

Chapter 4

Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora Network

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The political freedom enjoyed by the Sri Lankan Tamils in many democratic societies, with the concomitant rights of free speech and freedom of association, has led the Tamil diaspora in Europe and North America, mostly in London and Toronto, to establish a range of Tamil institutions and organizations. They include Tamil-owned businesses, media, temples and churches, cultural, political and service organizations, alumni associations and sports clubs. They also include agencies that help new arrivals in finding housing or employment. The Tamil diaspora have their own newspapers, radio and television channels. The LTTE managed to gain control over these institutions to get both political and financial support.

Before 1983, the small population of Sri Lankan Tamils, mostly consisting of students and professionals, did not have many prospects for interaction and community development. After 1983, thousands of Tamils migrated to the West. The English-educated Tamil professionals could get easily assimilated with their knowledge of medicine, engineering, law and accountancy. The refugees got into small businesses and established a chain of Tamil shops that could cater for the needs of the Tamil population. After stabilizing themselves economically, the Tamils made efforts to preserve their identity and ensure that there are religious and cultural values among their community. They built temples in the West.

To preserve the Tamil language and culture, the expatriates founded Tamil schools for the second-generation diaspora. The Tamil Students' Associations formed in the Western universities also helped the LTTE to reach the young Tamil expatriates. Alumni groups from almost every educational institution in the Tamil Eelam region in Sri Lanka have formed old boys' associations. Even village-level organizations have been formed. Tamil writers and professionals have their own professional associations. The establishment of technology encouraged Tamils to start Tamil radio, television and newspapers. This helped the Tamils to be in constant touch not only with the events happening in Sri Lanka but also with their co-ethnics settled in other Western countries.

A Chartered Accountant who migrated to the UK as a student in the 1970s states that the Tamil exodus to the Western countries brought about a major difference in the community life of Sri Lankan Tamils, creating an environment to live an “accomplished family and community life”. To quote:

Now especially within the London metropolis, Sri Lankan Tamil community centres, temples help to keep in touch with their culture; the information on homeland is communicated through television, radio and news is regularly updated. Not like before. Sri Lankan Tamils are constantly in touch with their relations and friends in Sri Lanka. It's the communication that helps them to keep the identity. Parents are here, children are here and Tamils are not alone or isolated. There is enough intercourse and functions. Financially also well off. They live a fruitful and complete life although they are far away from Sri Lanka. (Padmanathan, Day Care Centre, Interview, North Wembley, London, 30 April 2008)

Tamil Diaspora Network

The establishment of the wide network of Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora organizations after 1983 gave an ample opportunity for the Tamils to interact with their community members. The LTTE could easily make inroads into all these Tamil associations to get its message heard. Taking the diaspora network as the base, it developed its front associations and formed umbrella organizations in the Western countries. Tamil cultural and political organizations like the Illankai Tamil Sangam in the USA, the Swiss Federation of Tamil Associations, Australian Federation of Tamil Associations, and the United Tamil Organization (UTO) in the UK, etc. are some of the LTTE's front organizations. The LTTE keeps close track of Tamil diaspora. It makes use of its computer database, public records, and information from supporters. The movement of new arrivals is also tracked (Human Rights Watch 2006: 12).

The World Tamil Movement (WTM), a charitable organization, has established various sub-organizations that specialize in different political issues (Zunzer, berghof-center.org). Founded by refugees from various social backgrounds, WTM was operational in Canada, Western Europe and Australia. There is a diaspora group for young Tamils called Tamil Youth Organization (TYO), which has branches in Britain, Canada, USA, Australia, Germany, France and many other European countries (*Tamil Guardian*, 9 November 2005). It was recognized as the LTTE's front organization and was banned by Canada in 2008 (elakiri.com, 8 July 2008).

The Tamil Rehabilitation Organization is considered as the humanitarian arm of the LTTE.⁶⁵ Established in 1985 in north-eastern Sri Lanka, TRO had its headquarters in Kilinochchi, which was under LTTE control. Its work in the North-East region was supported through its branches (Zunzer, beghof-center.org). It had its network of offices in fifteen countries (Thomson and Turlej 2003; lankalibrary.com). The International Tamils Rehabilitation Organization (ITRO) in London was the representative body of the TRO overseas offices. Regarding itself as the leading relief agency in the war zones of Sri Lanka, TRO boasted 3500 staff members and more than ten thousand volunteers (tamilcanadian.com, 26 November 2005). The UK Charity Commission removed TRO from its list of charities in August 2005 because the TRO “had not been able to account satisfactorily for the application of charitable funds of the charity” (“Thamilkural”). The TRO (UK) clarifies that it has been removed from the list not because of irregularities in fund collection but because of non-conformity with some of the charity regulations relating to operational management. “On the basis of this non-compliance, the Commission, in consultation with the former trustees of the TRO (UK), established a new charity called Tamils Support Foundation (TSF) in 2004. The funds of TRO (UK) were transferred to this new charity”, the organization said (Tamilguardian.com, 21 September 2005). The TRO has been alleged to have transferred millions of pounds sterling to the LTTE (Thomson and Turlej 2003).

The British Tamil Association is another Tamil charitable organization.

Tamil Diaspora in Western Europe

There is a large-scale Tamil diaspora presence in the UK, France, Germany, Switzerland, Scandinavian countries and to some extent in the Netherlands. Most of the LTTE’s international action groups began in London. The Tamil Action Committee, which coordinates their activities, was till recently headquartered in London. All the international organizations which now exist had their beginning in London mostly. The expansion of the LTTE in to the Europe took place from the UK. A Tamil programme on Tamil Radio, 3CR Radio (Melbourne) also mentions a

⁶⁵ TRO also helped the international donors and agencies by facilitating their work in the North-East, see <<http://www.forcedmigration.org/guides/fmo032/fmo032-4.htm>>.

European Tamil Federation. (English transcript of a Tamil broadcast made on 16 October 2006 on the “Thamilkural” programme, <http://www.tamilcanadian.com>).

UK

The first Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora public organization for the cause of Tamils – the Tamil Coordinating Committee – was formed in London in 1978 by Amirthalingam when he was touring with an Eelam activist, S.K. Vaikundavasan, based in London. The TCC later became the LTTE’s front organization (Gunaratna 1999: 113). The TCC, however, denies any links with the LTTE and maintains that it only undertakes cultural activities (*Sri Lanka Monitor*, January 1990).

The Tamil Information Centre in London is a propaganda mouthpiece of the LTTE. Many publications and television documentaries on the Sri Lankan conflict are done for BBC and ITV channels with the assistance of the TIC, which tries to project itself as independent and ‘impartial’ (www.ourworld.compuserve.com).

The LTTE bought Eelam House in London in 1996. Lawrence Thilagar inaugurated it. The funds donated or extorted from the Tamil community in Sri Lanka and abroad were used to purchase this building.

