

TAMIL TIMES

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ELECTION FEVER GRIPS SRI LANKA

All political parties are gearing themselves for the big battle. Sri Lanka is gripped with election fever. The media is afflicted with pre-election mania. The campaign has already begun in earnest, although no announcement of an election has been made yet.

Under the constitution, the elections for the National State Assembly are not due until the middle of next year, and the Presidential elections not until 1984. However, political observers believe, that President J.R. Jayawardene has already decided on the elections for the latter part of this year. But he is keeping everybody guessing as to when they are to take place, and which will take place first - Presidential or general elections.

Sri Lanka is not unknown for political horse-trading between political parties. Nor there is any shortage of political punters and they are prepared to stake their bets in this guessing game in favour of the Presidential election taking place prior to the general elections. They suggest that if it takes place first and the present President is re-elected, then he could use his elevated position and the immense power, influence and patronage that go with it to manoeuvre and politically manipulate the outcome of the general elections. The leader of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the only opposition party that is likely to defeat the present ruling party, Mrs. Bandaranaike, deprived of her civic rights by the government on charges of abuse of power, and therefore is not in a position to present herself as a candidate in the

Presidential election. In addition, there is a lamentable dearth of candidates of national standing and popular appeal to be able to successfully challenge the present incumbent. J.R. wants to hold the Presidential election before the opposition parties could regroup themselves from their present pathetic disarray.

VOLATILE PICTURE

Political observers believe that the general elections will definitely be held before the end of this year. The growing unpopularity of the govt. on the one hand and the ever increasing number of people who have begun to attend opposition rallies and meetings, particularly that of Mrs. Bandaranaike, has persuaded the President to go to the country at the earliest possible opportunity because he realises that, as days and months pass, the situation is likely to deteriorate further for the govt.

In the run-up for the elections, the entire situation presents a volatile picture. As far as the opposition parties are concerned, the SLFP suffered a major split about an year ago followed by a bruising campaign of claims and count-claims, insults and insinuations and court battles between the rival factions. Only recently, a bargain was

Contd. on page 11

“TIGERS” SHOOT IT OUT IN STREETS OF S. INDIA

The fratricidal war between the two rival factions of the 'Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam', a Tamil youth movement, took a tragic turn when it spilled out beyond the shores of Sri Lanka, with a shootout in public that took place in the streets of Pondy Bazaar, Thiyagarayanagar, South India at about 10 p.m. on May 19. Following this incident, a number of leading members of the movement have been arrested including Prabhakaran [Thamby] and Uma Maheswaran [Muhunthan], the leaders of the rival factions.

One of the injured, Jothswaran, is in hospital with serious bullet wounds under a heavily-armed guard. Prabhakaran and Sivakumar (Ragavan) were arrested after a chase immediately following

Tamil Nadu to carry out their own investigations, and to explore the possibility of extraditing the arrested 'Tigers', who are reported to be 'wanted' in Sri Lanka for other alleged crimes. As



PRABHAKARAN

the shooting incident. Sivaneswaran (Niranjana) and Uma Maheswaran were apprehended after a few days of intensive search. It is reported that several others have also been rounded-up and detained pending investigation.

Already, the top brass of the Sri Lankan police force are in

UMA MAHESWARAN

extradition proceedings cannot be completed within a short time, the Lankan police are, in the meantime, keen to obtain the assistance of their counterparts in Tamil Nadu to delve deeper into any possible underground link between the 'Tigers' and Indian or other

Contd. from page 2

TWO MORE GUNNED DOWN

On Wednesday 26th May a popular social worker and a Tamil liberation activist, I. IRAIKUMARAN [27] was gunned down along with his friend T. UMAKUMARAN [28] at Alaveddy, Jaffna by a gang of seven youths.

The killings had occurred in the late hours of the night.

According to the statement given by Umakumaran's brother Sivakumaran a group of seven persons on bicycles had walked into their house and woken up Umakumaran who was sleeping in the open verandah. When he and other inmates also woke up and

came out, one of the men had brandished a revolver and threatened them to keep quiet. They ordered Umakumaran to come along with them.

Umakumaran was asked to get on one of the two motor-cycles parked in the compound and one of the gang mounted the bike. The other six youngsters had then deflated the tyres of the other motorcycle. Before taking Umakumaran away, the gang had warned the inmates not to raise an alarm; otherwise their house would be razed to the ground.

Contd. on page 13

HARTAL AGAINST NEW CAPITAL

The widespread response from the Tamil speaking people of Sri Lanka to the call for a "Hartal" - [boycott] against the shifting of the capital to Kotte and renaming it Sri Jayawardenapura and the opening of the new Parliament building there, must have sent shockwaves within the leadership of the Tamil United Liberation Front [TULF]. This was the first Hartal organised without the support and in opposition to the TULF.

Sections which opposed the participation by the TULF in the ceremonies connected with the opening of the new Parliament building called for a Hartal on the day of the opening - April 29, 1982. All the reports indicate that the Hartal was an unqualified success. There was a considerable response to this call in the Tamil areas, particularly in the northern part of the country where shops were shut, schools boycotted and transport services seriously affected. The commercial life of the northern city of Jaffna was virtually paralysed.

The Hartal was called jointly by the Tamil Eelam Liberation Front, Eelam Manavar Pera-

vai (Eelam Students Congress), Students' Association of the University of Jaffna, Tamil Ilaingar Peravai (Tamil Youth Congress), Revolutionary Communist League and the Jaffna Branch of the Public Corporations Workers Union. They called upon the people "to observe a hartal on the 29th to maintain the self-respect of the Tamils and to renew the determination to re-establish Tamil Eelam".

Following a protest meeting Dr. S.A. Tharmalingam the leader of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Front, garlanded the statue of King Sankili at Nallur, the capital of the old Jaffna Kingdom before it was conquered by the Portuguese.

Contd. from page 1
foreign groups or individuals. In appreciation of the arrests already made, and in anticipation of and as an incentive to further co-operation, the Lankan govt. has already announced a reward of one million rupees to the Tamil Nadu policemen who effected the arrests.

The Lankan govt. and the security forces, which had displayed a remarkable incapacity for the last several years to apprehend the 'Tigers' who were alleged to have been involved in spectacular bank-raids and several daring shootouts with the security forces, are reported to be thoroughly elated at the arrest of the leaders of the movement. They believe that these arrests will virtually cripple the movement totally.

"Liberation Tigers" have been a movement based on a section of the Tamil youth of Sri Lanka, who had become exasperated with the continued failure of the parliamentary leadership to solve the problems of discrimination and oppression facing the

Tamils. They set out on the road of armed struggle to liberate the people from oppression and to achieve a separate state of Eelam for the Tamils.

Ideological differences are said to be at the root of the split in the movement into two factions, one led by Prabhakaran and the other by Uma Maheswaran. The tragic aspect of this factional struggle was that they chose to sort out their ideological differences with the very weapons which they allegedly collected and used to 'deal with organs of oppression'.

Long before the tragedy that was enacted in the streets of Tamil Nadu, there were reports of a series of shooting incidents, in the course of which members on either side were killed. These suicidal escapades into the arena of mock heroism provided the Lankan security forces with the opportunity for which they had waited for long, to effect a large number of arrests.

Some believe that the latest arrests of the 'leaders' them-

(Contd. on page 13)

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LONDON DIARY

WAR ON BBC

The War Party, otherwise known as the Tory Party, have been preparing for battle under the generalship of Mrs. Thatcher to 'make the world a safer place to live in' and to show the world that 'Great Britain does not appease dictators' (supplying weapons of mass destruction in return for the dictator's money in peace time is another matter), and to show the "Argies" a lesson. Unexpectedly it went into battle on a second front against the BBC.

Weapons like 'traitors', 'treason', 'unpatriotic', 'odious and subversive' and 'stabbing our boys in the back' were liberally used in this war against the BBC. Why? The BBC had the cheek and impudence not to follow the "hysterical blood lust" of the Sun, Daily Star and the Daily Mail. The BBC had the audacity to permit views to be broadcast of those who were critical of the government's war-policy.

To the eternal credit of the BBC, they withstood the onslaught with courage and independence. Richard Francis, the Managing Director of BBC Radio, in an address to the International Press Institute, said, "Our job is not jingo, it is to provide the most reliable account of confusing and worrying events, both for the troops themselves and the families, the country at large and for the rest of the world The BBC needs no lessons on patriotism. Truth is the best propaganda. Whatever reputation the BBC may have does not come from being tied to the government's apron strings'. In spite of accusations from Mrs. Thatcher and her Foreign Secretary, Mr. Pym, and the jingoistic rabble from the Tory backbenches and the bloodhounds of the Sun, Daily Star and Daily Mail, the BBC's coverage of news and views about the Falklands crisis has been

supported by over 81 per cent of the people in Britain according to a public opinion poll conducted by an independent research Company, Audience Selection.

