

The Sansoni Commission Evidence

The Story of the Sri Lanka Race Riots 1977

No 15.

Saturday November 25, 1978

Re. 1.

'CLERK IN SARONG WANTED TO 'EAT THE FLESH' OF THE HEAD CLERK'

GURUNATHAPILLAI MAHESWARAN: Affirmed: 37 years: Technical Officer: 14/3 Kandamadam: Jaffna.

Q: You are presently the Technical Officer attached to the Local Govt. Department, Jaffna? A: Yes.

Q: On what date did you come to this office? A: On 4. 11. 77.

Q: Prior to that where were you working at? A: At the Executive Engineer's Office, Mihintale.

Q: For how long? A: For four and a half years.

Q: Where was your office situated? A: At Mahakandarawa.

Q: Where were you residing? A: In Govt. Quarters in the same area. There is a tank there in that area. A: No.

Q: There are no Tamil residents in that area? A: No.

Q: No Muslims either? A: Not to my knowledge.

Q: Can you recollect 17. 8. 77? A: Yes.

About 9 Tamil officers

Q: On 17. 8. 77. you attended office as usual? A: Yes.

Q: Who was your superior officer? A: The Executive Engineer Mr. Selladorai a Tamil gentleman.

Q: Was he on duty? A: He was on leave. He was not there.

Q: On that day how many Tamil officers were there?

A: About nine including the sub-ordinate grade- nine from my office and three from the Irrigation Office at Mahakandarawa.

Q: On the morning of the 17th did you hear anything?

A: At about 8.30 or 9 a. m. there was communal tension erupting in Anuradhapura area. Crowds were going here and there at junctions. People were attacking cars and vehicles. I also heard that there were Tamil shops at Anuradhapura which were looted and burnt.

Road blocked with logs

Q: That was at Anuradhapura and the suburbs? A: Yes.

Q: Was there any signs of it spreading to Mahakandarawa?

A: By 11 a. m. we had a reasonable indication of that.

Q: That was on 17. 8. 77? A: Yes.

Q: When you heard of this at Anuradhapura did you find out what happened?

A: I sent my office jeep with a Sinhalese and a Tamil officer to check on the stories.

The jeep proceeded towards Mihintale junction. The jeep could not proceed further.

Q: How many miles is it from Anuradhapura to Mihintale junction? A: About 12 miles. The jeep had been stopped by putting logs on the road. The jeep could not proceed. The jeep returned immediately to my office. They told me that the situation was very bad at Anuradhapura. They also said that crowds were assembling at Mihintale junction.

Q: At about 11 a. m. that day you had a definite indication that it was spreading to Mahakandarawa? A: Yes.

Q: Why did you think so?

A: Some workers said that some youths from the colony had assembled on the road which was an unusual thing.

One of the clerks working in the office - I. M. S. Arunatilleke was not seen in the office. That was on 17. 8. 77 in the morning. He came on a bicycle in a sarong and shirt at about 11 a. m. He came to the compound of the E.E.'s office. That is not the usual dress he wears to office. He was not seen in office prior to that. He asked for Mr. Sundaram the Head Clerk of the Office.

H. C. had left office early

Q: What did he ask you?

A: He said, "Ko H. C. pakaya (obscene word) His flesh must be eaten".

HE FLED



MIHINTALE

Q: Where was the H. C.?

A: He had left the office about an hour earlier. I did not know where he was.

Mr. Kodeeswaran: Q: Did the Head Clerk come to work? A: Yes.

Wanted to take personal revenge

Q: At the time Arunatilleke came there he was not there?

A: He was not there. Some Sinhalese who were standing there said that it was not the time to settle private scores, and to forget about that. He said that for what Mr. Sellathurai the Executive Engineer and he had done he must take revenge. We knew that our lives were in danger and we decided to get to our quarters and then go somewhere: so I went to my quarters.

They smashed doors & windows

Q: What about the other Tamils? A: Another officer made arrangements to send Mrs. Thillainathan who was expecting, to some Mudalali's house. I went to my room and tried to hide my articles. Between 12. 30 and 1 p. m., a gang of about 15 to 20 came marching gesticulating towards the house of Sundaram. His house is about 500 yards away. Later I heard that those people were from the colony and some others working in our division. I did not know them.

Q: Did they go to the quarters of Sundaram? A: Yes.

Q: What did they do there? A: They smashed the doors and windows and entered the house.

Q: You did not know whether Sundaram was there? A: I did not know.

Q: You were inside your quarters? A: Yes

Q: You saw Sundaram's house being damaged? A: Yes.

Q: Part of the crowd marched towards the quarters of the other Tamil officers? A: Yes.

Q: They did not advance towards your house? A: No.

Q: Your house was not attacked? A: Not at that moment.

Q: What happened there-after?

A: About 1.30 or 2 p. m., a labourer attached to my Department called Senanayaka came there when I was hiding there and said that a gang was coming towards my quarters and asked me to vacate the quarters. That was at 1.30 or 2 p. m. There is a patch of jungle behind our quarters. I immediately went there.

In the jungle from 2 - 5 p. m.

In the jungle I saw Balakrishnan and Shanthikumar from the Irrigation Department. The whole evening we were there. We thought that it was advisable to scatter and stay separately in the jungle. I moved on to a different hiding place. They continued to stay where the three of us were. I moved behind the house of a Sinhalese Overseer who was working with me. I stayed there till 5. p. m.

Q: The whole night you stayed in the jungle behind the overseer's quarters? A: Yes.

Q: On the following morning what happened?

A: I had contact with the Overseer called Shapin. He told me that after the attack on the houses the previous evening the gang would move into the jungle to search for the Tamils. He told me that it was dangerous for me even to say in the jungle. He advised me to go to another

(Continued overleaf)

"Those who do not remember the past are condemned to relive it"

- Santayana - American philosopher 1863-1952

(Continued from page 1)

Sinhalese Technical Officer and then go somewhere. Then I managed to get through the jungle to the house of Jayatilleke the Store Keeper of our Division.

A day & night in the chena

Q: Where was the Sinhalese Overseer, Shapin's quarters?
A: That was at Makandarawa.

Q: You went to Jayatilleke the store keeper? A: Yes. With the help of Jayatilleke we arranged for Jinadasa's car to take me and another officer Thillainathan to a hut in the chena in Seepakulam which was six miles away. We stayed in the chena during a day and a night. On the 19th morning a jeep came with two armed police constables, and the grama sevaka and took us. Thillainathan was with me at Seepakulam. Mrs. Thillainathan was with Appuhamy Mudalali in his house. We collected her and went to Anuradhapura Kachcheri. From Anuradhapura Kachcheri we came to Jaffna on the 20th.

Q: At the Anuradhapura Kachcheri camp, how long did you stay? A: For a day and a night.

Refugees were all standing

Q: What was the condition of the camp there? A: All the refugees were standing.

Q: You came by bus to Jaffna? A: Yes.

Q: Did anything happen on the way from Anuradhapura to Jaffna?

A: There were six or seven buses in the convoy. Near Parasangawewe stones were pelted at our bus.