Eelam House in London was one of the propaganda and communication centres of the LTTE. The LTTE projects its face to the British public and the world through the propaganda and communication centre which has its office in this building. Eelam House was also the home of the United Tamils Organization (UTO), which carries out the propaganda and fundraising activities of the LTTE. Outwardly, Eelam House was headed by A.C. Shanthan, the LTTE chief in the UK, but it actually served as the principal base for Balasingham to coordinate the overseas political activity (Hoffmann and Chalk 2001: 44). The LTTE’s official statements and declarations were produced from here. Eelam House was also the address for TEEDOR. Earlier called as ROOT (Research Organization of Tamil Eelam), TEEDOR claims that it came into existence in 1985 “to research, plan and develop the infrastructure of Tamil Eelam” (www.teedor.org/about/teedor.html). TEEDOR, as the name implies, it is associated with the LTTE in supporting Tamil Eelam. This organization made efforts to get European Union, local and government authorities to help in different projects. Eelam

House had many names in postal addresses to enable it to get donations and grants (www.ourworld.compuserve.com).

The International Federation of Tamils (IFT) in Surrey is another front organization of the LTTE (Gunaratna 1999: 113–14).

The British Tamils' Forum is an umbrella organization promoting the LTTE's cause. Its members include: Federation of Tamil Associations, World Culture Association, Tamil Action Committee, Tamil Aid, Tamil Health Organization, Tamil Peace Support Group, Tamil People's Forum, Tamil Refugee Action Group, and International Association of Tamil Journalists.⁶⁶ White Pigeon is also a member association (*Tamil Guardian*, 1 February 2006; British Tamils' Forum–News Focus, 24 November 2006). Welfare associations in the British Tamils' Forum include Batticaloa Underprivileged Development Society, Thenmaradchi Development Association, Mallakam Development Association, Coventry Tamil Welfare Association, and Karri Welfare Association (British Tamils' Forum–News Focus, 24 November 2006).

The Federation of Tamil Associations is a part of the British Tamils' Forum. It has member associations in Birmingham, Cambridge, Coventry, Bolton, Hertfordshire, Liverpool, East London, Tamil Action Committee (UK), T.E.M. London, Manchester, Milton Keynes, Nottinghamshire, Scotland, Shropshire, and St. Albans.⁶⁷

The British Tamils' Forum also comprises of many Tamil sports associations, including cricket, football and volleyball clubs. The Forum also includes alumni associations like St. Antony's College Kayts Alumni Association of Europe, Chavakachchery Hindu Old Boys Association, Jaffna Hindu College Old Boys Association, Mahajana Old Boys Association, Pungudutivu M.V. Old Boys Association, and Jaffna Hindu College Association. Students in Tamil schools are associated with the Forum through West London Tamil School, British Association of

⁶⁶ Others are: ITRO, British Tamil Association, European Tamil Federation, Standing Committee of Tamil Speaking People, Kingston Institute of Tamil Culture, Redbridge Tamil Society, Tamils for Labour, Oxford Centre for Tamil Education and Fine Arts, Medical Institute of Tamils, and Technical Association of Tamil Forum (*Tamil Guardian*, 1 February 2006; British Tamils' Forum–News Focus, 24 November 2006).

⁶⁷ The office-bearers of the Federation of Tamil Associations were: Chairman A. Selvaratnam, Deputy Chairman Dr. S. Yogarajah; General Secretary Dr. N. Satchithanathan; Secretary J.K. Karan; Treasurer Dr. L.S. Ratnam (<http://tamilnation.org>, 14 February 2001).

Tamil Schools, and Tamil School Sports Association (British Tamils' Forum–News Focus, 24 November 2006).

The TYO is also considered as a front organization of the Tamil Tigers (Whiteman 2006, globalpolitician.com). Tamil societies of University College London (UCL), Imperial College, Leeds University, Surrey University and Kings College's Sri Lankan Society form the United Kingdom Tamil Students Union (UKTSU) which is affiliated to the TYO (*Tamil Guardian*, 9 November 2005).

The International Tamil Foundation, which supports the LTTE's ethnic movement, claims to be a think-tank which has existed in the UK since the late 1980s. C.J.T. Thamotheram, its founder, established London's first Tamil school, the West London Tamil School. He was also involved in the Standing Committee of Tamils (SCOT) in 1977 (*Tamil Guardian*, 2 November 2005). R. Ganeshalingam currently acts as the Foundation's chairman (tamilnation.org, 7 February 2001). The Tamil Community Centre is a UK-based civil society organization (*Tamil Guardian*, 22 March 2006). In December 2007, an organization called Tamil National Remembrance Foundation surfaced in the media for its pro-LTTE rally in London on the LTTE's Martyrs Day (*The Hindu*, 9 December 2007). The Sri Lankan High Commission in the UK said that it was a front organization of the LTTE.

Whiteman (2006), a spokesperson for the London-based anti-terrorist group VIGIL, while discussing the LTTE and its UK network, also refers to other Tamil organizations registered as charities in the UK besides TRO, such as the Tamil Refugee Education and Training Centre, where the LTTE's official spokesman Anton Rajah works, and the Tamil Refugee Action Group. The British branch of Tamil Relief Organization is another registered charity which even was blamed of transferring millions of pounds to the LTTE (Thomson and Turlej 2003). The LTTE activist, while writing in the *Hot Spring* magazine, considers these charities as brainchildren of Prabhakaran (Whiteman 2006, globalpolitician.com). LTTE-affiliated charitable organizations try to gain credibility by making it known that they work with organizations like CARE, UNHCR and UNICEF. The Tamil Housing Association is also a diaspora organization in the UK. There are some Sri Lankan

Tamils who are also active members of local public bodies. They formed a front called the British Tamil Councillors and Associates.

The Tamil Lawyers' Association (UK) responds to human rights and other security-related issues affecting Sri Lankan Tamils (TamilNet, 1 August 2007). Campaign Against State Terrorism in Sri Lanka (CASTIS) is based in Manchester (tamilcanadian.com, 6 February 2007). There is also an International Association of Tamil Academics (IATA) (tamilcanadian.com, 16 April 2007).

The LTTE is also said to be operating through London Tamil *Mandram* and the World Saiva Council (Gunaratna 1999: 113–14). As the majority of the Tamils are Hindus, temples became a potential place for the Tamil Tigers to reach the Tamil diaspora in the UK. London has some twenty-two Tamil temples (Human Rights Watch 2006: 21). Sri Rajarajeswary Amman Temple, Sri Venkateswara Temple Birmingham, Katpaka Vinayakar Temple, Enfield Nagapoosani Ambal Temple, London Divan Kovil, Britannia Hindu Temple Trust, Maruthanila Mandram are members of the British Tamils Forum (British Tamils' Forum–News Focus, 24 November 2006).

The British Consortium of Tamil Schools and the Tamil religious organizations from the Hindu, Christian and Muslim communities also take part in activities that are related to the Sri Lankan ethnic movement (tamilcanadian.com, 16 June 2006).

