

# Tele-war to defeat Prabha's Eelam

By Kumbakarana

When the Pope visited Sri Lanka a few years ago, large numbers of Jaffna Catholics arrived in Colombo.

A young nun told the media: "We thought that Colombo was a city which was a little bigger than Jaffna and we thought that Colombo was a heap of rubble, after the destruction wreaked on the city by the Tigers. But this is a heaven.

The godfathers of Tamil racism did think a few years ago that after a prolonged war of several years, the country's economy would

disintegrate, and the capital city would lie in ruins. But despite a devastating war of nearly three decades, sabotage and ethnic cleansing, Sri Lanka has managed to survive and develop.

But in Jaffna in place of the beautiful dream of Eelam, one only sees a few old buildings, heaps of rubble with residents living in a backward backyard. Except for those who have migrated to the south of Sri Lanka and to foreign lands for many Jaffna people Eelam life, Eelam if it ever materialises will be built on a cemetery.

According to Tamil Nadu watchers, Dravidian racism

has become much more subdued in this southern Indian state where it once thrived. It has become a mixed concept of 'Hindutva' and globalisation, and leading to a retreat from the ideology of Dravida Nadu. In Sri Lanka Hindu philosophy and popular culture have had a considerable impact on Tamil separatism.

The main reasons for Jaffna's youth joining the LTTE were strong family restrictions and the suffering caused under the caste system but, within the LTTE the caste system prevails to a much lesser degree.

The Tamil Congress, the

Federal Party, the TULF revolved round the Vellala community while the LTTE drew its membership from castes which were non-Vellala. According to some reports, the massacre of TELO members by the LTTE was due to Sabaratnam's high caste.

Besides the LTTE is said to have liberated the Tamil woman who was discriminated against in the Tamil society. Men and women are allowed to mix freely. What we usually hear are reports about strict rules governing sexual relations between LTTE male and female cadres.

In an LTTE documentary,

'Freedom Birds,' LTTE woman leader Akila holds up two cyanide capsules proudly and says that Tamil women require two capsules because they place a high value equally on their lives and their chastity. But a military officer said that they found condoms in the side pockets of some LTTE female cadres who were killed.

In popular Tamil cinema what is projected is the victorious hero. Fans are ready even to lay down their lives if they want to imitate their film heroes.

The depiction of the deaths of Black Tigers in video films is an imitation of popular

Tamil films. Film makers use such gimmicks as focusing the camera slowly on the dead body of the Sea Tiger, from his feet right up along the length of his body and lighting it up brightly, and exaggerating its size. Tamil youth who want to imitate MGR or Rajini Kanth now have the Black Tigers. People who would have died unknown deaths now have the opportunity to die before thousands of TV viewers.

A photo journalist who takes shots of semi-clad women says that large numbers of southern women are willing to come forward, for no payment at all, to satisfy

their overwhelming vanity and urge for publicity.

Tamil young men and women come forward for the same reason - to get symbolic recognition within their society by laying down their lives for a cause. What Tamil youth have to realize is that in order to be recognised one does not have to pay the highest price by dying.

There are nine TV channels, thirteen radio services, over one hundred newspapers, in the country and they are growing all the time in numbers. The problem is that these winds are blowing towards the Wannai, but they have been sealed off from

Jaffna by Prabhakaran. But Tamils in Colombo, Melbourne, Toronto, London etc., enjoy this commercial culture to the maximum.

The youth of Chennai have been enjoying the fruits of the open economy for five years. This lesson has to be learnt in the Wannai and Jaffna. To defeat Prabhakaran the weapon is not the devolution of power but eighteen TV channels aimed at the Wannai and Jaffna. Jaffna youth will decide then, whether they will live in 18th century Jaffna or join Colombo to live in the 21st century.