POWELL ON HIS HOBBY-HORSE

If there is anyone in Britain who has Sri Lanka in his mind all the time it is none other than that well known black-baiter, Mr. Enoch Powell. Whenever he wants to make a case for his racist policy of repatriation of blacks from UK, he does not fail to cite Sri Lanka as a good example to follow. He explains to his audience as to how the

plantation workers of Indian origin were rendered voteless, stateless and many of them forcibly repatriated.

The ethnic black population in Britain have become accustomed to hearing Mr. Powell's periodic outbursts calling for their repatriation.

Believe it or not, Mr. Powell recently spoke on the subject of 'Racial Harmony' to the Rightwing Monday Club of the Conservative Party. In his speech, he returned to his favourite hobby-horse of repatriation of the black population to their countries of origin and those British born second generation to the lands of their forebears.

Not being known to be an

enthusiastic advocate of assisting Third World countries, he called for the creation of a new Department of Immigration and Repatriation, and said that some of the money spent on Third World aid programmes could be spent on establishing such a department.

While Mr. Powell may camouflage his poisonous racism with his customary logic and inimitable eloquence, his followers in the National Front and British Movement accept his words as gospel and go about attacking, maiming and on occasions killing people of a darker hue as part of their contribution to keep Britain white.

UK LAW-BREACH OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The European Commission of Human Rights has accepted that a British immigration rule which prevents many women from living with their foreign husbands in this country appears to be a breach of human rights.

Five examples of women affected by the rule were presented to the Commission this month, and three of them were ruled to be admissible. This means that the Commission sees a prima facie case which may eventually be judged by the European Court of Human Rights unless the Government changes the rule.

One case was ruled inadmissible, because an application by the fiance of the woman concerned to come to Britain has not yet been formally rejected. The other was excluded because the Home Secretary decided at the last moment to allow the husband to enter.

The rule, introduced in 1980, says that the husband of a woman settled in Britain can only come to settle here with her if she is a British citizen who was born in the UK, or if one of her parents was born here. However, any man settled in the UK, irrespective of his citizenship, is allowed to bring his wife here to settle with him.

The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants and the National Council for Civil Liberties say that the rule is sexually and racially discrimi-

natory and contravenes the European Convention on Human Rights.

Miss Harriet Harman, the solicitor for the NCCL, said yesterday that the European Commission's decision was a recognition "of what we have said ever since the Government announced its

intention to introduce this rule."

The next stage is for the Commission to attempt to produce a friendly settlement and, failing that, to draw up a detailed report of its own. Lawyers expect the earliest date the cases could reach the Court is early 1984. The Court has ruled against Britain eight times, more than against any other member of the Council of Europe.

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TULF LEADER ON NEW CAPITAL

The following is the full text of the speech made by Mr. A. Amirthalingam Leader of the Opposition and TULF leader on the occasion of the opening of the new Parliament Building in the new capital of Sri Lanka, Sri Jayawardhenepura.

Your Excellency, I am very happy that I have been given this opportunity to speak a few words on this unique and historic occasion. A change in the Seat of Parliament from one building to another is a unique event, more so when it also means a change of capital, however close to each other the old and the new capitals may be. This change of capital from Colombo to Kotte is doubly significant. The declaration of Sri Lanka as a Republic in 1972 was hailed as a break with imperialism and the realization of the full sovereignty of the people. This change of capital means another break with the traditions introduced by the European conquerors, the imperialist rulers who

succeeded one another, the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British.

Colombo was made the Seat of Government by these foreigners from across the oceans who landed in the harbour and who wanted trade. Colombo was the harbour in which they could land their reinforcements of men and material to rule over the land and from which they could ship the merchandise for which they came. Colombo, the centre of trade and shipping, became the political capital as it suited the convenience of the foreign rulers.

The shift of the capital from Colombo to Kotte has been referred to as a prelude to the revival of the glorious heritage of the Sinhalese during the period of the Kingdom of Kotte, which was the high-water mark of achievement of Sinhalese literature. The Tamil people do not grudge the Sinhalese the restoration of what was theirs. We believe in a policy of live and let live. We believe in co-existence with the Sinhalese on a basis

of equality and freedom. We certainly resent and will fight against any set-up under which we are made second-class citizens and a subject nation.

The period when Colombo was the capital paved the way for the reduction of the whole population to a position of subjects of foreign imperialists, followed by the gradual emergence of the Sinhalese as the rulers, leaving the Tamil-speaking people as they were, a subject nation under different masters. As if to rub it in, the grant of Independence in 1948 was followed by citizenship laws which decitizenized and dis-enfranchised half the Tamil population and made the rest doubtful citizens, by language laws which enthroned Sinhala as the only official language, leaving the Tamil-speaking people out in the cold, and by amendments to the Constitution which made Buddhism virtually the State religion, leaving the Hindus, Muslims and Christians with a stamp of inferiority.

The Parliament in Colombo saw the emergence of the reaction to these measures in the form of demands for balanced representation put forward by the late leader Mr. G.G. Ponnambalam, the demand for a federal form of government put forward by the late leader Mr. S.J.V. Chelvanayagam and, ultimately and inevitably in the face of the total rejection of all these demands, the demand for the restoration of the sovereignty of the Tamil nation.

In the history of this Island the Kotte period has special significance. The name "Kotte" itself is a Tamil word, meaning a fort; and the city took its name from a fort built by a Tamil by the name of Alagakkonara.

At the time the capital was established at Kotte in the 14th century there were two other kingdoms in the Island. There was a Sinhalese kingdom in the central hills with its capital at Gampola and later in Kandy. There had been

a Tamil kingdom in the north with its capital at Nallur.

According to Professor K.M. de Silva, in his latest book "A History of Sri Lanka" at page 84:

"In the second half of the fourteenth century, the fortunes of the Sinhalese reached their nadir. True the writ of the Gampola Kings appears to have run in Rohana as well as on the western seaboard, but Jaffna under the Aryacakravartis was much the most powerful kingdom in the Island."

Even the reasons for moving the capital to Kotte which Professor K.M. de Silva gives are rather interesting. This is what he says at page 86.

"The capital of the Sinhalese Kingdom was moved once more, this time from the mountains to the west coast near Colombo, where Nissanka Alagakkonara had built the fort of Jayawardhenepura (Kotte) ... and once more the reasons for the move were essentially defensive, to protect the west coast with its rich cinnamon resources which the Tamil Kingdom was so anxious to gain control of."

No doubt, these three kingdoms had their ups and downs. Reference was made in the former Parliament to the conquest of Jaffna by Sapumal Kumarayya who was known in Tamil as Sampaga Perumal, an adopted son of Parakramabahu VI, who was the greatest ruler of the Kotte period.

This subjugation lasted only 20 years, and the Kingdom of Jaffna became independent again and continued to be independent till 1619. Even after the Kotte Kingdom had passed under Portuguese rule, Kotte or Jayawardhenepura, the capital, one of the kingdoms that existed in this country contemporaneously, had come back to its own. The Sinhalese people are proud about it and we are happy.

Kandy, which was the last of all, has preserved its grandeur and importance, but the third

Contd on page 13

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ENTERPRISES

MINISTER ALWIS REPLIES

The following are extracts from the speech made by Hon. Minister of State, Mr. Ananda Tissa de Alwis in reply to Mr. Amirthalingam.

Your Excellency, I do not intend on this historic occasion to cover all of the territory that has been covered by the Hon. Leaders and Members of the Opposition.

My hon. Friend, the Leader of the Opposition, rightly said that this city was discovered by Alagakkonara and that he was a Tamil. Of course that is true. No one will deny that history, least of all the Sinhalese. If you search through the annals of many nations, I would like to know of any other nation that is so generous to people who have come and are not of them.

Your Excellency, time after time the history of this country records how our kings of ancient times protected every religion, every visitor, and gave him honour except for once in Kotte when we were a little rough with the Chinese, and the Chinese came and took away one of our kings. They are making up for it now and they are our good friends.

ALAKESHWARA AND AMIRTHASEKERA

There was a reference to Alagakkonara, but I must remind the Hon. Member that he later preferred to be called Alakeshwara. There is no time now, but I can take you and show you the road where Alakeshwara is still remembered. Why? So there is no objection whatsoever. We shall take you to our hearts. You have come here as Amirthalingam. You are welcome to be with us and go anywhere you like as Amirthasekera. I do not want you to give an interpretation to that remark which you know very well is not intended. I know that you have a sense of humour as we all must have in this Assembly. A country that is governed by a humourless people would be in great jeopardy. And in that same

tone may I say that if ever you want to resuscitate that ancient kingdom of Nallur, you will find in common with us the difficulty that you cannot agree upon who will lead it. In such an eventuality we shall be glad to persuade Mr. Cyril Mathew to come and assist you as its king! Your Excellency, I am told by the Hon. Prime Minister that Mr. Mathew has already desired that I should express that he is ready, willing and able!

