

TAMIL TIMES

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Presidential Stakes

ELECTIONS ON OCT. 20TH

The Presidential election in Sri Lanka is to be held on October 20, and nominations close on September 17.

The incumbent, J.R. Jayawardene, is a certain candidate on behalf of the ruling United National Party (UNP). With the steamroller Parliamentary majority at his command, Mr. Jayawardene has already rushed through the required amendments to the Constitution to enable him to contest the elections.

Under the Lankan constitution, the President is invested with absolute executive power, and therefore, the Presidential election is one which determines who will rule the country for the next six years.

This election is unique in that all the rules of the game have been so amended to enable the incumbent to assure himself of certain victory. The only person who could have probably defeated him, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, the leader of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), has already been deprived of her civic rights by a Parliament which has an overwhelming majority of MPs belonging to the present President's party, and thus, has been prohibited from contesting the election. By further amendments to the constitution, she is also prohibited from supporting any other candidate.

Opposition groups which are keen to oust Mr. Jayawardene have been struggling to find a suitable 'consensus opposition candidate'. The hopes that Dr. Colvin R de Silva, the veteran leader of the Lanka Sama

Samaja Party would be an acceptable consensus candidate were dashed when Mrs. Bandaranaike declared that the SLFP would field its own candidate. Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, who would have had a better chance to become the SLFP's nominee, had damaged his position by his recent split with the SLFP and associating with Mr. Maitripala Senanayake. Although he has now re-joined the SLFP, opposition to his candidature is widespread within the party. It is said that even his own sister and her husband, Chandrika and Kumaranatunga, have voiced their opposition to his candidature. In this context, it is almost certain that the SLFP candidate will be Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa, another member of the Bandaranaike clan.

The LSSP has already Dr. Colvin R de Silva as its candidate. The Communist Party and the Nava Sama Samaja Party led by Vasudeva Nanayakkara have declared their support for Dr. de Silva. If he is to withdraw, and there is no other left candidate, it is likely that Vasudeva Nanayakkara will also contest. The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) has already commenced a campaign of countrywide meetings and the indications are that its leader Mr. Rohana Wijeweera is also likely to submit his nomination.

The Ceylon Workers Congress under Mr. Thondaman, who is already a cabinet minister, is expected to support J.R. Jayawardene.

The Tamil United Liberation

CAMPAIGN AGAINST EXECUTION OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

The Campaign for the Release of Eelam Political Prisoners in Sri Lanka [CREPP] has, in a statement, called upon "Those who cherish human rights and democratic liberties should raise their voices against the execution of Kuttimani and Jegan and demand the release of all political prisoners in Sri Lanka. They should demand the repeal of the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act. Which has been denounced by the International Commission of Jurists as a statute that violates Sri Lanka's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights."

The CREPP statement adds:-

"Two Tamil youths, Kuttimani and Jegan, have been sentenced to death. This is the latest in a series of attacks upon the Tamil speaking people by successive governments of Sri Lanka.

"The oppression of the Tamil speaking people over several decades resulted in the gradual development of a campaign calling for a separate sovereign Tamil State of Eelam in their traditional homelands. The continued oppression, the virtual armed occupation of Tamil areas by state security forces which harassed and terrorised the people and the frequent racial pogroms unleashed against the Tamils, contributed to the emergence of a national resistance movement which

recognised the need for the exercise of the right of self defence against the ever growing state oppression.

"Kuttimani and Jegan have become the victims of a regime which is determined to crush the Tamil Nation in their struggle for the exercise of their inalienable right of self-determination. These two Tamil youths have been sentenced to death upon a charge of allegedly killing a policeman. The death sentence was based solely on their 'confessions' extracted under torture while the two youths were in the custody of the army and police.

"Under the normal law of Sri Lanka, anyone charged with serious offences would be entitled to a trial by jury and confessions made to army or police personnel are not admissible in evidence. But under the Prevention of Terrorism Act enacted by the present government in 1979, not only are the accused persons denied of a trial by jury, but confessions extracted by the police and the army by any means are made admissible in evidence.

"Detailed evidence was given during the 'trial' of these two youths to show that they were detained incommunicado and without access to lawyers, relations or friends for a prolonged period, repeatedly beaten up, hung by their feet, metal rods inserted in their anus and penis, chillie powder applied on sensitive parts of the body, etc. The trial Judge,

Front (TULF) has already announced that it would not be contesting. Its leader, Mr. A. Amirthalingam, is reported to have said that the TULF 'will not resort to cheap stunts and put forward candidates to contest the presidential election. Our objectives are well known and we will work towards achieving our goal - Eelam .

Mr. Kumar Ponnampalam of the All Ceylon Tamil Congress has also declared his candidature. Not that he has any chance of obtaining even a substantial section of the Tamil votes; his venture would appear to be mainly to popularise himself and his party before the next general elections.

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TAMIL TIMES

A NEW DIMENSION

The recent history of Sri Lanka does not provide any instance of capital punishment being inflicted on political offenders. However, two Tamil youths, Kuttimani and Jegan, alleged to be members of the organisation commonly referred to as Liberation Tigers, await execution having been sentenced to death this month.

The statements made by these two youths in Court [see page 3] immediately preceding the passing of the death sentence on them should demonstrate to the authorities that no amount of harassment, torture or judicial murders is going to remove the phenomenon of political violence that has come into being as a counter to state terrorism.

While depriving the Tamil speaking people of their just rights, successive governments of Sri Lanka were able to deceive the Tamil 'leaders' with empty promises, cabinet portfolios, bogus pacts, etc., or terrorise them into submission by encouraging periodic violence against the mass of the Tamil people. The obvious impotence of the traditional Tamil leadership to solve the problems facing the people, and their continued oppression, forced at least some sections among them to approach the problem in quite a different way. With the emergence of movements that recognised the legitimacy of facing state terrorism with counter violence in self defence, the struggle of the Tamil people acquired a new dimension. They were not prepared to submit to violence by the state security forces without hitting back. Recent events have demonstrated this development very clearly. Pig-headed government leaders may delude themselves in the belief that, with superior might and the use of more and more state terrorism, they could suppress the resistance movements among the Tamils. Let them not forget that Americans also believed in their invincible superior might and learnt bitter lessons at great cost in Vietnam.

Depending on a permanently assured numerical ethnic majority to deny the just rights of the minority Tamil nation, the leaders of the mainstream political parties of the Sinhala community cannot forever seek to impose majority domination without serious opposition from the Tamils. Reliance on the efficacy of the state security forces to suppress this opposition by employing violence must of necessity produce a climate of violent confrontation. It is within the power of the political and religious leaders of the majority Sinhala community to avoid this confrontation by recognising the reality of the existence of two nations - Sinhala and Tamil - within the state of Sri Lanka and abandon the policy of hegemony over the numerically weak Tamil nation and recognise their right to live as equals. Enormous courage is required on the part of the leaders of the majority community if they are to avoid the inevitable consequences of an inexorable drift into a period of prolonged and debilitating violent confrontation, between the two major ethnic groups in the country.

WHITHER LIBERATION COUNCIL?

A Liberation Council comprising 5 members was elected at the recently held World Tamil Eelam Convention at New York. According to the powers given to it by the Convention, the five members (hereinafter called the 'American Five') co-opted three more members to the Liberation Council from London (hereinafter called the 'London Three'). All the press releases indicated that the Council was to consist of the eight members together with others to be co-opted later.

IS IT TRUE that the TULF leadership reacted angrily to the co-option of the London Three because they were thought to be anti-TULF; that the TULF demanded the sacking of the London Three with the threat that unless it was done, the TULF would be compelled to openly disown and dissociate from the Liberation Council; that the American Five have already succumbed to the TULF pressure and have written to the London Three intimating politely that they should not regard themselves as Council Members - in effect they have been sacked; that one of the London Three who belongs to the medical fraternity feels extremely insulted and angry, for in the first instance, he was reluctant to join the Liberation Council, but was persuaded to join it against his better judgment; that the TULF objection to the London Three was primarily directed against one amongst them who has embarrassed the TULF leadership by his much publicised antics - the latest one being the proposal to set up a provisional government in one year; that this individual is completely disappointed at the developments because he had hoped to assign to himself a leading role in the activities of the Council; that he feels that the TULF has succeeded in almost hijacking the Liberation Council; and that he is

presently engaged in encouraging the Parisian Tamils to set up a 'Branch' of the Liberation Council which will be out of reach of the control of the American Five?

Is it also true that the American Five, with a view to placating the London Three, had suggested that the latter should serve as the 'London Task Force' of the Liberation Council; and that this suggestion has been rejected by the London Three?

NEW INDIAN PRESIDENT

"I do swear that I will devote myself to the service and well-being of the people of India". With these words, every five years one person assumes the responsibility for the welfare of about 680 million people. Under normal circumstances the responsibility is essentially a symbolic one; the real responsibility and power lying in the hands of the Prime Minister. However in the event of political turmoil the President will have to assume the powers and discharge the functions. Therein lies the importance of the office. To be able to govern the country with general acceptance during times of political turmoil, even at times of political stability, the President must be seen to be above political colours, factionalism and personal prejudice. The oath expects the ideals of the office such as distinction, eminence and stature and imposes on the oath-taker the aspiration of impartiality.

