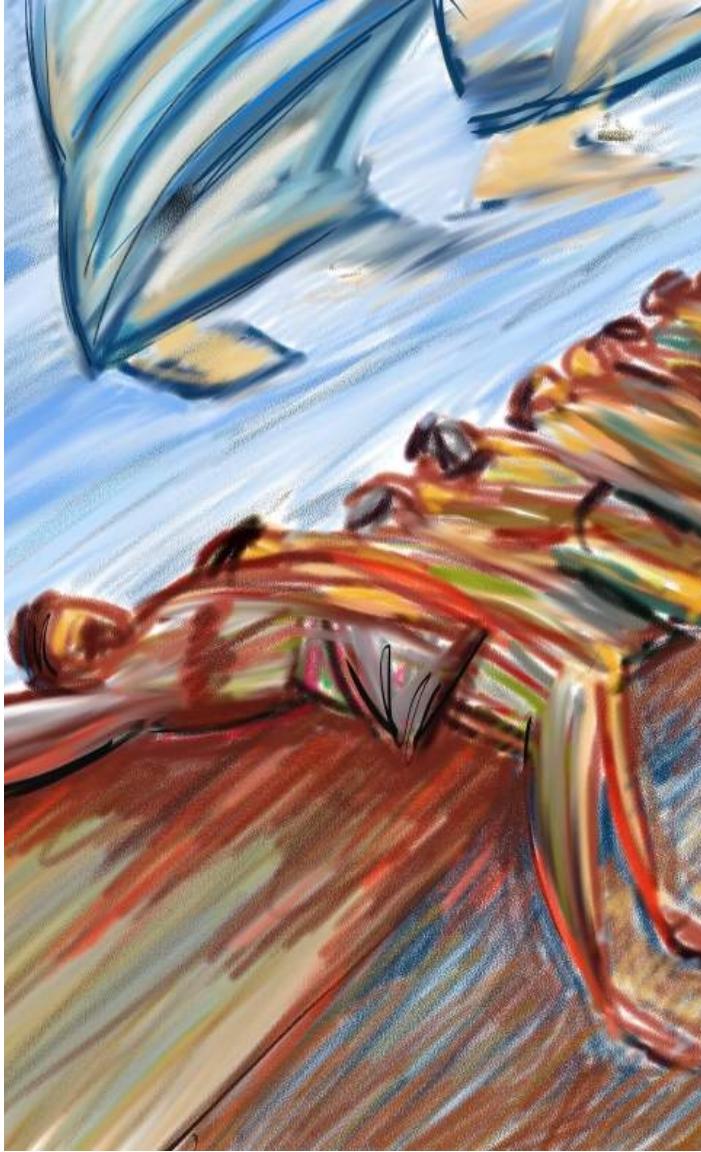


Understanding Sri Lanka's **War**

Comprendre **la Guerre** du Sri Lanka



Property of Canadian Tamil Congress



Canada is home to more than 250,000 Tamil Canadians. Many of whom fled to Canada to seek asylum from the violence and persecution in their homeland. Though the Tamil-Canadian community has come to embrace Canada as its home, the tragic circumstances that led them to up-root their lives and families will painfully remain an unforgettable part of their history.

This booklet showcases the events that chronicled the turbulent history of the island from the political scene during British colonization through to the recurring episodes of discrimination.