Q: Any other incident on the way?

A: I had a frightening experience near Paranthan. I was travelling by bus up to Murikandy. Mr. Thillainathan was accompanying us in the convoy in his car. Mr. Thurairajah a typist from the Director's Office was also travelling in Mr. Thillainathan's car.

At Murikandy Mr. Thillainathan asked me to get into his car as we thought it was a safe area. I got into his car and we passed Paranthan and while we were between Paranthan and Elephant Pass an Army Truck was proceeding from Paranthan to Elephant Pass.

Made to kneel down on road

Between Paranthan and Elephant Pass we saw a lorry coming from the direction of Jaffna. The Army men in the truck mentioned the lorry to stop. We were also asked to halt. We halted. The soldiers in the truck had rifles.

We saw the army men ordering the passengers from the lorry to get down and line up on the road kneeling. They were asked to kneel down on the roadside. Some pointed the rifles at them

An Army Lieutenant I think had a sterling gun with him. He came to the car in which I was travelling.

He asked Mr. Thillainathan for his licence. We told him that we were refugees and that we had nothing. We explained to him our condition and the situation in which we were left. Then he reprimanded us. He asked us where we were going. We said that we were going to Jaffna. Then he asked us why we were going to Jaffna. We told him that we were refugees coming from Anuradhapura and that we left the convoy at Murikandy and that we were proceeding alone.

He seemed to be in a mood. He asked whether we could be more safe at Jaffna than at Anuradhapura. Thillainathan and I were asked to get down from the car and raise our hands.

Keep mouths shut, he said

Commissioner: Was this Lieutenant a Sinhalese or a Tamil?

A: He was talking in English. I suspect that he was a Sinhalese who had worked with Tamils. He wanted us to keep our mouths shut otherwise he wanted to fire. He pointed his sub-machine gun at us.

While he was interrogating us another army officer was pointing his gun at Mrs. Thillainathan who was seated in the rear seat of the car. She was crying. The car was also searched. He asked us where we were staying. He asked us where we were going.

When I said that I studied at the Technical College he wanted to know whether I knew one Siriwardene. I think he was a technical officer. He wanted us to keep our mouths shut when we got to Jaffna. Then we got into the car and came to Jaffna.

Q: On the evening of the 17th your house was looted?

A: On the 17th night after 9 p.m., it was looted. I lost all my belongings.

Q: You do not know who looted your house?

A: At that time I did not know but now I know.

I came to Jaffna and went unofficially on the 22nd September for the first time. On the 22nd September I found that my house had been entirely looted. I made attempts to recover my property.

The first man to help me was the jeep driver of the office, Amarasena. He told me that he was able to save a few items of my furniture and that those things are with him. He asked me to take them.

Q: What are those items?
A: Dressing table, baby cot and few other items.

I asked him where he had kept those items. He told me that most of the articles have been kept in the office depot at Seepukulama, six miles away. I asked him why they were kept there. He said it will be more safer there. He could not give me a plausible reason.

Q: Did you take those articles on the 22nd?

A: I had no vehicle to collect those articles.

Q: What did you tell him?
A: He asked me for a letter. He said 'the police are now searching for looted articles and if your things are with me, they could suspect me for retaining looted articles'. So he asked me to give him a letter saying that my things

Q: So, tell us the steps that you took?

A: Between the 1st and 10th October, through my Director, Head of Department, I contacted Mr. Liyanage S.P. Anuradhapura and asked him to help me to recover the looted items. He arranged a Sub-inspector of Police and two constables to help me.

"We left in a jeep to search Amarasena's house. Amarasena was not there. His wife and his cousin or somebody was there. S. I. asked me to search and take whatever things I claimed as mine. No help was coming from the police. I alone had to search the house, pull out the things and collect them.

"I took much more items under his bed, inside his cupboard and told the policemen 'these are mine'.

Q: Were there any items that were in dispute?

A: My iron crow bar and some kitchen utensils. Ama-

Constables kept quiet

To Commissioner:

"At Mihintale when I was returning with my recovered looted articles in a departmental lorry accompanied by the police, the lorry was stopped at Amarasena's wife's house and her relations, two of them, rushed to the lorry, got into the lorry and abused me. The constables did nothing.

Q: So, they kept quiet?

A: Yes. It was a humiliating experience to recover our looted articles in the presence of the police. Thereafter, I did not make any attempt Sir.

Examination: etc.

Q: One of your complaints is that the police did not help you to recover?

A: Yes.

Q: What is the total loss you would have suffered?

'It happened between Paranthan & Elephant Pass

could be kept at his place till I called for them. I knew him well. He has helped Mr. Sundram to escape the previous day. He was very helpful to us. So, I gave the letter to him.

Q: Thereafter, what did you do?

A: Some of my Sinhalese friends on the next day told me that I had done a foolish thing in giving him a letter and that the persons who looted my quarters on the night of the 17th were Amarasena, Stores labourer Senaratne and the Store keeper Jayatilake.

"So, I happened to go to Amarasena's house. He said he had seen some of my articles thrown into the jungle opposite his quarters. Then, when I looked through his window, I saw much more than what he said. Then he got excited.

"So, by this time, I knew that the people who had come to help us on the 17th and 18th had been actually involved in looting our things

rasena's family disputed and said that they belonged to them. The axe was also in dispute. Police Officer asked me whether I had any identification mark to prove whether the axe was mine. I immediately gave the identification mark.

Dispute over crow bar

"Regarding the crow bar also there was a dispute and they asked me for any identification mark. I could not give any mark except for the fact that it was a piece of iron bar. He said the disputed items should be taken to the police station and after inquiry it will be handed over to the proper owner.

Q: Did you get your things back?

A: I got my things back from the place where they were hidden. There was no dispute regarding the other items. The police could have investigated and recovered the other looted items, but they did not do so.

A: Rs. 30,000/-. Out of this, I have recovered goods to the value of Rs. 5,000/-

Not paid any compensation

"I came to Jaffna on the 20th of August, 1977. My salaries were paid here. My August salary was paid in the early part of September. Thereafter, my salaries were paid regularly. I was not paid any compensation. I was paid only the three months salary advance recoverable in instalments.

Q: Then you did not want to go back? You wanted a transfer?

A: By that time I was already on transfer orders.

"I have put ten years service as a Technical Officer and four years as a Supervising officer. In all, I have put 14 years. In August, 1977 my consolidated salary was 460/-. I have lost now over Rs. 25,000/-. I am asking compensation in a sum of Rs. 25,000/-. This Rs. 25,000/- is my entire life savings.

(Continued next page)

DEPUTY SOLICITOR GENERAL CALLS INSPECTOR GURUSAMY:

(8th MARCH 1978)

Mr. G. P. S. de Silva calls Inspector Gurusamy.

Mr. Bartlett: I wish to know whether my learned friend is calling Inspector Gurusamy as one who has submitted a memorandum to speak in terms of item 1 and 2 of the Terms of Reference or is he calling him to speak about his presence in some place or is he calling him as a person who is giving information. I want to know whether he is presenting a

case or whether he is calling him as a witness. The Commission will at some stage notice this person as one who had participated. Gurusamy has figured in regard to some of the activities in connection with the break-down of law and order in this place.