The UK introduced statutory provisions in 2001, which prevented militants from operating in Britain to carry out their terrorist acts elsewhere. With that, the LTTE had to close its international secretariat in London.

SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES

The LTTE has invested in many businesses in Norway and other Scandinavian countries. The LTTE operates six offices out of Norway through front organizations, including TCC and TRO (Jansz 2004). The LTTE's main communication centre was based in Norway (ibid.). The operations of LTTE international propaganda network were very sophisticated. The LTTE as a group with such 'international support structure' was much aware of the technical means of gathering intelligence. So, they

were very cautious of developing open communications network. The LTTE communication centre in Norway was the nodal point for receiving daily information from the Vanni jungles. Selected battlefield reports were sent through satellite phone links as daily faxes (Chalk 1999), which were uploaded on the internet within twenty-four hours. The LTTE makes use of highly trained human couriers to transmit important messages.

GERMANY

In the 1980s and '90s, PLOTE and TELO were active in Germany but slowly the LTTE and its front organizations became a dominating force among the German Tamil expatriates. The WTM, founded in October 1990, has its office in Wuppertal, North Rhine-Westphalia. The TRO has an office in Monchengladbach in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia (Zunzer, berghof-center.org). There is also a branch of the TYO in Germany. Other than these, there are many Tamil cultural associations, sports clubs, Tamil-language teaching seminars and Hindu temples. They are concentrated mostly in West and South Germany, including Berlin (Zunzer, berghof-center.org). The scattered Tamil population of Germany is well connected through these organizations.

FRANCE

There is a Tamil Centre for Human Rights (TCHR) or Centre Tamoul pour les Droits de l'Homme (CTDH) in France, with Visuvalingam Kirubaharan as its general secretary (TCHR Press Release, 2 June 2006; tamilcanadian.com). Deirdre McConnell serves as director of TCHR's International Programme (TCHR Press Release, 25 July 2005). John Sivapragaam, considered the spokesman of Tamil Forum in France, serves as the head of TCHR (tamilnet.com, 29 May 2006; tamilcanadian.com, 15 April 2007).

Hindu Amman Temple members are also active in political activities in France.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Members of the Hindu Amman Temple were among those arrested for protesting in front of the Eiffel Tower condemning the arrest of Tamil activists by French police collecting funds for the LTTE.

THE NETHERLANDS

There is a Tamil-Dutch solidarity group with its leader Savarimuttu Mahendran in the Netherlands. The TCHR is also present in the Netherlands; Sinnaiah Inthiran is its current president. The Thamilmutham music group is also a politically active group in the Netherlands ('Dutch Tamils protest in Hague', TamilNet, 29 May 2006).

The Tamil Eelam Cultural Association in the Netherlands (TECAN) was established on 2 September 1995 at Gilze in the province of Brabant, to promote "Dutch-Tamil friendship, informing Dutch people about endless war and human rights abuses against Tamils in Sri Lanka and assisting Tamil asylum seekers in their asylum procedure" (<http://members.tripod.com/~tamilned/tecan>). TECAN has organized several campaigns, meetings and cultural events supporting the Tamil cause.

The TCC was alleged to have forced two members of the Tamil Dutch Human Rights Organization (TDHRO), which was regarded as the most independent of Tamil solidarity organizations in Holland. The LTTE was accused of intimidating members of this organization. The alleged LTTE front organization, TCC, was blamed for forcing two members of TDHRO to sign a letter dissolving their organization. Press reports said that TDHRO members were assaulted and threatened with death (*Sri Lanka Monitor*, January 1990).

SWITZERLAND

The LTTE's front organizations in Switzerland include the TRO and Swiss Federation of Tamil Associations (Zunzer, berghof-center.org). The Geneva-based International Federation of Tamils is a consortium of more than 150 global Tamil organizations (tamilnation.org, 3 October 2005). The Tamil Forum in Switzerland is also an active diaspora organization. It is an umbrella organization for twenty-six Tamil organizations in Switzerland.

The protestors gathered despite the French authorities not giving them permission to demonstrate (*Tamil Guardian*, 11 April 2007).

The LTTE owns the People's Shops, which were mostly opened in the early 1990s. There are restaurants owned by the LTTE, which also conducts many cultural and sports competitions. The LTTE also runs Hindu temples or has its members in the temple board of directors. Sivan Temple in Zurich-Affoltern is run by the Tamil Tigers. The first Hindu temple in Switzerland came into existence in 1994 in Bern-Bethlehem. Another temple was opened in Adliswil soon after (Zunzer, berghof-center.org).

The World Tamil Education Service runs schools in Switzerland. By 2003, there were some 73 Tamil schools with 4000 students enrolled in them. Mathi, an expatriate in Zurich, started a sports association called Tamilaar Illam in 1996, which focused on bringing the parents and children together and enforces Tamil-only rule on the field. The objective of this organization is to make the Tamil children more aware of their Tamil homeland and its culture and history (Guha 2003: 16).

The PLOTE, EPDP and the Democratic People's Liberation Front (DPLF) also have active members in Switzerland but their number is small and they have less influence (Zunzer, berghof-center.org).

North America

CANADA

Canada's Sri Lankan Tamil community has played very crucial role in the Eelam movement. With more than 200,000 Tamils living in Canada, numerous charities and political organizations have been created since 1983, by which the LTTE tried to gain control over the Tamil population.

The Tamils are a group with the largest number of organizations in Canada. During the settlement process in Canada, the Tamils established their local networking, which helped them to develop their social and economic conditions of living in the host country. Further, they could facilitate financial help to rebuild the war-torn Sri Lankan North-East region. These organizations and their work created more impetus for the creation of new organizations. Their growth has become so pervasive that there is at least one organization per each village which assists in its development (Zunzer,

berghof-center.org). Not only self-help village organizations, Tamil alumni associations and Tamil sports clubs too are present in Canada.

The Tamil diaspora organizations in Canada include: Federation of Associations of Canadian Tamils (FACT), WTM, Eelam Tamil Associations (British Columbia and Quebec), TCC, Tamil Eelam Society of Canada (TESC), TRO, Tamil Eelam Economic Development Organization (TEEDOR), Tamil Relief Organization, Academy of Tamil Arts and Technology, Canadian Alert on Sri Lanka (appeared in 1987 but not seen much in the 1990s), Tamil Resource Centre,⁶⁹ and the Tamil Seniors Centre.⁷⁰ There is also the Canadian Organization for Peace and Equality in Sri Lanka (COPE-SL), with A. Jesuthasan as its convenor (tamilcanadian.com, 15 February 2006).

FACT is an umbrella organization for LTTE activities in Canada. One of the FACT leaders, Manickavasagam Suresh, was fighting extradition attempts on a National Security Certificate since 1995. The FACT even threatened lawsuits against those who described it as a terrorist front. For example, in October 2000, the *National Post* was sued for \$13 million (Thomson and Turlej 2003; lankalibrary.com). The group also held demonstrations against such an allegation. The TRO was functioning in the FACT building from the mid-1990s till 2002, before acquiring its own premises. The Canadian Foundation for Tamil Refugee Rehabilitation is also a supporting member of the FACT and was registered as a charitable organization. The TCC, situated in downtown Ottawa, is another member of the FACT which also has a women's wing called Ottawa Tamil Women's Association.