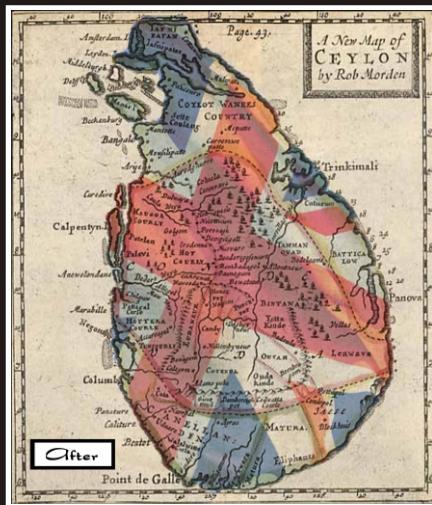
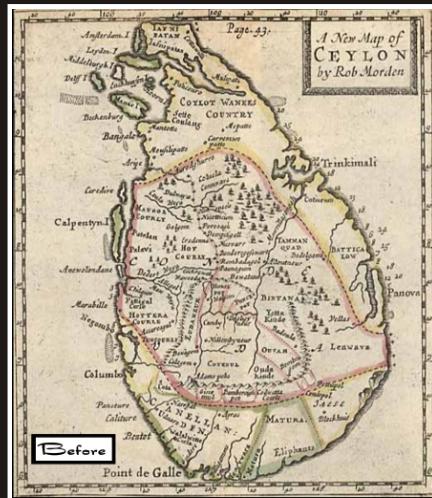


Pré-Colonisation

1

Pre-Colonisation

For over 2500 years, Sri Lanka has been inhabited by Tamils and Sinhalese. By the time the colonialists arrived, the island had long been divided into a Tamil kingdom in the North East, and two Sinhalese kingdoms in the Centre and South. During the colonial rule of the Portuguese (1505- 1658) and Dutch (1602- 1796), the Tamil and Sinhalese kingdoms were administered separately, respecting their distinct polities and geographic boundaries. With the British take over in 1815, the three kingdoms were amalgamated by the British for their own administrative convenience.



Deprived of Franchise and Citizenship

Démunié de la franchise et de la Citoyenneté

2



1948

"Everyone has the right to a nationality. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality..."

-Article 15, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

On 15 November 1948, the Ceylon Citizenship Act was passed into law. It disenfranchised and rendered stateless over 850,000 Tamils of Indian origin. As UNHCR Sri Lanka puts it, this "required that two generations of the person's family had been born in Sri Lanka. This essentially discriminated against Hill Tamils, many of whom returned to Tamil Nadu to give birth and most of whom could not produce documents to prove two generations of family born in Sri Lanka." This, in effect, changed the voting power of Tamils in the legislature from 33% to 20%, giving Singhalese representatives a larger majority and further allowing them to enact policies that the Tamils were unable to oppose.

Tout le monde à droit à une nationalité. Personne sera arbitrairement privé de sa nationalité...»

- L'Article 15, Déclaration Universelle de droits de l'Homme

Le 15 novembre 1948, l'Acte de Citoyenneté de Ceylan a été passé à la loi. Il a privé du droit électoral et il a rendu apatride plus de 850 000 Tamouls d'origine indienne. Comme UNHCR Sri Lanka le dit, «ceci exige deux générations de la famille de la personne née au Sri Lanka. Ceci était une discrimination pour les Tamouls des Collines, dont beaucoup d'entre eux devaient retournés au Tamil Nadu pour accoucher et la plupart d'eux ne pouvait pas produire les documents de preuves des deux générations de famille née au Sri Lanka ». Ceci, en fait, a changé le pouvoir de vote des Tamouls dans le système législatif de 33% à 20%, résultant une plus grande majorité aux représentants Singhalaïs et leur permettant de promulguer les politiques dont les Tamouls étaient incapable de s'opposer.

Le «Sinhala Only» Acte

3 Sinhala Only Act

1956



Language has been a point of significant tension in post-independence Sri Lanka. Shortly after independence, in 1951 the National Languages Commission was appointed to report on adopting Sinhalese and Tamil as the national languages. After 2 years, the Commission reported for the support of using both languages officially. However, there was strong dissent amongst Sinhala nationalists who campaigned for a "Sinhala only" language policy with the slogan "Sinhala within forty-eight hours". The "Sinhala Only" Official Language Act made Sinhalese the sole official language of Sri Lanka. This legislation had the effect of excluding Tamils from government and even many private sector jobs. Tamil civil servants were given three years to acquire proficiency in Sinhala or lose their jobs. Job promotions and annual salary increments were tied to abilities in Sinhala. This sparked the first wave of Tamil expatriates from Sri Lanka who mostly emigrated to England in search of work and educational opportunities.

