

# TAMIL TIMES

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## WILL SLFP CANDIDATE BE DISQUALIFIED?

With the polling day (October 20) fast approaching, and as the presidential election campaign is gathering pace with the six electoral combatants going round the country holding rallies and meetings, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party candidate, Dr. Colvin R de Silva, has introduced a highly sensational issue in the campaign, which threatens to affect the outcome of the election.

To the obvious delight of Mr. J.R. Jayawardene and the ruling United National Party (UNP), Dr. De Silva raised a crucial question before the people when he recently appeared on television: Can Mr. Hector Kobbekadduwa, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) candidate, be disqualified on an election petition and will he be prevented from assuming office even if he is elected?

Dr. De Silva, besides being a veteran politician of national standing, is one of the country's eminent lawyers and functioned as the Minister of Constitutional Affairs in the United Front government of 1970 under Mrs. Srima Bandaranaike.

The question of the deprivation of civic rights of Mrs. Bandaranaike by the present government and the issue of the restoration of her rights have so far played an important part in the opposition's campaign. Despite being deprived of her civic rights, she still remains the President of the SLFP. Appearing on television, Dr. De Silva explained to his viewers the legal

concept of 'AGENCY', and citing legal precedents, he suggested that Mr. Kobbekadduwa was a candidate of a party whose President was Mrs. Bandaranaike who has been prohibited from taking part in the election or its campaign by virtue of the deprivation of her civic rights. He suggested that there was a real risk that, if an election petition was instituted, the courts might hold that Mr. Kobbekadduwa was not entitled to assume office.

In such an eventuality, Dr. De Silva pointed out, Mr. J.R. Jayawardene would be declared elected even if he came second, and therefore asked the people to support his own candidature.

Although the SLFP lawyers and politicians have strenuously attempted to discount Dr. De Silva's assertions, the issue has become a major one in the campaign and thrown the Kobbekadduwa camp into much confusion.

The UNP and J.R. Jayawardene have lost no time in taking the issue further and exploiting the situation. The state controlled media are working overtime in creating as much confusion as possible on this issue among the people.

The belated and half-hearted intervention of Mr. Anura Bandaranaike in the campaign on the side of Mr. Kobbekadduwa has further exacerbated the friction within the SLFP camp. Cleverly upstaged by a combination of his own sister, Chandrika and her husband Wijaya Kumaratunga and Mr.

SRI LANKA

## PRESIDENTIAL RACE JR TIPPED TO WIN

The presidential election campaign in Sri Lanka is hotting up with the polling day fast approaching. As accurately predicted in the August issue of the Tamil Times, six candidates are in the running - the incumbent J.R. Jayawardene [United National Party]; Mr. Hector Kobbekadduwa [Sri Lanka Freedom Party], Dr. Colvin R. De Silva [Lanka Sama Samaja Party], Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara [Nava Sama Samaja Party], Mr. Rohana Wijeweera [Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna], and Mr. Kumar Ponnambalam [All-Ceylon Tamil Congress].

Of the other known political parties, the Tamil United Liberation Front is not participating in the elections; the Ceylon Workers Congress, whose President is Mr. S. Thondaman, a Cabinet Minister, is supporting J.R. Jayawardene.

Although six candidates are in the running, there is little doubt that the real contest is between J.R. Jayawardene and Kobbekadduwa. Kobbekadduwa, who was an unknown quantity in national terms, has been catapulted into the national scene by fortuitous circumstances - the deprivation of Mrs. Bandaranaike's civic rights, and her disability to contest the election.

One major factor that favoured J.R. Jayawardene was that the SLFP, the only party which could have challenged the UNP on an equal footing, was split and continued to remain split until JR decided

Kobbekadduwa, Mr. Anura Bandaranaike was denied SLFP nomination. The disappointed Anura has intervened to tell the people that Mr. Kobbekadduwa was on what he described as a short-term temporary contract with three specific duties to perform - to restore Mrs. Bandaranaike's civic rights, dissolve parliament and hold fresh elections.

on the election. However, the surprising and unexpected official recognition granted by the Election Commissioner to Mrs. Bandaranaike's SLFP and the award to it of the traditional 'Hand' symbol must have come as a rude shock to the UNP stalwarts and JR.

This election is unique in many ways. It is the first ever presidential election; it is the first time that a system of preferential voting is being used; and for the first time television will play a role in the campaign. All six candidates have been allocated 45 minutes of broadcasting. Most importantly, the votes of the minority ethnic communities - Tamils and Muslims - will have a significant effect on the outcome of the elections.

There are nearly eight million registered voters. Sri Lanka has always had a reputation for a fairly high turn out at elections and generally the average voting has been in the region of 80 per cent. On past performance, it is confidently anticipated that at least 6 million persons will cast their votes. However, this average is likely to be upset to some extent if the Tamil voters were to heed the call for non-participation and boycott of the elections. Although the TULF decided on a boycott, it is not engaged in an active organised campaign among its supporters for a (positive) boycott. Indeed many of its leaders have found it convenient to go abroad.

On the assumption that 6 million of the registered voters will cast their votes, a candidate should secure at least 3 million votes to achieve victory on the first count. If he fails to obtain 51 per cent of the first preference votes cast on the first count, then the second preference votes have to be counted and if this were to happen, the best laid

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## TAMIL TIMES

### TAMILS & THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

The main contenders in the forthcoming election for the most powerful position in Sri Lanka are the UNP and SLFP nominees - J.R. Jayawardene, the incumbent President, and Hector Kobbekaduwa, a former Minister under Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike. Both men go around the country unashamedly asking the Tamil speaking people for their votes.

The record of these two parties is replete with innumerable acts of discrimination against the Tamil speaking people. Whether in government or in opposition, they have conducted themselves as if they were in existence to serve only the Sinhala-Buddhist electorate. They have used the Tamil speaking people as a political football to be knocked around in their quest for power with callous and cruel disregard to the damage and destruction done to them and their property resulting from their racist propaganda.

The UNP commenced the so-called independence era with the dastardly act of downright perfidy against the 1.2 million Tamil speaking plantation workers. Their voting and citizenship rights were deprived at one fell stroke. Scheming and designing individuals that they were, the UNP leaders engaged in their diabolical plan of state-aided colonisation to make the Tamil speaking people a minority in their own traditional homelands of the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka.

The SLFP elevated Sinhala as the one and only official language of the country with the Sinhala only Act in 1956, granted Buddhism almost the status of a State religion, and continued with greater vigour the UNP's policy of planned colonisation of Tamil areas. When the late Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, the then Prime Minister, entered into an agreement with the late leader of the Federal Party, Mr. S.J.V. Chelvanayakam, to mitigate the effects of the Sinhala Only Act upon the Tamil people, the UNP under J.R. Jayawardene spearheaded a countrywide campaign in collaboration with some racist rabble in yellow robes to ensure the unilateral abrogation of the agreement between Mr. Bandaranaike and Mr. Chelvanayakam. The racial pogrom unleashed against the Tamil speaking people in 1958 was the direct result of the evil genius of JR and his campaign. No amount of empty and meaningless platitudes or soothing words from him today could obliterate from the memories of the Tamil people the cruel and diabolical game he played on that occasion.

The SLFP on the other hand, not only continued with the denial of the voting and citizenship rights to the Tamil plantation workers, but also contrived a pernicious pact with the Indian government to compulsorily repatriate them. When Dudley Senanayake, the then UNP Prime Minister, as a quid pro quo for the support extended by the Federal Party in 1965, attempted to introduce regulations for the reasonable use of Tamil Language in official communications and the courts, the SLFP, again in collaboration with the extremist sections of the Buddhist clergy, campaigned and demonstrated against the enactment of the regulations.

**BOTH PARTIES HAVE PRESIDED OVER SEVERAL INSTANCES OF GENOCIDAL RACIST POGROMS DIRECTED AGAINST THE TAMIL SPEAKING PEOPLE.**

On the general question of democratic rights of the people as a whole, both these parties have time and time again suppressed their rights, and more particularly denied the workers and trade unions of their right to strike, picket and demonstrate. The summary dismissal by the present government of over 50,000

## PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OPPOSITION IN DISARRAY

Elections are won sometimes by design and sometimes by default. If J.R. Jayawardene wins this election, it would be more by default on the part of the opposition.

