
TILL DEBT...

ued, "but your organisation and its development policies. We will not allow it to happen."

Mr. Yenal did not wish to "meddle in the affairs" of India, since the World Bank was "a guest of your country." Lending vast sums of money with fundamental conditionalities does not count as interference. To meddle is to be like the CIA, to interfere with the *political* affairs. The IMF/WB simply deals in *economics*, a simplistic distinction. We are not meddling, he says, "we are in the development business. We can get better returns on that money we loan without going into these difficult things." The

consequences of the policy are irrelevant. Oppression and exploitation are "difficult things for Policy makers to manage, but easy as rhetorical devices for political leaders. "Please accuse us or warn us for not doing our job as good as we can," Mr. Oktay pleaded, "but don't accuse us of being against the poor and the tribals ... I think we have done quite a bit for the poor."

Indeed, in the name of attacking "socialism", the Indian ruling coalition and their new allies the IMF/WB have done quite a bit for the poor — they have made them poorer.

Vijay Prashad
New Delhi

Statement by the Civil Rights Movement of Sri Lanka

THE INACCESSIBILITY OF EMERGENCY REGULATIONS

The rule that "ignorance of the law is no excuse" when a person is charged with contravening a law, is based on the premise that "everyone is presumed to know the law." This presumption in turn rests on the basis that the law is always **ascertainable**. If the content of emergency regulations is not ascertainable even by lawyers, the question could arise as to whether they are in fact valid law at all, for the rule of law presupposes that there can be no such thing as a secret law known only to a few, which becomes known to others only when they are charged with breaking it.

The inaccessibility of the various emergency regulations and the rules and orders made under them has for long been a matter of concern to the Civil Rights Movement.

Emergency Regulations are made by the President under the Public Security Ordinance, bypassing the normal legislative procedure which is through Parliament. It is essential that members of the public, and lawyers who advise them, be able to know quickly and reliably what emergency regulations have been made and remain in force at any given moment, as well as what rules and orders have been made under them. These regulations, rules and orders are published in the Gazette but relevant issues are always not readily available at the Government Publications Bureau, the staff of which work under great constraints of lack of space and other facilities. Persons who

subscribe to the Gazette receive them by post often after considerable delay, and even then certain issues sometimes are not received.

On 8 August 1989 by Gazette No. 569/19 the Government did publish a list of 19 emergency regulations that should be deemed to continue in force. But this Gazette itself is hard to come by, and CRM has been unable to trace any similar list published during the succeeding two and half years though many emergency regulations have continued to be made.

CRM therefore requests the Government to take the following steps.

- 1 To publish a list of emergency regulations and orders made thereunder during the currency of the present emergency, namely from 26 June 1989, and to have a set of these available for reference at government offices and Courts of law in various parts of the country.
- 2 To ensure in future that the full text of every proclamation, regulation, rule and order relating to the exercise of emergency powers be forthwith published in an English, a Sinhala and a Tamil newspaper.

TIGERISM

by Ram Manikkalingam

Once again the possibility of a new round of talks appears to be receding, following the opposition expressed to Minister Thondaman's proposals. Sri Lankans, especially Tamils, who are hoping for a permanent respite from the war are, understandably, blaming Sinhala nationalism. Yet, Sinhala nationalism, despite its stridency, is in a weaker position now, than on previous occasions when the Sri Lankan government has conducted negotiations with the Tigers and other Tamil parties. This suggests that if a nascent peace process is blocked, it is as much due to the distrust caused by the behaviour of the Tigers in the past as it is due to the successful mobilisation of the Sinhala nationalists. Acknowledging the independent role of the Tigers in sustaining the war in Sri Lanka should not be construed as an apologia for Sinhala nationalism. Instead, examining why the Tigers have consistently prevented the achievement of a political settlement will lead to an understanding of how the Tigers have effectively subsumed Tamil interests to their own. And it is only by separating Tamil interests from Tiger interests, which both the Sinhala and Tamil chauvinists seek to conflate, can it become clear how the behaviour of the Tigers is not detrimental to peace, but also inimical to the interests of the Tamil people.

Tamil Ultra-Nationalism

The politics of nationalism, which began as a reaction to Sinhala nationalism, has now acquired its own internal dynamic. This independent dy-

Ram Manikkalingam is a Doctoral candidate in Political Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

namic was impelled by the growing dominance of a vicious and extreme form of Tamil nationalism espoused by the Tigers. The emergence of this nationalism can be traced to the dilemmas of a nationalist movement. A nationalist movement uses a dual approach to oppose a dominant power. It invokes the violation of democratic norms, such as individual liberties and freedoms, in the status-quo, while it seeks to mobilise a community on the basis of ties of ethnic solidarity. While these ties are often strong enough to maintain unity in the face of struggle, they can weaken as differences of opinion evolve into rival politics programmes and strategies. At this point a tension arises between internal democracy and the need for unity in the struggle for collective emancipation. This tension may be resolved in different ways, ranging from democratic dialogue and non-violent confrontation to violent coercion.