La langue a été un point de tension significative au Sri Lanka pendant la poste-indépendance. Peu après l'indépendance, en 1951, la Commission des Langues Nationales a été engagée pour faire un rapport d'adopter les langues Singhala et Tamoul comme des langues nationales. Après 2 ans, la Commission a rapporté pour soutenir l'utilisation des deux langues officiellement. Cependant, il y avait une forte dissidence parmi les nationalistes singhalais, qui ont fait une campagne pour « Singhalais Only », la politique linguistique, avec le slogan «Singhalais dans les quarante-huit heures ». Le « Sinhala Only », Acte de Langue Officielle fait singhalais la seule langue officielle de Sri Lanka. Cette législation a eu l'effet d'exclure les Tamous du gouvernement et aussi d'emplois de secteur privé. Les fonctionnaires tamous avaient trois ans pour acquérir la compétence en singhalais sinon de perdre leurs emplois. Les promotions de travail et les augmentations de salaire annuelles ont été liées aux aptitudes des Singhala. Ceci a déclenché la première vague d'expatriés tamous de Sri Lanka qui ont émigré surtout en Angleterre, à la recherche du travail et des possibilités éducatives.

Abolishment of the Pacts

L'Abolition des Pacts

4

Chelvanayakam (2nd from left) and Bandaranaike (2nd from right) after signing the agreement on June 1957.



Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike and the Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri signing the Sirimavo-Shastri Pact in October 1964.

1957

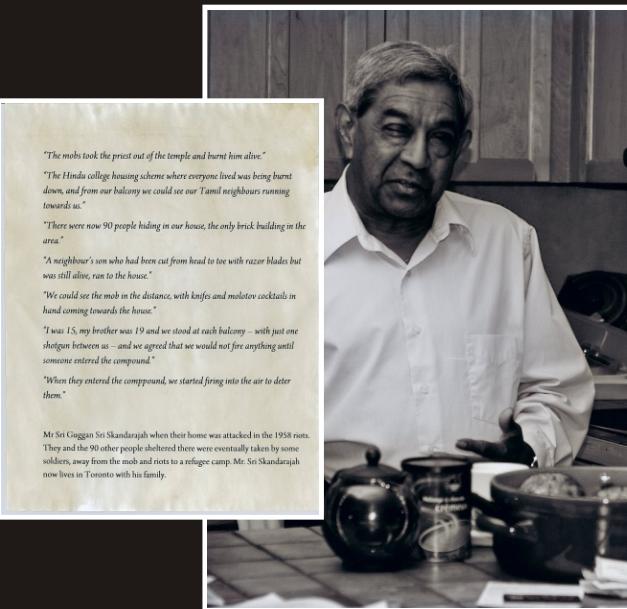
Tamil political leaders attempted to negotiate with the Sinhalese-majority government on language rights and political representation of Tamils. To this end, various peace pacts were signed but then successively broken by the government. One of the first pacts signed was the Sinhal-Tamil pact of 1925 which provided for representation on the basis of existing population ratios. The breakdown of this pact was attributed to Sinhalese determination to maintain territorial representation. In July 1957, the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact was signed, providing for protection of Tamil interests within a united single geographic entity. The Pact also made significant concessions on the language policy, allowing for Sinhala as the only official language with "the reasonable use of Tamil". However, Bandaranaike announced the abolition of the pact due to pressure from those who stringently opposed the pact, led by a movement of Buddhist monks. In 1965, the 'Senanayake-Chelvanayakam Pact' was drafted with provisions similar to the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact. This pact was never implemented despite repeated assurances.