The unexpected decision of the Elections Commissioner to grant official recognition to Mrs. Bandaranaike's SLFP could not have come at a better time for restoring the badly divided image of the SLFP and restoring its lost fortunes. The SLFP has been split into two rival factions for nearly 18 months and both were engaged in a mutually destructive and fratricidal struggle from which J.R. Jayawardene and the UNP expected to reap undeserved high political dividends. However the Election Commissioner's timely decision had an immediate positive impact in raising hopes of a united SLFP and sent Mr. Maitripala Senanayake's SLFP(M) into instant political wilderness.

Although Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa has been put forward as the SLFP nominee, it has been made demonstrably clear that he doesn't command the undivided and total support of the person who matters most in the SLFP, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, who wanted her son Anura nominated as the SLFP presidential candidate. The anti-Anura camp, which included his own sister Chandrika and her film actor husband Wijaya Kumaratunaga, succeeded in resisting Anura's claim. Mrs. B. having been deprived of her civic rights is not in a position to

address meetings in support of the SLFP nominee even if she wanted to. Anura has so far failed to appear on a common platform in support of Mr. Kobbekaduwa. People have got used to the habit of considering the Bandaranaike name as synonymous with the SLFP.

Mr. Maitripala Senanayake and his dissident group, having failed to obtain official recognition from the Election Commissioner, have been making strenuous efforts to rejoin the parent SLFP, promising support for Mr. Kobbekaduwa. Mrs. Bandaranaike's adamant refusal to let the Maitri group rejoin the party has resulted in further loss of support for Mr. Kobbekaduwa. Mr. R.P. Wijesiri of SLFP(M) and MP for Harispatuwa has already joined the UNP. Mr. Wijesiri and P.B.G. Kalugalla, a former Minister and a long standing SLFP stalwart and a few others who were with the Maitri group have pledged their support to J.R. Jayawardene.

### THREE LEFT CANDIDATES

The left, in this contest, has three candidates - Dr. Colvin R De Silva of the LSSP Vasudeva Nanayakkara of the NSSP and Rohana Wijeweera of the JVP. A unique opportunity was offered to the Lankan left on this occasion to field a common candidate opposed to both the UNP and the SLFP. Such a course of action would have provided an

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workers for merely exercising their legitimate right to strike in July 1980 is a blatant and clear example of the attitude of these parties to the fundamental rights of the people.

On any count, neither the UNP nor the SLFP deserve the support of the Tamil speaking people at this election or any other election so long as they persist with the policies they have hitherto pursued. It is not a question whether one belongs to the "RIGHT" or "LEFT" in the political spectrum. While it is right that the Tamil speaking people should campaign and struggle for their inalienable right of self-determination, whenever an opportunity presents itself they should vote against these parties who have been primarily responsible for the plight of Tamils today.

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opportunity for the left to restore its image amongst the people. Since the LSSP's decision in 1964 and later the CP's to enter into a coalition with the SLFP, the Lankan left has gradually lost its traditional hold even amongst the working class. The collapse of the left was reflected in its almost total eclipse from the parliamentary arena following the July 1977 elections.

Dr. De Silva, the veteran leader of the LSSP would have been an ideal common left candidate. Among the opposition candidates, he is the most experienced, powerful and colourful candidate. Although the LSSP's ideological position was seriously compromised during its coalition with the SLFP, the left presenting a united front and putting forward a common candidate in the person of Dr. De Silva against the UNP and SLFP, would have probably led to a polarisation of class forces, both at the leadership and rank and file level. Such a course of action would also

have given the working class, which has taken a severe beating at the hands of the UNP in the recent past, and which remains divided, dispirited and disoriented, a much needed moral boost. Sectarianism and opportunism have reigned supreme and the working class is destined to suffer for a further period.

The role of the Communist Party (Moscow) in this election is inexplicably opportunist. Up until the announcement of the presidential election, the CP has been in close collaboration with the LSSP and strongly critical of the SLFP. How and why the CP decided to back the SLFP's Kobbekaduwa and not the LSSP's Dr. De Silva beats one's imagination.

The NSSP led by Vasudeva Nanayakkara agreed to support Dr. De Silva's candidature if he contested on a clearly defined left programme. On Dr. De Silva's failure to be bound by such an undertaking, the NSSP put forward its own nominee, Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara. While the position of the NSSP in demanding that Dr. De Silva base his

campaign on a left programme is correct and understandable, to what extent Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara contesting would further the interests of his own party or the working class remains a debatable question. The NSSP parted company with the LSSP on the precise question of the latter's association with the SLFP. In this context, some supporters of the NSSP itself suggest that the party leadership has failed to grasp this opportunity to wean away the LSSP from the SLFP. It is reported that the Revolutionary Marxist Party accepts this line of thought and therefore has decided to back Dr. De Silva.

The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna has always held the rather arrogant view that all other left groups or parties are opportunist and counter-revolutionary. The JVP is bent on organising itself as the sole left force in the country and therefore its interest in united front activity with other left groups is marginal, to say the least. With those views, it would have been futile for anyone to expect the JVP to support Dr. De Silva.

#### TULF'S

#### "NON-PARTICIPATION"

The position adopted by the TULF in this election is the most pathetic. TULF is the biggest opposition parliamentary party in the country. More than that, it can claim with reasonable justification to represent the substantial majority of the Tamil speaking people. While its decision not to field a presidential candidate was predictable, its almost half-hearted call to the Tamil speaking people for 'non-participation' in the election constitutes an act of abdication of leadership and responsibility. If the TULF, after due consideration, came to the view that participating in the electoral process is not in the best interests of the Tamil speaking people, then the TULF leadership has an unshakable duty to go before the people and actively campaign for a positive boycott. If the leadership is not convinced

of a boycott, then they should give the correct message to the Tamil people as to what they should do with their votes.

The UNP and SLFP which have been jointly and severally responsible for the innumerable acts of discrimination against the Tamil speaking people are going around the traditional homelands of the Tamils, asking for their votes. Dr. Colvin R. De Silva, Vasudeva Nanayakkara and Rohana Wijeweera from the left and Kumar Ponnambalam of the Tamil Congress are also seeking their votes. Either the TULF leadership should have openly campaigned for a total boycott of the election and called upon the people to refuse to cast their votes as a symbolic act of defiance, or it should have specifically advised the people not to vote for the UNP or the SLFP and asked them to cast their votes for any one of the other candidates, which in effect would have meant an anti-UNP and anti-SLFP vote.

Participation in election constitutes a political act. An active boycott campaign of an election is also a political act. But a 'non-participation' declaration at the leadership level and leaving the people to decide as to how they should exercise their franchise and run away from the scene of political action is the act of a leadership which at best is opportunist and at its worst politically bankrupt. On both counts, such a leadership doesn't deserve the continued support of the people whom it claims to lead.

#### DIRECT DIALLING

A new Automatic Telephone Exchange with subscriber trunk dialling facilities to and from the northern Tamil city of Jaffna commenced functioning from 18th September.

It is now possible to make telephone calls and receive calls from other parts of the country by direct dialling. Although smaller and less populated cities in the country had enjoyed these facilities for quite some time now, Jaffna did not until last month.

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## “DEATH SENTENCES-CRUEL & BARBARIC” SAYS M.I.R.J.E.

“The Tamil youths, Kuttimani and Jegan, who were tried under the Prevention of Terrorism (Special Provisions) Act, have been sentenced to death. The MIRJE is opposed to the imposition of death sentence as a means of punishment, as being cruel and barbaric”, the Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality (President: Fr. Paul Caspersz; Secretary : Reggie Siriwardene) said in a statement released following the death sentences passed on Kuttimani and Jegan.

The statement adds, “It ill becomes a Government which claims to be Dharmista and a champion of Buddhism to seek to take the lives of these youths. It is a bitter irony that the United National Party, which when in opposition, was so critical of special legislation and laws with retrospective effect, should, when in office, enact similar legislation. The so-called Prevention of Terrorism Act incorporates all the most iniquitous aspects of the infamous Criminal Justice

Commission Law, which the UNP so justly denounced.