Your Excellency, in conclusion, may I recall to the minds of everyone present here and the nation through us that we are the heirs to a tradition which you so richly described in your speech. May I also recall to mind that in this moment of slight disputation by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, we the Sinhala people must, on the Floor of a House like this, express our undying gratitude to the great Sir Ponnambalam Ramathan. When Sinhala leaders were in prison and British imperialism had them in the palm of their hand, including the redoubtable E.W. Perera of Sri Jayawardhenepura, Kotte, who represented Horana in the Sate Council in a later period, one man, and one man alone, stood up against the might of British power and that man was a Tamil, and to that Tamil accustomed as we are to be grateful, accustomed as we are as a nation to face the truth with humility and gratitude, to that man I say on the Floor of this House "Thank you". That act made possible the growth of democratic freedom for our people and the power that they now enjoy.

Let us hope, Your Excellency, that in the House we shall always ensure that it will be the perennial spring of liberty that all of our people will equally enjoy and that every deliberation that is undertaken in this House will lead to prosperity and that we shall be able to be merely the sources by which we will express what

is there deeply implanted in mankind. In the words of the greatest orator who ever spoke in this House, the late Mr.

S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, I would call that "the unconquered and unconquerable spirit of man".

VERSE & WORSE

*We ruled whole Sri Lanka for uncounted years
Until it was spollt by the heathen Portuguese
Dutch and the English we kicked out
And waved high the Lion of Sinhalese
Once again we've built our fortress in Kotte
Ready to march on ahead
Anybody not infected by our Elephantitis
Will bury in our blind stampede.
We're so generous to 'people who've come and not of us'
And accept we are of true grit
But if Eelam is a serious demand
We'll drown you in our own shit.
If Lingam becomes Sekara and Singam, Singhe
We might exchange wedding rings
But if Nallur is to be revived
We'll send the Mathews to be your Kings.
We'll parody the spirit of democracy
And make sure we win the race
To suffer the loss of a Neville Fernando
Is better than losing face
Burning a library or two and a kovil here or there
Can sometimes be political butter and bread
While we have Alwis and his gang
Who said GAMUNU was dead?*

— MANO
Colombo 15

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MOORTHY ON WAY OUT

London is buzzing with rumours, particularly among circles close to the Sri Lanka High Commission, that the High Commissioner in UK, Mr. Moorthy is certain to be removed shortly.

The move to remove Mr. Moorthy would appear to have been already taken by the highest in Sri Lanka following a spate of petitions by some Sinhala extremists living in the UK.

It may be recalled that, when Mr. Moorthy was nominated to succeed Mr. Wimalasena, the previous High Commissioner, petitions were organised, particularly masterminded by the notoriously racist Sinhala Association of Sri Lankans in UK, protesting against his appointment on the grounds that, London being the foremost international centre, should have a Sinhalese as High Commissioner for Sri Lanka.

Mr. Moorthy, to prove his loyalty to the government which appointed him, and recognising the opposition he faced before his appointment, did his utmost, as a career diplomat, to satisfy the Sin-

hala Buddhist sections in London by accommodating most of their demands, by attending each and every minor social or religious function they organised, and above all by his strenuous efforts to defend the indefensible - the blatant discrimination and oppression of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. He faithfully and parrot-like repeated the propaganda put out by his political masters in Sri Lanka. Alas, his efforts would appear not to have satisfied the racist gangs of the Sinhala Association. They commenced a secret campaign against Mr. Moorthy which increased in its intensity and venom, particularly after the Sri Lanka Exhibition held in July last year.

Mr. D.P.R. Rajapakse, a UNP politico was appointed Deputy High Commissioner a few months ago. He is no man to play second fiddle to

anyone, particularly to a Tamil. From the time of his appointment, he would appear to have begun to cultivate the vociferous sections of the Sinhala community in London. He began to make his presence felt in almost all the social and religious functions associated with the London Sinhala community. He frequently spoke in Sinhala and never failed to utter the 'Sinhala-Baudha' mantram. The Sinhala Association, which was kept away at a convenient distance by the previous High Commissioner, Mr. Wimalasena and to some extent by Mr. Moorthy, because of its extreme racist position, began to move into the inner

sanctum of the High Commission through the good offices of the Deputy High Commissioner.

Mr. D.P.R. Rajapakse is a powerful man. He belongs to the ruling UNP. He is a Sinhalese and a Buddhist. He does not fail to circulate amongst the influential Sri Lankan social circles.

Sources close to the H.C. deny that Mr. Rajapakse is in any way connected with or instrumental in the campaign to replace Mr. Moorthy with a Sinhala Buddhist High Commissioner. But they seem to be confident that he is the best man to succeed Mr. Moorthy in the event of his removal.

PATIENT'S PLEA WINS DOCTOR'S FREEDOM

The Court of Appeal in London recently directed the immediate release of Dr. Wilegodawickremage Daya Silva, a Sri Lankan, who was serving a prison sentence of 18 months.

Dr. Silva of Craven Road, Bayswater, London was jailed at Knightsbridge Crown Court on February 12 this year on charges of forgery and uttering forged documents. He had forged bills for the treatment given to his Arab patients. He stood to gain £2570 by his forgery.

Dr. Silva, who was a General Practitioner, was supported by several of his patients in his

appeal. Lord Justice Watkins, sitting with Justice Drake said it was rare for the court to have heard such widespread praise for the GP from so many quarters. The court had received 80 letters from residents and a petition bearing hundreds of names begging the doctor's release. The court was now minded to treat him with leniency, said the Appeal Judge. An order enabling the immediate release was substituted for the prison sentence.

Dr. Silva, although released from prison, still faces an inquiry before the Disciplinary Committee of the General Medical Council.

BUDDHIST CONFERENCE

A conference of Buddhist leaders and scholars is scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka from June 1 to June 6. This is the sequel to a resolution adopted at the 13th General Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists held in 1980 in Thailand.

The Conference will discuss the future of Buddhism and the conditions of Buddhists everywhere in the world with a view to spreading the peaceful message of the Buddha to all mankind.

The Ven Narada Thero, the well-known and respected Sri

Lankan Buddhist monk, in a letter concerning the Conference, has expressed his belief "that Buddhist leaders and scholars will discuss Buddhism and its inherent message of peace and NOT politics or political dogmas."

P.L.O.

The government of Sri Lanka has decided to accord full diplomatic recognition to the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO).

The PLO which has hitherto maintained a resident mission in Colombo for the past several months is expected to be upgraded into a full embassy after the formal announcement of recognition.



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FILM STAR TURNS POLITICIAN

Following on the foot-steps of MGR (Mr M.G. Ramachandran, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu) and perhaps the foot-steps of President Ronald Reagan, another film star has decided to enter full-time politics.

Veteran of the Telugu screen, Mr N.T. Rama Rao, was unanimously elected the founder president of the new party 'Telugu Desam', formed in Andhra Pradesh. At his inaugural address he said that the new party would work

within the framework of the Constitution and strive to give the State a clean Government. According to Mr Rama Rao, if the Telugu Desam party came to power, the name of the State will be changed from 'Andhra Pradesh' to 'Telugu Nadu'.

Mr Rama Rao freely admitted that he was inspired by MGR. "He has achieved his objective. He has been able to successfully project himself as the hero standing on the side of suffering people".

TAMIL NADU TURNS TO COLOMBO

People in Tirunelveli, a small town in Tamil Nadu, are glued to their TV sets every day from 6 to 10 PM watching programmes beamed from Colombo. The transmitter is only 160 km away and 'Rupavahini', the Sri Lankan colour TV transmission makes it easily to Tamil Nadu coastline over the sea. The range of the 20 kw transmitter located 2500 m above sea level is about 200 km and therefore the reception is very clear. With booster antennae people

in certain parts of Trivandrum in Kerala State are also able to receive signals from Sri Lanka.

The programmes beamed by Rupavahini are in Sinhalese, Tamil and English. The Tamil programmes of which there is at least one hour each day include Carnatic music, Bhartha Natyam and Tamil films. The English cartoons and other comedy programmes, English films and sports features are the other attractions.

It is a worthy thing to fight for one's freedom; it is another sight finer to fight for another man's.

MARK TWAIN.

LIFE AFTER REPATRIATION

The economic and social distress of the repatriated Tamil estate workers from Sri Lanka is gradually gaining publicity in India.

The shattered dreams of those who thought that they were going to the bountiful bosom of the motherland and that an affectionate welcome was awaiting them are only now attracting public attention.

Socially the repatriates did not find acceptance readily forthcoming. Instead of the expected warm embrace for brethren returning after a long and traumatic separation, they encountered ridicule and contempt as indicated by the uncomplimentary terms they were referred to.

Economically, most of the rehabilitation and resettlement schemes are turning out to be fiascos. Recently Tamil workers who were 'rehabilitated' in Andhra state, had to march

back to Madras to draw attention to their grievances. In Tamil Nadu itself various rehabilitation schemes are in the process of closing down, thus making repatriates destitute as in Neiveli and Kanchipuram. Repatriates have been driven out of estates in Neelagiri and Kodaikanal and they have to resort to begging in the towns.

