-East provincial government in November 1988. In day-to-day dealings with EPRLF cadres, ordinary people were accused of being pro-LTTE, or of having stood by idly while the LTTE decimated them in the past. The killing of a large number of LTTE supporters and sympathisers left the feeling that a very crude military approach was being tried, with the complicity of the IPKF.

Perhaps far more serious than blunders of other parties have been the blunders of India, earlier seen as lacking in principle and now seen to be —lacking in objective as well. The readiness by India to descend to forms of expediency with apparently no political or moral scruples has left the IPKF with an unenviable task. One must remember that the IPKF was welcomed in July 1987 with almost universal approbation. When Indian officials say that several hundred Indian soldiers died for the Tamils of Ceylon, it undoubtedly makes sense to Indian ears. But given the enormity of civilian suffering in the face of Indian military action, this would —sound an insult to the average Tamil, adding salt to the wound.

True, a number of Indian soldiers died trying to maintain services. The —life of an Indian soldier here is as tense, unpleasant and hazardous as it is for many ordinary civilians. But seen from here, the reverses suffered by the Indian army were largely a consequence of a lack of moral and political vision. One does know that many Indian soldiers and officers are often courteous, obliging and do not relish the reputation of their organisation. But faced with a situation, gut instincts seem to take over.

India has consistently and indignantly denied allegations of torture and inhumane practices by its forces from international organisations, within and outside the country. The existence of such practices are so well known here, that privately many Indian officials would defend them on the grounds of expediency. That is at least a sure sign that they are aware that what they are doing is wrong - something for which India has rightly taken the Sri Lankan government to task in international fora earlier. India would never dare to argue before the world the need for inhumane practices, nor would it defend its use of such practices. Perhaps the fundamental error is that of trying to accomplish a political task without respect for people. Screams and groans from victims, heard by residents near IPKF camps, remain part of our day-to-day reality.

Even if one grants that the IPKF is faced with an incorrigible adversary, the question remains: Could a country such as India, with enormous intellectual, material and spiritual resources, make a plea to be judged at the same level as that of youngsters, whose experience from their early teens has taught them to rely on little else besides their gun? Would India defend the practices of some of the worst regimes of the world?

A poignant comment on the current situation comes in a leaflet bearing the title “We ask forgiveness from the people”, signed “Those who left the EPRLF”. It is addressed to their former comrades. Such crudely stenciled leaflets from the underground remain the only form of free expression. Some excerpts are quoted below in translation:

“.....Because conflicts within our organisation could not be settled in a regular manner, many responsible comrades like Davidson, Chelian, Devananda and Das left with broken hearts. It is because of the resulting weak state of our organisation that the Tigres attacked us, and not because the People instigated the Tigers”.

“But today you are using your armed might to take revenge on the people who only want peace and democracy. This will only push them once again to the state of accepting that the politics of the Tigers was right. It is not just the former supporters of the Tigers, but even thousands who supported us will be driven by your present conduct to the side of the Tigers”.

“Instead of trying to show that you are more democratic than the Tigers, you are trying to articulate your politics by showing that you are more brutish than the Tigers. We are greatly distressed by this”.

“Dear leader Comrade Padmanabha. In your thirst for a rational form of politics and in your desire to build up the EPRLF as an organisation to articulate it, you used to roam Tamil Nadu, suitcase in hand, sleeping on the streets. What are you doing when the very people for whose benefit you built up this organisation, spit upon it? Have you accepted this line, or is it that you have no authority to speak?”

“Comrades. Posters with beautiful slogans, red flags and sporting of beards cannot alone run a liberation movement. On the contrary, ever: comrade who bears arms must possess the discipline of loving the people”.

“Your confounding ‘red flag and revenge politics’ with ‘liberation politics’ has belittled and devalued the

noble sentiments you uttered in bygone days”.

“We appeal to you comrades within the EPRLF’ who love the people, think even at this eleventh hour. The arms of the foreigner which you bear in your hands will one day be taken away. What then will be your state?”

APPENDIX 2

Statement issued by the University Teachers for Human Rights. Colombo, December 1988.

During the period of six months that we have been in existence, we have issued a number of statements and appeals, both to the Government and to other parties involved in the present conflict, to desist from the use of violence. We now find that the situation has deteriorated to such an extent that a solution seems to be beyond reach. We would like to make one last demand on the right of the peoples of this country to a life free from fear. We also appeal to all organisations and individuals to subscribe to our demand.

We can visualise even a remote chance of a decent existence for the peoples of this country only if we as a people are willing to accept past mistakes and agree to a complete change of heart. Even as human rights organisations, we must admit that, on the whole, we have been very insensitive when large scale violations did take place in the North and East. We have been very passive when the democratic traditions and institutions that were painstakingly built up over half a century were ruthlessly destroyed, especially since 1983. Now, we are equally silent when other organisations which have openly demonstrated their contempt for democratic and human values have taken up the, fight that we failed to lead.

From numerous reports that have been brought to our notice, including specific instances from within the university community itself, we note:

The continuing violence in the North and the East. The conduct of an election under conditions which most people consider to be unfair has only aggravated the situation and added more parties to a suicidal contest.