“The Prevention of Terrorism Act is in effect throughout the island. Under its provisions, any trade unionist, student activist, opposition politician, progressive academic, socially active monk, critical journalist or dissident poet can be taken into custody, kept for eighteen months without being produced in Court, tortured and brought to trial on charges which are supported by confessions inadmissible under the normal law. As the Judge who passed the sentence on Kuttimani and Jegan stated, this piece of legislation itself provided him with no other choice. It is significant that he expressed regret at having to impose the death penalty.

“Kuttimani and Jegan are the first to be sentenced under this deadly legislation. The struggle against this draconian law is the struggle for safeguarding the democratic rights of all the people of this island.”

## HUNGER-STRIKE BY DETAINEES

Protesting against the inhuman conditions under which they were held, several Tamil detainees held at the Panagoda Army Camp went on a hunger-strike on September 9. The strike ended when the Army Commandant of the camp gave an undertaking to meet the following demands:

- to give prescribed quantity of food
- to permit three baths under a shower every week and removing the prohibition on detainees using the water taps in their cells for bathing

purposes. They can now wash when they please

- detainees will be permitted daily 1 hour's exercise in the open within the prison between 4.0 and 6.0 p.m.
- parcels to detainees by families will be opened and examined in presence of detainees; also when they are delivered by hand
- military police authority will make every effort to make a speedy delivery of detainees' correspondence
- 2 cakes of soap to be given to every detainee each month.

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# A MEGALITHIC BURIAL SITE AT ANAIKODDAI, JAFFNA

BY

Dr. James T. Rutnam

It is over fifty years since the first megalithic urn burial site in the Island was discovered at Pomparippu. Not much excitement was created by the discovery, as its significance was not known at that time. In the past fifteen years more megalithic sites have been discovered in the Island and their importance for the study of the early history of this country is beginning to be realised. It is not surprising therefore that the discovery of the first megalithic burial site in the Jaffna District in December 1981 has led to much excitement in that area.

The discoveries made by an archaeological survey team from the University of Jaffna during the first two weeks of December 1980 are indeed sensational. For a very long time nothing was known about the pre-and proto-history of the Jaffna District, and one had to be content with the legends of the Nagas of the Chronicles that passed for history. For the first time now a scientific study of the proto-history of that region has been made possible by the archaeological discoveries at the mounds of Anaikoddaï, about four kilometres north of Jaffna town.

One of these mounds had been harbouring a veritable burial complex dating back to pre-Christian times, until it was laid bare by workmen removing earth to fill the Navanthurai Lagoon. It was at this point that a team from the Jaffna University had moved in to save some of the precious artefacts and skeletal remains from being subjected to a second burial in another place that was being reclaimed from the lagoon.

The discoveries include skeletal remains from extended burials and urn burials, iron tools such as spearheads and daggers, parts of copper bangles and a copper rod, a large amount of black-and-red ware that is typical of megalithic sites in Sri Lanka

and South India, Roman rouletted ware and even objects with dateable writing, one of which goes back to the third century BC.

There is a reference by the Dutch writer Valentyn to some finds suggesting a sort of Roman settlement in the first century AD in Mantai in Mannar, more or less comparable to Arikemedu on the opposite coast of South India. But the evidence now appearing is of very much greater significance, for they confirm the lurking anticipation a few of us have had, since the discovery in the twenties of the urn burials at Pomparippu, that there was a megalithic phase common to the whole of south India and Sri Lanka preceding the early historic period.

Looking back it would seem that we had treated the large number of discoveries in many parts of the country where evidence of a megalithic phase had been observed with very little appreciation, not to say indifference, of their far-reaching significance.

As far back as 1886 Ievers had found an ancient burial place in Gurugalhinna in the Anuradhapura district. This had been also noted by H.C.P. Bell in 1892. It was a megalithic site, but the report of further investigations by Godakumbura in 1965 has yet to see the light of day. Hugh Nevill is on record as having discovered a cinerary urn at Malikam Pitti in 1877. A.C. Hocart announced the discovery of the Pomparippu urn burials in 1924.

It will be sufficient here to note a few names of places where discoveries had been made of urn burials, dolmens, cists, extended burials, black-and-red ware, etc, all pointing to a megalithic phase in Sri Lanka. These are, to be brief, the Gedige in Anuradhapura, Katiraveli in the Batticaloa district, Padavigampola in the Kegalle district, Gurugalhinna

in the Anuradhapura district, Kokebe in the North Central province, Makewita in the Gampaha district, Okanda, Habarana, Tissamaharama, Asmadala, Mummaragoda, Ibbanketuwe in the Matale district, Itikala, Bambaragas-talawa, Kudumbigala and Panamamoderagala.

Vimala Begley and others of the University of Pennsylvania did some excavation in Pomparippu in 1970. Begley had estimated as many as eight thousand graves in the three or four acres that form the megalithic cemetery at Pomparippu.

Commenting on some of these sites, S. Paranavitana in his work entitled *Sinhalayo* published in 1967, wrote on page 7: "these megalithic sites and urn fields are found throughout the regions inhabited by Dravidian-speaking people. The burial customs to which they bear witness are referred to in early Tamil literature. It is therefore legitimate to infer that the people who buried their dead in dolmens and cists as well as in large earthen-ware jars, were Dravidians. He continued (on page 9): "The few megalithic monuments and urn burials discovered in Ceylon are obviously an overflow from South India".

We have now discovered that these are far from being "few", and with further study are also compelled now to accept that they are not an "overflow" from South India but part and parcel of a single matrix of culture and identity that bound South India and Sri Lanka together in the past. While Paranavitana had chosen to call the bearers of this culture Dravidians, we would prefer to avoid names for the present and to confine our attention purely to scientific study free of political chauvinism or religious fanaticism. Is there much point in wanting to know in the present context which came first, the chicken



or the egg?

The University of Jaffna has an excellent staff of historians and archaeologists, led by an indefatigable scholar, Professor K. Indrapala, who is also the Director of the Evelyn Rutnam Institute For Inter-Cultural Studies in Jaffna. A senior lecturer, S.K. Sittampalam, has now gained a doctoral degree in Archaeology, having earlier obtained a first in the Master's Degree, at the University of Poona, and young P. Ragupathy is already a M.A. (Archaeology) in the first division from the University of Mysore. They have a set of keen and diligent graduates working along with them.

These scholars seem to attach great importance to the discovery at Annaikoddaï. Jaffna seems to have shared a common culture with Tamil Nadu in the pre-Christian and early Christian centuries. Roman rouletted-ware has been found at such sites as Uraiyar and Kaveripatinam in Tamil Nadu, and its presence at Annaikoddaï shows that Jaffna too was, as Warmington had observed in 1925, in its own way influenced by the Roman trade with Tamil Nadu in the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

The excavation at Kantarodai in 1970 had exposed megalithic

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## SRI LANKA NEWS IN BRIEF

- **New Passport Office:** A new Passport Office under the Immigration and Emigration Department has been opened in the northern city of Jaffna. Hitherto, the people of Jaffna and adjoining areas had to travel over 250 miles to Colombo to obtain or renew their passports.
- **Rs.1.8 million for family Planning:** The United Nations Family Planning Association will begin its single biggest project in Sri Lanka next year with the distribution of contraceptives, including pills, condoms and IUDs worth about Rs. 1.8 million.
- **Oil Exploration:** With the recent cabinet decision to farm out two off shore blocks for oil exploration to the American South East Asia Oil and Gas Company, Sri Lanka has now leased out an off-shore sea area of 25,925 square kilometres and a land area of 10,250 square kilometres for oil exploration.
- **Surveillance at Mannar to increase:** The Lankan Government has approved a scheme estimated to cost Rs. 4 lakhs to intensify customs and security vigilance at the Talai Mannar Pier.
- **Food Stamps for 2 million more:** Two million more people are to be included in government's social welfare programme of Food stamps; a recent survey has revealed that these persons had been excluded from the programme in 1979.
- **Statue for Pandaravannian:** A statue of Pandaravannian, who has been considered a national hero, was recently erected at Vavuniya. The statue was unveiled by the TULF MP for Vavuniya, Mr. T. Sivasithamparam.
- **Commission to probe racial violence:** A one man Commission comprising Mr. A.C. Alles, retired Supreme Court Judge, has been appointed to probe into the causes and extent of the recent inter-racial violence between the Sinhalese and Muslims in the Southern city of Galle and its surrounding areas.