Rajendra Prasad (for ten years); Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, Zakir Hussain, V V Giri, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed and Neelam Sanjiva Reddy each for five year terms have been Presidents of India over the last 35 years. On 25th of July '82, Zail Sing took the oath of office. ('Zail' is a modification of the word jail which Mr Giani Singh incorporated into his name when he was repeatedly jailed during the

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KUTTIMANI AND JEGAN TO HANG

"KUTTIMANI WILL BE SENTENCED TO DEATH TODAY, BUT TOMORROW THERE WILL BE THOUSANDS OF KUTTIMANIS".

- KUTTIMANI

"I CAN BE HANGED. BUT NO ONE CAN PREVENT THE BLOSSOMING OF EELAM. FREEDOM IS MY BIRTHRIGHT."

- JEGAN

Immediately before sentence of death was pronounced, Kuttimani and Jegan made statements when the Judge asked them whether they had anything to say:-

STATEMENT BY KUTTIMANI

"I am not guilty of any offence. I am an innocent person. I was taken into custody by the police and army and was compelled under torture to sign statements which were produced in this case as evidence in which I am convicted. With regard to the Order made by this Court I have to state certain basic ideas of mine. The verdict of this Court given in this case today will provide a new impetus, fertile manure and an encouragement and compelling reasons for the establishment of Tamil Eelam. This will not be the only case. There will be other Tamil youths who will be brought before this court, on false charges. When this is continued the punishment imposed will give encouragement to the Liberation of the Tamils.

I request that I should be hanged in Tamil Eelam. I request that my vital organs be given to those in need of them. I request that my eyes to be donated to some blind person, so that Kuttimani will be able to see through those eyes the reality of the Tamil Eelam'. I request that my body be given to the Medical Faculty of the University of Jaffna".

STATEMENT BY JEGAN

"I am innocent. The Army and the C.I.D. Police tortured me and obtained my signatures on some documents and produced the documents in this court falsely as my statement. I have been convicted on this false evidence. I can be hanged. But no one can prevent the blossoming of Tamil Eelam. Freedom is my birth right. This right has been denied to me. Although I have not obtained this right, I am sure that the Tamil youths to follow shall have this right to freedom. I'm not asking any mercy from any one. This has been imposed on me without any reason or justice. I request that I should be hanged in Tamil Eelam and my body be given to the Medical Faculty of the University of Jaffna. My eyes should be donated to some blind person. May Tamil Eelam blossom. Long live Tamil Eelam."

WHILE THE WILL OF THE MAJORITY IS IN ALL CASES TO PREVAIL, THE MINORITIES POSSESS THEIR EQUAL RIGHTS WHICH TO VIOLATE WOULD BE OPPRESSION.

-Thomas Jefferson



Kuttimani with raised handcuffed hands waving to the crowd after sentence of death was passed. Jegan is on his right. Gnanavelu who was acquitted and later detained in custody is on his left.

HOW KUTTIMANI & JEGAN WERE TORTURED!

- * Arrested and held in detention incommunicado without access to lawyers, relatives or friends for several months;
- * From the time of their arrest, they were subjected to frequent violent assaults and other forms of degrading and inhuman treatment;
- * Beaten all over the body with batons, rifle butts and other similar objects;
- * Stripped naked and allowed to remain so for prolonged periods and beaten while being naked;
- * No proper medical treatment provided for injuries caused by the police and army personnel while in their custody;
- * Hands were manacled and hung by their wrists and left suspended for several hours at a time;
- * Hung by their feet upside down and interrogated or illtreated while in that position;
- * Metal rods inserted in their anus;
- * Steel wires inserted in their penis;
- * Metal rods inserted in the anus of other detainees were forced into their mouths;
- * Forced to drink urine and dirty water from the commode;
- * Interrogated during all hours of the day and night without being permitted sleep for days;
- * Chillie powder applied to all sensitive parts of the body;
- * Forced to inhale burning chillie fumes.

[Abstracted from the evidence given at the trial of Kuttimani and Jegan]

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BHARATI: A REVOLUTIONARY POET & POLITICIAN

1982 marks the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of C. Subrahmanya Bharati, 1882-1921 (Chinnacami Aiyar Subrahmanya Bharati)[1]. His revolutionary poems and prose writings on political, social, literary, philosophical and other subjects are still relevant and will continue to be so for many years to come. Through his writings he has become a Tamil regional, an Indian national and an international poet.

Of medium height, straight gait and large expressive eyes, he liked to decorate himself like a warrior and wore a red turban with one end hanging down. He was fearless, extremely sensitive and charitable to a fault despite his own needs.

Subrahmanyam, affectionately called Subbaiya, was born on 11 December 1882 in Ettayapuram in the Tirunelveli District, the son of a Chinnacami Aiyar, a vidvan (scholar) and mathematician in the Ettayapuram Samasthanam

(Zamindar's residence), and Lakshmi. Chinnacami installed the first textile works in Ettayapuram in 1880. Having lost his mother at the age of five, he was brought up by his father who remarried. When he was about ten he accompanied his father to the poets' discourses at the palace, where he surprised everyone by

went to Benares at the invitation of his uncle Kedara Kattamatam Krishna Sivan and aunt Kuppammal. In Benares he passed the entrance examination of the Allahabad University although he had to learn Sanskrit to satisfy the requirements of the course. Subrahmanyam had to return to Ettayapuram in 1902 where

BY MEERA BAI DAWSON
[INDIA RECORDS OFFICE]

composing poems incorporating the concluding lines given by other poets. When Subrahmanyam was about fourteen (1897), he was married to Chellamma, the seven year old daughter of a Chellappa Aiyar. Around this time his father's business collapsed. Disheartened, his father died the following year. Subrahmanyam had studied up to matriculation in 1896 at the Tirunelveli Central Hindu College but failed the examination. After his father's death he did not have the means to resit the examination, so he

he was given a job in the Zamindar's palace. Having a love for English literature, particularly the works of Shelley, Keats and Byron, he started the Shelleyan Guild in Ettayapuram. He wrote for some time under the pseudonym Shelley Dasan, disciple of Shelley. Among his English writings are 'Agni and other poems and translations' and 'Essays'.

After a difference of opinion with the Zamindar he left Ettayapuram and joined the Sethupathi High School in Madurai as a Tamil Pandit. A few months later he became assistant editor of *Swadesamitran*[2] which gave him a taste for politics and social reform. He formed the Radical Club in Ramaswami Street, Madras. Also known as the Tivira Vata Cankam, its object was to abolish caste differences by bringing people of all castes together.

The partition of Bengal by the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, in 1906 was strongly opposed by Bengalis and encouraged the Swarajya Movement. Bharati quit *Swadesamitran*, a moderate newspaper, and launched his own nationalist Tamil weekly *intiya*[3] which was symbolically printed on red paper. He also published the monthlies *Cakravartini* and *Karmayoki* and the dailies *Vijaya* and *Curyotayam*.

The Indian National Congress met in Calcutta in 1906 under the leadership of Dadabhai Navroji when Swadeshim, boycott, National education and Swaraj were debated. The Congress moderates



and also the Government feared this. After participation in the Congress, Bharati met Nivedita (Margaret Elizabeth Noble), a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, and was counselled by her. On his return to Madras, Bharati started vigorously propagating the new policies of the Congress in *Intiya*. As a result its popularity increased and his freedom mission influenced his fellow Tamils. Against all opposition Bharati invited Bipin Chandra Pal to visit Madras during his propaganda tour of 1907[4] persuaded Subrahmanya Aiyar of *Swadesamitran* to preside and himself made a patriotic speech.

In 1907 the 23rd session of the Indian National Congress was to have taken place in Surat[5] where the moderates were strong but when the session started the rift between the moderates and the Nationalists caused the Congress to break up. The Nationalists denounced the Congress at Surat as opportunist and inaugurated passive resistance, Swadeshim and boycott. The Government branded the Nationalists as seditionists. Arrests, deportations and prosecutions became commonplace.

Bharati's friend Chidambaram Pillai who ran the *Swadeshi* steamer between India and Sri Lanka in competition with the British, was imprisoned. In 1908 Tilak was also imprisoned. At this time Bharati was writing strongly supporting Tilak's principles in *Intiya*. Fearing that he himself might get arrested and at the instigation of Chidambaram Pillai and other friends, Bharati left for Pondichery with his family.

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TERRORISM ACT PRESCRIBES WHAT THE CONSTITUTION PROSCRIBES

In July 1979 the Government passed the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act. On 11 March 1982, forestalling the lapsing of the Act in July 1982, it passed the Amendment to the Act. On 21 June 1982 Mr. J.R. Jayewardene is declared open in Colombo the United Nations Seminar "for the promotion and protection of human rights".

It is the purpose of this article to show that a Government which has passed the Terrorism Act and its Amendment contradicts itself when it seeks to speak for the promotion and protection of human rights. If it both passes the Act which unjustifiably violates human rights and sponsors the Seminar which purports to promote them, it can only be either that it understands neither its own Act nor the theme of the Seminar or that - and this is more probably the case - it hopes to use the Seminar as a convenience to conceal the Act's vicious onslaught on

human rights. In this it has found a willing accomplice in the highly paid Seminarists of the United Nations Organization.

Many would perhaps presume that a law, because it is a law, is *ipso facto* fair and just. But one has every right, and sometimes even the duty, to subject the presumption to scrutiny. A law, because it is a

tance - may, in the present state of society, be justified on the double grounds that they prevent a greater evil than the evil of the violation of human rights and that the violations are not in themselves intrinsically evil.

Neither justification is available for the Terrorism Act and its Amendment. For the violations of human rights,

BY REV. FR. PAUL CASPERSZ, S.J.
President, Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality.

law, is *ipso facto* legal. To say that a law is legal is indeed tautological. To proceed to state that a law, because it is a law, is not only legal but is also right and just is to make a conclusion unwarranted by the premises.