Les dirigeants politiques tamous ont tenté de négocier avec le gouvernement majorité singhalais sur les droits de la langue et la représentation politique des Tamous. À cette fin, ces divers pactes de paix ont été signés mais, brisé successivement par le gouvernement. En 1925, un des premiers pactes signés étaient le pacte Singhala-Tamoul, qui a pourvu à la représentation en se basant sur les proportions de population actuelles. La défaillance de ce pacte a été attribuée à la détermination singhalaise pour maintenir la représentation territoriale. En juillet 1957, le Pacte de Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam a été signé, pourvoyant la protection des intérêts des tamous au sein d'une unique entité géographique. Le Pacte a fait aussi des concessions significatives sur la politique de langue, tenant le compte des Singhala comme la seule langue officielle avec « l'usage raisonnable des Tamous ». Cependant, Bandaranaike a annoncé la suppression du pacte en raison de la pression de ceux qui se sont opposé rigoureusement au pacte, mené par un mouvement de moines bouddhistes. En 1965, « le Pacte de Senanayake-Chelvanayakam » a été esquissé avec les dispositions similaires au Pacte de Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam. Ce pacte n'a jamais été exécuté malgré les assurances répétées.

Le début des émeutes

15 Riots Begin

1958



"The mob took the priest out of the temple and burnt him alive."

"The Hindu college housing scheme where everyone lived was being burnt down, and from our balcony we could see our Tamil neighbours running towards us."

"There were now 90 people hiding in our house, the only brick building in the area."

"A neighbour's son who had been cut from head to toe with razor blades but was still alive, ran to the house."

"We could see the mob in the distance, with knives and molotov cocktails in hand coming towards the house."

"I was 15, my brother was 19 and we stood at each balcony – with just one shotgun between us – and we agreed that we would not fire anything until someone entered the compound."

"When they entered the compound, we started firing into the air to deter them."

Mr Sri Gaggen Sri Skandarajah when their home was attacked in the 1958 riots. They and the 90 other people sheltered there were eventually taken by some soldiers, away from the mob and riots to a refugee camp. Mr. Sri Skandarajah now lives in Toronto with his family.

"The (Tamil) Federal Party's annual public meeting was called for late May (1958). The conclave was to decide whether or not to undertake a Satyagraha campaign now that the (Sinhala) Prime Minister had withdrawn his support from the agreement he had endorsed a year before (the Bandaranaike Chelvanayagam Pact). The outbreak of violence began when a train, presumed to be carrying Tamil delegates to the meetings, was derailed and its passengers beaten up by ruffians. The next day Sinhalese labourers set fire to Tamil shops and homes in nearby villages where they lived intermingled with Sinhalese... Gangs roamed the districts where Tamils lived, ransacking and setting fire to homes and cars, and looting shops. Individual Tamils were attacked, humiliated and beaten... Some ten thousand Tamils were reported to have fled their homes to seek safety in improvised refugee camps... Many fled to the North by sea..."

- On the 1958 riots, by Professor Howard Wriggins. From: Ceylon - Dilemmas of a New Nation (Princeton University Press).

Le Parti Fédérale (Tamoul) a ouvert leur réunion publique annuelle pour la fin de Mai 1958. Le conclave n'était pas sûr de décider d'entreprendre une campagne de Satyagraha, maintenant que le Premier ministre (Singhalais) a retiré son soutien de l'accord qu'il a approuvé un an plus tôt (le pacte de Bandaranaike Chelvanayagam). La flambée de violence a commencé quand un train est présumé d'avoir amenés les délégués Tamoules aux réunions et ses passagers ont été battus par les brutes. Le lendemain, les travailleurs Singhalais ont mis le feu à des magasins Tamouls et des maisons dans des villages voisins où ils vivent mêlés avec les Singhalais... les gangs parcouraient les quartiers où les Tamouls vivaient, le pillage et l'incendie des maisons et des voitures, et le pillage de magasins. Les individuelles Tamouls ont été agressés, humiliés et battus... Une dizaine de milliers de Tamouls ont fuit leurs maisons pour chercher la sécurité dans des camps réfugiés improvisés ... Beaucoup d'entre eux ont fuit vers le Nord par la mer ...'

- Sur les émeutes de 1958, par le professeur Howard Wriggins. De: Ceylan - Dilemmes d'une nouvelle nation (La presse de l'Université Princeton).