The WTM also shared office space and even phone numbers with the FACT. WTM has its offices in Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa and Scarborough

⁶⁹ The Tamil Resource Centre was active in the 1990s but in 1995, its board of directors noted that both sides in the conflict in Sri Lanka were responsible for human rights abuses (Thomson and Turlej 2003).

⁷⁰ Others include: Canadian Foundation for Tamil Refugee Rehabilitation, Canadian Tamil Congress, Canadian Tamil Women's Community Services, Society for the Aid of Ceylon Minorities (SACEM), Tamil Anti-Racism Committee, Tamil Cooperative Homes Inc., Tamil Cultural Centre of Scarborough, Tamil Eelam Society of Mississauga, Tamil Refugee Aid Society of Ottawa, Thamilar Oli Association Inc. and Women Organization of World Tamil Movement. These diaspora organizations have been listed and discussed in detail in Thomson and Turlej (2003). The website of Canadian Tamils, www.tamilcanadian.com, presents a comprehensive list of Tamil diaspora organizations in Canada.

(<http://tamilcanadian.com/page.php?cat=551&id=4295>). WTM (Ontario), which came to light in 1989 but got allied with various anti-racist groups, was also a member of FACT (Thomson and Turlej 2003; lankalibrary.com). Sinnathamby Sittampalam, who was serving as the President of Toronto's WTM, denies belonging to the LTTE but admits that in assisting Tamils, supporting the LTTE is inevitable (*Toronto Star*, 26 February 2006; lankalibrary.com). WTM established the Academy of Tamil Arts and Technology in 1990 and is apparently a cultural and immigration support organization. The treasurer of the TESC is the founder of this group, which shares its office space with TESC in two of its Toronto-area offices. In October 1997, as part of a protest against the imprisonment of the coordinator for the WTM, Manickavasagem Suresh, the Academy of Tamil Arts and Technology also raised its banner (Thomson and Turlej 2003; lankalibrary.com).

Tamil Eelam Society of Canada (TESC), registered as a non-profit organization in 1978 (*ibid.*), was founded by members from the Sri Lankan upper-class strata after the TULF won the 1977 elections with an agenda to create an independent State for Tamils. It was the first political Tamil group in Canada formed with the motive of disseminating information to various national governments of the world and to draw their attention to the Tamils' plight in Sri Lanka. With more Tamils migrating out of Sri Lanka in the 1980s, the refugees took over this organization that subsequently showed their political inclination to the LTTE (Zunzer, berghof-center.org). Initially, it had its office space given by the United Church of Canada, but by 2001, TESC was operating its offices in six different places in Greater Toronto area. A TESC spokesman is said to have even declared its affiliation with the LTTE in 1996 (Thomson and Turlej 2003; lankalibrary.com). TESC helped in the creation of the Canadian Tamil Youth Development Centre in 1998 with the main purpose of reducing gang violence among the young Tamils which was embarrassing and generating violence within the community. In many of its demonstrations, CTYDC expressed its support to the LTTE.⁷¹ TESC also established Tamil Anti-Racism Committee in 1993 which could deal with the human rights and anti-racism groups in

⁷¹ CTYDC received \$50,000 from the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention in 2000 to generate a study entitled "Toronto Tamil Youth: The Realities". The same organization gave \$90,000 in 2002 for similar studies, while the City of Toronto granted \$6,000 under its "Breaking the Cycle of Violence" programme (Thomson and Turlej 2003; lankalibrary.com).

Toronto.⁷² The Tamil Relief Organization shared the office spaces of TESC and the FACT (ibid.).

Along with the FACT, WTM and TESC, in 2000, CSIS also designated Eelam Tamil Association of British Columbia & Eelam Tamil Association of Quebec as the front organizations of the LTTE. Not much publicity information is available on this.

There is also a Tamil Creative Writers' Association (TCWA) based in Toronto (TCWA Press Release, 17 October 2006; tamilcanadian.com). Other Tamil initiatives include the Tamil Emergency Medical Service (TEMS), The Economic Consultancy House (TECH), Vanni Innovation Group (VIG) (tamilcanadian.com, 2 March 2004).

The Tamil youth in Canada with their participation in student bodies are also mobilized for support to the Tamil cause. There is the Canadian Tamil Students' Association (CTSA) (21/22 December 2005; tamilnation.org). The Tamil student associations of the University of Toronto, York University, universities in Windsor and Ottawa, Seneca College, Centennial College, etc. also are active in some of the Tamil diaspora activities in Canada (tamil.net, 13 February 2000). Other Tamil student bodies that expressed concern over the political developments in Sri Lanka include McMaster University Tamil Students Association (MacTSA) of Hamilton in Ontario, Tamil Students' Associations of Ryerson University and Queens University (Ontario), Ontario Public Research Interest Group, Inc. at Queen's University at Kingston, Tamil Students' Association at the University of Guelph in Ontario.⁷³ In one of its press releases, the Tamil Students' Association of the University of Toronto describes itself as an officially recognized student group, representing the interests of 150 Tamil students at that time (tamilcanadian.com, 18 July 2001). The Academic Society of Tamil Students, established in 1994, plays an important political role among the academic community of Ottawa-Carleton universities and influences their support to issues of concern in the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict. (tamilcanadian.com, 13th July 2001). Carleton University has its Carleton University Tamil Students' Association (CUTSA) (tamilcanadian.com, 25 July 2001). A Tamil Youth

⁷² This group received funds from the Toronto multicultural grants programmes to organize a chain of community conferences. Some of the meetings were started by singing both the national anthems of Canada and the anthem of Tamil Eelam (Thomson and Turlej 2003; lankalibrary.com).

⁷³ Source: The press releases by the mentioned Tamil Associations in 2001 published in tamilcanadian.com.

Organization is based in Toronto (<http://www.lankalibrary.com/phpBB/viewtopic.php?p=3251&>). There is also a College and University Tamil Students Union (CUTSU) in Ontario (<http://tamilcanadian.com/page.php?cat=216&id=1000>).

The Toronto-based Student Volunteer Program (TSVP) says that its objective is to serve “as a forum for students, and recent graduates to discover, learn and participate in international development and act locally to effect global change” (tamilnation.org, 14 August 2004). Every year, the student interns are mostly sent to Sri Lanka to take part in the relief and rehabilitation activities in Sri Lanka. It appears that TSVP initiated sending the batches in 2002 and the key areas of their participation are in Information and Communication Technologies, Health, and Education.

The Tamil Children’s Endowment Fund is one of the many other Tamil youth initiatives in Canada (tamilcanadian.com, 2 March 2004). The Canadian Movement for Peace with Justice in Sri Lanka has as its convenor A. Jesuthasan (tamilcanadian.com, 28 December 2005).