The Terrorism Act and its nefarious Amendments violate human rights, and violate them without justification. Some violations of human rights - restricting a person's freedom of movement by confining the person in jail for robbery or murder, for ins-

legalized in the Terrorism Act, are, as we shall see, intrinsically evil and do not serve to eradicate what is stated to be the greater evil, namely, terrorism. In fact, the Act only stimulates State terrorism and hardens and exacerbates those who may have taken the path of individual terrorism. Certain provisions of the Act are intrinsically evil. Let us take some of these. Under Sections 6 and 7 of the Act any person connected with or suspected of "unlawful activity" may be taken into detention by unknown persons to unknown destinations.

Taken by whom? By the Police or the Army for some of the men are in uniform. And they come armed in State Jeeps. But no one can know anything more. It may be objected that, according to Section 6(I), the person making the arrest should be a Superintendent of Police or any other police officer, not below the rank of Sub-Inspector, authorized in writing by the Superintendent, and therefore that, to this extent, the person making the arrest is not unknown. In practice, this proviso has proved to be of absolutely no avail to persons arrested under the provisions of the Terrorism Act. The arrests are made with such a massive show of state armed power, often at night or in the very early hours of the morning, with armed men in vehicles surrounding the house so menacingly that it would

need supreme naivete to think that the person being taken, or his terrified mother or sister, would stop the proceedings and say, "Hey, Mr Policeman, according to Section 6(I) of the Terrorism Act, tell me before you dare to lay a hand on me whether you are a SP". The policeman replies, "I really didn't expect you to be so fussy. I must say I'm not an SP, I'm only an SI". "Well, Sir, if you are only an SI, then please let me take my torch and read the letter you have brought us from your SP".

It would be high comedy, if it took place. But, in the event, always and every time, there is nothing comic in the arrest. There is only weeping and wailing and heartbreaking anxiety as the person taken is thrown into a waiting jeep and hustled away.

Taken away, what for? The reasons are not given. Yet Section 13(c) of the Constitution enacted by the same Government which passed and implements the Terrorism Act says that "any person arrested shall be informed of the reason of his arrest". In a recent verdict of the Court of Appeal even the judges are reported to have said that they were unable to ascertain whether reasons were given. The present writer was able to ascertain in all the cases that were brought to his notice that no reasons were given beyond the catch-all reason. "You are a damned tiger, and we are taking you away". "What is a tiger, when was I a tiger, where, in whose company, who told you?" - these questions were never asked, simply because they cannot be asked. Taken away, where? Nobody knows. Gurnagar? Elephant Pass? A Police Station somewhere? Panagoda? The Jungle? A Fourth Floor anywhere? Who knows? We have had mothers telling us in words mixed with tears: "We do not want you to bring our son back to us. We do not want you to get a lawyer to defend him. Only tell us where he is. We only want to go (Contd. on page 6)

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TERRORISM.....

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there once and see if he is still alive". In all cases, we were not able to answer the mother's or the wife's or the children's cry.

For how long can a person be kept in detention in this way? Under the Act, for 3 days and 18 months. And, as has been the gruesome experience in not a few cases, at any time during this period, the State personnel can say, "Your son? Your husband? You're asking us where he is! We do not know". We have heard of mysterious disappearances in other countries where dogs have more rights than human beings conscientiously opposed to the ruling regime. We began to hear of some of these mysterious disappearances in our own country during the youth struggle of 1971. In the 1980's, unless we beware, they will fast become the order of the day.

If the Act is unfair and unjust in some of its most crucial provisions, it is patently unfair and unjust in its results. Or, if some attempt may be

made to defend the Act as it is worded, such an attempt is doomed to failure if one looks at the Act as it operates.

It will be sufficient if we examine the most pernicious of these results or the greatest injustice of the Act's operation. This is the institutionalization of torture.

The fundamental rights of the person are stated in Chapter III of the Constitution, Articles 10-14. Article 11 reads: 'No person shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.' While Articles 12,13 and 14 are by Article 15 subject to certain restrictions "as may be prescribed by law in the interests of national security, public order and the protection of public health or morality" Article 10 (prescribing freedom of religion) and Article 11 (proscribing torture) are subject to no restrictions whatsoever. A person in our country can never be tortured, no matter how big his alleged or even proven crime, in no circumstances whatsoever of time or

place.

Yet, as a result of the Terrorism Act, persons taken under the Act are often tortured. The Act takes away what the Constitution grants. The Act prescribes what the Constitution proscribes.

This is basically because the person can be taken into detention and kept incommunicado, as we have described, for a long period of time. Some of the facts of the torture have been reported in the Press (sometimes by Court reporters) but, unfortunately, in the main, only by the Tamil Press. Readers of the English and Sinhala papers have been - how deliberately, it is difficult to say - substantially shielded from the facts concerning torture. *The Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality in its recent report, entitled Tension and Torture in Yavuniya, has adduced some of the evidence from sworn affidavits of individuals subjected to torture.* Advanced torture varies from the chilly fumes treatment to having an iron rod sent up the anus, from beating on the soles of the feet in such a way as to rack the temples on the forehead, to beating on the back of the waist curved over a wooden log placed against a wall through two holes of which the interlocked hands are simultaneously beaten on the other side of the wall especially if they dare to separate under the impact of the blows on the waist.

Torture of such intensity was known in mediaeval times. In our modern history, on an institutionalized pattern, it perhaps dates from 1971 when youths were taken for alleged armed insurgency. After 1979 anyone taken under the Terrorism Act, unless released in a few hours, is in grave danger of being subjected to the torture and the cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment unequivocally and unconditionally proscribed by the Constitution.

If there may have been a case for remaining silent about the Act as it was passed in 1979 because by Section 29, it

would cease to be in operation three years after the date of its commencement, such a case is fatally axed by one of the Amendments of March 1982 which states simply, "Section 29 of the principal enactment is hereby repealed". The Act is now in force for all time. To continue to call it an Act of Temporary Provisions is, after the Amendment, meaningless.

But many of whom the contrary might have been expected, continue to be silent about the unfairness, the injustice and the moral turpitude of the Act in itself and the Act in operation. The reason seems to be that it is felt that the Act is against Tamil terrorists and, as such, does not affect any one who is not a terrorist, particularly not a Tamil terrorist.

To such as adduce this far from honourable reasoning, it is necessary to point out that the Act was first used not against Tamil terrorists but against some SLFPers. The last use of the Act before it finally snuffs out all that is left of the rule of law in our country may well, again not be against Tamil terrorists but JVP members and trade unionists. Furthermore, Section 2 of the Terrorism Act lists various offences that are to be considered offences under the Act: many of them have nothing to do with Tamil terrorism, real or imaginary.

The Act is now being used against Tamils only because they are the easiest targets. There is no guarantee that it will not be used in future against more difficult ones. Practice makes perfect, even in the operation of this Act!

This part of the argument may be concluded by saying that the Terrorism Act is intrinsically unfair and unjust both in itself and in its operation. Nor can it be justified on the grounds of the prevention of the greater evil. We recall the "wipe out terrorism before December 31" mandate given to the Army Commander in Jaffna in 1979. Three Decembers have

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LETTERS EELAM CONVENTION

It is with feelings of regret and disappointment that I write this letter regarding your coverage of the World Tamil Eelam Conference. The past nine issues of Tamil Times seemed to reflect independent and accurately objective reports of events and happenings, but in the July issue, you appear to have deliberately omitted a vital piece of information, which I believe should have been made available to your readers.

Mr. S.A. David, President of Gandhiyam, was left out of your list of Sri Lankan delegates. He was one of the speakers at the Nanuet conference and his contribution was just as impressive and important as that of any other Sri Lankan or Indian delegate. He revealed in no uncertain terms the floor-crossing attempts of the T.U.L.F. hierarchy - not a new feature of Tamil leaders in Sri Lankan politics. Mr. David's address so sorely upset Mr. A. Amirthalingam that he threatened to walk out - again not

something new - if Mr. David did not apologise. Mr. David did not apologise, nor did Mr Amirthalingam walk out; only Mr E. Benedict, on behalf of the conference convenors, offered a few words of regret.

In your article you make it seem that Mr. Amirthalingam, by his legal skill, had won the day. But from reports of some people who were at the convention this was not so. Rather Mr. Amirthalingam found himself stumped by Mr. David's criticism.

I believed that we had at last got a Tamil paper of unbiased reporting in the Tamil Times, but either due to your Big Brother attitude of the proprietors, or a willing omission on your part, you have in the words of the old Tamil adage buried the huge pumpkin in a small pot of rice.

I hope you will kindly rectify your omission by publishing this letter in your next issue.

A disappointed readers
Bromley, Kent.

EDITOR'S NOTE: May we unreservedly express our regrets for the omission of Mr. David's name from the list of delegates. The omission was

quite unintentional. We reject the accusation of 'burying the pumpkin'. Not that we were unaware of or wanted to suppress the incident, but we did not consider that the intervention of Mr. David in any way affected the outcome of the Convention. Whether Mr. A. Amirthalingam 'had won the day' or not, could be easily seen by the prompt surrender on the part of the Convenors to his threat and the subsequent developments particularly in regard to the composition of the Liberation Council.

TAMIL, THAMIL OR THAMIZH?

