

the Tamil people really expect from the LTTE is to secure for them their identity, security and socio-economic progress by negotiating a just, honourable and a durable settlement. What the vast majority of the Tamil people do **not** want is for the LTTE to engage in an endless bloody war that shows no signs of abating - and, no signs of 'Tamil Eelam' - with an entire generation (and future generations) being condemned to deprivation, destruction and death.

Similarly, what the ruling PA government, the UNP 'alternate' government, the emerging 'third force', the JVP, and the Sinhala extremist NMAT/SVV should recognize is that they simply cannot continue to carry out their adventurist, partisan politics in the name of the Sinhala people. Vast sections of the Sinhala people are clearly for peace (as a recent opinion poll revealed) and may not be averse to even supporting substantial autonomy for the North-East pro-

vided, of course, such a settlement guarantees permanent peace and the unity of the country.

Ultimately, attributing blame and advocating retribution is not the solution to the bloody war and the ethnic strife that has drenched both sides of the ethnic divide with blood. By the same token, the perpetrators will have to come to terms with peace or go the way of their victims. Neelan certainly would not have wanted his death to exacerbate ethnic tensions, further widen the ethnic divide or intensify internecine conflicts.

May Neelan Tiruchelvam attain Peace that he so desperately wanted others to enjoy. May his soul merge with Divinity and bless this troubled and blood-soaked land of ours.

DR. NEELAN TIRUCHELVAM: A TRIBUTE

FROM THE SSA

It is with deep shock and outrage that the Social Scientists' Association (SSA) condemns the brutal assassination of Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam, parliamentarian, scholar and civil society leader.

With this killing, political forces of ethnic extremism have silenced a voice of reason and sanity. Dr. Tiruchelvam, in his intellectual, political and activist life gave expression to a range of key values and ideals that are essential for the re-building of Sri Lankan society torn asunder by a multiplicity of crises of which the ethnic conflict is a most intractable manifestation. He was uncompromising in his commitment to ethnic reconciliation, inter-ethnic peace, pluralist democracy, human rights, social justice and decency in public affairs. His was a mind of considerable intellectual energy and perseverance which shined under conditions of darkness and barbarism. It is no exaggeration to say that the terms of Sri Lanka's contemporary discourse of democratic political reform were largely germinated in his creative mind and through his tireless interaction with all those who shared with him the ideals of a decent, peaceful world. Dr. Tiruchelvam earned much praise and some wrath for this singular contribution he made to enrich the political and constitutional thinking of Sri Lanka.

He was a great believer in and practitioner of institution building in both public and civil society spheres. He created and nurtured the International Center for Ethnic Studies and the Law and Society Trust. He worked closely with policy-makers and officials in creating and strengthening such key public accountability institutions as the Human Rights Task Force, the Human Rights Commission, the Office of the Ombudsman, and the Official Languages Commission. In the last few weeks of his life, he was working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, the human rights community and legal scholars in setting up an Equal Opportunity Commission. Many progressive pieces of legislation that have been enacted by the Sri Lankan parliament in recent years owe a great deal to Dr. Tiruchelvam's initiatives and inputs.

With the untimely demise of Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam all communities of Sri Lanka have lost a truly visionary bridge-builder. South Asia has lost one of its most creative democratic-reformist thinkers. We pay tribute to a colleague who has always been an inspiring presence among us.

Let this tragic death of a man of peace and moderation become a moment for the resuscitation of political forces committed to national reconciliation.