The Canadian Tamil Congress was founded in October 2000. Its key spokesman was an activist in these student bodies, including the CTYDC and the University of Toronto. It is said to have evolved out of efforts to give a clean image in the media as a representative of interests of the Tamil community in Canada (Thomson and Turlej 2003; lankalibrary.com).

In the area of Toronto, there are nearly forty Hindu temples, which are attended by Sri Lankan Tamils (Human Rights Watch 2006). The Hindu Temple Society of Canada also brings the Tamils together (tamilcanadian.com, 14 February 2005).

A news report published by the Department of Information website of the Government of Sri Lanka in September 2006 stated that some Canadian Tamil associations boycotted the LTTE. The website said that the “democratic-friendly Tamil association in Canada” represents the majority of Tamils in Canada who reject the LTTE.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ This news came in the light of some Canadian Tamils getting arrested for supporting the LTTE in Canada and the USA (news.lk, 1 September 2006).

In 1999, Canada declared the LTTE as a terrorist organization. The Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) concluded in 2000 that at least eight non-profit organizations and five companies were operating in Canada as fronts for the LTTE. The TRO is the principal fundraising group of the LTTE. The CSIS identified WTM, FACT and TESC as the key front organizations raising funds for the LTTE in Canada (Hoffmann and Chalk 2001: 48). Others designated as the LTTE's front organizations were the TCC-Canada (Thomson and Turlej 2003) and the Eelam Tamil Associations (British Columbia and Quebec).

USA

The Ilankai Tamil Sangham, considered as a front organization of the LTTE, has its branches in California, Florida, Ohio, Washington (DC), Houston, Dallas and Vancouver-Portland –Washington (sangam.org, 18 December 2006; tamilnation.org, 26 February 2007). It circulates pro-LTTE information on the Sri Lankan conflict in the US (Hoffmann and Chalk 2001: 44). The World Tamil Coordinating Committee (WTCC-USA) is also claimed as an LTTE front organization (Voice of America, 25 May 2007). It is a charity operating out of Queens New York by Karunakaran Kandasamy. Citing FBI records, Jane's Intelligence report (August 2007) said that Kandasamy is director of the US branch of the LTTE out of at least twelve such in the world.

Tamil diaspora organizations in the USA include the Federation of Tamil Associations of North America (FeTNA), World Tamil Organization (USA), World Tamil Women Organization (USA), Center for Women's Development and Rehabilitation (USA) (sangam.org, 18 December 2006), Youth Organization of American Tamils (YOAT) (tamilcanadian.com, 16 July 2001), Tamil Welfare and Human Rights Committee of Washington, DC, Action Group of Tamils in the US (AGOTUS), Society for Democracy Peace and Justice (New York), Tamil Eelam Society of Carolinas (USA) (tamilcanadian.com, 24 March 2004; sangam.org, 18 December 2006), and Connecticut Tamil Sangam (tamilcanadian.com, 27 August 2006).⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Other such diaspora organizations include Midwest Thamizh Sangam Illinois, Tamil Refugees Rehabilitation Organization California, North Carolinians for Peace; Tamil Welfare and Human Rights Committee (District of Columbia) (sangam.org, 18 December 2006), Tamil Heritage International,

When the US included the LTTE in its list of foreign terrorist organizations in 1997, it banned activities done in support of the LTTE. The US State Department has since declared the FACT, the Ellalan Force as well as the WTM and World Tamil Association, as front organizations of the LTTE and declared their fundraising and open support as illegal. When Canada banned the LTTE in 2000, the US also designated the WTM (Toronto and Montreal), the TCC, the Eelam Tamil Associations of Canada (Quebec and British Columbia) and the TRO as LTTE front organizations (Hoffmann and Chalk 2001: 48; US Patterns of Global Terrorism Report; tamilnation.org, 8 October 1997). But social and cultural Tamil diaspora organizations sympathetic to the LTTE could continue functioning in the US and are not restricted under these provisions.

South Africa

The presence of a 600,000-strong Tamil community in South Africa has helped the LTTE to spread its activities there. Gunaratna claims that even South African Tamils of Indian origin, who have close affinity to Sri Lankan Tamils, helped the LTTE to spread its influence in South Africa (http://www.sinhaya.com/SA_Connection.htm).

The initial attempts to make a strong base for raising funds started in 1995 by John Chrysostham alias Lawrence Tilagar. He is head of the Paris-based LTTE international secretariat. His efforts in South Africa led to the formation of People Against Sri Lankan Oppression (PASLO) by the South African Tamils in December 1995 in Gauteng. PASLO has branches all over South Africa. LTTE offices, particularly in London and Paris, provided PASLO with functions of propaganda. LTTE activists regularly travel to South Africa.

Several other South African Tamil organizations were formed. Dravidians for Peace and Justice (DPJ), an offshoot of PASLO, was formed in Gauteng (tamilnation.org, 9 March 1998). Other active LTTE fronts in South Africa were the Movement Against Sri Lankan Oppression (MASLO, based in Cape Town and Durban) and the Tamil Eelam Support Movement (based in Durban). In March–April

Association of Tamil Americans, Ohio Tamil Association, Carolina Tamil Americans (tamilnation.org, 26 February 2007), Tamil Americans and Friends for Peace (tamilnation.org, 25 July 2007).

1998, the Peace for Sri Lanka Support Movement (PSLSM) was established in Pretoria. It is an alliance involving many groups.

The TRO is also present in South Africa and is the principal fundraising group of the LTTE. The LTTE also tried to infiltrate other Tamil organizations in South Africa, such as the Natal Tamil Federation, the South African Tamil Federation, the Tamil Federation of Gauteng and the World Saiva Council for Chatsworth.

Through these front organizations and sympathetic groups, and by linking with other individuals and organizations, the LTTE is represented throughout South Africa. Their activities are well coordinated. After graduation, the best LTTE recruits were sent to Sri Lanka. Tamils trained in South Africa for the LTTE's movement are called South African Tamil Tigers (Gunaratna, sinhaya.com).

From its central base in South Africa, the LTTE can also expand its operations to other parts of Africa and elsewhere. The LTTE already has cells in Reunion, Fiji, Madagascar, Lesotho, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Swaziland.

Gunaratna cites the example of G.M. Veerabadren, belonging to DPJ, to demonstrate the link between the diaspora organizations and the South African Tamil Tigers. Veerabadren, while speaking to the *Sunday Times*, identified himself as Thamizh Veerabadren and said, "We also have a highly disciplined and militant group of Tamils here who have received training in explosives and tracking ... they are prepared to make the supreme sacrifice for the Tamils of Sri Lanka." He lobbied for the LTTE by using the DPJ letterhead, which describes the DPJ as a human rights organization (Gunaratna, sinhaya.com).