Through the pages of your informative journal, may I seek clarification of a matter that has been puzzling me for sometime. Recently I have seen in various documents, some of which have been published in your journal as well, a tendency to change the spelling of the word TAMIL. What puzzles me is that, if for greater phonetic accuracy the spelling, which has been in use for quite a number of years and therefore more widely known and recognized, must be changed, should not the

new spelling instead of Thamil be more accurately THamizH?

K R. Manikkan

SEPARATION- NO SOLUTION

"I agree that the Tamils are being badly treated by the Sri Lanka Government, and it is not in the interest of the whole of Sri Lanka. If the Tamils were helped from 1950 the country's economy would have been much better. But the solution to the problem does not lie in separation. It is not easy and is not worth the sacrifice the Tamils have to make. It is the politicians who will ride on the backs of Tamils and Sinhalese to power and enjoy. Sir Pon. Ramanathan helped the Tamils with Irranamadu Tank and developing 1000 acres and bequeathing the Ramanathan and Parameswara Colleges. He did many things to help the Tamils without raising the communal cry. My feeling is that we should get the Government to give 25 percent of the country's revenue to the villages and 25 percent of the revenue to the Regional Provincial Councils to develop the economy by statute, as in many countries to share the country's revenue. It

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DESTRUCTION OF MOHENJO DARO TO THE BURNING OF JAFFNA LIBRARY “INDRA” STANDS ACCUSED

While going through the back numbers of the TAMIL TIMES in Montreal I came across the March issue which carried a front page picture of an art exhibit displayed at the recent Hayward Gallery exhibition in London. It is that of a sculptured image of INDRA from Orissa State in India. No doubt it is a beautiful piece of sculpture and, possibly, an appreciation of that artistic beauty prompted its reproduction in the Tamil Times. But I like to think that by placing TAMIL TIMES and INDRA in juxtaposition on its front page, and by heading it with “Recreates Indian History”, the paper was consciously and deliberately writing a telling commentary on the position of the Tamils, past and present, from pre-historic times to the present day. It reminds us of the centuries old conflict between two civilizations, the Aryan and the Dravidian. It set in motion a train of thoughts that took in one sweep the Mahavamsa and Culavamsa traditions and the position of the present day Tamil Ceylon, the destruction of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa and the burning of the Jaffna Public Library.

Readers may wonder why an innocent looking front page of the Tamil Times should cause such a reaction. Well, it may be that travellers from present day Jaffna are rather overwrought. It may be that the sight of Indira tells on their nerves, because it symbolises the woes of the modern Tamil.

Indra is a household word throughout the East wherever Hindu culture has penetrated. He is the ruler of the Devas in the celestial world, and is a principal figure in the mythology of the Hindus. In the Tamil Kanda Puranam he is made to give his daughter in

marriage to an essentially Dravidian Deity, Muruka Peruman. His weapon is the mighty thunderbolt which, in the Bhubaneshwar sculpture, is depicted as a javelin. His exploits with women form the theme of many an interesting story in the mythology. He is represented as the bestower of fertility by sending storms and rains, so much so, that round about the beginning of the Christian Era the Tamil land held annual festivities in his honour. All these have engendered in the Hindu mind, including that of the Tamil, a certain respect and religious fervour for the Indra figure down the ages.

Modern archaeology, how-

ever, had a cleft as though the live man had been cut by a sharp weapon like a sword. Eight of them were identified on anthropological grounds as belonging to people of the Dravidian ethnic group, and one to that of the Mongoloid. Sir John calls it “The Last Massacre”. Sir Mortimer Wheeler, retired Director-General of Archaeology and author of the chapter on the “Indus Valley Civilization” in the Cambridge History of India, gives a vivid description of the scene and concludes with the dramatic words “Indra stands accused”.

Indra stands accused, because the Rig Veda, the oldest book of the Aryans, devotes

BY V. NAVARATNAM
[FORMER M.P. FOR KAYTS; PRESIDENT
TAMILAR SUYADCHI KAZHAKAM, CEYLON]

ever, tends to persuade us to revise our attitudes and ask, who, after all, is this Indra? A close study of the Rig Veda and of the archaeological finds of recent times has made scholars to suspect that he might have been a historical figure, that he was one of those warrior chiefs, like Rudra, Vishvamitra, Bharadwaja and others, who led the Aryan barbarian hordes into India through the Indus Valley sometime between 1700 or 1500 and 1000 B.C., that on his march into India he laid waste the highly developed Dravidian cities which scholars now call Mohenjo Daro, Harappa, and Canhu Daro, that the barbarian hordes went on the rampage and indulged in indiscriminate slaughter of the inhabitants. Sir John Marshal, Director-General of Archaeology of the Government of India at the time of the Mohenjo Daro excavations, found in one room alone nine skeletons. One of the skulls

most of its hymns to singing the glory of Indra in battle. Like the Old Testament Books of the Bible in relation to the Hebrews, the Rig Veda is devoted wholly to extolling the exploits of Rudra, Indra, and other Aryan warrior chiefs in vanquishing the indigenous (Dravidian) population whom they encountered in India and destroying their forts. Wine drinking and human slaughter receive fulsome praise in the Rig Veda.

It is a misconception to think that Saivism or Saiva Siddhantam, the religion that centres round the worship of Siva as the Supreme Almighty and widely prevalent in South India and Ceylon and in some pockets in Northern India like Nepal and Benares, is derived from the Rig Veda or the other Vedas. The Rig Veda is the oldest of the Vedas and is generally assigned to circa 900 or 800 B.C., but Saivism is of far greater antiquity than that.

When Rudra, Indra, Varuna, Aditi, Vishvamitra, Bharadwaja, and other generals led their Aryan hordes into India they met with a people with a superior civilization. They



found these people worshipping Siva Lingam Symbols. Some of the Rig Veda hymns which were composed on Indian soil at or about this time ridicule these people calling them “Sishnadevah” meaning “Phallus worshippers”. That the later day Hinduism absorbed the practice and made it part of itself is another story. Sir John Marshal found hundreds of objects at the Mohenjo Daro and other Indus Valley sites which he has identified as Siva Lingams and Avudaiyars. The Indus Valley civilization is assigned to circa 3000 to 2700 B.C., and this is unmistakable proof that Saivism is far more ancient than the Rig Veda.

There is another piece of evidence which appears to me to confirm the view that Saivism as we know was prevalent among the Indus Valley people. My study of it, alas! was interrupted by the burning of the Jaffna Public Library by barbarians who claim to be some of the progeny of those whom Indra led into India. That was the only library in the whole of Ceylon which had a copy of Sir John Marshal’s Report of the Indus Valley excavations.

During the excavations Sir John dug up hundreds of seals which bore engravings of human figures, animals, birds, trees and other objects, and some writing in a script which has not yet been deciphered.

(Contd. on page 9)

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

MARK TWAIN.

Contd. from page 8

Marshal has identified some of the figures as "Siva", and one or two as Siva in his aspect of "Pasupati". Sir Mortimer Wheeler has described one particular seal of great interest. In my opinion it deserves a closer study, because if it is what I suggest it to be, then it will be one more clear proof that Saivite Tamils constituted, if not the whole population, at least a main element of the population of the Indus Valley cities in 3000 or 2700 B.C.

Wheeler says that the seal depicts a man seated on a tree, one hand holding on to a branch and the other outstretched, while below on the ground stands a tiger with its head raised upwards. Sir Mortimer is positive that it is not a hunting scene, and thinks it may possibly have some religious significance. Obviously he could not be expected to know, but to us Saivite Tamils it immediately suggests the well known story of the hunter and the tiger that is repeated on every Maha Sivarathri Day year after year throughout the Tamil lands.

throughout the Tamil lands. Maha Sivarathri is the night previous to the new-moon day in the Tamil month of Masi (Febr./March). On such a day, as the story goes, a hunter was chased in the jungle by a tiger and he climbed up a tree. The tiger stalked him under the tree and would not go away. Night fell and the hunter in order to remain awake, lest he may fall down in sleep into the jaws of the waiting tiger, plucked the leaves and put them down one by one. He kept vigil all night and occupied himself in this way. At daybreak he satisfied himself that the tiger had left and came down. He saw that the tree on which he had spent the night was a Vilva tree and the leaves had fallen on a Siva Lingam that was under the tree. He had unwittingly performed worship to Siva (Archana) keeping awake all night. The Hunter attained Mukti or Ultimate Bliss. The moral of the story is that this Maha Sivarathri night is so sacred to Siva that if you stay awake and perform worship all night, even unknowingly, you will attain Mukti.

Now, it would appear that the Mohenjo Daro seal tells this story in every detail, the outstretched hand representing plucking leaves. But Wheeler makes no mention of a Lingam under the tree. So I looked up Marshal at the Jaffna Public Library Reference Section and stumbled upon the photograph of a seal that answered to Wheeler's description. Unfortunately the bottom part of the picture was so black that no detail was discernible. I had to postpone further investigation for another day. One week later Marshal was in ashes in Jaffna!

I hope some resident of London interested in the matter will take up this investigation using the facilities available at the British Museum. Perhaps, if an effort is made, he may even have a look at the seal proper and find out if there is anything like a Lingam near the foot of the tree. The subject is important enough to be worth the trouble, because it may help a more positive identification of those who peopled the Indus Valley cities five

thousand years ago.

History has no meaning if it does not provide lessons for the present and the future. The history of the Tamil people has been one of building civilizations, only to be destroyed by barbarians. They are now going through a Tamil Diaspora. It is time they bestir themselves to protect their identity. They cannot afford to wait for a holocaust to overtake them, as did the Hebrews. It is a marvel that they have preserved their identity so far. But they cannot allow another Indra to come upon them, for that is just what is happening in Ceylon.