In the case of Tamil nationalism, the Tigers set out to eliminate all opposing parties, organisations and individuals. Unity was asserted at the expense of internal democracy. The Tigers, thus, represent an extreme aberration of the emphasis on ethno-national solidarity at the expense of democracy. A counter example to this is the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). The PLO derives its legitimacy from the Palestine National Council (PNC), which is the Palestinian parliament in exile. Despite Fatah dominance of the movement and numerous incidents of interfactional fighting, major decisions are still made through debate and discussion in the council. The Tiger emphasis on a monolithic unity is a consequence of their attempt to invent a new Tamil identity, where the basis of political programmes and alliances are of an ethnically essen-

tialist character. In this framework, political identity is directly derived from one's ethnic identity. Class, caste, gender, individual aspirations and broader social issues are relegated to the periphery.

The Tigers invented a new Tamil identity by, simultaneously, drawing upon and denying history. This identity claims to be tied to history on the basis of language, region and tradition. But the Tigers are anti-historical, in that they are committed to denying that the Tamil identity also includes a history of co-existence with other communities. The denial of pluralism among communities is only a step away from the denial of pluralism within a community. Thus, one implication of this newly invented Tamil identity (through ethnic essentialism) is that the Tigers have to deny and eliminate real or potential differences of opinions and interests among Tamils. The monolithic unity violently asserted by the Tigers is both the cause of and the consequence of Tamil essentialism, and ultimately culminated in a new political ideology - Tigerism.

The development of this Tamil essentialist ideology is evident in the political attitude and approach of the Tigers towards the Muslims of the Northeast. With the growth of this virulent brand of Tamil nationalism, the Muslims of the North and East became steadily alienated from the Tamil community. The Tamil nationalist project at first unwittingly, and then wittingly excluded Muslims, as it set about the invention of a separate identity. This separate identity, which was initially a defensive strategy with regard to Sinhala discrimination, took on an offensive form with regard to the Muslims. The increasing domination of Tamil nationalism by the Tigers, ulti-

→

TIGERISM...

mately led to the massacres of hundreds of Muslims and the expulsion of thousands from the North and East. The exclusionary logic of a "traditional Tamil homeland," a direct outgrowth of ethnic essentialism, had been taken to a fanatical extreme. The new Tamil identity, invented by the Tigers, denied not just political space, but even physical space to all non-Tamils in the Northeast.

The Tigers have also successfully manipulated the Tamil struggle in order to dominate Tamil politics. This has been achieved by a two-pronged strategy. The first, simple and brutal, has been to murder all political rivals of the Tamil movement. In addition, the Tigers have sought to intimidate and threaten all cultural, social and human rights activists in the Northeast, apprehensive of their possible emergence as an alternative source of leadership for the beleaguered Tamil community.

The second strategy has been based on their cunning use of the peace process. The Tigers, when pushed to a corner, have resorted to ceasefires and negotiations in order to rearm and consolidate themselves. In doing so, however, they have had to pay a price in terms of their loss of control over the Tamil people. A return to peace and normalcy in the North and East meant that the gun no longer ruled, and that people could express themselves more freely. This automatically resulted in an erosion of the Tiger dominance of the Tamil community. Thus, it was precisely at those moments when the possibilities for peace seemed to be emerging that the Tigers broke off negotiations in order to continue the war and regain the "support" of the Tamil people.

This "support" is obtained neither from genuine sympathy for the Tiger programme nor through direct Tiger coercion, but from a shrewd manipulation by the Tigers of the political options available to the Tamil people. By shutting the Tamil people off from the possibility of a negotiated settlement with peace and regional autonomy, the Tigers compel

them to choose between Tiger rule or Sri Lankan military rule. When faced with such a stark choice, the Tamil people invariably "support" the Tigers, because they fear the inevitable carnage that would result from war. This fear is then trumpeted as "support" for the Tigers, both by the Tigers, themselves, and by their ideological twins in the South - the Sinhala chauvinists.

Thus, the ideology and practice of the Tigers is antagonistic to a negotiated settlement. A negotiated settlement requires, among other factors, a willingness to trade power for peace, the building of alliances across ethnic boundaries and the recognition that ethnic solidarity is not the sole basis of political mobilisation. But ethnic essentialism is just that; it cannot make space for anything other than itself. Peace, democracy and human rights vitiate the commitment of ethnicity, because they require loosening the presumption of an ethnic essence. Such an admission would automatically weaken the Tiger stranglehold on Tamil politics. Hence, it is no surprise that the Tigers have eliminated all other political alternatives available to the Tamil people in order to pursue their chimera of a separate Tamil Eelam.

War or Peace?

The Sri Lankan government must bear moral and political responsibility for aggravating the conflict by refusing to grant an adequate devolutionary package that could satisfy all non-chauvinist Tamil opinion. The excuse that the Sri Lankan government has hitherto put forward - that peace is blocked by the intransigence and fickleness of the Tigers - is not a sufficient reason to shun genuine negotiations with other Tamil political parties. The failure of the UNP government to grant and institutionalise regional autonomy, such as federalism, has only complemented Tiger efforts to shut off the political options available to the Tamil people. Instead of keeping the door to a politically negotiated settlement open, the government has only stood by and watched, if not actively helped,

the Tigers slam it shut in the face of the yearning for peace of the Tamil people.