Peace Protests

Manifestation pour la paix

6



A protest by Tamil students of the East against University Standardisation Rules



A sit-in protest in front of Jaffna Kachcheri demanding that its duties not be performed in Sinhala language

1961

Without the ability to reject the legislation in parliament, the Tamil Federal Party protested through non-violent demonstrations in north eastern provinces with initial success. However, police and military personnel unleashed violence on peaceful Satyagrahis (civil disobedience campaigners) who were protesting the imposition of the official language in the Tamil-speaking areas. Several brutalities and grievous injuries were perpetrated against the innocent Tamil civilian population. The Tamil-speaking areas were placed under military occupation for several months thereafter and a policy of permanent harassment of the civil population was consistently maintained without any relaxation. Several hundreds of persons were placed under preventive detention without charges being brought against them.

Sans la possibilité de rejeter la législation du parlement, le parti fédéral Tamoul a entrepris des manifestations non violentes dans les provinces du Nord-Est avec des premiers succès Cependant, les policiers et les armés militaires ont déclenché la violence sur les Satyagrahis (les candidats désobéissants civiles) qui protestaient contre l'imposition de la langue officielle dans les régions Tamoules. Plusieurs brutalités et des graves blessures ont été perpétrées contre le peuple innocent Tamoul. Les régions Tamoules a été placé sous l'occupation militaire pour plusieurs mois et par la suite une politique permanante d'harcèlement du peuple civil a été systématiquement entretenue sans aucune détente. Des centaines de personnes ont été placé en détention préventive sans des poursuites amenées contre eux.

1971



Sirimavo Bandaranaike introduced a bill called "Standardisation of University Entrance Marks" which required Tamil medium students to obtain a higher aggregate of marks than their Sinhalese counterparts. This rigged the raw marks from the entrance exam in favour of the Sinhalese and against the Tamils. Further, with her "area quota" system, Tamils from the North had to obtain a higher mark to enter the science-based faculties in the universities. It was a violation of the UN policy (article 26.1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that "higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit." Consequently, Tamils entering the Engineering faculty dropped from 40% (1970) to 24% (1973) and 13% (1976). In Medicine it dropped from 50% (1970) to 37% (1973) and to 20% (1975). In Science, from 35% (1970) to 15% (1978).

Sirimavo Bandaranaike a introduit une proposition de loi nommée « L'uniformisation des notes pour l'admission à l'université ». Cette loi a requis les étudiants Tamouls à obtenir une note plus élevée comparés aux étudiants Singhalaïs. De plus, cette loi a truqué les notes de la rentrée et il était avantageux pour les singhalais et contre les tamouls. Ensuite, avec sa système de quota pour chaque région a obligée les Tamoules a obtenir une note très haute pour qu'ils puissent rentrer dans les domaines basées de sciences à l'université. C'est la violation du politique de l'ONU (article 26.1) de la déclaration universelle des droits humaines qui déclare que « les études supérieurs sont accessibles à tous sous la base de mérite ». Par conséquent, les tamouls qui sont rentrés dans la faculté d'ingénierie ont baissé de 40% (1970) à 24% (1973) et 13% (1976). Dans la faculté de médecine, il a baissé de 50% (1970) à 37% (1973) et à 20% (1975). En sciences, de 35% (1970) à 15% (1978).



1976

Vattukottai Resolution

**this Convention resolves
that restoration and reconstitution
of the Free, Sovereign, Secular,
Socialist State of Tamil Eelam,
based on the right of self
determination inherent to every
nation, has become inevitable in
order to safeguard the very
existence of the Tamil Nation in
this country.**

In 1976, the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) was formed, which included organizations representing the Indian Tamils, the Ceylon Tamils, the Tamil-speaking Muslims and the leaders of the Tamil United Front. At this inaugural Convention held in Pannakam, the Vattukottai Resolution was passed, declaring a reclamation of the right of self-determination for the Tamil people. Shortly after a rally to announce the resolution, Amirthalingam, the leader of the TULF and other members of the TULF were arrested and charged with sedition. At the 1977 general elections, the TULF contested on a platform of seeking a mandate from the Tamil people to establish an independent sovereign state in Tamil Eelam and won an overwhelming majority of Tamil seats, becoming the official opposition party. Shortly before the 1977 general elections, more anti-Tamil riots broke out, causing widespread death and injury to Tamils in Colombo. Refugees from Colombo had to be taken by ship to the Tamil areas in the North East for their safety.