(Contd. from page 6)

gone since the mandate was given and, on the Government's own submissions, the Act is still necessary because terrorism is still very much alive. Indeed, if terrorism seems to be at times on the decline, this is not because of the Act, but because of dissension within the ranks of the terrorists. If there is a setback for terrorism, this is not because of, but in spite of the Act.

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SRI LANKA: NATIONHOOD(I)

A Marxist view

MYTHS AND REALITIES

Myth 1. Lanka is a Nation State.

On the contrary, it is a multinational or more correctly a binational bourgeois state, containing a (dominant) Sinhala nation, Tamil nation and several national minorities, who do not constitute a nation - such as the plantation Tamils, Muslims, etc.

2. The Tamil people in the North and East do not constitute a nation, chiefly because they lack a 'separate economy', which is a vital prerequisite of nationhood.

This is a classic sleight-of-hand resorted to by most leftists. The scientific socialist definition of a nation does not refer to a 'Separate economy'. What it does speak of is a 'common economic life'. There is obviously a vast difference.

"A nation," says Stalin, in his celebrated and universally accepted definition, "is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make up, manifested in a common culture." Speaking of the economic factor, Stalin points to his native Georgia, and says that although the Georgians inhabited a common territory and spoke a common language, they did not, strictly speaking, constitute one nation before the 2nd half of the 19th century because they lacked a common economic life, being split up into a number of economically disconnected principalities. For centuries the Georgians waged war against each other and pillaged each other, each inciting the Persians and Turks against the other. The ephemeral and casual union of the principalities which some successful king sometimes managed to bring about, embraced at best a superficial administrative sphere, and rapidly disintegrated owing to

the caprices of the princes and the indifference of the peasants. Nor could it be otherwise in economically disunited Georgia. Georgia came on the scene as a nation only in the latter half of the 19th century, when the fall of serfdom and the growth of the economic life of the country, the development of the means of

3. *The Tamils may be discriminated against and maybe 'second-class citizens', but they are not an oppressed nation.*

"What is national oppression?" According to the scientific socialist view, "National oppression is the system of exploitation and robbery of

The Tamil areas are neglected in respect of resource-allocation for economic development, and therefore these areas remain underdeveloped in agriculture, irrigation and industry. The North is ruled by a predominantly Sinhala bureaucracy and therefore it is an alien administration. There is a heavy military presence with a Brigadier as its co-ordinator. Standardization and district quotas deny equality of educational opportunity and thus access to employment. The running down of Tamil 'streams' in the schools of the Sinhala areas acts as a device to stifle the "mother tongue" of Tamil children (which is naturally the medium in which a child performs best) and amounts to forcible cultural assimilation.

4. The Tamils are oppressed by Sinhala imperialism.

This figure commonly in the rhetoric of nationalist Tamil politicians including those of the younger generation. In the strict scientific, i.e., Leninist sense, however, imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism. Lanka's capitalist economy is enmeshed inextricably in a dependent relationship with the imperialist (neocolonialist) economies of the metropolitan centres (viz. USA, Western Europe & Japan) and functions as a peripheral unit of the world capitalist system. It is impossible, therefore, for the dependent underdeveloped capitalism of this country to be characterized as imperialist - which implies the highest stage of capitalist development. Thus, the dependent Sinhala bourgeoisie cannot be termed imperialist, in the Leninist sense of the word.

The Tamil people are oppressed *nationally* by the ruling Sinhala bourgeoisie and its (bourgeois) state apparatus. They are also oppressed and exploited by Western neo-colonialism, as are the Sinhala people, who are *socially*

(Contd. on page 11)

—BY CHINTAKA—

(Confronted by the disconcerting intricacies of the 'Tamil question', the pressures of racial prejudice of both kinds, and the demands of parliamentary politics and electoral opinion, Leftists and progressives, both Sinhala and Tamil, adopt different positions. But each position is justified as the correct 'socialist' view. What is the correct Marxist standpoint on the national question? CHINTAKA offers some answers vis-a-vis the Tamil question. Reproduced by kind courtesy of "LANKA GUARDIAN")

communication and the rise of capitalism introduced division of labour completely shattered the economic isolation of the principalities and bound them together into a single whole. "The same" concludes Stalin, "must be said of the other nations which have passed through the stage of feudalism and have developed capitalism." Thus a *common economic life, economic cohesion*, is one of the characteristic features of a nation."

So, it is extremely clear that common economic life means *nothing other* than the replacement of feudalism (with its isolated, 'self-sufficient' village communities, by capitalist market relations and division of labour which provides an internal economic bond for a roughly contiguous region. Obviously it is basically this situation, with its common economic life, that prevails in the North, rather than a state of feudal isolation. Therefore the Tamil people do possess 'the economic factor' which taken together with the other socio-historical characteristics, necessitates their definition as a *nation* as distinct and separate from the Sinhala nation.

oppressed peoples, the measures of forcible restriction of rights of oppressed nationalities.. these, taken together, represent the policy generally known as a policy of national oppression."

(J.V. Stalin-Report on the National Question-delivered to the 7th Congress of the Bolshevik Party)

If one applies this definition, then clearly the Tamils suffer the burden of a policy of national oppression as practised by successive Sinhala bourgeois governments since 1948. Sinhala is the sole official language while Buddhism is accorded a pre-eminent place in the Constitution. The same is true of the national flag. The requirement of passing Sinhala proficiency exams has not been done away with. The device of settler-colonialism, used by the Zionists and white racists in Southern Africa, is deployed to alter the population balance and seize the traditional homelands of the Tamil people. Preference is accorded to Sinhalese in the realm of employment, even in the case of recruitment to state enterprises in the Tamil areas.

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oppressed and exploited by "their own" (i.e. Sinhala) bourgeoisie. The Sinhala people however are not *nationally* oppressed by this bourgeoisie. In other words the Sinhala worker and peasant are exploited *as workers and peasants* rather than *as Sinhalese*, while their Tamil counterparts are oppressed *as Tamils* and *as workers*. Of course, the Tamil masses are exploited by "their own" bourgeois elements as well, but the fundamental contradiction is not with them, at this stage of their struggle. Rather, the main enemy of the Tamil people is their external foe, the Sinhala bourgeoisie and state machine, which must not be characterized either as 'Sinhala imperialism' or confused with the Sinhala people. The example of Vietnamese is salutary, as is that of the Cubans-They have never, in the course of their struggle, confused the American people with U.S. imperialism. This fundamental distinction is necessary to neutralize and even forge vital alliances with the working masses of the dominant (in this case, Sinhala) nation.

5. The national question can be solved by granting concessions to the Tamils.

The use of the word concession itself reveals a stark misperception of the problem. The question is not of granting concessions, but rather of the *legitimate rights*, national and democratic, of the Tamil people.

6. The National Question can be solved by constitutional amendments.

This is a view held by, among others, the Communist Party of Sri Lanka which has proposed several constitutional amendments incorporating regional autonomy and linguistic-cultural-educational rights. But, as far as scientific socialists are concerned, "Clearly whoever regards the national question as a component part of the general question of the proletarian revolution can-

not reduce it to a constitutional issue ... and vice versa, only one who separates the national question from the general question of proletarian revolution can reduce it to a constitutional issue." (STALIN)

7. The national question can be solved by granting equal rights to the Tamils in the fields of language, culture and education.

This was the original standpoint adopted by the LSSP (pre 1964) and approximates roughly to the view held by the J.V.P. and also many liberals. But the national question cannot be separated from the problem of political power and confined to cultural, linguistic and educational issues. "The obtuseness of the Austrian Social Democrats of the type of Baner and Renner consists in the fact that they have not understood the inseparable connection between the national question and the question of power, that they tried to separate the national question from politics and to confine it to cultural and educational questions" (J.V. Stalin)

Contrary to the slogan of the Second International, which was for the "National equality of rights," Lenin stressed that "the question of self-determination belongs wholly and exclusively to the sphere of political democracy, i.e., to the realm of political secession and the establishment of independent national states." Lenin and Stalin pointed out that to put forward 'cultural autonomy' as a solution to the national question ensures that all political and economic power remains concentrated in the hands of the dominant nation.

The Leninist approach to the national question puts 'politics in command', unlike the economic perspective of Rosa Luxemburg and the reformist position of Renner, Otto Bauer etc. "The proletariat of Russia is faced with a two-fold or rather a two sided task: to recognise not only fully equal rights for all

nations in general, but also of equality of rights as regards *polity*, i.e. the right of nations to self determination, to secession." Indeed this twofold task faces our progressives today.

8. The Left Movement should recognise right of the Tamils to self-determination, but should oppose separation and propose regional autonomy instead.

This is completely contrary to the Leninist position. Lenin repeatedly stated with utmost clarity that it would be wrong to interpret the right to self-determination as having any other meaning than political self-determination, state independence and the right of formation and existence as a separate national state. In fact, Lenin proposed that the slogan of national self-determination is nuclear and should be replaced by the well defined, concrete slogan of "the right of nations to political secession". It is meaningless for the left parties and groups to speak of the Tamil's right to self-determination (the right to determine *their own* political destiny) and then determine themselves, that the Tamil peoples struggle should not go beyond a demand for regional autonomy! It is particularly ridiculous in a context when (going by the General Election figures) 57% of the populace in the North and East and 70% in the North alone have gone beyond the limits of *partial, reformist* demands such as federalism and regional autonomy to the radical demand for *total national liberation*.