## "BOYCOTT ELECTION"

### SAYS LIBERATION COUNCIL

Among the many important matters taken up for discussion at a meeting of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Council, the decision to hold a Seminar on the Economic Development of Tamil Eelam received a great deal of attention of the Council. Appropriate measures are being taken to co-ordinate the work already begun in Sri Lanka regarding the Seminar, and experts will be called upon from around the world to do the groundwork in preparation for the birth of the NEW NATION OF TAMIL EELAM. The Seminar is expected to be held in New York during the month of July 1983.

Regarding the forthcoming Presidential election, the Council decided that, (a) No Tamil should contest the Presidential election. (b) Tamils should not exercise their ballot at the next Presidential election.

This decision is necessitated by the fact that the Tamils

have lost confidence in the Parliamentary system and any future support of this system will not serve the purpose of achieving their ultimate goal of Tamil Eelam. This affirmative action is the only way in which the Tamils can express to the outside world their strong political conviction in the creation of Tamil Eelam.

The matter of forming an INTERIM PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT, which was referred to the Liberation Council at the Convention, was tabled and discussed. In principle, the Council was in agreement with this proposal, and a task force has been appointed to pursue this matter further.

With reference to the sentence of death passed on Kuttimani and Jegan, the Council has already contacted the various Human Rights Organizations, and a telegram has been sent to the President of Sri Lanka calling the judgment a travesty of justice.

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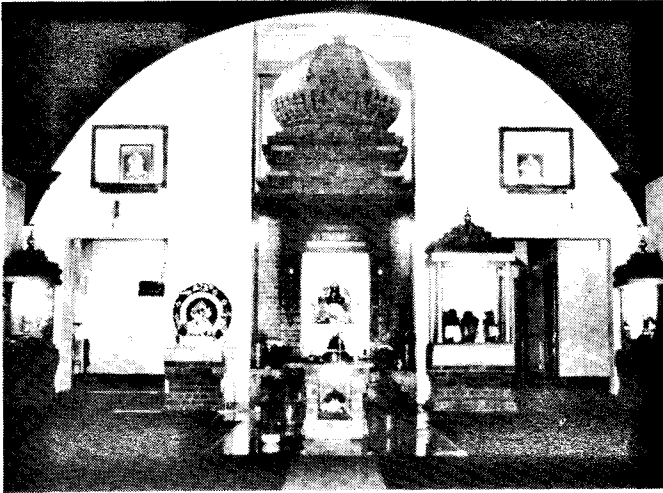
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## GANAPATHY TEMPLE OF WIMBLEDON

BY RANI EMMANUEL

In Wimbledon, a residential suburb in south-west London, now stands a monument to Tamil-Hindu culture - a Temple in the name of Ganapathy, popularly and affectionately also called Pillaiyar. Normally in Indian cities and villages, the first shrine or Temple is dedicated to Ganesh and therefore it is fitting that this London Temple - the first in Europe - should have been in His name and honour.



At first, in 1979, poojas were held every Friday in a rented hall, but the handful of devoted organisers felt they should have a permanent place of worship. As the Indian proverb says, 'One cannot persuade luscious mangoes to fall into one's lap by merely chanting mantras', these men realised that they had a lot of hard work to do before their dream reached fulfilment. They vowed that within two years to the day the first pooja was offered, they would purchase, build and consecrate a proper Temple.

Accordingly, the enterprising members of this pioneering group purchased a disused church building using their own funds within an year. Between the purchase and conversion of the building into a Temple, they encountered many difficulties. Undaunted, the group went ahead. This was a gigantic task - renovating and refashioning a typical Christian place of worship to a traditional-looking Hindu Temple.

A large imposing image of

Pillaiyar was the first priority. A group of traditional sculptors in Mahabalipuram, South India, was commissioned to carry out this most important task. They also carved many other statues of other deities and all these were brought to London, some by sea and others by air.

On September 12, 1981, two years after the idea of the Temple was first mooted, the

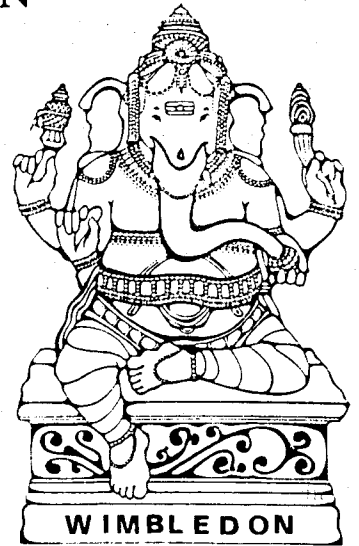
main deity was installed in a magnificent three day ceremony amid all the pomp and glamour one only witnesses at such occasions in India or Sri Lanka. Thousands of devotees and well wishers gathered and the atmosphere was filled with deep devotion and serenity. The remarkable religious devotion displayed by those who participated in the ceremonial rituals of the KUMBABISHEKAM clearly demonstrated the need of the people for such a Temple. A solemn procession in the afternoon was the highlight of the proceedings. It was a day that will live long in the memories of London Tamils.

The Ganapathy Temple represents a unique achievement in the history of Sri Lankan residents in Britain. A labour of LOVE and DEVOTION and all Sri Lankans, whether Hindu or belonging to any other faith, are truly proud that this small group of sons of their soil have been successful in establishing this magnificent edifice in London and have helped to keep alive

the religious and cultural practices of their fore-fathers.

A resident priest, besides performing poojas, attends to the various needs of the Hindus, solemnising marriages, naming of children, determining auspicious days and times etc., and generally helping the people to be aware of their traditional Temple events. Abishekams are performed on request. Daily and weekly poojas are held and on festival days, special services and ceremonies are conducted.

The VINAYAGAR CHATURTHI was celebrated on a grand scale on August 22 this year. A large number of devotees and worshippers took part in the pooja performances which were held from 10 a.m. and participated in a solemn procession later in the afternoon. The crowd and the atmosphere were reminiscent of similar scenes at Nallur, Kataragama and Thiruketeeswaram. Following this, on 3rd



and 12th September, there were special poojas to commemorate the first anniversary of the Kumbabishekam.

Adjoining the main Temple is a spacious hall where Satya Sai Bajans are held regularly.

Everyone will hope that this Temple flourishes and that the old and the young grow in the knowledge of the true precepts of Hinduism, even though they are far away from their native lands.



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# Journey's end for the tea pickers

David Selbourne

Crossing the Kelani and Sitawaka rivers (they made *The Bridge Over the River Kwai* in these parts), the road narrows through Puwakpitiya, and climbs up-country. We are in the Central Highlands of Sri Lanka. From 2,000 feet, the tea estates are pretty as a picture, bushes as neat as the topiary in a formal English garden.

Yellow and black fingerposts point down russet paths to the plantations: Penrith and Kenilworth, Glen Loch, Hollyrood and Dundedin. There are "gospel halls" and "factory churches," as at Lindoola, by the roadside; and superintendents' bungalows (Westward Ho, Hill Tops, and so forth), some of them as stately as mansions. Once the fans whirred over cane basket chairs, English and Scots accents, and the morning papers. The garden trellises, potting sheds and roses could be in the Malverns, the lawns were like haize or green velvet. Things were well-ordered, in the good old days.

When the car stops close to a green, steep, near-sheer tea slope, stepped in worn grey granite, you can see the tea pickers clearly: hooded in the steady drizzle, or shrouded, under coloured plastic, blue, red, yellow; at their hips, grey wicker baskets. (You can also see that some of the highest terraces are overgrown with creepers, like abandoned Italian vineyards.) Waiting in the quiet rain at the roadside, the flanks of patient bullocks glisten, horn tips and muzzle hair jewelled and dripping. And beyond the next turn, there are female voices approaching.

You are suddenly face to face with them on the road, on their way to the checkweighman. Leather straps around their foreheads, to bear the weight of the fully laden tea baskets, they are running—you can see on the instant from a calvary of labour; some no more than little girls (though it is easy to confuse them, with their thin legs and stunted bodies), some tired old women, with pinched lemur-like faces, teeth *pan-stained*; running near bent-double, like coalmen in our own old days; their mouths puckered, and mocked by the bloom of the roadside flowers.

