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 contestants going round the country holding rallies and meetings, the Lanka Sama Samajaya 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 Kobbekeaduwa, 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. Sirma 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. Kobbekeaduwa 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. Kobbekeaduwa 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 candidate.

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 Kobbekeaduwa 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. Kobbekeaduwa has further exacerbated the friction within the SLFP camp. Closely upstaged by a combination of his own sister, Chandrika and her husband Wijaya Kumaratunga and Mr.

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 Kobbekeaduwa [Sri Lanka Freedom Party], Dr. Colvin R. De Silva [Lanka Sama Samajaya Party], Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara [Nava Sama Samajaya 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 Kobbekeaduwa. Kobbekeaduwa, 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 to contest.

Kobbekeaduwa, Mr. Anura Bandaranaike was denied SLFP nomination. The disappointed Anura has intervened to tell the people that Mr. Kobbekeaduwa 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.

The surprise 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 15 minutes of broadcasting. Most importantly, the voices 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 six million persons will cast their votes. However, this average is likely to be up 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
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 Kobekaduwa, 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 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, and continued with greater vigour the UNP's policy of planned colonisation of Tamil areas. When the late Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, 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.

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, introduced 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 enactments 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 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.
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 Kobbehaduwa 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 candidate 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 Nana- yakkara. 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.

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 severely responsible for the innumerable acts of discrimination against the Tamil speaking people are going around the country, including 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 Ponnambal 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.
“DEATH SENTENCES-CRUEL & BARBARIAN” 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 Sirivardene) 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 Bharrista 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 DETAINEEES

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 4.00 and 6.00 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.

TAMIL TIMES

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A MEegalithic Burial Site at Anaikoddai, Jaffna

It is over fifty years since the first megalithic urn burial site in the Island was discov-
red 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-his-
tory 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 Anaikoddai, 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 compara-
able to Arikemudu 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 Pomparip-
pu, 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 Levers 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 disco-
voy 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 Gede 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,
Ibbanketuwu in the Matale district, Iitkala, Bambargas-
talawa, Kudumbigala and Pan-
namamoderagala.

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 sinhala megalithi published in 1967, wrote on page 7: “the megalithic sites
and urn fields are found throughout the regions inhabi-
ted 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 con-
tinued (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 to ac-
cept 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 chos-
en to call the bearers of this
culture Dravidians, we would
prefer to avoid names for the
present and to confirm our
attention purely to scientific
study free of political chauvi-
nism 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, Pro-
essor K. Indrapala, who is also
the Director of the Evelyn
Rutnam Institute For Inter-
Cultural Studies in Jaffna. A
senior lecturer, S.K. Sittpam-
lam, has now gained a
doctoral degree in Archaeo-
logy, 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 Univer-
sity of Mysore. They have a
set of keen and diligent
graduates working along with
them.

These scholars seem to attach
great importance to the discov-
ery at Anaikoddai. Jaffna
seems to have shared a
common culture with Tamil
Nadu in the pre-Christian and
early Christian centuries. Ro-
man rouletted-ware has been
found at such sites as Uraiay
and Kaveripatnam in Tamil
Nadu, and its presence at
Anaikoddai shows that Jaf-
nia too was, as Warming
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 Kantaradai
in 1970 had exposed megal-

Contd. on page 13

Dr. James T. Rutnam
“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 Kittunam 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.
GANAPATHY TEMPLE OF WIMBLEDON

BY RANI EMMANUEL

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, the Temple was first mooted, the religious and cultural practices of their fore-fathers. The project, 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.

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

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.
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 2,500 feet, the tea estates are pretty as a picture, bushies as neat as the topiary in a formal English garden.