Mr. de Silva: The witnesses have spoken to Inspector Gurusamy's presence,

Mr. Bartlett: Gurusamy's name transpires with regard to the rifle that was taken from Thilagar. It had been falsely produced before the

Magistrate at the Inquest proceedings as having been taken at the scene of the shooting. Secondly with regard to the false message that was sent across. Thirdly, even in today's evidence it was stated that he was present at the hospital premises when the patient was taken by the Police Officers.

Mr. Shanmugalingam: We have not yet concluded the evidence. My Senior would like to cross-examine this witness. Your Honour will have to decide whether Gu-

rusamy is one of the persons on whom Your Honour will issue notice if there is evidence to explain his conduct. The Inquest evidence is not over. I do not know why he is being called now.

Mr. de Silva: I asked my learned friend whether they are calling him. More than one witness stated about the presence of this witness.

Commissioner: That makes no difference to me. I will express my finding. If Mr. Silva wishes to call him now let him do so.

I do not think Mr. Silva is taking any particular stand.

Mr. Shanmugalingam: If he refers to the rifles, we will reserve our cross-examination.

Mr. G. P. S. de Silva: The idea of the commission sitting here is to facilitate persons who are here to give evidence. I have no pre-conceived notions or theories. I merely want to assist this Commission. My learned friends can ask any number of questions, or they can recall any number of witnesses. I have no objection.

PONNUSAMY GURUSAMY, affirmed, 55 years, Inspector of Police, Jaffna.

Q: How long have you been attached to the Jaffna Police station? A: Three years.

Q: When did you assume duties in Jaffna?

A: In June, 1974.

Q: And you were a Sub-Inspector at that time?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you know a person by the name of Sinathamby Thilagar?

A: Yes.

Q: He was a hospital overseer attached to the Jaffna hospital? A: Yes, I know him well.

Q: You know his family also, his children? A: Yes.

Q: You know at least where he lived in August, 1977? A: Yes.

'I did not go there'

Q: That is along Hospital road, Jaffna? A: Yes.

Q: On 16th August, 1977 in the morning, had you occasion to go into the house of Mr. Thilagar? A: No.

Q: I am asking you this question because evidence had been given before His Honour that you had entered the house of the witness Thilagar and you had spoken to his children on the morning of the 16th August, 1977?

GURUSAMY DENIES ENTERING THILAGAR'S HOUSE

A: I have not been there.

Q: Were you present at any time when the police had entered the house of Thilagar and removed a rifle or fire arm belonging to him? A: No.

Q: Do you know his daughter called Vami?

A: I know his daughters, but I cannot remember the names. I know that he has a son by the name of Rajakumar.

Q: Did you see either Vami or Rajakumar in their house on the 16th? A: I did not go to the house.

Q: (Shown X53) How will you describe this book?

A: Telephone register No. dated 14. 8. 77 to 23. 8. 77.

Q: That is the period covered by X53? A: Yes.

Q: Can you explain what is meant by the telephone register?

A: The telephone register is maintained at the police station to record all messages that go out from the po-



'A telephone register was maintained at the Police Station...'

lice station. The messages that come to the station are also entered in this register.

Q: Does it refer only to telephone messages or other messages also?

A: All messages are entered in this register.

Q: Whether they are messages that come from outside or whether they are messages that go out from the police station? A: Yes.

Q: (Shown X53 (a)) is a telephone message sent from the S. P. Jaffna to the I.G.P.? A: Yes.

Q: According to X53 (a), at what time was this message sent? A: On 17. 8. 77 at 1100 hrs.

Q: Is that the time at which it was recorded or is it the time it was transmitted? A: Transmitted time.

(Continued overleaf)

'SOME EMPLOYEES HELPED, SOME LOOTED....'

(Continued from page 2)

"Mahakandarawa is about 12 miles from Anuradhapura town. You have to go 1 1/2 miles interior from the Anuradhapura - Trincomalee road.

Some helped, some looted

Q: You also mentioned that some of the employees helped you and some of them looted? A: Yes. In fact, I went and stayed in my friend's quarters and he gave me meals that night.

Q: You also mentioned about the menacing experience you went through when you were coming to Jaffna where the army personnel lined up certain persons on their knees and got you to stand up with your hands raised? A: Yes,

Q: For how long were you asked to do that?

A: Our experience ended within about ten minutes.

He appeared to be hostile towards us. Thereafter he asked us to go away without carrying tales about what happened to us.

Q: What happened to the lorry load of people who were asked to kneel down?

30 to 35 were lined up

A: They were in that position till we left.

Q: How many people were lined up in this way?

A: About 30 to 35.

"Among them, some were old, some were young and some middle aged. They were kept on their knees with their hands raised.

No questions by Mr. G. P. S. de Silva.

Questioned by Mr. Balasubramaniam.

Q: After your experience is it possible for any Tamil officer to work in areas like Mahakandarawa?

A: It will be very unsafe. If I had been asked to go back, I would not have gone.

Further questioned by Mr. Bartlett:

"I made a statement to the Jaffna police on the 24th after I came here. I have a certified copy of that statement. (The statement is

marked P8). This was the first statement that I made to anyone in authority. My statement was recorded by PS 7882, Rodrigo.

"I also wish to mark a copy of my letter sent by me to the Co-ordinating Officer, Mr. Rudra Rajasingam dated 28-8-77 as P 8A. That sets out all my problems and my losses and I have also mentioned at the end of that letter the name of six people who were helpful to me and I have mentioned the names of two people to whom I have specifically mentioned to safeguard my property.

(Continued from page 3)

Q: The transmitted time is 11 a.m. on the 17th August?
A: Yes.

Q: Were you the officer-in-charge of the Radio Control room on the 17th August?

A: I was the officer-in-charge of the radio operation room.

Q: Is that different from what is called the radio control room? A: Yes.

I know the witness called P. C. Kumarasamy who gave evidence.

Q: On the 17th August, 1977 were you also in the same room in which P. C. Kumarasamy was working?
A: Yes.

(COMMISSIONER: What is that room called?

A: Operation room, Sir.

I said I was the officer-in-charge of that room.

Q: Were both of you working at the same table?
A: Yes.

Q: (Shown X53 (a)) Were you present at the time Head Quarters' Inspector Mr. Gunasekera came up to P. C. Kumarasamy and dictated this message? A: No.

Q: (Shown X53 (b)) X53(b) has been transmitted at what time?

'Transmitted at 11.05 a.m.'

A: On 17. 8. 77 at 1105 hrs.

Q: That is it was sent out from the Jaffna police station at 11.05 a.m.? A: Yes.

Q: Now explain X53 (b)?

A: This telephone register is maintained by the Operation room. (Shown X54) This is called the Wireless Telegraphic Register. It contains messages that go out from the police station. Once a message is written in X53, a copy of that goes to X54.