Follow them: beasts of burden, they stand as patient as the bullocks (or pit donkeys), queuing at the shed of the checkweighman. He is entering the weights in a ledger, behind his wooden counter, the rain now drumming on the corrugation. When they unload the baskets from their backs, and release the straps from their foreheads, you can tell the young ones quickly: they smile with relief, and even giggle. The older women, hollow-cheeked and often wild-eyed, with exhaustion, step back without expression, eyes long ago blanked out by labour.

At nightfall, and in heavy rain, in the "line rooms"—labour barracks, usually set deep in the plantation, isolated from other habitation, without electricity or running water (and guarded in the old times)—they

stare, in the same way, out of darkness; stalled, or penned, like cattle. On hillsides fresh with rain, and verdant, these are blackened sheds, or hutches—70 per cent of them one-roomed—like lines of loose boxes each with the bisected door of a stable.

If you look inside, you will see a bed, a chair, a table; perhaps a wooden bench, and a faded photograph or two on the damp-stained plaster, mementoes of lives unregarded. The inner "room," as black as an underground pit, will be crowded with bodies—even the whites of eyes are extinguished—with a red hearth glow in the corner. There is a smell of wood smoke funnelling blue-grey from the shed doorways; and, gathering around you, children. (At ten or eleven, they seem six or seven. But then this is a flowering in darkness.)

A solitary chair is dusted over quickly, with the back of a flustered hand, for you. It is a relief to sit and dwarf yourself, when you are such a Gulliver in a Lilliput of hard labour. There is anaemia here in these sallow faces; serious under-nourishment in stick legs and swollen bellies: pigeon chests and coughing. Even the young men are drawn and tired, their eyes, in the fitful light of the hurricane lamps, dark-circled.

## The 'plantation Tamils'

These are "plantation Tamils," as a man might say water buffalo, or wild elephant. There are well over one million of them. Hindus brought to Ceylon from South India, from 1839 onwards, as indentured labour on British plantations, 80 per cent of them are *harijans* (ie. "untouchables") as distinct from the two million indigenous and, in general, caste-Hindu "Ceylon Tamils." And not only out-castes, but in one drastic blow made aliens also, when in 1948 the country became independent, under Sinhalese Buddhist majority rule.

The Citizenship Acts of 1948 and 1949 left the "plantation Tamils" without a nation, stateless. The Parliamentary Elections (Amendment) Act of 1949 took away their franchise. In 1964 and 1974, pacts with India—not registered with the United Nations, and without international juridical status—provided for the "repatriation," or deportation, of 600,000 of them. The rest, 375,000, were to become citizens of Sri Lanka.

Stalled in a Gehenna, there was never a condition like theirs: victims of Sinhalese racial attacks, rape and plunder in 1972, 1977 and 1981; intermittently driven to flee the plantations in search of safety among the "Ceylon Tamils" in the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka; 400,000 already uprooted and "sent back" to India, which most of them have never seen; half a million of them still stateless; tens of thousands awaiting Sri Lankan citizenship, or "repatriation," some "overstaying" and in hiding; some who have been given Indian citizenship, but who have changed their

minds about leaving; some with no documents at all to their names ("do you think records were kept of the birth of all these poor people?") who are lost and despairing in a maze of regulations; and 25,000 who simply did not get their jobs back, after a strike in July 1980.

On top of it, they are the source of Sri Lanka's greatest wealth—the tea, coconut and rubber plantations still provide over 70 per cent of the country's export income—and victims of its bitterest hardships, in a seemingly eternal conjunction.

Crowded in their sheds, they speak terribly of their lifetimes of colonial drudgery on these pitiless hillsides, as of near-halcyon days: with a timid and deferential nostalgia for the white man, whom you are representing. For, now, there are new bitternesses: the "independence" which robbed them of their citizenship, and the "nationalisation," in 1972 and 1975, which brought the Sinhalese in to manage the thralldom of the Tamils.

The Janatha Estates Development Board and the Sri Lanka State Plantations Corporation have merely taken over as taskmasters. Even trade union officials unwittingly refer to the new Sinhalese in the old British bungalows as "the planters." (In any case, Brooke Bond Liebig, Lyons, Typhoo, the *cws*, *et al*, still control the Colombo tea auctions, the prices and the markets.) And in the line rooms—the development board says that 10 per cent have been renovated in the last decade—there is still no light, the rain still courses down the damp-stained walls on to the earthen floor, and it is still the only available running water.

Moreover, despite their creation of Sri Lanka's wealth, the workers themselves are close to destitution. At Drayton Estate, Kotegala, young Muthuraman, married with two children, and a pruner—with the top joint of his left index finger missing—is sitting in a black hovel. It is Line No. 11, Room 10. He is at a rickety wooden table, covered with orange plastic, which takes up much of the tiny space; a bed fills the remainder. There is a small hand-mirror and a calendar nailed to the faded green white-wash; the inner room is Stygian.

For 25 days' labour last month, he earned 440 rupees (£10.40). Of this, 358 rupees (£8.90) was docked at source, most of it for rations—rice, flour, sugar—advanced on the truck system: he was left with £1.50 for a month's labour. His friend Selvanathan, who has five children, got 570 rupees (£13.50), which included extra rainy-season shiftwork, planting seedlings. He was left with 37 rupees (90p), after similar deductions. Like all the other workers I spoke to, he is caught in a stranglehold of arrears, eking out life by borrowing every month for basic foodstuffs against wages.

Muthuraman can "get through" only until the twenty-second of each month, with a meagre diet of rotis, coconut scrapings, rice and dal. He may have eggs once a week, and meat once a month, if he is lucky. After the twenty-second, he and his wife—who earned a little over £5 for 26 days' labour—and their two children "just managed to survive." The end of the month is a "bad situation." As rations dwindle to zero, with only cups of tea (which are free)

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September 1982

Contd. from page 8

for an empty stomach, and nothing of value for the pawnshop, many of the workers starve, especially the women.

"At times of great need," I was told—as others gathered in the shed, some to speak, and some, their eyes glazed, to listen—"a little bit of rice or flour may be given by others. But usually we can only watch when others are starving." Blackened by darkness, they became plantation slave hands before my eyes; Negroes of the ante-bellum American south, by the light of a hurricane lamp, swarming with insects.

"No one has a surplus, everyone is struggling for survival," they were saying. Heavily varicosed legs stood beside me. "It is a vicious circle," Muthuraman said: "without food, we don't have the stamina to go to work, and so lose our wages. The people who are malnourished fall ill more often." And there is no sickness pay; these are labour pains shared by men, women and children.

But it is the women's life and work on the plantations which is the cruellest. "They work from the time they wake, till the time they go to sleep"; they "go without" first; they "make the sacrifices"; and are often bullied and beaten by their menfolk into the bargain. Their deficiency diseases and their physical sufferings are therefore the most serious.

Over half of them are said to be clinically malnourished. There are high stillbirth and infant mortality rates (perhaps over 150 per 1,000 births), but in the last years no official figures have been published. They earn around 60 per cent of the men's wages even for exactly the same work and the same output.

Much of the plucking of the leaves is done by the women. Digging, planting, pruning, in addition to picking, are men's work. (You can see the ragged male labourers, thin as sticks, clearing the underbrush with mattocks.)

After having got up at dawn, or even before, to fetch the water, sometimes at a long distance, the women must prepare what food there is, see to the children and do the other household labour, before reporting for "muster" at 6 or 6.30 am. If they are late, they will be stopped work for the day, and lose their pittance. Then, at the "muster shed," where the teabaskets are usually kept, the overseer will tell them which hillside to go to.

It may be a long way, several miles; and hard going on the steep terraces, which seem to reach to the skies as you climb them. And when they reach their places, you can hear them calling in unison to each other: "*poliyo, poli, poliyo poli*" ("may the baskets be full soon").

They break at noon for an hour: humping their loads, usually three times a day, to the weighman, their "chits" pinned to their baskets, or blouses. They finish at dusk but often do not reach the line rooms—and the cooking, the cleaning, the feeding, the washing of clothes—until 7 pm. What they eat, they eat last, and separately, from the men: drudging from dawn to night, on an endless treadmill.

### Systematic cheating

But you will find much worse, if you wait, and question and listen. It is not just

simple matters, such as the fact that the workers must provide their own raincoats, or, on some plantations, even their own baskets.