The latest tale of woe is about families numbering over a hundred, sent to settle in Kerala. Newly cleared land for cardamom plantation; unclean water; provisions to be bought from a town about 20 miles away; no health facilities and no schools; daily wage of Rupees Ten per person and no work during rainy days. After a number of days of starvation and deaths of children through accidents and illnesses, the families decided to march to Madurai.

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SRI LANKA

A NEW CAPITAL & A NEW
FOR A DIV

A new chapter was opened in the history of Sri Lanka on April 29, 1982 when Colombo ceased to be its capital city and Sri Jayawardenapura in Kotte was declared the new political capital of the country. On the same day, a new Parliament building, sited in the new capital and costing several hundred million rupees, was ceremonially declared open with great pomp and pageantry by President J.R. Jayawardene.

The country or its people did not demand a new capital. Nor were they able to afford an ultra-modern luxury building for their leaders to debate as how best they could squander the peoples' money. The whole idea of the new capital and building was of the President himself.

One should not be deceived that the new capital city has been named after the present President because of the similarity between his name and that of the new capital. Although the two names sound similar, one can easily note the difference in their spellings. This is not the only difference. The new capital derives its name from the old times of the Sinhalese Kings of Kotte, which was known as 'Jayawardenapura', meaning 'City of Victory'. The present President has absolutely no claim of any historical relationship with that city.

Mr. J.R. Jayawardene, the self-confessed shrewd schemer he is, has an eye for history. For sometime now, he has been exercising his mind as how best he could earn a place in history and be remembered in the future. He probably and genuinely entertains the fond belief that, in course of time, the gullible people of Sri Lanka and, for that matter, innocent foreigners will relate his name to the name of the new capital and mistakenly come to believe that the new capital is named after him.

Besides, Mr. J.R. Jayawardene's predisposition and predilection to personal glory, and almost paranoid obsession about his personal position in the country's history, the transfer of the capital to the seat of the old Sinhalese Kingdom of Kotte, from where the last Sinhalese King surrendered his kingdom to the Portuguese colonisers in 1505 A.D., is of enormous and unparalleled significance to the relationship between the two major ethnic communities, Sinhalese and Tamils, in Sri Lanka.

The eminent Sri Lankan historian, Professor K.M. de Silva on the subject of "Discrimination in Sri Lanka", said: "THE SINHALESE BUDDHISTS ARE THE LARGEST AND ALSO THE DOMINANT ELEMENT IN THE POPULATION OF SRI LANKA. THEY ARE THE MASTERS AND RULERS. THEY HAVE REGAINED POLITICAL POWER AFTER MANY CENTURIES, AND ARE FULLY AWARE OF IT, PERHAPS OVER AWARE NO OTHER ELEMENT COUNTS". The transfer of the capital to Kotte concretely symbolises that political reality, the Sinhalese Buddhist domination in the country.

SEVERAL KINGDOMS

Except for brief periods in its 2000 years history, Sri Lanka was comprised of several kingdoms. At the time of the arrival of the Portuguese in 1505 AD, there were four kingdoms exercising total sovereignty within their own territorial limits. These were the kingdoms of Kotte, Sitawake, Kandy and Jaffna. The Kingdom of Jaffna whose inhabitants were predominantly Tamil-speaking had their own Tamil King.

The Portuguese conquered the maritime provinces, that is all the three kingdoms except the kingdom of Kandy, which they failed to conquer despite repeated attempts. The British, who followed the Dutch, succeeded in conquering the Kandyan kingdom in 1815 after a bitter military struggle. For the first time in its modern history, the country was politically and organically united in 1833 by the British following the implementation of the recommendations of the Colebrook-Cameron Commission proposals. This unification of the country was effected from above by the colonial masters, without the so-called natives having had any say in the matter, for their economic, political and administrative convenience.

UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

The unification of the country, apart from the other many advantages, provided a unique and unprecedented opportunity for the two major ethnic communities of the country to get together, particularly with the gradual development of the campaign for constitutional reform leading to complete independence. Initially, the campaign confined itself to constitutional reform towards more and more legislative power to local representatives of the people. Although this campaign was primarily restricted to the English educated sections

of both communities, it cannot be doubted that it assisted in the process of developing a closer and better relationship between the communities as a whole.

The election in 1910 of Sir Ponnampalam Ramanathan as the first and only elected representative to the Legislative Council symbolised the trust and understanding that had developed between the two communities during the preceding period. It was not an accident that Sir Ponnampalam Ramanathan was elected by a constituency (however small or limited it may have been), the majority of which was Sinhalese and who voted for him in preference to Dr. Marcus Fernando, an influential medical practitioner.

RAMANATHAN AND SINHALA-
BUDDHIST REVIVAL

Sir P. Ramanathan had already displayed his dedication and commitment to serving the cause of the entire Ceylonese nation during his tenure as a member of the Legislative Council between 1879 and 1892 and later when he occupied the position of Solicitor General. Although he was a Tamil and Hindu, Ramanathan's contribution to the nationalist renaissance amongst the Sinhalese and Buddhists was immense. Presently, when any small concessions to the Tamil speaking people in Sri Lanka are deliberately and unjustifiably misrepresented as a threat to and betrayal of the Sinhala-Buddhist cause by substantial sections of the Sinhala political leadership, it is relevant and appropriate to recapitulate, for the record, certain instances of Ramanathan's contribution to Sinhala-Buddhist revival:

(a) In 1880 Colonel Henry Olcott, the great Buddhist revivalist, arrived in Ceylon, founded the Buddhist Theosophist Society and worked for the revival of Buddhism. He found in Ramanathan a close ally and lieutenant who worked with him shoulder to shoulder. His faith in Ramanathan was demonstrated when Olcott made Ramanathan joint-treasurer with himself of the immense funds he raised for the furtherance of Buddhist education.

(b) Ramanathan, together with Olcott, was largely responsible for organising the agitation which eventually made Wesak Day a public holiday.

(c) Ramanathan strongly advocated the passing of the Buddhist Temporalities Bill to safeguard Buddhist temporalities

PARLIAMENT BUILDING DED NATION

By R. GANESHAN

from fraud, misappropriation, misuse and mismanagement. In his celebrated speech in the Legislative Council on the Bill, Ramanathan said, "The Buddhist clergy are really objects of worship and, therefore, theoretically purity itself. The action of the British Government has reduced a large proportion of them to a state of impurity".

(d) Sarasavi Sandaresa of May 28, 1889, commenting on the contribution of Ramanathan, commented:

"The Buddhists, as a national sect, owe Mr. Ramanathan a deep debt of gratitude. His interest in the question of the Wesak Holiday and the Buddhist Temporalities Bill, his encouraging words to the Buddhist students of the Pali College and Theosophical Society, and a host of other services to Buddhism, have endeared him immensely to the Buddhists of Ceylon".

(e) In recognition of Ramanathan's services in the cause of Buddhist revival, Colonel Olcott sent the following letter to him enclosing the manuscripts of Sir Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia":

"Dear Mr. Ramanathan,

"In redemption of my promise, I send you a sheet of the original Ms. of Sir Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia". It was given me by him personally in London in July, 1884. I need scarcely tell you that this is a literary treasure that one day must have a great value apart from its historic interest, and in giving it to you, I feel that you have richly earned it by your chivalrous help in the Legislative Council to the Buddhist community of Ceylon. If good wishes coming from a thankful heart have any dynamic value, then shall mine follow you to the end of your public career.

*Faithfully yours,
H.S. Olcott."*

IN DEFENCE OF SINHALA

(f) At a time when the culture, tradition, language and religion of the Ceylonese ran the risk of being completely submerged by Western influences, Ramanathan, more than any other man of his time, threw himself firmly and forcefully behind the nationalist cause.

The clarion call he made to the Sinhalese in his celebrated and generally much acclaimed speech on the subject of "DENATIONALISATION OF THE SINHALESE" delivered at Ananda College on September 3, 1904 was typical of the genuineness with which he applied himself to raise the consciousness and pride in their language. In a long, hard-hitting and thought-provoking speech, he directly and bluntly told his Sinhalese compatriots who were becoming obsessed with anything English:-

"I see no signs of abatement in the spirit of denationalization that has taken possession of the country. First and foremost is the utter neglect of the use of the Sinhalese language amongst those who have learned to speak English ... many of them have not thrown their whole heart into the national movement... I have asked these denationalized gentlemen, "Will you tell me what constitutes a Sinhalese man?" Not knowing the answer they have remained silent. I then asked them, "Do you take delight in speaking the beautiful Sinhalese language at your homes, and among your friends whom you meet in railway carriages and other places, and on public platforms?" They feebly smiled. The other day, I was travelling in a railway carriage where I met four or five Sinhalese gentlemen of first rank, and the party included a Sinhalese lady. I found them all engaged in speaking the English language. Ah! If Sinhalese lips will not speak the Sinhalese language, who else is there to speak it?"