(Commissioner: Q: Who enters that?

A: There will be copies and they will have to paste that, Sir.

Q: Where is that kept?

A: That is kept in the radio room.)

Q: In X54 you get the original pasted?

A: And the copy is pasted in X53? A: Yes.

So, once the copy of the message is given to the Wireless Telegraphic room, he transmits to the station concerned?

Q: Now what is pasted as X53 (a) is also pasted in X54 and has been marked as X54 (b)? A: Yes.

Q: The original is pasted in X54 and the copy is pasted in X53? A: Yes.

Q: X53(b) reads as follows "Further to my message of just now, please cancel this message. Further message will follow"? A: Yes.

'I SENT CANCELLING MESSAGE: S. P. DID NOT KNOW' - GURUSAMY

Q: Look at both X53 and X54 and tell us at what time this message that I just read out to you was sent from the Jaffna police station?

A: X53 has been written out at 11-05 a.m.

(Commissioner: Q: Is the time written there?

A: The time is written in the register as 1105 hrs.

Q: Now the first message, that is X53(a), what time was it sent out of the police station. Look at both books and give the answer?

'Written earlier sent at 11 a.m.'

A: On 17-8-77 at 1100 hrs.

Q: That is the message referring to the attack on Naga Vihare was sent at what time? A: At 11 a.m.

(Commissioner: Q: So, it was written at 11 and transmitted at 11 a.m.?

A: No, Sir, it was written earlier. The time of writing is not mentioned.)

Q: What you say is the first message that is referred to in X53(a) was transmitted at 11 a.m. on 17-8-77?

A: Yes.

Q: Then the second message, that is X53(b), which cancels the earlier message was sent out at what time?

A: Written at 11-05 a.m. and sent at 11-15 a.m.

Q: In X53(a), the times are the same: written at 11 a.m. and transmitted at 11 a.m.? A: Yes.

Q: X53(b), who sent that message?

A: I sent that message.

Commissioner:

Q: I thought the messages are first written. Where was X53(b) written out?

A: It was written at W. T. O. room.

Q: By whom?

A: Wireless Operator Jacob,

Q: Were you present?

A: Yes.

Q: At what time?

A: At 11-05 a.m.,

Q: You dictated it?

A: Yes.

'I said: it was incorrect'

Q: What made you dictate this X53(b)?

A: I was the duty officer at that time, of the Operation Room. Suddenly I was summoned by the Radio Communication Centre in Colombo. I was summoned to the Radio Room. I was in another room. He questioned me about X53A, (X54). I told him that it was an incorrect message and to cancel same.

X53B reads as follows:

"Further to my message of just now please cancel this message. Further message will follow".

Q: Did any further message follow? A: No.

Q: In X53B you find the words, "From S.P. to I.G.P."?

A: Yes.

Q: Did the S. P. authorise this message?

A: No. He did not know about it.

Q: (Shown X54A) What does this message indicate?

A: It indicates the time, date, station — from what station to what station messages have been sent. The receiving officer and the despatching officer.

Q: (Shown X54A — witness is asked to read the message — the original of a message already marked X54A. He reads:

"From S.P. Jaffna to D.I.G. Range 2. Today at about

Mr. Bartlett: This is a case shifting the scene.

Commissioner: Q: How far is Pannai from the police station?

A: Quarter of a mile from the Police Station. It is behind the Fort.

Q: They were shooting within quarter of a mile of the Police Station, between the Police Station and these quarters? A: Yes.

Commissioner: At page 607 of the proceedings this message is marked "X54A".

Mr. de Silva: Q: At what time was this message 'X54A' sent? A: On 16-8-77 at 22-02 hours.

Q: Who was the D.I.G., in charge of Range 2?

A: Mr. Ana Seneviratne.

Q: Was he always in charge of Range 2? A: Yes.

Q: Does Jaffna come under Range 2? A: Yes. The message was sent to I.G.P., also.

A: The P. C., was not happy to stay there in the hospital. He complained that he was not being treated.

Q: Are you speaking from rumour or from what he told you?

A: He said that he was not being treated.

Q: When did he tell you that?

A: When I went to the hospital.

Q: On 16th August?

A: On the same day.

Q: Did you go to the ward and speak to him?

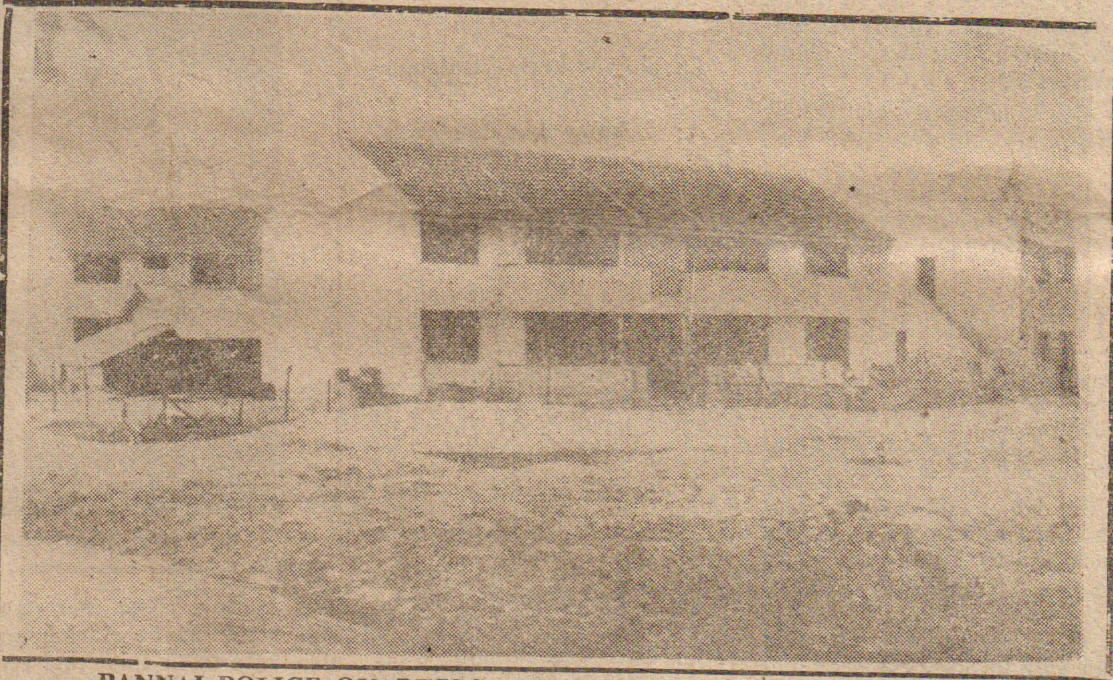
A: Yes, I went to the ward and spoke to him.

Q: Having spoken to him what did you do?

A: Later when he was discharged from the hospital he was taken to the Police Station.

'Sent to A'pura by plane'

Commissioner: Q: Later means after you spoke to him?