Some are much too bemused and weary, in the heat of the crowded hutch, to make any sense of it; shaking their heads in the terrible bewilderment of the defeated. (The rate of illiteracy, up to 50 per cent and higher, is three and four times that of the non-plantation sector.) But the others, the younger, will give you the whole chapter and verse of it: the systematic cheating, devilish in its intricacies, of the plantation workers' wages.

"Even in our meagre earnings, we are cheated," they say; "every one of the field staff steals from us"; "only a quarter of the workers know how to deal with it and check the details." There are "mistakes" made in the large deductions (up to 95 per cent) from earnings under the truck system. They get less weight in their rice, sugar and flour advances, particularly when children collect the rations, than they are charged for. Even the numbers of days worked can be wrongly booked.

And above all, the women especially are deceived by the checkweighman over the poundage in their baskets. It is not just the deductions made for moisture (up to two kilos) in the rainy season, or for the weight of the basket itself (up to one kilo). But they will be cheated about how much they have actually picked, with some of the extra unpaid weight being booked over to favourites, for a percentage backhander. Moreover, the balance excess tea, from entirely unbooked poundage, is sold off privately in bulk at the tea warehouses, as in Hatton, and the proceeds split between the overseers.

But on the plantations, protest or refusal to cooperate brings victimisation. "We are sent to do harder work as punishment," clearing hillside undergrowth, or digging 125 holes in a day for seedlings, back-breaking labour for the older workers. "Troublemakers" will be put to work in isolation, out of touch with the other field hands; or given work where the overseers, or their favourites, can keep an eye on them. The compliant get the easier jobs, and payment for poundage stolen from the other workers. "When a superintendent leaves," I was told, "he will even introduce his favourites to his successor."

By now, it was night on the plantation. Outside, hoarse and guttural, frogs were croaking in the silence. And, then: the estate superintendents "have their own private gardens and herds of cattle. We work, and the estate pays." (That is, as R. R. Sivalingam, a leading Hatton attorney, confirmed later, "the costs are charged to the state, and the labour is provided by the estate workers.") In a chorus, I was given the last details: "there is no choice, working for them privately is treated as estate work. You are allocated the work and have to do it." According to Sivalingam, some of the superintendents have even built homes in Kandy, with World Bank money and materials allocated for rehousing the plantation workers.

They laugh here at UNICEF, with plantation managements diverting international funds for "welfare training," or health supervision, or nursery provision; with 9,000

teachers short on the plantations, the estate schools like cattle sheds, and only 10 per cent of plantation children still in school by grade five, or age eleven.

Lay Christian bodies, like the Christian Workers' Fellowship, and distinguished Jesuits like Father Paul Caspersz and his Satyodaya Movement, try—by "social action," adult education, publicity and protest—to make good gross deficiencies in public health, in welfare, in education, with the meagrest of resources. They are beacons in darkness.

### Deathly laughter

But despite these efforts, they laugh in the line rooms at the "labour laws," with a minimum age for workers of 14, and girl children of ten and eleven hired despite it "on a contract basis." (To say nothing of widespread chemical spraying, without the slightest protection.) They laugh—the laughter is deathly—at the workers "Provident Fund," which should provide a lump sum, to which they have contributed from wages, on retirement. Workers at the Drayton plantation have been given no account, since "nationalisation," of how much is lying to their credit. And there are no pensions.

The commonest journey's end, is on the plantations. You can see the unnamed mounds, body-shaped tumuli—sometimes with small metal crosses at their heads—beside and even beneath the tea bushes. They are buried on the tea lands, along the estate roads and pink pathways. "The tea grows over them," said Jeffrey Abayasekera, a lay Christian worker.

The death grant is 25 rupees (60p). A coffin costs 120. Though they may sometimes be able to call on a distress fund, they are too poor to afford the wood for a Hindu cremation. Not even their priests come. It is usually far out of the way, and in any case they are outcastes. "Even our bodies are manure for the tea bushes," someone said quietly, in the stifling hutch, breaking the abyssal silence. There needs to be a threnody for all this, to reach heaven. Or, better still, one great revolutionary act, to sweep it all into oblivion.

As it is, the Sri Lankan tea economy, losing some of its traditional markets in Europe and America to North African and Indian plantations, is slowly contracting. As world prices fall, the tea acreage and the workforce are shrinking together. Some of the estates are even being handed back to the private sector and allowed to run wild, before clearance and Sinhalese occupation.

And as you drive down from Nuwara Eliya, the "sanatorium of Ceylon"—with its race track (and hurdles) at 6,000 feet, Tudor gables and Morris Minors, a Victorian Scotland, glens and all, but for the teak and bo-trees—you can see where a new population of Sinhalese is being settled, in the name of "rural development," or "village expansion," on the premium tea lands. The work of enslaved Tamil generations is being cleared away for Sinhalese housing estates, carved out of the tea bushes. It is these new settlers who, as in 1977 and 1981, have brought increasing racial violence.

### Waking from the nightmare

But in the line rooms you may find, too,

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plans of J.R. Jayawardene may go wrong.

Although it was not unexpected that the TULF will not field a candidate in the elections, its call to the Tamil people not to participate has distinctly displeased the J.R. Jayawardene camp and upset its calculations. While he would not have wanted the TULF to openly support him, for it would have had a backlash effect among the chauvinistic sections of the Sinhalese, J.R. Jayawardene

would have naturally expected the TULF to be at least silent.

With the TULF's half-hearted call for non-participation, and Mr. Kumar Ponnambalam contesting, it is possible and likely that substantial sections of the Tamil speaking people will exercise their votes.

The crucial importance of the ethnic minority votes has been realised by all the candidates. That is why, J.R. Jayawardene and Hector Kobbekaduwa, who would have, in accordance with their past

record, normally engaged in a contest of outbidding each other to prove who was the more authentic pro-Sinhala Buddhist leader, are today seen trying their utmost to show how reasonable they have been and will be to the ethnic minorities. For instance, the SLFP nominee, Hector Kobbekaduwa, who is not noted for his reasonable attitude to ethnic minorities in the past, would appear to have met the leaders of the plantation workers' unions whose membership is predominantly Tamil speaking, and

given five basic assurances in writing: repeal of the Terrorism Act; payment of compensation to all victims of communal riots since August 1977; all wage increases awarded since 1977 to other workers also to be given to plantation workers; solutions to any matters affecting plantation workers such as citizenship, land acquisition, etc. to be worked out in consultation with trade unions; and teaching appointments in schools in the plantation areas to be given to educated youth from the plantation areas.

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if you look, cut-out portraits of Marx and Lenin. At Drayton, there is even a plantation child called Brezhnev. The more militant unions, such as the Red Flag Plantations Workers' Union and the National Union of Workers, though still small, are growing. After generations of inertia, they talk of unity and class struggle.

Moreover, in the Northern Province, the Ceylon Tamils are engaged in an increasingly bitter struggle for secession and an independent state of their own in Sri Lanka, "Tamil Eelam." And it is fear of further Sinhalese pogroms against the plantation workers, in reprisal for the distant violence

of their indigenous Tamil brethren, which is slowly bringing the two Tamil communities closer together.

This is a population, once imprisoned in the line rooms, which is forcibly on the move: by deportation and recurrent flight from racial attacks. Waves of lemming-like internal migration have already taken tens of thousands—there are 50,000 in the Vivuniya district of North-Central province alone—into the Ceylon Tamil heartlands. And the younger generation, in particular—like their brother *harijans* in northern India—are slowly waking from the long nightmare on the plantations.

"There is no possibility of the rest of them now being chased back to India," says

S. C. Chandrasenan, a Colombo lawyer and one of the most militant of the Ceylon Tamils' political leaders. "There is no alternative for them but to move into the traditional Tamil areas. Every further act of communal violence against them will expedite it." But, until then, hundreds of thousands of plantation Tamils will remain in the line rooms, unreached by Marx, or Christ, or "Eelam."

"Some day," says Chandrasenan, "there will be a Tamil exodus from the plantations." Meanwhile, they wait for a Moses in their crowded hovels; toiling for our daily cuppas under their Sinhalese paraohs.