Yellow and black fingerprints dot down russet paths to the plantations: Penrith and Kendiworth, Glen Loch, Hollywood and Dunedon. There are “gospel halls” and “factory churches,” as at Lurdulla, by the road-side, and superintendent’s bungalows (Westward Hill, Hill Lops, and so forth), some of them as staticky as mansions. Once the fans whirred over cane basket chairs, English and Scots accents, and the morning papers, bread and butter, tea, and milk. And then there could be the Malverns, the lawns were like lavender or green velvet. Things were well ordered, in the good old days.

When the car stops close in a green, steep, near-sheed tea slope, stepped in worn grey granite, you can see the tea pickers clearing the brambles of the full dairy tea baskets, they are running you can see on the instant from a calvary of labour; there are no more than little girls (though it is easy to confuse them, with their thin legs and stunted bodies), some tined old women, with pinched lemar-like faces, teeth pantaned; running near bent-double, like coalmen in our own old days; their mouths puckerred, 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 check-weightman. He enters the weights in a ledger-book, bangs the mallet on the table, and 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 exhalation, eyes long ago blanched 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 sate, in the same way, out of darkness; stalled, or penned, like cattle. On hillsides fresh with rain and verdant, these are blackened sheds, or huts: 70 per cent of them one-roomed, like lines of horse-boxes with the ribbed sides have given 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 damper-stained plaster, mementoes of lives un-regarded. 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 fumelling blue-grey from the shed doorways; and, gathering around you, children. (At ten or eleven, they seem six or seven, blue-black, just in flower in darkness.)

A solitary chair is dusted over quickly, with the back of a fluttered 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 anemia here in these sallow faces; serious under-nourishment in the pigion chest 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 (i.e. “untouchables”) as distinct from the two million indigenous and, in general, caste-Hindus “Ceylon Tamils,” who are mostly 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 1949 and 1949 left the “plantation Tamils” without a nation, stateless. The Parliamentary Elec-tions (Amendment) Act of 1959 took away their franchise. In 1964 and 1973, acts 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, and another 400,000 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 ter-rribly of their lifetimes of colonial drudgery on these hillside plantations, 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 to manage the thradom 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 Estates names—"tea plantations" (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 reno-vated in the last decade—there is still no hope, though still a sour smell in the damper-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, Kotigala, young Mathuraman, 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 whiteaway in the corner.

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), who paid 68 rupees to his landlord, the damper-stained man’s wife, who also paid half of the monthly instalments for the tea-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.

Mathuraman 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’ work, they “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)
for an empty stomach, and nothing of value for the pawning of, many of the workers steal—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, the scramble is between other women, especially.” Blackened by darkness, they became plantation slave hands before my eyes; Negros 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. Heavy, crossed 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. The deficiency diseases and their physical suffering 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. The women earn around 10 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 work. Their “muster” is at 6.30 am. If they are late, they will be stopped working for the day, and lose their pay. Then, at the “muster shed,” where the teabags 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 lead in the sky as they climb. And when they reach their places, you can hear them calling in unison to each other: “polio, polio, polio poli” (“may the baskets be full soon”).

They break at noon for an hour; humping their loads, usually three times a day, to the hilltops. They fill their baskets or, as they call them, chits, and begin to carry them on their backs. They finish at dusk but often do not reach the line rooms—and the cooking, the cleaning, the washing, the drying 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 raincapes, or, on some plantations, even their own baskets.

Some are much too bemused and weary, in the heat of the crowded hutches, to make any sense of it; shaking their heads in the terrible bewilderment of the defeated. (The rate of illiteracy, up to 55 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 on the 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 the 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 checkweighmen. Over the poungadage in theirtea days, is not just the deduction for the flour, for sugar and flour advances, but also for 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 their favourites, for a percentage backhander. The tea companies now balance excess tea, from entirely unbooked poungadage, 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 hard work and are punished.”