LTTE Network in South- East Asia

The proximity of the South-East Asian countries to the North-East coast of Sri Lanka, where the battle had been raging between the Tamil Tigers and the Sri Lankan Army, had induced the LTTE to develop various front organizations in this region. They include trading firms, shipping companies, restaurants and hotels (<http://www.svik.org/thai.htm>). Cambodia, Thailand and Myanmar are the significant countries in the LTTE's network. The LTTE's base in Myanmar was closed in 1996

after protests from the Sri Lankan government. Cambodia serves as the centre of its South-East Asia network. Thailand, with its shoreline facing the Bay of Bengal, became a transshipment point for the LTTE's arms and munitions. Widespread corruption among the military and police officials in Thailand and the country's efficient communication infrastructure proved beneficial to the LTTE.⁷⁶ In Bangkok, the front companies and sympathizers of the LTTE also provided a wide logistics network. Through Phuket and Sattaship on the Gulf of Thailand, the munitions moved. Even Ranong and Krabi, situated on the Andaman coast, are used for the movement of munitions (<http://www.svik.org/thai.htm>).

Community Welfare and Dialogue Organization is a Tamil group in Malaysia which mobilizes support to the ethnic movement in Sri Lanka (tamilnation.org, 10 February 2007).

LTTE Network in Australasia

AUSTRALIA

Also in Australia, Tamil diaspora organizations are present in good number through which the Sri Lankan Tamils make their political and economic representation in the Sri Lankan ethnic movement. The Australasian Federation of Tamil Associations (AFTA) is an umbrella Tamil diaspora organization in Australia and New Zealand. Ana Pararajasingham served as the chairman of this organization (18 April 2006, lankalibrary.com; 28 May 2006, TCNR Media Release, tamilcanadian.com). Its member associations are in Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Darwin, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney, Auckland and Wellington (tamilcanadian.com, 18 July 2002). Australians for Human Rights was started in Sydney on 16 September 2006 (sangam.org, 26 September 2006). The Australian Human Rights Foundation is alleged to be another front organization of the LTTE (Gunaratna 1999: 45). Australia also has the TCC and Tamil Rehabilitation Committee.⁷⁷ The Thamileela Viduvu is a diaspora initiative formed under the umbrella organization Tamil Education Foundation of Western Australia. Its self-avowed objective is to improve the living conditions of war-affected

⁷⁶ Llyods List, brought out in March 2000, points out that after closing the LTTE's base in Myanmar, the Tamil Tigers started operating in an island near Phuket (Quoted in <http://www.svik.org/thai.htm>).

⁷⁷ The TCC has been suspended by the Australian government on doubt of breaching its new anti-terrorism finance laws, suspecting it as an LTTE front organization (lankalibrary.com, 18 April 2006).

young in North and East Sri Lanka by creating awareness of their plight among the Tamil expatriates (<http://www.tamilnation.org/diaspora/australia.htm>).

Tamil diaspora organizations in New South Wales include Consortium of NSW Tamil Association, Eelam Tamil Association, Tamil Medical Aid, Tamil Civic Centre, Tamil Refugee Council, TRO,⁷⁸ Australian Federation of Tamil University Students, Tamil Resources Centre, and Sydney Tamil Christian Fellowship. These organizations play a role in the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict and at one time or another showed their support to the LTTE (MCRA Radio 2000; tamilcanadian.com, 3 June 2001). Victoria has the Consortium of Tamil Associations (tamilcanadian.com, 18 November 2006) and Eelam Tamil Association of Victoria, formerly called the Ceylon Tamil Association, established in 1978 in Australia. As of May 2006, M. Sivakumar was serving as the President and S. Mahendrarajah was its Secretary (tamilcanadian.com, 16 May 2006). Queensland has the Tamil Association of Queensland, Eelam Tamil Organization, Sri Lanka Upcountry Association, Tamil Senior Citizens Association in Queensland, Tamil Youth Group of Queensland, Jaffna University Alumni Association, Peradeniya Engineering faculty Alumni Association, Jaffna Hindu College Old Boys Association, and Brisbane Tamil School (tamilnation.org, 10 June 2006).

The second-generation Tamils in Australia get to experience the civil war in Sri Lanka through the Australian Tamil Youth Project, which sends the youths to North and East Sri Lanka to gain first-hand experience of the plight of the civilians there and also to understand the significance of Tamil history and culture. It also gives them an opportunity to do some humanitarian work (<http://www.tamilnation.org/diaspora/australia.htm>).

The temples and their management in Australia also contribute their share to the ethnic movement in Sri Lanka. There is a Hindu Ahlaya Sangam Inc. and Sri Selva Vinayakar Temple in Queensland (tamilnation.org, 10 June 2006)

⁷⁸ The Deputy High Commissioner in the Sri Lankan High Commission of Australia, Asoka Giriagama, alleged that TRO Australia was funding terrorism and even raised the possibility of allocating tsunami funds to the LTTE (26 November 2005, <http://www.tamilcanadian.com/page.php?cat=218&id=3623>).

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand has COTANZ (Consortium of Tamil Associations of New Zealand) (tamilguardian.com, 28 December 2005). The Federation of Tamil Associations in New Zealand represents the three main Tamil organizations in the cities of Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch (tamilnation.org, 11 February 2001). The Tamil Youth Melbourne Discussion Group is a gathering of like-minded individuals to address and contribute to the humanitarian and development needs of North and East Sri Lanka.

Among other Tamil diaspora organizations are the International Movement for Tamil Culture, New Zealand Tamil Society Inc., Thamizh Aruvi Foundation (Charitable Trust), Wellington Tamil Society Inc., Canterbury Tamil Society, and Massey University Tamil Society (<http://www.geocities.com>). Most of these organizations were established with the objective of promoting Tamil language and culture.

The New Zealand Tamil Society, which claims to coordinate with the Bangkok branch of UNHCR in the Tamil refugees' settlement in New Zealand, also took an active part in programmes commemorating the conflict at home (<http://www.angelfire.com/ak/nztamil/>; www.geocities.com). New Zealand Tamil Society was established in 1983 to help the migrated Tamils to integrate with the New Zealand society. It nurtures Tamil language and culture for the benefit of the first-generation Tamils, and also runs language schools in Mt Roskill and Pakuranga. Out of 3000 estimated Tamils in Auckland, 500 are members of this society (tamilcanadian.com, 19 December 2003).

Among the other Tamil diaspora organizations in New Zealand are the Tamil Studies and Human Rights Trust, Auckland Arts and Literature Circle, Tamil Senior Citizens, Tamil Community Education, Tamil Medical Doctors Association, Tamil Cultural Group (tamilguardian.com, 28 December 2005) and Tamil Youth Organization New Zealand (TYONZ) (sangam.org, 5 May 2007).