PANNAI POLICE QUARTERS: 'A case of shifting the scene' - Counsel

2100 hours (9 p.m.) a police party was sent in Jeep No. 4 Sri 9013 to check on the families of police officers of Jaffna Police at Pannai police quarters. On their return journey some persons who were ambushing had opened fire at police. PCs 979 Alwis and 13693 Nandasiri received some gun shot injuries. The rear glass and windscreen are damaged and there are pellet marks on the sides of the jeep. The two rifles carried by the officers are also damaged due to pellets striking the weapons. The men have to be necessarily removed to Colombo due to the situation here".

(Refers to page 607 of the evidence. The marking there should be X54A.)

'Shifting the scene'

Mr. de Silva: Q: Where is Pannai?

A: That is towards the beach, behind the Fort.

Q: Had you anything to do with "X54A"?

A: I was on duty when it was despatched.

Q: This morning you heard the evidence of that witness, Male Nurse Mylvaganam, who said that you were present at the time when P. C. Bandara left the hospital on the 16th? A: Yes.

Q: What were you doing there?

A: I was sent by the Headquarters Inspector, Mr. Godfrey Gunasekera, to go and see Bandara as he was to be taken to Anuradhapura Hospital. He wanted me to make arrangements to take him to Anuradhapura Hospital.

Q: What were you asked to do at the Hospital?

A: I was asked to see if he could be released to take him to Anuradhapura Hospital.

Q: Do you know why he was to be sent to Anuradhapura Hospital?

A: Yes, after I spoke to him.

Q: How long after?

A: About one hour or half an hour later.

Q: From the hospital where was he taken?

A: To the Police Station.

Q: From the Police Station where was he taken?

A: He was despatched by plane to Anuradhapura.

Q: Is it something which you heard or is it something that you know?

A: I am not sure.

Q: From Jaffna Hospital you took him to the Jaffna Police Station? A: Yes.

(Interval)

11-45 a.m. (Sittings resumed after interval)

(Continued next page)

PONNUSAMY GURUSAMY
Recalled and affirmed.

Mr. Shanmugalingam: With regard to the cross-examination of this witness on behalf of the T.R.R.O., I suggest that this witness may be called at a later date. My learned friend Mr. Kardigamar would cross-examine him on the 20th.

'I joined as P. C. in 1941'

Mr. Bartlett: Q: When did you join the Police Service?

A: I joined as a Police Constable in 1941. In 1952 I was promoted as Sergeant and in 1968 I was promoted as Sub-Inspector. Presently I am an Inspector. I was promoted to the rank of Inspector in 1976.

Q: During what month were you promoted as Inspector?

A: In May, 1976.

Q: For what period of time have you functioned as Sub-Inspector or Inspector in Jaffna prior to today?

A: From 1974 up to date.

Q: From what month in 1974? A: From June 1974.

Q: Was this the first occasion that you came to serve in Jaffna or were there other occasions?

A: This was the first occasion I came to serve in Jaffna.

Q: In June 1974?

A: Yes.

Q: From that period you have been continuously here as Sub-Inspector and Inspector from 1976? A: Yes.

Q: For what period have you worked under the Headquarters Inspector, Mr. Godfrey Gunasekera, prior to his transfer from this area?

A: From 1975 I have worked as Sub-Inspector under him.

H. Q. I. transferred from Jaffna'

Q: During what month was he transferred out of this area?

A: In January 1978. I am not sure.

Q: I put it to you that the Headquarters Inspector, Mr. Godfrey Gunasekera, was transferred out of this area somewhere in October, 1977? A: May be.

Q: That is a date which you can verify? A: Yes.

Q: He was transferred in October, 1977 after the August disturbances?

A: Yes.

Q: Was there a break-down of law and order in August 1977? A: Yes.

Q: Can you assist the Commissioner as to how you came to give evidence here - were you on summons or were you summoned over the telephone?

A: I was personally informed by the Deputy Solicitor General to be present here.

'I CANNOT REMEMBER DISCUSSING THE RIFLE'

Q: Did he send you a personal call? A: Yes.

Mr. G. P. S. de Silva: I asked the A.S.P., who is assisting the Commission to bring him here.

Mr. Bartlett: Q: You got the message from the Deputy Solicitor General communicated to you through the A.S.P., who is assisting the Commission? A: Yes.

'Asked to come on Saturday'

Q: On what date were you asked to come here?

A: Last Saturday.

Mr. Bartlett: Any number of people can be got on the telephone.

Q: You came here for the first time on Monday the 6th, into this hall on some message? A: Yes.

Q: That was the first day you were present here to give evidence? A: I have come here previously when the Commission commenced its sittings. I was detailed for duty.

Q: To give evidence here you came here for the first time on Monday the 6th?

A: Yes.

Q: Were you informed on what matters you were going

A: Here in this Court.

Q: He just told you, gun and the messages? - Nothing else? A: Yes.

Q: Did you or did you not know that Tilagar, his daughters and his sons have testified about certain matters which touched you in this case? A: Yes.

Q: You, I take it, knew it from the newspapers?

A: Yes.

Q: And that did not trouble you at all? A: No.

he asked you about the .22 rifle and you said "don't worry, we will return"?

A: I cannot remember.

Q: It is possible that he met you and inquired about the .22 rifle?

A: If that is so, I would have remembered.

Q: If Tilagar had testified that he met you and told you "please get me my rifle", that statement of his is false?

A: I don't remember the date. S.P. Jaffna went to hospital one day. I went along with him. There I met Tilagar and he asked the S.P. about the rifle in my presence.

'Schooling at Vembadi'

Q: I want you to answer my previous question: Is that statement of Tilagar before the Commission that he met you and requested you to secure the .22 rifle is true or false.

A: That is false.

Q: I take it that his statement that you told him 'I will try and secure your rifle' is also a false statement?

A: Yes.

Q: What is the kind of evidence that you have acquainted with - is it from the Tamil paper or the English paper?

A: I read all papers. I know his daughter Bami. Bami is about 16 years old. She is a school going child. She is schooling at Vembadi Girls' School.

Q: Have you questioned yourself with the evidence of Bami from the papers or from other source?

A: From the papers as well as others.

'The intention is possible'

Q: Do you know the evidence of Janaki? Were you informed of the evidence of this child Janaki by any person or did you read her evidence from the papers?

A: I read her evidence in the papers.

Q: This child does not bear any illwill towards you?

A: No.

Q: This child does not have to implicate you in anything without any kind of rhyme or reason?

A: I don't know.

Q: She can have the intention to implicate you?

A: Possible.

(Continued overleaf)



Victim of alleged Police rampage in the Jaffna market area in August 1977, being carried to the Jaffna hospital.

Q: Last Saturday was what date - or was it on Monday?

A: Saturday the 4th.

Q: I put it to you that you came here for the first time on Monday 6th March?

A: Yes.

Q: On that day you came to the Commission for the first time?

A: I have come here previously.

Q: For the first time you came here on summons and that was on the 6th and not on the 4th, is that correct?

A: Yes.

'I came here on Monday'

Q: The very first day you appeared on summons from the D. S. G., was on the 6th?