En 1976, la Libération Front des Unis Tamouls (LFUT) a été formé et elle a compris les organisations qui représentaient des Tamouls Indiens, les tamouls Ceylan, les Musulmans qui parlent le Tamoul et les chefs du Front des Unis Tamouls. À cette inaugurale convention qui a lieu en Pannakam, la résolution de Vattukottai a été passée déclarant la réclamation des droits de l'auto détermination pour le peule Tamoul. Brièvement après la manifestation pour annoncer la résolution, le chef de LFUT Amirthalingam et d'autres membres de LFUT ont été arrêté et chargé avec sédition. Durant l'élection générale de 1977, le LFUT a disputé sur une plate-forme de quêteur un mandat du peuple Tamoul pour établir un état souverain au Tamil Eelam et ils ont gagnées avec la majorité des sièges Tamouls et il était effectivement devenu le parti opposé officielle. Un peu avant les élections générales de 1977, plusieurs contre Tamouls émeutes ont cassé causant des meurtres étendues et des blessures à des Tamouls de Colombo. Les réfugiées de Colombo ont été prises par le bateau à des régions Tamoules dans les parties du Nord Est pour leur sécurité.

Incendie de la bibliothèque de Jaffna

Burning of Jaffna
Library

1981



[Artwork by Nishani Vipul]

On the night of June 1st, 1981, the Jaffna public library, housing 97,000 rare books and manuscripts, was burned to the ground. That day all Tamils lost a piece of themselves. This act of arson was carried out by two hundred officers of the Sri Lankan police force, in the presence of Ministers Cyril Mathew and Gamini Dissanayake.. Rare old manuscripts written on palm leaves and stored in fragrant sandalwood boxes, miniature editions of the Ramayana epic from the children's section and yellowing collections of extinct Tamil-language newspapers were among the irreplaceable artifacts consumed in the blaze.

.....

La nuit du 1er Juin 1981, la bibliothèque publique de Jaffna qui contenait 97,000 livres et manuscrits rares, a été brûlée à la terre. Ce jour tous les Tamouls ont perdu un morceau d'eux-mêmes. Cet acte d'incendie criminel a été effectuée par deux cent agents de la police sri-lankaise, en présence des ministres Cyril Mathew et Gamini Dissanayake. Rare vieux manuscrits écrits sur des feuilles de palmier et conservés dans des boîtes de bois de santal parfumé, mini-éditions de l'épopée du Ramayana par les enfants de la section et le jaunissement des collections des journaux disparus en langue tamoule ont été parmi les objets irremplaçables consommés dans le brasier.

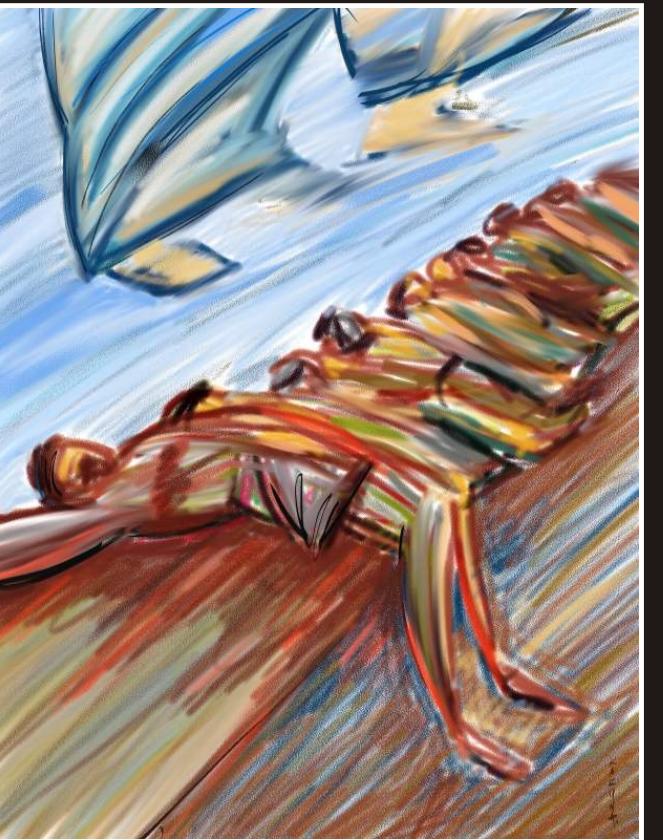
(Œuvre d'art par Nishani Vipul)