Apart from the diaspora organizations discussed above, which play a political and an economic role in the ethnic conflict, there are various other Tamil diaspora organizations that collaborate solely with institutions in the Tamil homeland for its development, especially to reconstruct its basic infrastructure, which has been

affected gravely by the conflict. For example, the Medical Institute of Tamils (MIOT) and TAMMED based in England, Australia and Canada. Tamil physicians basically from London travel to Jaffna and Vanni for three weeks to three months and offer their service. Also, the Tamil diaspora group in Norway, Tromsa Tamil Sangam, collaborated with the University of Tromsa and was involved in setting up medicine and fisheries faculties in the Eastern University and Jaffna in the Tamil homeland (Cheran 2003: 14). The TRO and TEEDOR are considered to be effective organizations in coordinating with the diaspora in relation to the development of the North-East (ibid.: 19). Their policies are framed more to accommodate the diaspora, though it is done implicitly. This aspect, however, is beyond the scope of this study.

Roping in the Second Generation of Tamil Diaspora

To sustain the Eelam movement it is necessary to draw the second-generation migrants to the notion of Eelam. This generation has been brought up almost exclusively in the Western atmosphere. Most of them have not visited Sri Lanka. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, the philosophical moorings of the LTTE underline Tamil nationalism deriving its vigour from Tamil history and culture. Much thinking went into the effort to keep the Tamil youngsters well versed with their language, culture and history. In 1987 A.C. Tarcisius with his team started organizing weekend Tamil schools after experimenting with the Tamil children in various countries (A.C. Tarcisius, Interview, UK, 26 April 2008). The Tamil schools were started with a commitment to ensure that the Tamil children learnt the Tamil language.⁷⁹ The Tamil language has also been included as an optional subject in the UK national curriculum till the twelfth standard.⁸⁰ Tamil schools also teach them arts like Bharatanatyam and Carnatic music, which are part of the cultural heritage of Tamils. There is something like an obsession to make the young Tamils learn classical music and dance. A result is that the diaspora Tamil children hold more cultural

⁷⁹ Textbooks were designed from kindergarten to class V, each having a packet of five in Tamil: three different guides designed separately for students, teachers and parents to educate Tamil children in reading and writing the Tamil language, and a CD to ensure right pronunciation (Tarcisius, Interview).

⁸⁰ For the Sri Lankan Tamil community, Chennai serves as the cultural capital. The diaspora Tamils have institutions affiliated to Tamil universities in Tamil Nadu. Vice chancellors and Tamil scholars from Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka have also constituted the Education Board to design Tamil-language textbooks for the second-generation Sri Lankan Tamils in the West. Teachers from Tamil Nadu are invited to conduct examinations for Tamil language in UK.

performances than Tamil children in Chennai or Sri Lanka. The parents organize *arangetrams* and the Tamil schools take up the responsibility (Tarcisius, Interview).⁸¹ These language schools have also established sports clubs, cultural groups, aesthetic studies, ethnic classes, and classes for arts and music.

Support from International Bodies through Tamil Diaspora

Sri Lankan Tamil journalists among the diaspora with their membership affiliations in international bodies like Canadian Journalists for Free Expression, France-based media watchdog Reporters Without Borders (Reporteurs Sans Frontiers), Committee to Protect Journalists (New York) also got them involved in observing the violations of press freedom and the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and take their help in their international media activities. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has its representation in more than 115 countries with 500,000 journalists. The Free Media Movement, a Sri Lanka-based media group, is affiliated to it.

The Sri Lankan Tamil Christian community, through its association with the Christian World Service, which is an ecumenical development assistance agency providing New Zealand donor support programmes throughout the developing world, induced the latter, after it learnt more about the causes and outcomes of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, to support the Tamil cause (tamilnation.org, 7 November 1997).

Many Tamil American organizations which support the “lawful” activities of the LTTE in Sri Lanka (tamilnet.com, 18 October 2005) also are represented in the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR),⁸² a non-profit legal and educational organization based in New York, which also represents a human rights organization called Humanitarian Law Project. The Tamil students in Canada by being part of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) based in Ontario could mobilize their support and concern for the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict (tamilnation.org, 21–22 December 2005).

⁸¹ The *mridangists* and other accompanists are hired even from Tamil Nadu. The parents travel to Chennai to shop for costumes and jewellery, altogether spending about £10,000 on the big event (Raghavan, Interview, UK, 23 April 2008). Incidentally, many expatriates also complain that these efforts to defend Tamil identity are also indirectly contributing to gradual replacement of culture with class.

⁸² CCR was founded in 1966 by the attorneys representing civil rights demonstrators in the South. Its self-avowed objective is to protect and advance the rights guaranteed by the US constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (tamilnation.org, 21 November 2006).

The LTTE's banner in its international campaigns is 'Peace'. This is intended to attract the support of various non-governmental organizations to its cause. Among these organizations are: Canadian Relief Organization for Peace in Sri Lanka, International Educational Development Inc, World Council of Churches, Australian Human Rights Group, International Federation of Journalists, Pax Romana, International Peace Bureau, International Human Rights Law Group, and Robert F Kennedy Memorial Centre for Human Rights (Chalk 1999). The support LTTE gained from these groups proved very beneficial. These groups have demonstrated their support to the Tamil cause publicly.

By projecting itself as a national liberation struggle, the LTTE even developed relations with groups aligned to the "Progressive Left" in other countries (Thomson and Turlej 2003). Highlighting the racist element in the Sinhala stance, the LTTE activists globally drew support from such anti-racist groups mostly in the early 1990s (ibid.).

The Diaspora Media Network

The importance the LTTE gives to electronic and print media in spreading its cause is obvious in its Television and newspaper service network in various countries. In countries with substantial Tamils, diaspora has established a network of Tamil Radio and Television stations. Tamil journals, newspapers, magazines are published by Tamil diaspora which carried their support to the ethnic movement in Sri Lanka. The LTTE has also gained access to media through the Tamil diaspora. Along with food items and spices, Tamil shops also sell Tamil videos and newspapers promoting the cause of the LTTE.

In the North Atlantic countries, there are more than forty Sri Lankan Tamil newspapers. More than 80 per cent are said to be controlled by the LTTE or its front organizations. If any Tamil newspaper does not allow the infiltration of the LTTE, the Tamil Tigers either call the stores or ask the Tamil diaspora to boycott it (Gunaratna 1999: 114).

In the UK, the LTTE owns broadcasting stations. There are also many journals and newspapers published by the diaspora organizations in the UK. Among these are the

Tamil Guardian, the journal *Kalathil* (published by IFT), *Network* (edited by N. Satyendran, LTTE's legal adviser), *Viduthalai Puligal* and *Tamil Land* (both alleged to be LTTE publications), the journal *Hot Spring*, the newspapers *Tamil Nation* (published from Croydon, Surrey) and *Thamilan* (London) (Gunaratna 1999: 113–14). *Jnana Deepam*, a Tamil newspaper, is printed in Germany (tamilnet.com, 7 August 2004). Media units in Canada include *Geethavani*, *Muzhakkam*, *Ceylon Times English Weekly*, *Thamils Info* and *World Tamils Weekly* (tamilcanadian.com, 14 February 2005). Toronto has ten Tamil-diaspora weeklies, of which five are circulated free of cost. *Eelamurasu* is based in Melbourne (tamilguardian.com, 23 November 2005). *Eelanadu*, the first Sri Lankan Tamil newspaper published in 1991 in Paris, carried news reports on Sri Lanka and also the local community events (UNESCO 2000; tamilcanadian.com).