Clearing hillside undergrowth, or digging 25 holes in a day for seedlings, back-breaking labour for the older workers. “Troublemakers” will be put to work in isolation, out of the other field hands; or given work where the overseers, or their favourites, can keep an eye on them. “The only way to get easier jobs, and payment for poungadage 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 dark. 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. Sivilingham, a leading Hatton attorney, confirmed later, “the costs are charged against the estate, and the labourer is paid 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 Sivilingham, some of the superintendents have even bought homes in Kandy, with West Bank money and servants’ wages for rehousing the plantation workers.

They laugh here at UNICEF, with plantation management 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, have distinguished leaders like Father Paul Caspersz and his Sayodaya 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 beacon 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 fourteen, and girl children of ten and eleven hired despite it “on a contract basis.” (To save nothing of the3 deathly laughter “We work, and the estate pays.”) 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 Sivilingham, some of the superintendents have even bought homes in Kandy, with West Bank money and servants’ wages for rehousing the plantation workers.

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Contd. from page 1

plans of J.R. Jayawardene may go wrong.

Although it was not unexpec-
ted 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-hear-
ted 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 Kobekaduwa, 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
Kobekaduwa, 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 predomi-
nantly Tamil speaking, and
given five basic assurances in
writing: repeal of the Terro-
rism Act; payment of compen-
sation to all victims of commu-
nal 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 appoint-
ments in schools in the
plantation areas to be given to
educated youth from the
plantation areas.

Contd. from page 9

If you look, cut-out portraits of Marx
and Lenin. At Drayton, there is even a planta-
tion child called Brezhnev. The more mili-
tant unions, such as the Red Flag Planta-
tions 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 increas-
ingly 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 communi-
ties 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
Vavuniya 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. Chandrakanesan, a Colombo lawyer and
one of the most militant of the Ceylon
Tamils' political leaders. "There is no alter-
native for them but to move into the tradi-
tional Tamil areas. Every further act of
communal violence against them will
exceed 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 Chandarakanesan, "there
will be a Tamil exodus from the planta-
tions." Meanwhile, they wait for a Moses in
their crowded hovels; toiling for our daily
cuppas under their Sinhalese pharaohs.

(By kind courtesy of "NEW SOCIETY")
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 their long and chequered history.

To be or not to be, to survive or go completely - 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 despotism". 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, the late Dr. Paul E. Peiris, said "Long before the arrival of Vijaya, there were in Lanka five recognized Iswarams of Siva which claimed and received the adoration of all India. They were Thiruketheswararam near Mahatiritha, Muniswararam dominating Salawatta and the Pearl Fishery, Tandeswararam near Mantota, Thirukoneswararam opposite the great Bay of Koddar, and Naguleswararam 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.

S.R. PARAMSOTHY
London W5.

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DIVIDE & RULE, JR STYLE

Subtle and consequential, it would appear Sir Editor, to the debacle that was JR’s helicopter 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 ‘his offer was greeted with thunderous applause by the claue 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
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, Streatham 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, Vathyangiah. 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, Revestoke Road, Wimbladen, 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.

PH.D
Mr. M.R.R. Hoole, eldest son of the late Rev. Richard H.R. Hoole and Jeevanmary Somasundaram, has been awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Mathematic 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 third-class 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 Omanihi, 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, thalikodi, 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 Puliyanakulum.

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 Koralagamage 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 Omanihi jungles with 13 wristlets, jewellery and cash. They were produced on the 22nd before the Vavuniya Magistrate. They are Abeysinghe Dissanayake, J. Chandrapala and G.L. Premadasa. The Magistrate, Mr. K.D.M.K. Pethagoda has ordered that the suspects be 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?

Contd. from page 5

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

One noticeable fact at Annalikoddai was the discovery of a large number of potsherds with graffiti 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 Teynemvelly District, which some date as early as the 9th century BC.

One is reminded on this 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 2,000 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."

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 expediency to let them have it, politically autonomous, facing the consequences however portentous these may be, of abandonment 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
Batilicaloa
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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-territorial, 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 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 the Lankan government and cricket circles that the tour by the cricketers 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 bars 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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