"If the leaders of a people get denationalised, they are no longer forces for permanent good amongst that people. Therefore, for the sake of the nation, its leaders must be national... For the sake of the people, then, if not for your own sake, you must take delight in the Sinhalese language; you must not spurn it.... It is your duty to cultivate the study of the Sinhalese language to the best of your power, and to speak it, ignoring the English language on all occasions and at all places where English has no business..... But if you do not do so and delight in donning the external and ephemeral phases of Western civilisation and cannot or will not speak your native language... and will not stand up for your national institutions, then I say none of you deserve to be called Sinhalese."

IN DEFENCE OF THE SINHALESE

(g) Sir P. Ramanathan's heroic defence of the Sinhalese during the Martial Law days of 1915 requires no elucidation.

The venerated Sinhala scholar, Anagarika Dharmapala, who was in Calcutta, having read Ramanathan's impassioned speech in the Legislative Council, wrote a long and moving letter dated October 21, 1915 in which he said:

"Please accept my sincerest congratulations for the historic speech you made at the Ceylon Legislative Council, which I read in the 'Ceylonese'.

The day that you are taken away from Ceylon, from that day there will be none to defend the poor, neglected Sinhalese. They are a doomed people, with none to guide and protect them. Unhappy Sinhalese!"

Dr. C.W.W. Kannangara, who later became Minister of Education, in a speech referring to Ramanathan's role during the Martial Law days said:

"When the fair name of the Sinhalese had been traduced, when the whole Sinhalese race was about to be wiped out of existence by a

muddle-headed Government, it was Ramanathan the Tamil, who raised his mighty voice and fought on behalf of the Sinhalese ... His name will ever be inscribed in the loving hearts of a grateful people."

Mr. E.W. Perera had this to say:

"It was Sir Ramanathan who fought manfully and strenuously for the Sinhalese, who, though not of his [the speaker's] blood, yet feeling as a child of the country for his mother-land, did all he possibly could as the one Ceylonese member to vindicate the Sinhalese and help them in their great agony and in their great travail."

The pioneer Labour leader of Sri Lanka, Mr. A.E. Goonesinghe, said many years later:

"The history of Martial Law in Ceylon cannot be concluded without mentioning the part played by that great man Sir Ponnampalam Ramanathan, who stood like a colossus alone in the Legislative Council and vindicated the honour and dignity of the Sinhalese nation. I was present in the gallery on that day in September 1915, when Sir Ponnampalam spoke for several hours. With tears in his eyes, he described the brutalities committed by Englishmen with impunity under the name of British justice. He said it was not justice but downright murder by the ruling race and it was an act of misgovernment for the ruling race to ignore all these atrocities.

"Up jumped Sir Reginald Stubbs, the then Colonial Secretary, and said that Sir Ponnampalam was accusing the government of misgovernment and wanted the word withdrawn. Sir Ponnampalam refused and enumerated one by one the acts of misgovernment.

"No Sinhalese who had heard Sir Ponnampalam in defence of the Sinhalese people in the Legislative Council that day will ever raise his hand, or say anything against the Tamil race. The actions of the Sinhalese in 1958 against the Tamils make me ashamed as a Sinhalese, and I decried them then and ever after. This hatred and contempt engendered by designing politicians against our own brothers the Tamils must cease."

CEYLON NATIONAL CONGRESS

The 1920's witnessed the first cracks in the unity that had been forged between the Sinhalese and Tamil communities during the preceding period. The Ceylon National Congress had been formed on December 11, 1919 with Sir P. Arunachalam as its founder President. Sir Arunachalam had succeeded in merging the three principal political organisations in the country - the Ceylon Reform League, the Ceylon National Association and the Jaffna Association - into a single national organisation. In the words of Arunachalam, the Ceylon National Congress had 'achieved a position of

Contd. on page 10

Contd. from page 9

power and prestige that could not be ignored by its foes and made its influence felt both by the local government and the Secretary of State.'

But by 1921, the Congress had split. Arunachalam was replaced by Mr. James Peiris who became its President. The split arose as a result of the repudiation of a pledge given in writing by Mr. James Peiris and Mr. E.J. Samarawickrema in regard to a seat for the Tamils in the city of Colombo. The Congress had reduced itself from being a 'National Congress to one representing mainly a section of the Sinhalese, destroyed the feelings of mutual confidence and co-operation between the various communities.'

FRAGILE FOUNDATIONS CRACK

The debate in the Legislative Council in 1928 on the question of franchise and the position adopted by almost all the well known Sinhalese leaders of the Ceylon National Congress in opposing the grant of the franchise to the plantation workers of Indian origin demonstrated the growing gulf between the leaderships of both communities. The fragile foundations that Ramanathan so laboriously laid for a united Ceylonese nation was further weakened when leaderships of both communities began to pursue policies which had the main aim of promoting sectional interests.

Big doors swing on little hinges and the whole future of the relations between the ethnic communities depended on the way the leaders of the nation set about their tasks in the post-independence era.

However with the transfer of political power and Ceylon achieving dominion status, the edifice of a united 'Ceylonese Nation' began to crack to its very foundations.

In India, which was granted independence at about the same time, and which had over 400 dialects and 18 major languages, and a multitude of religious and other fissiparous tendencies operating, the leaders of the country made every effort to galvanize the nation into a single whole unit by implementing appropriate constitutional arrangements to ensure that the minorities felt secure and not discriminated. But in Sri Lanka, every successive post-independent government made it their preoccupation to undermine national unity and harmony between the communities. With absolutely no conception of the past history of the country prior to its unification in 1833, and without any regard to or perception of the calamitous and destructive consequences for ethnic relations, they set about pursuing policies as if they were only acting for and on behalf of the majority Sinhala commu-

nity. The policies they pursued since independence were not only discriminatory, but were deliberately designed to re-establish the stamp of Sinhala domination over the minorities.

POLICIES OF DISCRIMINATION

Article 29 of the Constitution prohibited the enactment of any law which would impose disabilities or restrictions, or confer advantages or privileges, on the members of any community or religion. This had been done to allay the fears entertained by the ethnic minorities of probable domination by the numerically strong majority community. However, neither constitutional constraints nor the demands of justice or fairplay, or the inevitable and justifiable accusations of breach of faith and perfidy, or the ugly prospect of racial conflicts prevented the post-independent governments led and controlled by leaders of the majority community from unashamedly pursuing policies of discrimination and oppression of the minorities:-

● **SINHALA LION FLAG:** Upon obtaining independence, India which had an overwhelming Hindu majority, selected "Asoka Chakra", the symbol of peace of the ancient Buddhist Emperor of India, Asoka, as the emblem in their national flag. But in Sri Lanka, the government adopted the 'Lion' flag, which was the flag of the Sinhalese. Predictably the Tamil and Muslim minorities protested. But their protestations were depicted by the government as anti-Sinhala and a minor concession was made by adding two strips in green and yellow (purporting to represent the Tamils and Muslims) to the Lion flag. Thus the first post-independence assault was made on national unity.

● **PLANTATION WORKERS DENIED FRANCHISE:** During the negotiations with the British for independence, the Board of Ministers of the State Council, in the Memorandum submitted to Whitehall, put forward a scheme of representation under which they conceived the Sinhalese to have 59 seats, Ceylon Tamils 15 seats, the Tamil plantation workers of Indian origin 14 seats and the Muslims 8 seats in the new Parliament. It was primarily on the basis of this Scheme that the British granted independence. At no time did the leaders of the majority Sinhala community give even an indication to deprive the Tamil plantation workers of their citizenship and voting rights immediately after independence. However, with one fell stroke of an Act of Parliament, over a million of the Tamil plantation workers were deprived of their citizenship and rendered

stateless, and in the following year they were disfranchised. To this day, besides the large number of plantation workers who had been forcibly repatriated to India, many remain stateless and voteless.

The treatment meted out to the plantation workers, who were almost the sole breadwinners of the entire nation, should go down in thick bold black letters in the annals of Sri Lanka as the most shameful and barbarous act of inhumanity ever perpetrated during the 2500 years of the country's history.

● **MINORITY REPRESENTATION HALVED:** The deprivation of franchise to the Tamil plantation workers had the effect of depriving the Tamil speaking people of the country of almost 50 per cent of the political representation to which they would have been entitled in Parliament.

● **WEIGHTAGE OF REPRESENTATION TO THE MAJORITY:** To protect minority representation, the Constitution granting independence gave some weight to area as well as population in delimitation of constituencies, 75,000 people per constituency plus one constituency for every 1,000 square miles. While enjoying no vote, nearly a million Tamil plantation workers have been and are counted for the purpose of delimitation of constituencies, and this anomaly has helped and continue to help create thirteen additional seats for Sinhalese members. Although the Sinhalese population constitute 70 per cent of the population, they enjoy nearly 85 per cent of representation in Parliament. Sri Lanka is unique in that it is the only country in the world where the majority community enjoys weightage in representation at the expense of the minority.