9. The Tamil people suffer from the same problem as the Sinhala people viz that of economic stagnation, so they should not perceive in national terms and ask for a separate state.

True enough, the Sinhala and Tamil peoples both suffer the burden of economic underdevelopment generated by imperialism and accentuated

by the global economic crisis. However, just as the industrialized West transfers the burden of the crisis onto the dependent countries such as Sri Lanka, the ruling bourgeoisie of this country (ie. the bourgeoisie of the dominant nation) transfers the burden of the crisis onto 'their own' masses as well as on to the oppressed Tamil people. Due among other things, to the imperatives of electoral politics however, *a disproportionate share of this burden is transferred to the latter*. As the capitalist economic crisis deepens on global, regional and local levels-in other words as the crisis of surplus accumulation deepens-the Tamil people are increasingly marginalised. In his study on 'Rural Poverty in Sri Lanka' the Malaysian scholar S.H. Lee points out that in the decade 1963-1973, the per capita real income of the Ceylon Tamils fell by 28%!

10. The Tamil people can win their national rights within the existing socio-economic system. Their struggle is not and should not be aimed at toppling the present socio-economic setup and therefore should come into minimal contact with Marxist ideology and the Sinhala radical left.

This is the view held by those Tamil politicians, not to mention business and professional strata, who are wedded to the capitalist system and are hostile towards the political radicalization of the Tamil Youth. They seek therefore an ongoing dialogue with the Sinhala bourgeois parties as opposed to the Left movement and advocate parliamentary paths of struggle. They do not realize however that where bourgeois politics reigns and where the states are based on private property, the very basis of the state fosters national conflicts and struggle. Bourgeois democrats have been striving for decades to eliminate national contradic-

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(Contd. from page 11)
tions by attempting to combine the granting of national rights with the system of exploitation, but "the tragedy of the multinational bourgeois state lies in that it cannot resolve these contradictions, that every attempt on its part to equalize the nations and to protect the national minorities while preserving private property and class inequality usually ends in another failure, in a further aggravation of national conflicts." (Stalin)
Thus, since bourgeois society has proved to be utterly incapable of solving the national question, (and indeed, the very existence of capitalism without national oppression is inconceivable) the only way out is to abolish capitalism, to establish collective ownership of the means and instruments of production. Hence, there is an organised connection between the National question and the questions of the rule of capital, of overthrowing capitalism, of rupturing with imperialism and transferring power to the labouring masses by the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship.

Myth 11. The demand for a separate state is a demand of the Tamil bourgeoisie. Therefore it is reactionary and has to be opposed.

Leninism draws a fundamental distinction between the bourgeois nationalism of an oppressor nation and the bourgeois nationalism of an oppressed nation. The former is reactionary, while the latter is, in the main, progressive "In so far as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation fights the oppressor, we are always, in every case and more strongly than anyone else, in favour, for we are the staunchest and most consistent enemies of oppression The bourgeois nationalism of any oppressed nation has a general democratic content that we *unconditionally* support"

(Lenin - The Right of Nations to Self Determination) This was starkly counterposed to the views held by

Rosa Luxemburg (and later Bukharin and Preobrazhensky) that support for self-determination implies "support for bourgeois nationalism" which Marxists should desist from, since each class in a nation has conflicting interests. (Rosa Luxemburg - The National Question and Autonomy).

For Lenin, however, the fact that the national movements of Turkey, India, Persia, China, Ireland, Korea, etc. had bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaderships, in no way implied that Marxists should not support those struggles. Likewise the petty bourgeois nature of the leaderships of SWAPO, the Patriotic Front, the ANC, the PLO, Frente Polisario (Spanish Sahara), Fretilin (East Timor), the Moro Liberation Front, IRA etc etc. does not prevent progressives in this country from supporting their struggles. However these same leftists, some of whom consider even the SLFP as progressive (!), are unremittingly hostile towards the TULF, on the grounds that it is un-Marxist and non-proletarian! 'Tis strange, 'tis wondrous strange...

12. The struggle for Eelam is essentially a contention between the Sinhala and Tamil bourgeoisie and therefore the Left should stay clear of this infra-class competition.

True, the competition between these two bourgeoisies does play a certain role in this issue, but this competition is not the essence of the national question. Unlike in the classical European context the national struggle is not simply a struggle waged primarily by a rising capitalist class. The essence of the national movement in the North lies in the struggle waged by all the oppressed classes, with the educated middle class youth as the main force, against the bourgeoisie of the dominant (Sinhala) nation. In any case, the urban based Tamil 'haute' bourgeoisie is opposed to separatism and seeks negotiated solutions with the U.N.P.

middle bourgeoisie in the Tamil areas whose upward mobility has been blocked. Hence its vacillatory politics of contention/collusion with Sinhala bourgeois govts.

13. The Tamils view problem in communal terms rather than in class terms, therefore their demands should be opposed.

True, the feeling 'Tamil-ness' precedes class consciousness within the national movement in the North. But this is quite natural since objectively the main contradiction of the Tamil people is with the bourgeoisie of the dominant Sinhala nation and its state apparatus. It is a fact that for most Tamils the distinction between the Sinhala state and the Sinhala people is blurred. But it is the duty of Sinhala leftists to comprehend the total experience of the Tamil people and work from the nationalist reality towards the class reality. Class solidarity becomes credible only if the right of national self determination is taken as the point of departure. It is impossible for Sinhala and indeed Tamil Marxists to 'skip-over' the nationalist feelings of the Tamil people. Class consciousness can arise through their national consciousness, as the

struggle goes on, but it cannot be imposed artificially or arrived at in a linear fashion.

Furthermore it is not surprising that sections of the Tamil masses have a communally tinged consciousness and often resort to fantastic anachronistic arguments. Lenin pointed out that such a "disparate, discordant, and heterogenous mass, containing the petty bourgeoisie and backward workers" will inevitably contain the "preconceptions, reactionary fantasies, weaknesses and errors" of these sections. Leftists must not stand against or apart from these forces but must lead them along the correct path. The strong religious flavour of the Irish struggle in no way prevented Marx and Lenin from being its staunchest supporters.

See Lenin - The 1916 uprising in Ireland - The Discussion of Self-Determination summed up).

Rosa Luxemburg, however, saw only the anachronistic, petty bourgeois, reactionary aspects of national movements and not their complex, dual nature and revolutionary potential as allies for the proletariat.

**To be continued
In the next issue**

**Be peaceful, be courteous, obey the law,
respect everyone; but if someone puts his hand
on you, send him to the cemetery -**

-Malcolm X [1965]

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SRI LANKA NEWS IN BRIEF

• **SINHALESE INCREASE FROM 64 P.C. IN 1964 TO 74 P.C. IN 1981:** Denying the propaganda by some extremist racist elements that family planning activity in the country was gradually leading to the majority Sinhalese community becoming a minority, the Minister of Trade and Shipping, Lalith Athulathmudali pointed out, while addressing a parliamentary group on population, that in 1946 the Sinhalese constituted only 64.4 percent of the population, but in 1981 they were 74 percent.

• **SKYJACKER TO BE PROSECUTED:** The sky-pirate, Sepala Ekanayake, who skyjacked an Italian Airline plane is to be prosecuted in Sri Lanka under special legislation rushed through Parliament recently.

• **BOOM BOOSTS TEA TRADE:** According to trade circles, tea prices have never been as good as they are now since the boom year - 1977. The July average of Rs. 23.89 for 1982 has been the highest

monthly average since 1977. Substantial Iraqi purchase of tea has helped the Colombo tea market in recent weeks.

• **TEA PRODUCTION DOWN:** During the first half of 1982, Sri Lanka lost 14.6 million kilos of tea production.

• **3 LANKANS DIE IN LEBANON:** Reports have confirmed that three Lankans were killed during the recent invasion of Lebanon by Israel.

• **27,000 APPLY FOR 250 VACANCIES:** In response to advertisements for 250 vacancies in the Sri Lanka Air Force over 27,000 applications have been received.

• **INFUX OF INDIAN TOURISTS:** According to Lanka's Tourist Board reports, over a fifth of the visitors who went to the country during the first five months of 1982 were from India, whereas for the whole of last year, they accounted for only 13 per cent of the total. Of the 181,836 tourist arrivals during January to May this year, 39,044 were

Indians - 21 percent of the total. The increase of Indian visitors is attributed by knowledgeable circles to their desire to buy duty-free imported items which they cannot obtain in India so cheaply.

• **CURFEW LIFTED, BUT EMERGENCY & CENSORSHIP CONTINUES:** Following the racial clashes between Sinhalese and Muslims in the southern city of Galle, a state of Emergency was declared and curfew and censorship were imposed. Now the curfew has been lifted, but the emergency and censorship continues.

• **BREATHALYSER FOR LANKAN MOTORISTS:** The cabinet has approved certain amendments to the Motor Traffic Act which include measures to prevent driving under the influence of alcohol and the introduction of breathalyser rests.

• **CEYLON TEA AT COMMONWEALTH GAMES:** Sri Lanka has been awarded sole franchise rights to serve pure Ceylon Tea at the 12th

Commonwealth Games to be held at Brisbane, Australia from September 30 to October 9.

T.U.L.F. M.P. FOR ROME CONFERENCE

Mr. V.N. Navaratnam, M.P. for Chavakachcheri leaves for Rome on September 2nd to attend the Working Committee meeting and the General Sessions of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference. En route he is expected to stay over briefly at Madras, New Delhi and Germany.