Mr. de Silva: I object to this kind of questioning.

to testify? A: I was informed personally by the D.S.G., that I will be called to give evidence.

'About the gun & the messages'

Q: Was it a personal message sent through the A.S.P.?

A: The A.S.P., summoned me. He asked me to come.

Questioning by Mr. Bartlett, ctd.

Q: And did the Deputy Solicitor General inform you that these are the matters on which you have to testify?

A: Yes.

Q: And he told you that you have to testify in regard to what matter - gun?

A: Yes.

Q: And? A: Messages.

Q: Where did he tell you?

Q: You did not seek on your own to come before this Commission and say "Sir, these items of evidence are untrue"? A: No.

Q: You did not communicate to any person at any stage that these items of evidence that Tilagar, his son, his daughter have testified here, before this Commission, are false?

A: I have not communicated?

Q: Now, you have testified to this Commission that Tilagar is a person who is known to you and the members of his family are known to you? A: Yes.

Q: And they reside at Hospital road, Jaffna?

A: Yes. I know their residence.

Q: And Tilagar said that you met him in hospital and

THE 'THATTAYA' STATEMENT WAS FALSE - GURUSAMY

(continued from page 5)

Q: Implicate you in order to get you into serious trouble in your Department?

A: Possible.

Q: And, therefore, you request this Commission not to act on the evidence of Janaki because it touches you, because she has some evil intention to put you in trouble? A: I won't say that.

'I cannot say either way'

Q: But Janaki's evidence is that on the 16th morning at about 9.30, several people ran across her house into the compound being chased by police constables you are aware of it? A: Yes.

Q: And that police constables chased these people into her house and kept on thrashing some of them including her younger brothers?

A: Yes.

Q: All that evidence, you say, is false and untrue?

A: I won't say that.

Q: That part of the evidence could be true?

A: I would not say it is possible or impossible.

Q: All the evidence of that little girl is that several people were being chased by police constable at the entrance of their house and some of them assaulted her brothers?

A: Yes.

'Must be having intention'

Q: Now if that is all the girl was going to testify before this Commission, that evidence does not identify any police constables? you know that?

A: Yes.

Q: So, she has no evil intention of putting any constable into trouble?

A: She must be having some intention.

Q: To put the constables into trouble without identifying them?

A: She must have had some intention.

Q: What is the intention?

A: I don't know.

Q: And you want the Commission to believe that this girl came and spoke some untruth about police constables coming and entering the house and assaulting her brothers?

A: I won't say that.

Q: She also said that you came into the house about that time and prevailed upon those police constables not to attack them - that statement, therefore, would be a false statement?

A: I don't know.

Q: If your statement is true, that statement of her before the Commission is false? A: Yes.

Q: She also stated that those police constables were so annoyed and said "thattaya katta wahapan"? That statement is also a false statement, that this girl included those words to make her testimony before this Commission realistic?

A: I think so.

Q: That this innocent child has been pushed by her father, her brothers and sisters to come and give a false testimony on those matters in respect of the events of that day?

A: May be for some reasons that I don't know.

Q: This child has also testified to the fact that a .22 rifle was removed from the bed room on that day and the party left. I put it to you that evidence touches you because you said that you will secure that rifle back and give it to them. You say, that evidence is also false? A: Yes.

Q: You know that gun has played a significant part in other proceedings?

A: Yes.

Q: That gun has played a very significant part in an inquest proceeding where two people lost their lives by police firing? A: Yes.

'I am aware of the production'

Q: And this gun was produced in those proceedings on the 19th August, 1977?

A: Yes.

Q: As having been left in the scene besides a fence, according to Inspector Mendis who gave evidence at the inquest?

A: I cannot say where it was found.

Q: But you are aware that it was a part of the productions by S. I. Mendis?

A: Yes.

Q: Now, incidentally, this Janaki's version is corroborated by the other two children of Tilagar on all particulars, and you would say that those witnesses have come and corroborated a false evidence on false matters? A: Yes, possible.

'Letting down the Police force'

Q: You will not say that any one of them or all of them have any illwill towards you? A: They must be having.

Q: The father has ill-will towards you?

A: I don't know.

Q: You know that the A.S.P's inquiry revealed that this gun was Tilagar's gun?

A: Yes.

Q: That Tilagar has a licence which also tallies with the number of the gun?

A: I don't know.

Q: Mr. Gurusamy, pardon my asking you. Some police officers and constables do not like to let down the police force. That is the kind of credo which they believe in?

A: Yes.

Q: You are not one of those Inspectors who believe in that credo. You will let down any police officer?

A: I decline to answer.

Q: You see the present Inspector, Terrence Perera is the H. Q. I. Jaffna?

A: Yes.

Q: He had, according to evidence, pulled up the police constable, Sattanathapillai who had testified before this Commission and told him "you have let down the police force"?

A: About Mr. Terrence Perera telling the P. C. I don't know.

'I. G. P. testified against D. I. G.'

Q: You said that you were aware that Terrence Perera was reported to have said this?

'THE FATHER & THREE CHILDREN GAVE FALSE EVIDENCE'

A: Yes, according to PC Sattanathapillai.

Q: You accepted earlier that there are police constables who believed in the credo that they should not let down anyone in the police force? A: Yes.

Q: There is that camera-derie? A: Yes.

Q: Your present I. G. P. did testify against his own D. I. G. in 1962 when there was subversive activities in the police force? A: Yes.

Q: Your present I. G. P. would not have accepted that credo in the service because he did testify against the D. I. G. and several officers?

A: I cannot answer that question.

Q: You don't wish to commit yourself in regard to my earlier question whether you belong to this credo?

A: I don't wish to answer that question.

Q: I put it to you Mr. Gurusamy that every bit of evidence you have given in regard to Tilagar's children and Tilagar himself is false testimony? A: I deny.

Q: I say that these three children and their father gave truthful evidence but you say that their evidence is false?

A: Yes.

Q: The evidence that they gave to the effect that the police came there and you were also seen there, you say is also false?

'Their evidence is false'

A: The evidence referring to me I say is false. The evidence regarding the other police officers, I cannot say whether it is false or not.

Q: If these children have deliberately introduced your name in evidence, they must be having a sinister and an ulterior motive against you?

A: Yes.

Q: I put it to you that if you admit in these proceedings that you were aware of the identity and the police constables who assaulted the crowd, you would be helping this Commission. To avoid that you are coming out with this story? A: No.

Q: On that day, there is evidence that the people were running away from police attacks and if you say the truth in that regard you would be helping the Commission. I put it to you that you do not want to do that? A: No.

Q: Where were you on that day?

Q: He said that he tried to contact a high officer but he could not?

A: There were other officers in the police station. Unless I go through the books I cannot say who they were.

Q: Was Mr. Noordeen there?

A: He was at the station. He had to go to the scene where the trouble was. That was in the morning - up to 9 a.m.

Q: From what time to what time?

A: From 8-30 to 9 a.m. he was at the station attending to the work.

Q: He was at work?

A: He brought the message that a mob had attacked him.