The LTTE runs its own television channels to reach the Tamil diaspora. The cultural programmes and serials in Tamil Nadu-based television channels like Sun TV or Jaya TV, with whom the diaspora TV channels have collaborated, have an equally interested audience among the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora (Manoharan, Interview, UK, 15 April 2008).

In the 1980s, the LTTE's Nitharsanam Television service was broadcasting programmes in Jaffna district. After the studios got destroyed by the Indian army in February 1987, a satellite TV station, National Television of Tamil Eelam (NTT), based in an undisclosed location in the Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka, restarted its news broadcast to European countries on 26 March 2005. The NTT's logo is *Karthigaipoo* (Gloriosa Lily), which was declared as the national flower of Tamil Eelam by the LTTE (tamilnet.com, 26 March 2005, 30 July 2005).

The Tamil Radio and Television (TRT) network, based in Paris, gave voice and identity to many Tamils. Guhanathan Sabapathy Suppaiah was the director-general of TRT network, which functioned with around 20 full-time staff members and fifty freelancers at its Paris headquarters. It is the first Tamil Television. It was taken over by the LTTE. Not only in France, The TRT also had its own correspondents in the LTTE-claimed Eelam, southern India, and in major cities in West European countries with considerable Tamil population. TRT also had its production unit in India. Though its officials claim that TRT is a channel with news and cultural programmes,

there were certain critics who allege that some of its contents support the LTTE's ethnic movement (UNESCO 2000; tamilcanadian.com; island.lk, 9 December 2000).

Another television network, Tharsinam functioning from London, which was closed down in June 2008, was an active LTTE's voice functioned from London (prnewswire.co.uk, 23 November 2008).

The LTTE was said to have acquired the London-based Tamil Television Network (TTN) and International Broadcasting Corporation by intimidation and threat (asiantribune.com, 11 December 2006). Kuhanathan (or Guhanathan), chairman of Radio Asia, a Paris-based company, achieved popularity through his first 24-hour Tamil radio Tamil Oli.⁸³ With that, the LTTE focused on owning a Tamil radio (11 December 2006 asiantribune.com). The International Broadcasting Corporation (IBC) was the first radio in London started in 1997 by a Tamil playwright A.C. Tarcisius, after resigning from the BBC. He modestly said, "I ran it for three years and then people with more money, they wanted to expand it. I just gave it to them and left" (Tarcisius, UK, Interview, 26 April 2008). IBC acclaimed international popularity.

After taking other Tamil literary assignments for few years, Tarcisius was later called by the LTTE to work in TTN. He served as its director for two years (Tarcisius, Interview). Paris-based TTN was banned by the French authorities in May 2007 (www.dnaindia.com, 21 May 2007). In the same month a news report claimed the beginning of another news channel called Tharisanam (Vision) in Europe.⁸⁴ TTN is another Tamil television station and its programmes were viewed by Tamils across Europe. In April 2007, the French authorities, on the charges of improper registration of the channel, closed this station (tamilguardian.com, 12 May 2007). World Tamil Television is a Tamil Television station set up in Berlin which airs Tamil programmes (tamilnet.com, 7 August 2004).

Canada has the Canadian Tamil Television and Radio also brings the Tamil diaspora together in Canada. More than ten different newspapers exist in Canada

⁸³ Guhanathan also started TRT from Paris (asiantribune.com, 11 December 2006).

⁸⁴ The Sri Lankan Defence Ministry's website said that the launch of Tharisanam television on 17 May 2007 was broadcast through the satellite feed of Makkal TV, a Chennai-based channel owned by the Tamil Nadu party Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK); see <<http://www.dnaindia.com/report.asp?NewsID=1098147>>.

(Zunzer, berghof-center.org). TVi (Tamil Vision Int) a Tamil television in Canada and a Canadian Tamil Radio (CTR), which are said to be run by the Tamil Tigers (tamilcanadian.com, 20 December 2006; asiantribune.com, 11 December 2006); Thamicholai, a Tamil radio station, is based in Toronto (TCWA Press Release, 29 April 2005; tamilcanadian.com). More than ten Tamil newspapers exist in Canada (Zunzer, berghof-center.org).

In Australasia, on the media front there is Tamil Media New Zealand in operation from July 2002. It is said to serve the need to promote the ancient heritage, language, culture and traditions of the Tamil people (<http://tamilnation.org/diaspora/newzealand.htm>). Thaemadura Thamir Osai, a Tamil radio enterprise established in 1999, got incorporated into Tamil Media New Zealand.⁸⁵ Thamir Muzhakkam is a Tamil radio enterprise in Sydney (MCRA Radio 2000; tamilcanadian.com, 3 June 2001).

NTT, based in the Tamil homeland, also has in 2005 spread its television services to countries in Asia, including South-East Asia,⁸⁶ and the new service to India, parts of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar and China use Eurostar at 11.5 GHz. They started their broadcast with 2-hour programs. For successful broadcast of these programmes in some of the areas, especially South-East Asia, the cooperation of international journalists was urged for by the NTT (tamilnet.com, 30 July 2005). The official Radio of LTTE, Voice of Tigers, also began its broadcast to the South Asian countries from 4th March 2007.⁸⁷

Conclusion

After 1983, the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora established numerous community organizations, weekend Tamil schools and media networks for cultural and social interaction among the dispersed Tamils in the West. This vast complex network of

⁸⁵ It operates on 104.6 FM every Tuesday, 9.20 pm to 10.20 pm, <http://tamilnation.org/diaspora/newzealand.htm>.

⁸⁶ The event of broadcasting Tamil news to the South East Asian countries was attended by the LTTE's head of media unit Naresh who at the event handed over the new antennas to the Chief News Editor of *Voice of Tigers*, which is a sister media organization. LTTE's media coordinator Thaya Master was also present at the event (tamilnet.com, 30 July 2005).

⁸⁷ The leader of the LTTE's political wing, S.P. Thamichelvam, said at the event that the inauguration on the 69th birthday of late Anton Blasingham was a mark of respect to him for his contribution to the progress of the Tamil media (tamilnet.com, 4 March 2007).

associations became an easy base for the Tamil Tigers to reach the expatriates for drawing political and economic support. By using force and threat, they took hold of flourishing businesses. As organizations are formed by professionals, students and at even village or college level, the LTTE could easily and intricately develop its connections with the expatriates. This diaspora network indirectly contributed to the formation of the LTTE's international network. Through this network of international offices and cells, the LTTE disseminates information to the Tamil communities all over the world. Politically, sympathetic pressure groups among the diaspora serve as propaganda centres for the LTTE.