(By kind courtesy of "NEW SOCIETY")

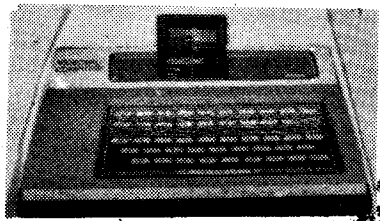
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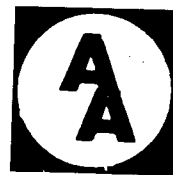
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## LETTERS

### UNSEEN DESPOTISM

However much the Government of Sri Lanka and its emissaries abroad may endeavour to paint a glowing picture of the harmonious relations prevailing within the island between the races, they cannot conceal the fact that the Tamils of Ceylon are facing the gravest crisis in their long and chequered history.

To be or not to be, to survive or go completely under - that and no less than that is the question that stares every true Tamil in the face. During the 35 years of Independence, they have been reduced to sheer servitude and utter impotence in national life.

This is what exactly happens, as Viscount Bryce has said in his celebrated treatise, DEMOCRACIES, "If the racial group constitutes a majority in the Chamber, it is omnipotent. It can count on passing all its measures ..... The Chamber, have ceased to deliberate, has become a mere voting machine, the passive organ of an *unseen despo-*

*tism*". The Tamils thus became the helpless victims of an unseen despotism.

The traditional Tamil homelands, governed by Tamil rulers for centuries, attained a high standard of civilized life long before many nations of today were born. That eminent Sinhalese ethnologist and antiquarian of international repute, a gentleman besides of high integrity and perspicacity, the late Dr. Paul E. Peiris, said "Long before the arrival of Vijaya, there were in Lanka five recognized *Isvarams* of Siva which claimed and received the adoration of all India. They were Thiruketeeswaram near Mahatittha, Munniswaram dominating Salawatta and the Pearl Fishery, Tandeswaram near Mantota, Thirukoneswaram opposite the great Bay of Koddyar, and Naguleswaram near Kankesanthurai. Everyone must concede that the chief influence which has been exercised on the Sinhalese Court throughout its history was the Dravidian interests of South India. I am

of the opinion that long before the arrival of Vijaya the country had been fully occupied by Dravidian races. I hope the Tamil people will realize that in truth there is buried in their sands the story of much more fascinating development than they had hitherto dreamt".

In 1948, Britain, which held sovereignty over the whole Island, granted it its Independence. It was Independence granted, be it remembered, not merely to Sinhala Ceylon but to Tamil Ceylon in equal measure. In the interests of both the peoples, Britain advocated the continuance of the administrative union which Tamil Ceylon accepted only when adequate safeguards were provided. They were assured that there would be no discrimination on racial grounds; there would be equal opportunity for all and merit would be the sole criterion for participation in public affairs.

What surprises one most is that since 1948 everyone of these safeguards was consigned to the dustbin and in stead all manner of disabilities were imposed on the Tamils. 'Mathematical' democracy, the rule of superior numbers, made democracy a mere mockery. When the Tamils protested, all forms of State violence were let loose on an unarmed and defenceless

people.

The Tamils who are proverbially a peace-loving, law-abiding people, averse to violence of any sort except as a last resort, bore all the barbaric excesses with patience, hoping against hope that justice would sooner or later prevail and relief would come. They parleyed with whichever Party was in power, and made Pacts with the rulers, whoever they were, in the fond hope that truth and justice would ultimately triumph.

That prescient political thinker, Edmund Burke, once said that racial hostilities often leading to open war spring from one race denying the just rights of another race and added, "Think seriously of the folly of allowing any body of persons within the State to foster resentment against denial of rights which they feel to be part of their just due".

The sentences quoted above depict truly the racial scene in Sri Lanka after Independence. The Sinhalese, by virtue of their superior numbers, have succeeded in depriving the Tamils of their just rights and in rendering them wholly impotent in national affairs. Resentment has accumulated over the years and may burst out with results disastrous to both peoples.

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### DIVIDE & RULE, JR STYLE

Subtle and consequential, it would appear Sir Editor, to the debacle that was JR's helicoptering election tour of the Peninsula, was the offer of a separate Administrative District to the people of Kilinochchi (a small town in the district of Jaffna)

It was reported that this offer was greeted with thunderous applause by the claque that had milled round him. "He had the power", the Sun reported (5.10.82), "to create a new District". The offer was made gratuitously and only after the soliciting question had been put to them, whether they wanted a separate District of Kilinochchi. There was a loud yes (a resounding OHM)

from the crowds, and it was further reported, the promise followed.

The Vanni, which earlier had consisted of the administrative Districts of Vavuniya and Mannar, was further divided not many years ago with the creation of the Mullaitivu District. Kilinochchi too was then being prepared for secession as from above Elephant Pass, which is Peninsular Jaffna, and it was only stiff opposition from the NP members of Parliament that saved it from administrative severance from the District of Jaffna.

What is in the mind of the

Contd. on page 13

## EVENTS

### SARASWATHY POOJA

The West London Tamil School will celebrate **SARASWATHY POOJA** on Saturday, 23 October at 11 a.m. at Stanhope Middle School, Mansell Road, Greenford, Middlesex. All friends and well wishers are welcome.

Those who wish to join classes in Tamil, dancing, music and veena are requested to telephone 01-904 3937.

\*\*\*

### DEEPAVALI LUNCH

On 14 November, S.C.O.T.'s Deepavali Lunch will take place at Lola Jones Hall, Greaves Place, Off Garratt Lane, London SW17. For tickets and other particulars, please contact Mr. R. Mahadeva, General Secretary, SCOT, 69, Streatfield Road, Harrow, Middlesex (Tel: 01-907 6836).

\*\*\*

### ANNUAL CAROL SERVICE

The London Tamil Congregation which meets at Putney Methodist Church, London SW15 will hold its annual Carol Service on Sunday 19th December at 3.45 p.m. There

will be a rendering of specially composed Christmas Carols on this occasion under the direction of the congregation's Choir Leader, Vathany Thangiah. The Christmas message will be delivered by Canon Sebastian Charles of Westminster Abbey.

\*\*\*

### S.C.O.T. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The Fifth Annual General Meeting of the Standing Committee of Tamil Speaking People, (S.C.O.T.) will be held at 5 p.m. on Saturday, November 6, in the Little Hall, Revelstoke Road, Wimbledon, London SW18.

\*\*\*

### WOMEN, IMMIGRA.....

A conference organised by Women, Immigration and Nationality Steering Group and the Women's Committee of the Greater London Council will take place on Sunday, 24 October, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at County Hall, Waterloo, London SE1. All women are welcome. A creche for children will be provided.

\*\*\*

## ABOUT PEOPLE

### Research Prize

A Lankan priest, Fr. A.J.V. Chandrakathan of the Jaffna Diocese, was recently declared the winner of a \$1,500 prize by MISSIO, the founding society of the West German Bishops' Conference.

Fr. Chandrakathan won the prize for his research on "CHURCH'S ENCOUNTER WITH CULTURE IN SRI LANKA", a study on contextual theology in the light of the Ecclesiology of Vatican II.

### P.H.D

Mr. M.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.

In his early years, Mr. Hoole was educated at Chundukuli Girls School and later at St. John's College, Jaffna.

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

## EQUAL CHANCES FOR ALL SRI LANKA CITIZENS

Citizens of Sri Lanka registered under the Indian and Pakistani Citizenship Act, will not be discriminated against in future by any Government department. Though the Constitution states that all citizens, whether by descent or registration, are equal and they must be categorised as citizens of Sri Lanka, in practice whenever appointments are made the applicant is asked to say to which category he belongs.

In a circular sent to all Government departments by the Secretary of Public Administration this week, the heads of departments were told that for filling vacancies no question should be asked whether the applicant is a citizen by descent or registration.

Under the provision of the Indian and Pakistani Citizenship Act of 1948, certain restrictions such as purchase of land, etc. had been placed against citizens by registration. These restrictions have been removed in the 1978 Constitution placing all citizens on an equal footing.



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## TAMIL PASSENGERS ATTACKED & ROBBED

It has happened again and again, and now again. On Tuesday the 21st at 2 a.m. passengers in the Jaffna bound Colombo mail train were attacked and robbed by armed thugs. This time their target has been very selective: the robbed passengers were the slightly well-to-do Tamils travelling in the thirdclass sleeperette with consideration for comfort and security.