'STAND UP AGAINST INJUSTICE'

"Every Christian should stand up for justice and should work untiringly towards achieving it", said Rev. M. Selvaratnam (Karavaiyoor Selvam) at the 43rd Annual Celebrations of the Christian Seva Ashram, Chunnakam Sri Lanka. He said it was the duty of every Christian to lend his voice against injustice whenever and wherever it is directed against human society.

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10 MONTH STRIKE

- CALL FOR SUPPORT

The strike of workers at the Paranthan Chemical Factory, one of only two industrial projects cited in Northern Tamil province of Sri Lanka, which commenced on November 27, 1981 continues to this day.

The strike began as a result of the interdiction of trade union leaders of the workforce by the management which, under the direction of government, has refused to end the strike by negotiation. On the contrary, the management and the government, particularly the Industries Minister, Mr. Cyril Mathew, have used every effort, including thuggery, to break the strike.

In an appeal to 'All Working People and Friends', the Ceylon Mercantile Union which is leading the strike states:

"Amongst the many struggles that are taking place in the world today are struggles of workers in defence of their trade union rights and the right to strike.

"In Sri Lanka, as in other countries, these rights have been and are being subjected to continual attacks by the exploiters and oppressors of the workers, both in state and in private enterprises. One such attack is what has resulted in the strike at the Paranthan Factory of the Paranthan Chemicals Corporation, controlled by the Ministry of Industries and Scientific Affairs. It has become by far the longest sustained strike in any state institution in this country.

"We call upon all workers and their organisations, political parties and other individuals or groups of people, who are concerned with the defence of the democratic rights of workers, to support the struggle as best as they can.

"We also call upon all those who are opposed to the running down of the factory at Paranthan, with the prospect of its ultimate closure, and the resulting heavy loss to the country's economy, to

demand a prompt and proper settlement of the strike by the Government.

"We would appeal to all people who are concerned with human and democratic rights to bear in mind that the

strikers have lost pay for nine months already, in their heroically sustained struggle. Their loss of pay amounts to over 2.5 million rupees* so far. Between them, they have 725 dependent children and 440 other dependents."

SOLIDARITY IN ACTION

The General Secretary of the Ceylon Mercantile Union, Mr. Bala Tampoe, during his recent visit to Europe met a number of workers in the Dutch town of Utrecht. Among the workers was one Klaas Korporaal. On hearing the details of the strike and the plight of the workers,

Klaas has donated a sum of 10,000 Dutch Guilders (\$3600) which represented the entirety of his life savings, to support the striking workers of Paranthan Chemical Factory.

The following is the text of the letter sent by Klaas to the Ceylon Mercantile Union along with his donation:-

I AM giving 10,000 Dutch Guilders to the CMU, to support the Paranthan Strike, which is going on for such a long time.

On June 9, had met the CMU leader Bala Tampoe, who was in Holland, in the city where I live, Utrecht. He has told me and other people about his Union and his country.

I work as a metal worker in a factory in Bilthoven, called Koninktyke Fabrick Inventum, making electrical equipment for aeroplanes. In three years of work I have saved an amount of money, because I live a very simple life. I only had to pay for my own living. I had a cheap room etc. Now I am giving a part of my savings.

I am a member of a big Dutch trade union, called Industriebond FNV. In Holland the people have a good living standard, or I could better say: we have a large wealth, although we still have to fight for the weakest people and the lowest classes.

But I heard of the bad situation in your country:

- Second export article after tea are workers
- People don't have enough to eat
- Plantation workers don't have the right to vote
- the power of the foreign companies, who abuse the fruits of your country and the cheap labour of your people.

The Dutch people are still in debt to your country because we have been imperialists in your country and there are still some big Dutch companies there.

I know that we workers have to fight for our rights. I wish the strikers a strong heart and I hope they will win

Sincerely,

*Sgd. Klaas H. Korporaal,
Utrecht, Holland.*

2nd July 1982.

LETTERS

Contd. from page 7

should be a demand by the whole country. Otherwise we will only be helping the politicians in the "divide" cry as the M.P. for Kilinochi is trying to divide even the Jaffna District. We can continue to divide and only the politicians will ride to

power on it. What is required is a greater share for the village councils and Regional/Provincial Councils to improve the economy. It should be made a universal demand in the whole of Sri Lanka, to improve the economy."

K, Mailvaganam

University of Jos,
Jos, Nigeria.

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AUGUST 1982

ABOUT PEOPLE

Ph. D IN MATHEMATICAL LOGIC

Mr. R.R. Hoole, eldest son of the late Rev. Richard H.R. Hoole and Jeevamany Somasundaram, has been awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Mathematical Logic by the University of Oxford.

An old boy of St. Thomas College, Colombo and the University of Ceylon, R.R. Hoole is now back in Singapore as a Lecturer in the Department of Mathematics of the National University of Singapore.

S.J.H. ALOYSIUS

The death occurred very suddenly, on August 6, of Mr. S.J.H. Aloysius of 60 Ravensfield Gardens, Stoneleigh, England.

Mr. Aloysius, an accountant by profession, had during his life time a wide circle of friends, primarily due to his involvement in social causes. He was a founder member of the Standing Committee of the Tamil Speaking People (SCOT) and later was actively involved with the Central British Fund



for Tamil Refugee Rehabilitation of which he was a Director.

The funeral took place at Karaveddi, Sri Lanka, on August 14. He leaves behind his wife Indrani, teacher at May Day Girls School, Putney, London, and his 11 year old son, Sutharshan.

COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

The Lankan Department of Posts and Telecommunication recently released a Commemorative Stamp in honour of the late Sir Waithilingam Duraiswamy, who was a highly respected politician during his life time.

Sir Waithilingam was Speaker of the State Council for 11 years, during which time, he carried out his duties with dignity, skill and impartiality.

1ST CLASS HONOURS AT OXFORD

Miss. Revathy S. Mahendran of St. Hilda's College, Oxford University, was adjudged worthy of First Class Honours, by the examiners, in the Zoology Final Degree Examination, held in the Trinity Term 1982.

As a result of her brilliant success, she has been offered a further scholarship by the London Cancer Institute, Surrey, to do Research in Breast Cancer, from October this year. Revathy is an old girl of Vembadi Girl's High School Jaffna, and of Haverstock Comprehensive School, London.

NEW HIGH COMMISSIONER

Shri S.J.S. Chhatwal has been appointed High Commissioner for India in Sri Lanka in succession to Shri Thomas Abraham.

M.P.'S UNTIMELY DEATH

Mr. T. Thirunavukkarasu, T.U.L.F. Member of Parliament for Vaddukoddai, Sri Lanka died of a heart ailment on August 1, 1982.

The late Mr. Thirunavukkarasu represented the Vadduko-

ddai constituency since 1977. He belonged to the All Ceylon Tamil Congress and when the ACTC joined the Federal Party to form the Tamil United Liberation Front, he was appointed its Joint Treasurer.

At the time of his untimely death, Mr. Thirunavukkarasu was 49.

In 1970, he contested against the then leader of the Federal Party, the late Mr. S.J.V. Chelvanayakam, but was soundly defeated. However, when he contested Vaddukoddai in 1977 under the TULF ticket, he won the seat by a majority of 18,000 votes.

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(Contd. from page 4)

Once in French territory he continued to publish *Intiya* with renewed vigour amidst great hardship and the paper continued to be circulated in British India. The Government considered this a dissemination of sedition in British India made possible through the French settlements. (India Office Records Home Pol. Proc. 8153 (1909) and 8430 (1910) contain letters exchanged between the British and the French Governments in India in an attempt to track down Subrahmanya Bharati)[6] Bharati lived in Pondichery for ten years during which he came into contact with Va. Ve. Subrahmanya Aiyar, a barrister who gave him loyal support and Aurobindo Ghosh, himself once a revolutionary turned spiritual Guru, inspiration. Under Aurobindo's influence Bharati translated the *Bhagvad Gita* and a chapter from Patanjali's *Yogasutra*. While in Pondichery Bharati successfully evaded the spies who were sent to him across the border. However,

in 1918, at the close of the First World War, Bharati tired of exile in Pondichery and of not being able to participate directly in the freedom movement in British India, crossed the border on the 20 November and was promptly arrested in Kadalur. However, less than a month later, he was released mainly through the efforts of Rangacami Aiyangar, then editor of *Swadesamitran*, and proceeded to his wife's place in Kadayam in Tirunelveli. There he lived for the next two years except for brief visits to towns such as Ettayapuram and Karaikkudi. In March 1919, during a visit to Madras, he met Gandhiji at the residence of C. Rajagopalachari.

In December 1920 he rejoined *Swadesamitran* as assistant editor, a post which he had held fifteen years earlier.

Bharati was deeply religious and had a reverence for all forms of life. When he made his daily evening visit to the temple at Triplicane he would always feed the elephant there. Unfortunately one evening in

July 1921 the beast turned on him, knocking him unconscious. He does not appear to have recovered from the shock and on 12 September he died at the early age of thirty nine.

Some of Bharati's publications were proscribed by the Government under Section 12 of the Indian Press Act, 1910[7].

Bharati will long be remembered for his poems several of which have been set to music. A memorial to him was inaugurated by C. Rajagopalachari (1879-1972) politician and Governor General of India (1948-1950) in Ettayapuram. There is also a Bharati Sangam in Calcutta.