● **STATE-SPONSORED COLONISATION:** Successive post-independent governments have followed a policy of land alienation, under which lands in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, which are the traditional homelands of the Tamil speaking people, have been distributed to people belonging to the majority community accompanied by vast amounts of financial and other forms of assistance from the state. The net result of this policy has been the transfer of several hundred thousands of people belonging to the Sinhala community into areas mainly inhabited by Tamil speaking people, both Tamils and Muslims. This state-aided transfer of population has over the years grown to such an extent, particularly in the Eastern Province, that some constituencies of traditional Tamil areas have begun to return Sinhalese Members of Parliament.

Contd. on page 12

Contd. from page 1

struck between the majority of one faction led by Mr. Anura Bandaranaike and the other led by Mrs. B. and consequently the SLFP are presently engaged in undoing the damage caused by the split.

The Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) recently suffered another split, when the pro-SLFP Anil Moonesinghe led his followers out of the party. The Communist Party (CP) is presently following an isolationist policy but this is not expected to last long. True to their past record, these parties are expected to line up behind the SLFP to avoid being wiped out of parliamentary existence. A repeat of the 1970 scenario under the SLFP is their best hope for parliamentary political survival.

The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) is faced with open challenge from groups which have hitherto operated from within it. These groups have already laid the foundations for a new political party and the leadership of the TULF is under heavy fire.

The Jantha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), led by that skillful organiser and political impressario, Rohana Wijeweera, is the only party in opposition, which is determined and resolved to go it alone and take on all the parties, both of the opposition and government, single handed. They are staking a claim to be the biggest left party after next elections.

The Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP), led by its charismatic leader, Vasudeva Nanayakkara, a former MP, have ruled out any alliance with the SLFP and are campaigning for a United Front of all left parties.

The ruling United National Party, although afflicted with internal rivalries, is not threatened with any major split. But it has its share of the problems. The govt. is demonstrably unpopular owing to its inability to control the twin problems of rising unemployment and escalating cost of living.

GOVT. ROCKED BY SCANDALS

The UNP, which came to power in 1977 on an anti-corruption and anti-nepotism platform, has recently been rocked by a series of scandals. The govt. MP for Hewahetta, Mr. Anura Daniel was caught red-handed by customs officers while attempting to smuggle in two suit-cases full of gold bars, expensive wrist-watches etc. worth several million rupees. The damaging publicity that followed caused the President to compel the MP's resignation from his seat.

The Minister of Agriculture, Mr. E.L. Senanayake, was forced to tender his resignation after charges and counter-charges of impropriety between him and his Permanent Secretary. The allegations were inquired into by a Cabinet sub-Committee headed by the President himself and the Minister had to go. There have also been allegations against other high-ups in the govt. of using their position to feather their own nests, sending their children to schools run only for children of foreign diplomats and also Western countries for education, helping friends and relations and generally abuse of power and position. Although mud-slinging and muck-raking are normally to be expected in the political game, the opulence and luxury that characterise the living of some of the government's leaders give weight to allegations of shady deals and shadowy connections.

The situation had become so serious that the President sought and obtained from his party exclusive power for himself to investigate complaints and sack any minister or MP or govt. official without reference back to the party. A new Code of Conduct for Ministers and MPs was drawn and given wide publicity. The VIPs lounge at the Katunayake International Airport which was generally used, or rather abused in the past has

Contd on page 13

LANKANS HIT TENNIS FORM

Lankan tennis players are making a name in oil-rich state of Bahrain. Former National Champion, Frank Sebaratnam in particular displayed his outstanding tennis prowess by winning two titles recently at the Cathey-Pacific Open Tennis Championships.

Sebaratnam won the Men's Singles title for the second consecutive year defeating Egyptian Abdul Jawad Mohamed 6-3, 7-6. He earned his second title when he won the Mixed Doubles event partnered by Shalini Panditharatne, who formerly captained the Colombo Ladies College tennis team.

Bahrain conducted its annual Davis Cup style tournament. The previous winners of this

competition were India, United States and Great Britain. However, this year, the Lankans created a major upset by winning the tournament. The Sri Lankan team comprised Frank Sebaratnam (Captain), Anu Karunaratne, Neil Senviratne, Jaye Thalayasingam and Neil C. Wijeratne. They beat Bahrain, who had previously defeated India, Rest of the World and European Select, by three matches to one.

MADRAS-COLOMBO

A direct speech circuit between the air traffic controllers of the Madras airport and Tatmalana airport (Colombo) was commissioned this month to ensure greater safety of air travel between India and Sri Lanka. The new circuit will provide instantaneous communication between the two air

ports.

A teleprinter circuit between the two air traffic services also began regular operation. The new land-line teleprinter circuit makes use of the Indo-Sri Lankan microwave link and will be used to exchange messages concerning aircraft movements, flight plans, weather data, etc.

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Contd. from page 10

● **SINHALA ONLY:** At the time of independence, it was the policy of all political parties that English should be gradually replaced by Sinhala and Tamil as Official languages of the country. Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike (leader of the SLFP), after resigning from the United National Party, said: "It is most essential that Sinhalese and Tamil be adopted as the official languages immediately so that the people of this country may cease to be alien in their own land; so that an end may be put to the iniquity of condemning those educated in Sinhalese and Tamil to occupy the lowliest walks of life". But in 1956 he became Prime Minister following a highly charged racialist campaign of "Sinhala Only in 24 hours", and enacted the Official Language Act which declared Sinhala as the sole official language of the country. When Ramanathan lambasted the westernised 'denationalised' Sinhalese leaders in 1904 for not taking "delight in speaking the beautiful Sinhalese language", he would not have ever imagined, even in his wildest dreams, that his own Tamil language would one day be denied official recognition.

● **DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT:** The extent of discrimination practised by the governments against the minorities was such that in the year 1980, of those who were selected for appointments in the public sector, less than 3 per cent were from the Tamils although they constitute nearly 22 per cent of the population. There has been a virtual moratorium on the recruitment into the army and the police from among the Tamils. Of the 17,000 police force, only about 800 are Tamils, and even they are mostly senior officers who joined the force several years earlier.

● **DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION:** The Tamil people face discrimination in the field of education too, and this is most felt in higher education. Admission to universities on the basis of merit has been undermined and replaced with a system of admissions which operates to the benefit of students from the Sinhala community.

● **VIOLENCE AGAINST THE TAMILS:** If Ramanathan fought "to vindicate the Sinhalese and help them in their great agony and in their great travail", as Mr. E.W. Perera put it, during the dark days of Martial law in 1915 under the British, it is under and during the post-independent governments of Sri Lanka that the Tamil speaking people of the country had suffered their worst agony and found themselves in their greatest travail.

Besides the overt and covert forms of discrimination the Tamil speaking people face and the continued deprivation of citizenship and voting rights for about a million plantation workers of Indian origin, both these sections have been subjected to widespread racial violence repeatedly over the years beginning 1958. The intensity and frequency of this violence has increased during the last four to five years.

For the first time since independence, the Tamils were subjected to racial violence in 1958 which followed a countrywide campaign by the present President Mr. J.R. Jayawardene against a pact (popularly known as the B-C pact) entered into between the then Prime Minister, Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and Mr. S.J.V. Chelvanayagam, the leader of the Federal Party. - a party which represented a substantial majority of the Tamils. Under this pact, the Tamil Language was to be recognised as a language of administration in the Northern and Eastern Provinces where the majority of the population was Tamil speaking, and these provinces were to have a limited degree of autonomy in matters of administration and land alienation. The present President in association with a militant section of the Buddhist clergy in a well orchestrated campaign in 1958, portrayed this pact as a betrayal of the Sinhala-Buddhist majority and successfully whipped up so much racial tension in the country that, not only did the then Prime Minister unilaterally abrogate the pact, but also the country was plunged into a storm of racial violence, the main victims of which were the Tamil people.

Since the racial violence of 1958, there have been several outbreaks of such violence, the worst of which occurred in 1977, 1979 and 1981. During the violence in 1977 and 1981, not only the Tamils living in Sinhala areas were subjected to violence, but also thousands and thousands of plantation workers of Indian origin were attacked, robbed, raped and their properties set alight with the security forces actively conniving or turning a blind eye. These violent outbreaks were invariably preceded by concentrated and sustained campaigns of racial hatred by some Sinhala politicians including several belonging to the present Government party. It was the despicable and reprehensible role that they played during the August 1981 racial violence that compelled even this present President to publicly state: "I speak more in sorrow than in anger. Recent events throughout the Island, North, Centre and South, show that the religions we profess do not seem to influence for

the good of some of our people. I regret that some members of my party have spoken in Parliament and outside words that encouraged violence and the murders, rapes and arson that have been committed."

The horrifying tale of the May-June 1981 violence in the Northern city of Jaffna by the security forces has been so widely and well documented in the international news media that it is not necessary to recount its gory details.

ALL PARTIES ARE ETHNIC

Except for the far left political parties, which count for very little influence in parliamentary terms, almost all political parties in Sri Lanka today can be described as ethnic political parties. In the absence of 'national' political parties, which pursue policies irrespective of ethnic considerations, national politics has over the years degenerated into racial politics.