The unprecedented carnage in the South. It has been reported that the introduction of the new emergency regulations on the disposal of dead bodies etc. has resulted in widespread and uncontrolled killings of youth.

Even a semblance of normality is found only in and around Colombo. Even here, reported incidents involving even university employees point to the spread of the reign of terror into Colombo itself, where persons are shot and disposed of very casually.

The threats to free public expression of one’s views, extended from all quarters. Political meetings have been attacked and speakers and members of the public have been killed merely for holding opinions opposed to those of the attackers.

Trade union leaders and members have been attacked and killed both for going on strike and for not going on strike.

If we draw any lessons from our unfortunate recent history, it is that: Violence cannot be defeated by violence. Rigged elections and other tampering with the democratic process breeds more and more violence. Hence, as a means of regaining our right to freedom from fear, we demand:

Immediate dissolution of the parliament and the institution of a multi-party caretaker government.

Immediate withdrawal of the emergency regulations on the disposal of dead bodies.

Confining of troops and all auxiliary forces to barracks and the use of the police force only in law enforcement.

Immediate cessation of all acts of violence by all armed groups, both in the North and the South, against their opponents and members of the public.

We also once again appeal to all other organisations and individuals to join us in our demands.

Statement Issued by the Federation of University Teachers Associations

July 1988

We are living through times when this country, once considered safe for democracy, with its newly found notoriety for violation of fundamental rights, seems set to relive the experience of some of the countries in Latin America and the Middle East. Violence appears to have become away of life in Sri Lanka - violence by the state, by political groups and even by individuals. Violence by the latter groups and individuals is a consequence of the violations of democratic norms and indulgence in violent methods by the state itself over the last many years. The Federation of University Teachers Associations is opposed to violence and terrorism whichever quarter it may emanate from.

Since 1979, the Amnesty International has produced lists of hundreds of missing persons who disappeared during the government's security operations in the North and East of this country. The Amnesty International had also detailed gruesome methods of torture compiled from sworn testimonies of the large number of victims. The International Human Rights Alert is another organisation which drew attention to these happenings. Special attention was drawn to the activities of the Special Task Force which is neither directly nor indirectly accountable to parliament. It is with regret that we have to note that serious matters received little consideration in this country.

With a parallel insurgency developing in the South, the same state security apparatus that was used in the North and the East was put to work in the South. In the meantime, Indian forces assumed responsibility for security operations in the North and East. Over the last six months, the number of disappeared persons in the North, the East and the South run into a few hundreds. Several reports of these and extra judicial killings have been well authenticated. There are a number of indications that a number of those detained, including innocent persons, have died as a result of treatment received under interrogation.

The silence of both the Sri Lankan and Indian authorities on the question of disappeared persons has left a number of families in the throes of bitterness and anxiety. They spend day after day going from camp to camp waiting hours on end only to be asked to try elsewhere. The matter at present receives far less international publicity because of the common interest of silence on the matter shared by Sri Lankan and Indian Governments.

The disappearance of Wannigama, Assistant Lecturer at Ruhuna University, must be seen in this context. It may be mentioned for the record that in 1983, Assistant Lecturers Nithyanandan and Varathirajaperurnal of

Jaffna University, who were arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) came close to death in Welikada Prison. More recently Pulsara Liyanage of Kelaniya University and Dayapala Thiranagairma too were charged under the PTA.

As academics, we cannot continue to remain silent on this matter if we are to influence the course of affairs of our country for the good. We acknowledge that the government has a serious problem with the activities of the armed rebel groups who are themselves responsible for a large number of killings of unarmed civilians. These groups grew out of past insensitivities to real problems, but we strongly disapprove of the methods of terror being used by the Sri Lankan and Indian governments in combating these problems. Besides the tragic loss of life, the underlying social problems are rendered more chronic. Solution to these problems have to evolve with a will to try democratic alternatives. This req4res giving credibility to democratic institutions.

We call upon both the Sri Lankan and Indian governments to put an end to the agonies of relatives by coming clean on disappeared persons, to call a halt to the present repressive methods of operations and to moderate their conduct so that democratic alternatives can evolve. We simultaneously call upon the armed rebel groups to give up violence.

UTHR: Anneal for Membership, and Policy Statement. July 1988

As a response to numerous expressions of concern by academic staff at Universities at the continued deterioration-of human rights at the University level and in the country in general, the Federation of University Teachers Associations (FUTA) decided to sponsor an independent University Teachers Association for the defence of human rights. In pursuance of this goal, University Teachers for Human Rights (UTHR) has been set up.

This organisation seeks to monitor human rights in the country in general, and more specifically in the University. It hopes to collect data relating to human rights violations and raise awareness on the issues. The UThR would be grateful to you if instances of human rights violations are brought to our attention.

The UTHR will function through its members in different universities. We hope that you would become a member of UTHR and enrol your colleagues as well.

UNIVERSITY TEACHERS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

- Objectives:
- a) Raise awareness on issues relating to human rights in Sri Lanka
 - b) Monitor human rights violations
 - c) Collect and collate data relating to human rights violation
 - d) Take appropriate action with regard to human rights
 - e) Cooperate with organisations, local and foreign, with similar objectives

Membership: Open to all university teachers.

End/