'Did not answer a single call'

Q: Up to 9 a.m. he was at the station and thereafter left and at what time did he return?

A: I do not know. I was at the station till I went to the hospital.

Q: At what time did you go to the hospital?

A: At 9 a.m.

Q: Did the telephones ring till the time you went to the hospital?

A: The operators were answering the calls.

Q: You did not answer any telephone call?

A: I did not. I did not answer a single call.

Q: You did not answer a single telephone call that day?

A: No. I did not answer.

Q: Mr. Joseph the A.G.A. told the Commission that he tried to contact the Police but he could not contact. You say you were at the police station? A: Yes.

Q: Did you acquaint yourself with the typewritten pages of the evidence led before this Commission - were they given to you to be read?

A: No.

'I was not interested'

Q: On the 6th I observed (Mr. Bartlett) you reading the evidence - is it false or true that you were reading the evidence about yourself in these proceedings? A: No.

Q: You did not have any other person's evidence to study? A: No.

Q: You did not have to study the evidence about the telephone registers?

A: I did not.

(continued next page)

WHO GAVE THAT FALSE MESSAGE?

I. P. GURUSAMY DOES NOT KNOW

(Continued from page 6)

Q: Mr. Silva the A. S. P. did not give you any type-written pages of the evidence for you to read?

A: No. He did not give me the pages of the evidence that concerned me. He wanted to clarify something about the Information Books.

Q: I saw you studying the pages concerning you and not the Information Books?

A: I deny that.

Q: You have not seen the evidence concerning you in this inquiry? A: I have not. I was not interested.

Interested in the evidence'

Q: You followed the evidence of Thilagar with deep interest? A: Yes

A: You did not go through the whole evidence in this case? A: No

Q: You were interested in the evidence that touched in, in the newspapers? A: Yes.

Q: You would have it on record that apart from a message sent to you by Mr. Silva, A. S. P., you did not know the point of time at which you would have to testify to the gun and the Information Books? A: Yes.

Q: That was all?

A: Yes.

Q: You were not acquainted with what had been produced and what transpired against you? A: No.

'P. C. Kumarasamy's handwriting'

Q: You did not understand on what matters you were to give evidence?

A: I did not.

Q: You have not submitted a memorandum to this Commission? A: I have not.

Q. (Shown X.54B) It is a message in the handwriting of P.C. Kumarasamy?

A: Yes.

Q: You know his handwriting? A: Yes.

Q: That message X.54B-NW.3 (Out) Wireless Telegraph - how was it received, at what time? A: At 11 a. m.

Q: The message is said to have been transmitted at 11 a. m.? A: Yes.

Q: That message No. 223 is from the S. P. Jaffna to the I. G. Police? A: Yes.

Q: It is a wireless message and given in slow English?

A: Yes. (Counsel demonstrates). They are given in fast English also.

Q: Messages given in telegraph is given in slow English?

A: They can be given in fast English also.

Q: At what speed?

A: It depends on the ability of the officer receiving the message at the other end.

Q: All wireless messages are given in slow English - they are repeated in slow English?

A: If the gentleman receiving it is slow it is given in slow English. If the person receiving it is fast, it is given in fast English.

Q: You said it is given in slow English?

A: It is possible to give it in fast English also.

Q: If it is given in slow English? A: It must be given clearly.

Q: Were you present when this message was given?

A: No.

Q: How did you give this message on the wireless. (witness is asked to demonstrate)?

A: I have not given messages over the wireless.

Q: Wireless messages are given by Mr. Jacob?

A: By him and the other operators also. He is a civilian operator.

Q: If P. C. Kumarasamy said that Mr. Gunasekera gave the message to be transmitted to Colombo you say it is false? A: Yes.

Q: This message was followed by a subsequent message noted in the outward register - in X54C "Further to my message just now please cancel this. Further message will follow?" A: Yes.

Q: Who gave that message? A: I gave it.

'On nobody's instructions'

Q: On whose instructions? A: I gave it in my own.

Q: On nobody's instructions? A: Yes.

Q: If you wanted, you give messages without any instructions? A: Yes.

Q: The evidence is that messages to the I. G. P. are given on the instructions of the S.P. and no one else? A: It is not so.

Q: Ten minutes after the first message? A: Yes.

Q: Who manipulated that delay of 10 minutes.

A: I manipulated.

Mr. Bartlett: Q: Why did you manipulate this delay?

A: I checked on the message. The earlier message came at 11 a. m., and it was sent at 11 a. m.

Q: This also should have gone immediately, why was this delay? A: This was transmitted by radio and the other message by telephone.

The reason for the delay

Commissioner: Q: The first message came at 11 and was transmitted at 11 a. m. Do you accept that? A: Yes.

Q: This went in the books at 11-05 and was transmitted at 11-15. He wants to know the reason for the delay?

A: Probably the operator must have delayed.

Commissioner: Q: Why did you not add the words "it is a false message"?

A: I did not mention?

Q: Your intention was to make it known that it was a false message and to ignore it? A: When I mentioned "Cancel" they would know that it is false.

Q: Did you make it quite clear that it was a false message? A: Other areas would understand that it was cancelled.

Q: Cancelled because of some wrong procedure, may be anything? A: (No answer)

Q: You stated that a further message will follow? A: Yes.

Q: Did you follow it up? A: No.

'I knew it was false'

Q: Why did you not follow it up? A: There was no other instance to follow it up.

Q: Why did you not follow it up at once - what was your intention in having those words?

A: The officer who received the message would have understood it as false.

Q: You did not cancel the incorrect message?

A: I cancelled it.

Q: How does the operator know that this is a false message? A: (No answer)

Q: You knew it was false when you sent the false message? A: Yes.

'Yes - it was a deliberate lie'

Q: You did not add in your second message that it was false? A: No.

Q: You did not follow it up and say that it was false? A: No.

Q: It was a deliberate lie that was sent over the radio? A: That is so.

Mr. Bartlett: Q: I put it to you that if in five minutes you knew that this message, first message sent at 11 o'clock was false, you were part and parcel responsible for the communication sent to the I.G.P., over the wireless network?

A: If that was so I would not have cancelled the message.

(I. P. Gurusamy's evidence to be continued in the next issue)



The ancestral home of the late Mr. S. Nataraja, once Crown Proctor, Amuradhapura, was burnt on August 18, 1977. Except for the front porch seen in this picture, the rest of the house was gutted.

(See Mr. M. Rajasingham's evidence in Issue No. 11)

Q: They are given in slow English? A: That depends on the person receiving the message.

Q: Messages from the S.P. and I. G. are important messages? A: Yes.

Q: They are given in slow English? A: That depends.

Q: They are given without interruptions? A: Yes.

Q: They can be picked up by the police stations the Island over? A: Yes.

Q: Is it correct to say that Mr. Godfrey Gunasekera the H. Q. I. gave this message? A: I do not know.

Q: Did Mr. Godfrey Gunasekera give the message? A: I do not know.

To Commissioner:

(I do not know who gave the message.)

Q: You yourself can assume the role of S. P. and send messages to the I.G.P. Colombo? A: Yes.