The United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the two biggest mainstream political parties, have pursued and do pursue policies which are essentially pro-Sinhalese and pro-Buddhist. They attempt to outbid each other before the Sinhala and Buddhist masses to prove that one party is more pro-Sinhala and pro-Buddhist than the other. If one party attempts to grant even a minor concession to the ethnic or religious minorities, the other party accuses the former of 'betrayal' of the Sinhala race and Buddhist religion. Irrespective of their differences and open hostility on other matters, the UNP and the SLFP are basically united in one matter - in the pursuit of policies that ensure and guarantee majority Sinhala domination over the minorities.

The minority Tamils, by and large, have been and are being represented by their own ethnic political parties. When the major mainstream political parties, the UNP and the SLFP, continued to follow discriminatory policies, it was natural and predictable that the Tamil minority gravitated towards parties which professed to protect their interests. The vast majority of Tamils have in the recent past and do at present support the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). Having committed itself to parliamentary politics and non-violence as the means to achieve its aims of protecting and promoting the interests of the Tamil people, one would have expected the TULF to have developed a strategy to form alliances with those parties which represent the oppressed sections in the majority community. This the TULF has signally failed to do and repeatedly had

(Contd. on page 14)

(Contd. From P. 11)
been restricted for use by the President, the Prime Minister and certain specified category of diplomats. All others and their families are expected to use the normal channels and every govt. Minister or MP are required to declare everything on departure and arrival to the Customs.

It is believed that these measures have been adopted and given publicity under the direct authority of the President, who has become more and more alarmed at generalised allegations made against almost everybody connected with the govt. He hopes to salvage, at least to some extent, the much tattered and tarnished image of the govt. in the public eye before the elections.

While the much publicised so-called anti-corruption drive by the President has been widely welcomed, observers doubt whether he had left it too late for the cancer of corruption to be cured sufficiently enough to be able to present a clean and healthy

image before the people in time for the election.

Contd. from page 4

Capital, Nallur in Jaffna, which was the seat of government from the thirteenth century to the seventeenth century, for a much longer period than Kotte, is completely neglected. Are you surprised if the Tamils regard this neglect as symbolic of the subject status of the Tamil nation, of their not being free yet?

Your Excellency, under your government, District Development Councils have been established in all the districts with power to look after certain matters at the district level. May I make use of this opportunity to ask that the District Development Council established in Jaffna be given the necessary authority to locate, revive and resuscitate the glorious palace and capital that was occupied by the last Tamil King of Jaffna, Sankili.

While there is an attempt to revive and resuscitate ancient Sinhalese greatness, let there be a similar revival of ancient

Tamil greatness, both of which bloomed side by side. Let not one wilt and wither while the other revives and blooms. Both nations were free during the Kotte period. Both languages flourished during that period. All religions, particularly Buddhism and Hinduism, were thriving during that period. Let us hope that the new Kotte era

which is being inaugurated today will lead to the revival of the Kotte spirit, the spirit of equality, the spirit of freedom for all. Let us find a modus vivendi, a means of co-existence as friends, recognizing the equality and the right to self-determination, the right to freedom of the nations occupying this island. I thank Your Excellency.

Contd from page 1

The gang had then proceeded to Iraikumar's house where they had forced Umakumar to call out Iraikumar's name. Iraikumar's father had replied that his son was sleeping in a hut in the garden.

The bullet-riddled bodies of Iraikumar and Umakumar were discovered the following morning lying side by side in a paddy field.

Iraikumaran, a Cultivation Officer, was the Organizing Secretary of the Tamil Ilaigar Peravai Viduthalai Ani [Tamil Youth Front-Liberation Wing]. He had previously been a member of the youth front aligned with the Tamil United Liberation

Front and edited a pro-TULF paper ILAIGNAR KURAL [The voice of youth] in 1976.

When the TULF decided to support the District Development Councils Bill, Iraikumaran had broken away from the party and had since then remained a critic of the leadership.

Contd from page 2

selves would render these two factions totally ineffective and the rank and file disoriented. However, some express the hope that at least the rank and file of these factions would soon realise that, engaging in acts of bovine criminality is not the way to settle ideological differences.



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TAMIL ASSN. OF AUSTRALASIA

The Ceylon Tamil Association of Australasia celebrated Tamil New Year in Sydney on 17th April. Hon'ble John Kerin, Shadow Spokesman for Primary Industries, was the Chief Guest. In his speech he referred to a letter he had written to Sri Lanka's High Commissioner in Canberra and was amazed by the reply he had received. The tone of the reply showed a totally racist attitude towards the Tamils and no sympathy whatsoever for the suffering of this minority community.

He promised to do everything within his power to get the Australian Government to help in alleviating the plight of this important sector of Sri Lankan society. The evening's programme included dance performances by Shanti Kathirgamasekaran, Sumathi Rajakopal, Brarthana Janarthanam, Devika Balasubramaniam, Vasanthi Craig and Sasi Thuraisingham, and a music recital by Mrs Devi Pavan, accompanied on the Mridangam by Dr A. Charavanamuttu. There were also speeches by the President, Dr V. Sundrasingham, and by Mr. Tom Whelan of the World Development Tea Co-operative.

S. Thuraisingham
Joint Secretary
33 Brabyn Street
Eastwood, N.S.W. 2122

TAMIL ASSOCIATION OF BRENT

The Tamil Association of Brent (London) celebrated the Tamil New Year Day on 17th April in London. Dr S.K. Subramaniam delivered an eloquent and lucid speech on the question 'Will the Tamil Language Survive?'

At the Annual General Meeting that preceded, a constitution was adopted and the following officers were elected: Mr J.J. Shakespeare (President), Mr K Sothinathan (Secretary) and Mr M Mohandas (Treasurer).

'WIND OF CHANGE'

The Tamil Youth Association of London, formed last year, held their third function entitled 'Wind Of Change' on 24th April 1982 at the Kenneth Black Memorial Hall, Wimbledon.

A revue comprising dance routines, songs both eastern and western, and comedy items was extremely well received by an unexpectedly large but nevertheless responsive audience. In particular, a dance to the recent hit 'Ever So Lonely', and the characterization of Raguthasan - 'father of Tamil consciousness in Britain' - were the favourites of the evening.

The show was followed by K.S. Colour Sounds Disco. A crowded yet lively disco topped an evening in which over £600 was raised for the Jaffna Public Library Fund.

We would like to thank all those who have supported us so far, and hope that they will continue to do so under the T.Y.A.'s new leaders. If you would like any information on the T.Y.A. please contact one of the following:

Vigna Emmanuel 01-460 3959
Mathumathy 01-949 1788
Kathirgamarajah
Nira Rajeswaran 01-856 0596

LOFUJ-AGM

Mr. N.Vamadeva was elected Secretary at the Annual General Meeting of the League of Friends of the University of Jaffna held on 9th May 1982 at Tooting, London.

The other officers, Dr T. Raja Chandran (President), Dr T Ratnavel (Vice President) and Mr R. Sarvananthar (Treasurer) continue in office.

It was disclosed that over hundred books had been sent to the University library and that the intended target is 1000 books before April '83. On the day of the meeting donations totalling over £800

were collected.

Please send donations to: The Treasurer, LOFUJ, 44 Lorne Road, Wealdstone, Middlesex, U.K.

ZAMBIA TAMIL ARTS & CULTURAL ASSN.

The New Year/Easter programme took place on 1st May at Hindu Hall, Lusaka. A large number of children enthusiastically took part in the various events. The dances and plays were well received by the audience. Christian songs were sung by Mr. J.M. Rajakariar. Miss P. Saravanamuttu, Mrs. Sarojini Asirvatham and Mrs. Mythili Raghavan were among those who helped in organising the evening's programme.

Mr. K. Jeganathan, Chairman of the Association, has left the country for Sri Lanka on completion of his contract with the Ministry of Education. His successor will be elected on 13th June.

P.O. Box 35157

Lusaka

J.J. Bernard

Hon. Joint Secretary

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Contd. from page 12

found itself entering into pacts, either in secret or in the open, with the UNP or the SLFP with a view to obtaining some minor concessions, only find at the end of the day that they have been betrayed.

There was a lingering hope, that so long as the traditional left parties in the country, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) and the Communist Party (CP) followed non-racial policies and policies which promised to guarantee the rights of the Tamil minority, racial harmony and national unity could be re-established if and when they came to power. To the credit of these parties, it must be recorded, they consistently opposed anti-Tamil measures like the imposition of the Lion Flag, the deprivation of

voting and citizenship rights to Tamil plantation workers and the enactment of Sinhala as the only official language. However, their stand on these questions cost them dearly in parliamentary terms. Gradually, as their ideological commitment began to wane and with their capitulation to political opportunism as a means to gain a political foothold in governmental power, they abandoned all principles and trimmed their policies to suit the requirements of the SLFP with which they entered into parliamentary alliances. With this act of opportunist capitulation to the SLFP politics of racialism, the last nail in the coffin of national unity was struck.