A comprehensive federal package of devolution put forward by the government (irrespective of whether the Tigers cease fire or negotiate) will serve a dual purpose. First, by indicating to the Tamil people that their voice is being heard at the centre, it will practically demonstrate the availability of a political opportunity for them to exit from under Tiger domination. This will exert pressure on the Tigers to negotiate, and then to enter democratic politics. However, if the Tigers flout Tamil opinion, despite the actual granting of a federal package of devolution and continue the war, the Sri Lankan government will then have the moral and political legitimacy, internationally and among the Tamils, to defeat the Tigers.

Meanwhile, Tamils must come to terms with two important developments in Sri Lankan politics. The first is that the nature of Sinhala nationalism has been transformed since the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord. The Sinhala opposition expressed at the time of the Peace Accord was the culmination of Sinhala nationalist opposition to Tamil rights and Indian intervention. This opposition was spearheaded by the JVP, which represented the ultra-nationalist segment of Sinhala politics. The JVP was uncompromising with regard to the Tamil question, and based its anti-state campaign on the combined platform of populist social change and anti-Tamil jingoism. The Indo-Lanka Accord was undoubtedly signed under duress. Yet the granting of limited self-rule to the Tamil areas resulted in a strategic compromise on the part of the Sri Lankan state with Tamil aspirations. Key aspects of this compromise also included the recognition of Sri Lanka as a multi-ethnic society and Tamil as an official language. This is now a baseline position from which the Sri Lankan state cannot deviate. Even extreme Sinhala political parties have accepted the basic notion that any political settlement will involve the granting of regional autonomy



TIGERISM...

to the North and East. The issue now is not whether there should be regional autonomy for the Tamils, but how much. Thus, the peace accord, followed by the defeat of the JVP, created added political space for the Sri Lankan state to reach a negotiated settlement to the ethnic conflict, and has transformed the terrain of Sinhala politics.

Undoubtedly, Sinhala nationalism is still a major impediment to the achievement of a political settlement, but it is different from the Sinhala ultra-nationalism of the early 1980s. And more importantly, although Sinhala nationalism may continue to be a part of the state ideology, it is no longer the dominant part. Thus, the trite claims made by Tamil nationalists about Sinhala nationalism, as

monolithic, permanent and unchanging, do not ring true in the face of the drastic developments of the past few years.

The second important change is the gradual political isolation of the Tamils from the international community, corresponding directly with the increasing dominance of the Tigers over Tamil nationalism. As long as Tamil interests are seen as Tiger interests, the struggle of the Tamil people to redress their grievances will only receive tepid support, at best, both in the South and internationally. The Tigers have posed as the saviour-leaders of the Tamils by shrewdly linking genuine Tamil interests to their narrow political project. Unless the aspirations of the Tamil people are politically and ideologically delinked from those of the Tigers, the Tamil struggle will not

progress.

Finally, the instinctively defensive reaction of some Tamils towards any criticism of the Tigers and Tamil ultra-nationalism was understandable in the past, though based on morally shaky grounds. Today, such a defence of the Tigers is morally and politically reprehensible, given the crimes committed by the Tigers against the Muslims and Sinhalese of the Northeast, and the Tiger denial of political freedom to the Tamil people. Moreover, it is precisely through a critical analysis of Tamil nationalism, in general, and the Tigers, in particular, that a new political programme for the Tamil people can be articulated - a new programme that may enable Tamils to attain peace with dignity. ■

REFLECTIONS ON FEAR

by Gameela Samarasinghe

Fear!

Fear and the child are born together

Fear is our faithful companion, our twin

Brother, our shadow

It will never let go its hold

Until, remorselessly, it sees us into our grave

Frederick Leboyer

Loving Hands, Collins,

1977

Leboyer's words raise fundamental questions. Fear indeed manifests itself throughout life. Fear is perhaps one of the most complex emotions because there are such wide individual variations in fearfulness.

There are chronic fears and acute fears, normal fears and pathological fears, fears which are considered natural or ordinary

Gameela Samarasinghe, psychologist,
works at the Marga Institute in Colombo

like the fear of death, fears that are innate, like the fear of heights, and fears that are learnt, like the fear of snakes.

Fear can also be a stimulating emotion for some, when for example, it engages a person to correct his/her behaviour, but more often, fear paralyses. The type and degree of fear and the context within which fear appears influence the manner in which one reacts to fearful situations.

In the recent past, Sri Lankans have been exposed to a particular type of fear, a fear

provoked by sudden, novel and intense stimuli. This fear did exist earlier but did not manifest itself as frequently. Though it possesses some features of the fears listed above, it also has particular characteristics.

The fear is caused by exposure to traumatic stimulations. The traumatic stimulations we recall are recent: the 1983 July riots, the JVP insurrection, the North-East conflict. The images that confront us are of the killing, the burn-