Q: It is not the S.P. who gave the instructions but you?

A: Every message has to go to the S. P.

Q: Did he sanction the message? A: No.

Q: You sent it off your own bat? A: Yes.

Q: You did not check?

A: I checked whether the earlier message was correct.

Q: From where?

A: From the registers in Jaffna. I found the message was incorrect and I sent the 2nd message.

Q: This 2nd message was sent at 11-15 a. m.?

A: Yes.

Q: You do not know why it was delayed? A: No.

Mr. Bartlett: Q: I put it to you that message was cancelled so that the message that was to follow might be more serious than the earlier message? A: Could be.

Q: The earlier message is known to be false? A: Yes

Q: As the message sent at 11 was false, according to you, you sent a message at 11-05 cancelling the earlier message? A: Yes.

Q: Cancellation of a message does not mean that it is false because it was stated that another message will follow? You will accept that the second message was sent because the first message was false? A: It does not mention that it was false. I mentioned about the cancellation so that no action will be taken.

"Nothing is ever settled until it is settled right"

— Rudyard Kipling.

The Sansoni Commission Evidence

The Story of the Sri Lanka Race Riots 1977

Attorney-at-Law who considered Anuradhapura his home town, says:

'THUG ASSAULTED MY WIFE'

MYLVAGANAM SHANMUGALINGAM GANESHA MOORTHY: Affirmed: 39 years: Attorney-at-law, Anuradhapura.

Q: From the time you passed out you have been practising at Anuradhapura? A: Yes.

Q: How many years in practice are you? A: From 1962.

Q: You were born and bred in Anuradhapura?

A: I was born at Kopay. I treat Anuradhapura as my home town. I was bred there. My father and others have their properties in Anuradhapura. My house is at Godagemawatha about 200 yards from the Courts.

Q: On 17.8.77 did you go to the Courts as usual?

A: I had a few cases. I went to Court. As there was tension in town I got permission and came home. Early morning a labourer came and informed me that two trains had been attacked and two boutiques had been looted. When I was in my office I heard there was tension in town and all Tamil boutiques were looted and attacked.

Crowd of 200 assembled

Mr. Shanmugalingam:

Q: Your sister-in-law is a Pharmacist attached to the hospital? A: Yes.

Q: You went to hospital, took her and went home?

A: Yes.

Q: From about noon you were confined to the home?

A: Yes, because I thought that I might be assaulted. I confined myself to my house.

Q: At about 8 p.m., can you tell in short what happened?

A: At about 8 p.m., I was in my house with my children, wife, and sister-in-law. About 200 persons assembled in front of my house and shouted out asking me to come out. As I did not come out they started smashing the door and windows. They tried to break.

Q: Did your wife and sister-in-law express concern?

A: They shouted out and said that we should leave the house immediately. I took my spectacles and we all went through the back door.

Q: There is only one gate from the road leading to your house?

A: The entire premises is barbed wired and there is only one gate.

Q: So you had to come to the gate to get to the main road? A: Yes.

I heard cries of 'Aiyo'

Q: When you, your wife, sister-in-law and your three children came on to the road what happened?

A: I heard the sound of cries of "aiyo" from the direction of my wife. When I looked, I saw my wife being assaulted by a thug. I started to assault him and pull my wife. Immediately the people in the crowd started to attack me.

Q: What was he pulling? A: My wife was wearing a gold chain. She was pulled to snatch the gold chain. We were assaulted with clubs.

Q: You sustained injuries?

A: I sustained heavy head injuries and injury to my chin.

Some tried to protect me

Q: Were some of the people in the crowd known to you?

A: There were some people known to me and I questioned them. As I fell down and as there were some people known to me, sympathy was created and they tried to protect me.

Q: By that time your sister-in-law and children had gone?

A: My sister-in-law and the youngest child had run away somewhere. I made a search for them for about half an hour but I could not find them.

Q: Then you, your wife and two children left the place?

A: Yes. An unknown person volunteered to take me to the hospital. As I entered the hospital I found Sunderalingam who was a friend of mine. He was an M.L.T. He could not speak. Later I learnt that the assault in the hospital had taken place as I entered.

Q: If you had entered five minutes earlier you also would have been assaulted in the hospital? A: Yes. Then I saw Sivasambu, Rajaratnam and Appar with severe bleeding injuries. I was taken to the ward.

Q: Were you treated?

'Hospital employees refused to shave my head'

A: There were two nurses. They treated Sivasambu and later treated me. Thereafter some Internee Doctors rushed in. They saw my injuries and wanted some employees to shave my head. They refused. Then I was asked to sit down on the ground. Then they cut my hair and dressed the wound. Then my wife, children and I slept at my friend's place.

Q: On the following day did you go towards your house?

A: I went to my house and found almost all the valuables, clothes, kitchenware, and eversilver were missing. They had been removed. Almost anything of value had been removed. I had only a shirt and sarong and my wife had a saree and blouse. All the other valuables were taken away. The furniture also had been taken away. Some of the heavy articles were damaged.

Q: What value do you think is the worth of the things you lost?

A: About Rs. 35,000/-

Q: Did you send a message to the Police Station?

A: I sent Luxman Weerasooriya to the police. He brought a jeep and took me, my wife and the children to the Kachcheri as refugees.

Q: At the Kachcheri did you discover your sister-in-law and your child? A: I saw them there.

'Amman' image was removed

Q: You know the Kathiresan temple?

A: Yes. I was the Secretary of the Building Committee. I was one of the Trustees from

Q: Even today it is guarded?

Q: During the disturbance it was guarded and now it is not guarded. Ours is a joint Hindu Family. One brother is in Zambia and the other is in England and the properties have not been divided. The entire furniture had been smashed and burnt. All the pictures which were hung on the wall were smashed. When I went on 19th September there was practically nothing.

You know Vivekananda Society Building?

A: I can testify to that I was the General Secretary for 12 years and I am still

1965. On 16th August I tendered my resignation. The members told me at the Kachcheri Camp that they were assaulted on 17.8.77. The priest told me that he was assaulted and that he had left the temple. There was no priest for the temple and the temple was closed. Later we found that the image of amman was removed.

Q: Johnpillai was the District Organizer of the U.N.P., for the entire Anuradhapura District? A: Yes.

Q: He is a Tamil? A: Yes.

Q: During this trouble both the house and his dispensary had to be heavily guarded?

A: When he was being transported to Vavuniya I saw his dispensary being guarded.

a member of the management. I went and inspected the premises and I found that some of the electrical fittings had been removed. There are rooms in the hostel. All the articles had been removed. This society was established in 1925. Our valuable records are missing.

Temple huts burnt down

Q: Now you are practising in Anuradhapura? A: Yes. The temple was gifted by my grand-father. There is a Pillayar temple looked after by me. There were two huts in those premises where the priest stayed in one and caretaker in the other. Both the huts were burnt down and the statues were removed.

next week

- * 'Man who sold me the king coconut snatched my suitcase'
- * Kilinochchi woman's evidence