### THUGS GOT IN AT GALGAMUWA

The armed thugs are believed to have boarded the train at Polgahawela and Galgamuwa and had been travelling in the train's buffet car; when the train passed Omanthai, about 20 of them joined by aerated water vendors, had rudely awakened the sleepy passengers, armed with what appeared to be revolvers, knives and broken bottles, and had blocked the exits so that the 50 passengers in the compartment couldn't escape to other

compartments. Many passengers through fear had voluntarily handed over their jewellery, thalikodis, wrist watches, cash and suit cases.

One aged lady had found it difficult to remove her 20 sovereign thalikodi from her neck; a thug, after minutes of struggle, had wrenched the thalikodi, leaving the lady injured. 18 year old Gowri after parting with one of her "gypsy" ear rings had found it difficult to remove the other from her ear; a thug had violently extracted it with part of Gowri's ear!

A man who attempted to retaliate against the thugs was stabbed in the chest with a broken soda bottle. Another woman who was stabbed with a broken soda bottle fainted immediately. The thugs are reported to have jumped off the train with their booty when the train slowed down at a point close to Puliyankulam.

It was surprising, according to the passengers, that though they repeatedly pulled the emergency chain the train failed to stop. But after the looting, the train had slowed down very conveniently at a particular point enabling the thugs to jump off. The cabin-boy John Korlagamage too had left the doors of the sleeperette compartment open, whereas it is normally locked from the inside. The police have taken both the engine driver and the cabin-boy into custody.

The Police have arrested three youths in the Omanthai jungles with 13 wristlets, jewellery and cash. They were produced on the 22nd before the Vavuniya Magistrate. They are **Abeyasinghe Dissanayake, J. Chandrapala and G.L. Premadasa. The Magistrate, Mr. K.D.M.K. Pethagoda has ordered that the suspects be**

Contd. from page 5

thick cultural artefacts, specially black-and-red ware, in the earliest phase of that site, dating to the 2nd century BC.

One noticeable fact at Annaikoddai was the discovery of a large number of potsherds with graffitti marks comparable with those of South India. No Buddhist, Jain or Brahminical influence is revealed by any one of these finds. The Pomparippu finds compare in some cases with those at Adichanallur in the Tinnevely District, which some date as early as the 9th century BC.

One is reminded on this

Contd. from page 11

President is not hard to divine. Peninsular Jaffna had always been a thorny nettle to grasp and the holding of it from Metropolitan Colombo has not been a pleasurable pastime since the 1930's. If the Peninsula, inclusive of the islands, not distant from its S.W. coastline, has proved politically unresponsive to overtures of subordination from the South, would it not be a gesture of expedience to let them have it, politically autonomous, facing the consequences however portentous these may be, of abandonment

remanded and presented for an identification parade on 4-10-82.

Meanwhile, following telegraphic protests by the Presidential candidate Mr. Kumar Ponnambalam and Jaffna M.P., Mr. V.Yogeswaran, to Mr. J.R. Jayawardene, the President has ordered Mr. W.P. Rajaguru (D.I.G. Northern Range) to submit a comprehensive report on the incident. The A.S.P. (Jaffna) Janab Nizzam who is leading the investigations has questioned the General Commissioner of the Railways, regarding the following:

(a) Why the train failed to stop even though the emergency chain was pulled?

(b) Why the doors of the sleeperette - compartment were not locked?

(c) Why the eight security personnel who should normally be on duty failed to travel on the day of the incident?

occasion of the prophetic words of Dr. Paul E. Pieris, when he declared publicly at a meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society as far back as 1919: "I hope the Tamil people will realise that in truth there is buried in their sands the story of a much more fascinating development than they had hitherto discovered ... for, 2000 years ago, Jaffna was an important and flourishing district. Coins in abundance have been discovered indicating a flourishing condition of commerce not only in Roman times but far anterior to that."

to their recalcitrance and overweening sinister designs.

Such, to my hearing, had been the attitude of many among the majority, viz. to cut loose this running sore from the main body politic of territorial Lanka and nurse the integrated rest with all sagacity until the severed Peninsula is only a fading memory, the painfulness of which would have abated and ceased completely with the therapeutic passage of irreversible time.

E. SEEMANPILLAI

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## PRESIDENTIAL VISIT NORTH UNDER SECURITY BLANKET

A security blanket enveloped the northern part of the country during President J.R. Jayawardene's recent tension-packed tour of the Tamil areas as part of his election campaign. It is reliably learnt that J.R. undertook this trip against the strong advice of the National Security Council which feared organised violence by Tamil youth groups. In no way a testimony to his bravery, JR's visit to the Tamil areas demonstrates the importance he attaches to Tamil votes for his continued political survival as President.

Unprecedented security precautions characterised his arrival in the northern Tamil city of Jaffna on October 2. The elaborate security precautions included air cover, skilled marksmen positioned on roof tops of tall buildings, crack commando units, riot squads, experts in the use of metal detectors and mobile bomb disposal units.

His mode of transport was generally extra-terrestrial, a well secured helicopter flanked on either side by a helicopter full of security personnel armed to the teeth. The three helicopters remained always air-borne except when the President had to be at ground-level to address meetings. On these occasions, the President's car was in the middle preceded by a pilot car, a security vehicle and an advance security car; back-up police and commando units followed to meet any emergency. While skilled marksmen took up positions on roof-tops, the venues of meetings were closely guarded well in advance by police and military units.

A few days before the Presidential visit, an attempt was made by an unknown group to blow up the causeway that connects the mainland of Jaffna Peninsula and the island of Karainagar which is the base of the Sri Lankan Navy. Just before the arrival of the President in the

city of Jaffna, mysterious explosions occurred in the centre of the city. Government sources attributed the explosions to extremist Tamil youth groups who they said were bent on frightening away the people from attending the meetings addressed by the President.

### POLICE CRACK-DOWN

Despite the heavy police-army crack down against the organisers of the boycott and hartal campaign against President J.R. Jayawardene's visit to the North, all indications are that the response was substantial. Business establishments put up their shutters in spite of police promises of protection to all those who kept their shops open. Cinema shows were cancelled and minibus services were drastically curtailed. Some children boycotted schools.

The General Union of Eelam Students (GUES) and the Tamil Eelam Liberation Front, two of the main organisations which organised the campaign, became the chief targets for the police-army pre-emptive strike.

Three shots were fired from a passing vehicle at the residence of Dr. S.A. Tharmalingam, President of the TELF, around 12.30 a.m. on 30th September. The bullets damaged the walls and windows of the house. The Doctor who was sleeping at the time came out hearing the gunshots, but the vehicle had been driven away.

On the following day, many activists were taken into custody by the police and handed over to the army. A TELF youth activist, Devathasan and M. Davidson, the Secretary of GUES, were taken into custody by the police and turned over to the army. Davidson, who on hearing that he was being sought by the police, voluntarily surrendered to the police. The police detained him and it is learnt that he has now been transferred to the Anuradhapura Army Camp.

## LANKAN CRICKET MERCENARIES TO VISIT S. AFRICA

It is reliably learnt that a former Sri Lankan test player has privately organised a cricket team to tour South Africa commencing 19th October. The team is expected to include 6 Lankan test players. The former test player who has masterminded this tour from behind the scenes and in total secrecy has played as a professional in Britain and Netherlands. The players have been lured into the tour with the promise of payments ranging from one to one-and-a-half million rupees.

It is believed that the government of Sri Lanka is deeply worried about the impending tour. The government, following a recommendation from the Sri Lankan Cricket Board of Control, has decided to take all steps to prevent the tour taking place by invoking its international commitments, the Commonwealth Gleneagles Agreement and United Nations resolutions on contact with South Africa.

Apart from its international obligations, there is fear in Lankan government and cricket circles that the tour by

the cricketing mercenaries will provoke reprisals. The country obtained international test status only last year. They have already played India and Pakistan. The test tours of Australia and New Zealand are to take place next year. In the meantime there is an impending tour of Zimbabwe. These tours and even the test status accorded to Sri Lanka may be imperilled if the proposed tour is allowed to go ahead.

The Commonwealth Games Federation has already drawn up a code of conduct setting out what action a member association should take if there is a breach of the Gleneagles Agreement which bans sporting contacts with South Africa. A country risks suspension for gross non-fulfilment of the Agreement that imperils the games. And where infringements occur in sports outside the Games programme, these must be brought to the Federation's attention, while the national organisation must make known its opposition and request its government to adhere to the Gleneagles Agreement.

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