Although Sri Lanka remains, in physical terms, united, the nation stands divided - a Sinhala nation, led by leaders who are:

determined to maintain their domination, and the Tamil nation struggling for survival and its identity.

Unless a revolutionary transformation takes place in the relationship of social forces bringing in its wake the right balance of power among the ethnic groups in the country resulting in a true sense of security and freedom for all the people, one can bid good-bye to national unity forever, and the country will continue to progress towards the quagmire of national disintegration. The majority will continue to impose its will and the minority will never give up fighting.

No democracy can long survive which does not accept as fundamental to its very existence the recognition of the rights of minorities.

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OBITUARY**MRS. NAGARATNAM
THAMOTHARAM**

Mrs Nagaratnam Thamothe-ram died at the age of 82, recently in Jaffna. Relict of Dr T.P. Thamotheram of Chavakachcheri (retired SHS Ratnapura); mother of Sara of St John's College, Jaffna (husband of Sundari), Kamala (wife of Mr A. Mandaleswaran), Pathma (wife of Dr. V. Amarasingham) and Meena (Consultant Microbiologist, West Middlesex Hospital and wife of Dr. C.C. Mahendra).

RUBY**MUTTUNAYAGAMPILLAI**

Mrs Ruby Beatrice Leela-wathy Muttunayagampillai died on 2nd May 1982 at Bagshot, Surrey, UK. Wife of late Vethanayagam Thomas Muttunayagampillai (Surveyor); daughter of late Mr & Mrs C.A. Gnanapragasam of Manipay; mother of Chandra (B.A.A.), Cherish (Fiat), Noel (New Testament Church of God), Vino (Bechtel), Mano (Renault) and Jemima (Allied Suppliers); mother-in-law of

Balasingham Jayarajah (Lep Air), Somanather Rajkumar (South Bucks District Council) and Nava Veerasingham (Ton-bridge Wells Council) and Nava Veerasingham (Ton-bridge Wells Council) sister of the late Keerthisingham (Stan Vac), Nancy, Lily, late Jeyasingham (G.P.O.) and Muriel. Cremation took place at East Hampstead crematorium.

M.SRI KANTHA

The loss of a friend with whom I first became acquainted in my young days, fills me with sadness. It is not this sadness but the pride with which I recall the achievements of Mr Sri Kantha, that I wish to convey here. His personal achievements are well known and documented. His successful stewardship of many responsible positions in the then Ceylon Civil Service to which he gained entry in 1973, brought him the honour, O.B.E., in 1954. From that year till 1961 he served as Government Agent of Jaffna. This was a time of trial. The tribulations of the Sri Lankan

Tamil community were beginning to mount. The actions of those Tamils in positions of running the State machinery were understandably often misunderstood and misinterpreted.

Only those who were closely associated with Sri Kantha knew of the torments he endured because of the conflicting loyalties and of his firm determination to adhere to noble guiding principles and personal integrity. Having lost his mother in his young days, emotional suffering was not new to him. His active encouragement of the Tamils to settle in and develop their own lands by creating several townships in the underpopulated Kilinochchi area and his pioneering Youth Settlement Schemes for educated unemployed youths are just a couple of examples of his

concern for the common man. His retirement in 1969 from the position of Permanent Secretary meant to him only that he was moving from public service to more intense community service. This period till his death on 4 February 1982 was filled with social service, educational and religious activities. I do not wish to repeat the various details affectionately recorded by many who knew him, in the souvenir published in March in his memory.

In his nineties, Mr Mylvahanam, the father who brought up his illustrious son on his own must be a proud man, in spite of his sorrow. His wife Maheswari, children and others who supported and encouraged Sri Kantha deserve our sympathies.

S.R.PARAMSOTHY

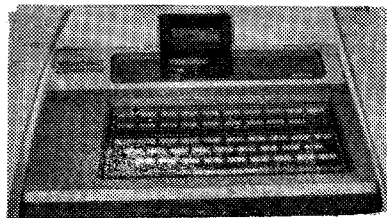
S.C.O.T.

The Standing Committee of Tamil Speaking People held its annual Tamil New Year Lunch on 9.5.1982. The lunch was followed by a cultural programme. The function was attended by over 350 people. The proceeds were in aid of the Jaffna Public Library Fund.

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TAMIL TIMES

TULF & THE COMING ELECTIONS

The campaign for the next general elections have begun in full earnest in Sri Lanka. Elections are held. Governments come and go. But the situation concerning the Tamil speaking people has continued to be the same. Indeed their position has deteriorated more and more under successive governments, whether they be of the United National Party [UNP] or the Sri Lanka Freedom Party [SLFP].

The coming elections can be different from all previous elections in more than one sense. The first-past-the-post system of voting has been replaced with a variant of proportional representation. This system of voting is unlikely to enable either the UNP or the SLFP from winning a massive majority of seats as it happened in 1956, 1970 or 1977. It also has the effect of enhancing the decisive nature of ethnic minority votes.

While all other opposition parties are poised for an electoral battle with the ruling UNP, the TULF, at present, gives the impression of being tied to the apron strings of the UNP. However, in spite of the protracted negotiations with the UNP, the TULF has very little to show to the people who elected them.

The SLFP would appear to have gained substantial support among the majority Sinhala community and there is every likelihood that it may come to power after the elections. Recognising this possibility, the traditional left parties, the ISSP and the CP are eager to jump onto the SLFP bandwagon.

What the TULF cannot fail to realise is that, if the UNP wanted to resolve the problems facing the Tamils, they had the power to do so with over 140 members in Parliament since 1977. Not only did it fail to solve their problems, but also the worst ever violence suffered by the Tamil speaking people occurred under this government in 1977, 1979 and 1981. The UNP government also has within its Cabinet confirmed racists like Cyril Mathew etc.

What the TULF ought not to forget is that the problems facing the Tamils cannot be solved by the UNP or the SLFP without the support of the majority of the Sinhala people. The TULF, for its part, has miserably failed, over the years, to devise ways and means to convince the Sinhalese people of the nature and extent of the injustice and discrimination faced by the Tamils. The substantial majority of the Sinhala people, having been dispensed with liberal doses of biased racist propaganda by the media and politicians alike, mistakenly equate the protests by the Tamils with obstinacy, unreasonableness and Tamil communalism.

The TULF also cannot be oblivious to the emerging Sinhala-Buddhist backlash against the re-invasion of Sri Lanka by, what the late Philip Gunawardene picturesquely described as 'Thupahi Culture'. The vulgar consumerism, the expansion of tourism with all its attendant evils of gambling, prostitution and drugs, the re-emergence of values befitting the old colonial days and the general cultural devaluation have given rise to this developing nationalist backlash. Unfortunately this movement also encompasses within itself anti-Tamil racist elements.

In this context, the political conduct of the TULF during the coming elections is crucial. Whichever party - UNP or SLFP - wins the next elections, there is a danger of a repeat-performance of the racial violence and outrages against the Tamil speaking people that followed the July 1977 elections.

The TULF owes nothing to the UNP or the SLFP. Its paramount duty is to the Tamil speaking people to ensure that their interests are protected under any government. It should be

UNDERGRADS DEMAND RELEASE OF DETAINED YOUTH

Undergraduates and students in the North and East in Sri Lanka boycotted lectures and classes on 14 May to protest at the continued detention, without trial, of Jaffna University undergraduate Apputhurai Vimalarasa for over a year at the Panagoda Army Camp. The undergraduates of the University of Colombo too joined in the protest by boycotting lectures in the afternoon while telegrams asking for the release of Vimalarasa have been sent to President J.R. Jayawardene by undergraduates of the other Universities.

The almost hundred per cent boycott was in response to a call by the Students Assembly of the University of Jaffna which is carrying on a campaign to free Vimalarasa, a Science Faculty student of the University of Jaffna, who was arrested by army personnel at 4 a.m. on 24.4.1981, a few hours before he was due to sit the Final Examination.

The Students Assembly had, in a leaflet issued in Tamil, Sinhala and English, called upon students to boycott all schools, private educational institutions and universities on 14 May in the fight to free Vimalarasa.

Some undergraduates and students issuing these leaflets in Kilinochchi and Batticaloa were arrested by the Police on

Friday morning.

S. Ragupathy and S. Tharmaratnam, first year Arts Faculty undergraduates of the University of Jaffna were arrested at Kilinochchi along with two students of the Kilinochchi Maha Vidyalaya whose names are not known.

In Batticaloa, five undergraduates of the Batticaloa University College and seven students were arrested by the Police. The undergraduates taken into custody are Thiyanathan, Prabhakaran, Indrakumar, Mohideen and Mansoor. The names of the students are not available.

Following a massive protest demonstration on May 15, the arrested student leaders were released.

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prepared to struggle with any government for the restoration of the lost rights of the Tamils. To side or give the impression of siding with the UNP would be suicidal.