NOTES:

[1] At the end of November 1896 Subrahmanya visited Vidvan Gurugaha Dasa Pillai of Ettayapuram. A Virutai Sivanyana yogi who was also there teased Subrahmanya about his failure in the examination to which Subrahmanya retorted that he had not studied with a view to passing. As a result of the discussions that followed, the yogi asked Subrahmanya to talk in

public on his self chosen topic, 'the potentiality of education' After listening to the lecture the yogi called Subrahmanya 'Bharati' which thenceforth was attached to his name.

[2] *SWADESAMITRAN*, the first Tamil daily [after being started as a weekly] was founded by G. Subrahmanya Aiyar in 1882. [He also started *THE HINDU*, an English newspaper, in 1871]. A conservative paper supporting the Congress moderates, it has always maintained a high standard. Subrahmanya Bharati was assistant editor of the paper for many years. The daily newspapers in Tamil, as in other Indian languages, were a byproduct of the rise of Indian nationalism. Besides cultivating Indian patriotism they gave shape to the modern Tamil prose style which until then was either written in verse or in lengthy prose in linked sentences.

[3] *INTIYA*, a Tamil weekly [started 1906, ceased 30 April 1910, reappeared 4 July 1910] proclaimed the new spirit of India and was outspoken.

[4] India Office Records Home Pol. Proc. 7590 refers.

[5] *SURAT CONGRESS* Loka-

(Contd. on page 17)



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Contd. from page 16

manya Balgangadhar Tilak led the Nationalists. He insisted that the principles which evolved at the Calcutta Congress should be strictly adhered to.

[6] "In August 1909 the Government sanctioned the prosecution under sections 124-A, 153-A and 505 of the Indian Penal Code of the editor, proprietor, printer and publisher of the vernacular newspaper called India, published at Madras. The real proprietor of the newspaper, who had kept discreetly in the background, removed the press to Pondicherry where the newspaper continued to publish seditious articles".

"The paper it is understood is at present registered at Pondicherry in the name of one Lakshminarayana Aiyar".

"Musiripakkam Srinivasa Aiyar who was alleged to be editor, proprietor, etc., was prosecuted in Madras on 13th November 1908".

The British Government sought the help of the French to find the real proprietor. They replied "The articles in the paper, the INDIA, to which you drew the attention of my administration cannot so far be made the subject of a prosecution before the French

courts. It is not possible to point to any fact which oversteps the limits permitted by our legislature on the subject of the liberty of the press. However that may be, I have issued the necessary instructions that an increasing and vigilant watch shall be maintained for the future on the articles which may appear in that paper.

-From His Excellency the Governor of the French settlements in India to His Excellency the Governor of the Madras Presidency.

"One of the staff of India, M.R. Tirumalacariya left Pondy for Europe in 1908".

[India Office Records Home Pol. Proc. 8153[1909], 8430[1910] and LPJ/5/358]

[7] Proscribed publications of Bharati:

Newspapers: Suryotayam, Intiya Books: Kanavu, Putuvai: Sarasvati Press, 1910 1,15p; 18cm. Poem of 49 verses of patriotic nature. PP Tam B9

Aril oru panku, Putuvai: Sri Sarasvati Press, 1910. 2,38, 2p.;17cm.

Allegorical story PP Tam B11 Intiyarkalil Jatiya aikkiyam ennanam untakum. Putuvai: Calkon Cinnaiya Press, [19-] 16, 2p.; 13cm.

On the means whereby India would attain unity PP Tam B12.

BHARATI COINS

Bharati commemoration coins in denominations of Rs. 100 and 10 in proof and uncirculated variety and in the denominations of Rs. 2 and 50 paise in circulated variety will be issued on December 11, the poet's birthday.

This decision was taken at the second meeting of the all-India Subramania Bharati Centenary Celebration Committee held here today under the chairmanship of Mr. Kamalpathi Tripathi to review the programmes planned for the nation-wide celebration of the poet's birth centenary.

Proposals made earlier for renaming Madras airport and the GT Express after Bharati

have been given up as the Ministries concerned have regretted their inability to do so.

Proposals made earlier for renaming Madras airport and the GT Express after Bharati have been given up as the Ministries concerned have regretted their inability to do so.

The proposals for issue of commemorative postage stamp too has not been cleared. The P and T Department has said that as already a postage stamp in memory of Bharati has been issued, a second stamp cannot be issued. But, the centenary celebrations committee is pursuing the matter and persuading the P and T Department to issue the stamp.

MRS. GANDHI VISITS IN SEPTEMBER

Prime Minister of India Mrs. Indira Gandhi, is scheduled to visit Sri Lanka by end of September to participate in the Asia-Pacific Population Conference. The Conference which is to be opened by President Jayawardene will be

held from 20th to 29th September. According to tentative arrangements Mrs. Gandhi is expected to be here for 3 days from September 19th. About 400 representatives from the 29 countries will participate.

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MOUNTING PROTEST AGAINST DEATH SENTENCE

Opposition is mounting in various parts of the world against the death sentences passed on two Tamil youths Kuttimani and Jegan.

Paris, Bonn, London and Madras have already seen widespread protest campaigns. In London, several organisations include the Tamil Rights Group, Sri Lanka Workers Association, General Union of Eelam Students, Nava Sama Samaja Party, Revolutionary Marxist Party, International Marxist Group, Tamil Co-ordinating Committee I etc. have combined to form a campaign committee called the CAMPAIGN FOR THE RELEASE OF EELAM POLITICAL PRISONERS IN SRI LANKA (CREPP).

A successful protest vigil attended by over one hundred people was held on September 2 outside the Sri Lanka High Commission in London. The participants in the vigil included British, Tamils and Sinhalese resident in London, and they carried black flags and placards calling for the stopping of the execution of Kuttimani and Jegan, release of all political prisoners in Sri Lanka and the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Contd. on page 1

in his judgement, admitted that these youths were held in an army camp "in a secluded and a lonely place", without access to "friends, relations and lawyers"; they were "kept amidst armed and unarmed soldiers. They would have been unaware how long they would be detained"; and "the question of singling out of these two there were no physical harassment, a statement made by a suspect in these circumstances would be irrelevant under Section 24 of the Evidence Ordinance". But he concluded that, under the draconian provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, he had no alternative but to admit the confessions obtained under torture as evidence and pro-

CREPP has planned or a series of protest actions in the coming weeks which include picketing, holding demonstrations and public meetings as part of a continuing campaign. Lobbying well known trade unionists, progressive MPs, human rights activists, civil rights organisations and other similar individuals and institutions forms part of the planned campaign.

Protest demonstrations and meetings have already been held in Germany and France. The General Union of Eelam Students (GUES), Union of Repatriate Eelam Students (URES) joined other student organisations in South India and held a largely attended protest demonstration on August 19 in Madras. The procession marched from Napier's Park to the Sri Lanka High Commission Office in Madras shouting slogans against the death sentence and the harassment of and discrimination against the Tamil speaking people of Sri Lanka.

nounced them guilty and sentenced them to death.

"The singling out these two Tamil youths for execution is symbolic of the draconian treatment meted out to those who stand and struggle for the exercise of the right of self determination by the Tamil speaking people in Sri Lanka, who have been subjected to a long series of repressive measures".

"It is in this context the campaign for the halting of the impending executions of Kuttimani and Jegan and the release of all political prisoners assumes special importance and urgency. The frame-up and the convictions based on 'confessions' obtained under torture of these two youths should not be allowed to stand."

"QUASH DEATH SENTENCE"

-N. S. S. P.

The Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP) of Sri Lanka has appealed to all working class and democratic organisations to launch an agitation aimed at quashing the death sentence on Kuttimani and Jeganathan.

Dr. Wickremabahu Karunaratne, General Secretary NSSP, has stated in a press release, "The High Court has fighters Tamil Liberation fighters Kuttimani and Jeganathan to capital punishment. This is a result of the Government's attempt to find a military and judicial solution to a political

problem. The problem of the Tamil speaking people is a political question which has not been solved by this reactionary government nor by previous governments.

Terrorism among the Tamil youth is a result of this situation and this in turn had only consolidated reactionary Sinhala chauvinism. The NSSP appeals to all working class and democratic organizations to launch an agitation aimed at quashing the sentence and treating Kuttimani and Jeganathan as political prisoners."

(Contd. from page 2)

Indian independence struggle.) Political commentators note with dismay the gradual change in the Presidential candidates; the gradual decline in the philosophical stature and the not imperceptible increase in political partiality. Many were disappointed by the choice of Zail Singh by Prime Minister Indira's Congress. According to some, his only qualification for that office was his unwavering support of Mrs Indira Gandhi.

It is to the credit of India and the traditions she has been attempting to build since independence in 1947 that though it is not a constitutional requirement, the Presidents have been chosen from minority communities. It is said that Mrs Gandhi decided on Zail Singh after failing in her attempts to find a suitable and widely acceptable South Indian candidate. Also at a

time of unrest among certain sections of the Sikh community, a Sikh President might have been considered to be the best unifying force. Critics of Zail Singh wonder why even if one accepts the argument that the time is ripe for a Sikh President, why Swaran Singh could not have been chosen.

The elections indicate not only support from ruling Indira Congress but also cross voting from other opposition parties in favour of Zail Singh. It is hoped Mr Zail Singh, a man of small beginnings and who rose from grass root politics to hold top positions in national politics will mature in the office of the Presidency and live up to the expectations of the Founding Fathers that the 'President is the symbol of the nation. His place in the administration is that of a ceremonial device on a seal by which the nation's decisions are made known'.

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