Welikade Prison

7

Le prison de Welikade

July 1983



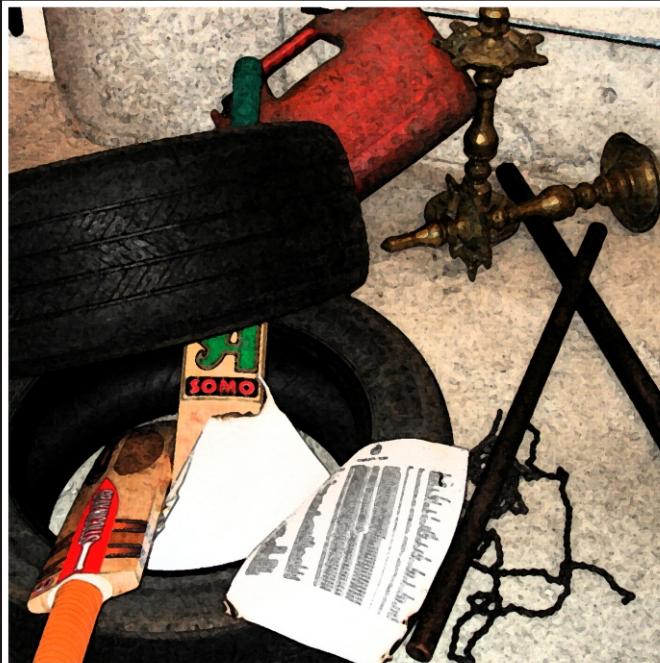
The Welikade Prison Massacre is perhaps the most notorious incident that took place during the July 1983 riots. On July 25, thirty-five Tamil political prisoners, most of them detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, were killed by Sinhalese prisoners with the complicity of jail guards using spikes, clubs and iron rods. The bodies of the prisoners were heaped into a pile in the yard of the prison to appease the mob. A second massacre took place at the same prison a few days later. On July 27, an additional 18 Tamil prisoners were hacked to death when a mob of prisoners armed with weapons broke into their cell. The survivors of this attack recall using broken chairs and tables in the cell to keep the crowd at bay for half an hour before any officials came to their aid. The surviving 36 Tamil prisoners were transferred to other prisons around Colombo. In total, 53 prisoners were massacred in the Welikade Prison.

Le massacre de la prison de Welikade est l'incident le plus connu qui a eu lieu au cours des émeutes en Juillet 1983. Le 25 Juillet, trente-cinq prisonniers politiques tamouls, la plupart de ces détenus en vertu de la Loi sur la prévention du terrorisme, ont été tués par les Singhalaïs prisonniers avec la complicité des gardiens de prison, en utilisant des pointes, des clubs et des barres de fer. Les corps des prisonniers ont été entassés dans une pile dans la cour de la prison pour apaiser la populace. Un deuxième massacre a eu lieu à la même prison quelques jours plus tard. Le 27 Juillet, 18 autres prisonniers Tamouls ont été piratés à mort quand une foule de prisonniers armés avec des armes sont entrés par effraction dans leur cellule. Les survivants de cette attaque rappellent d'avoir utiliser chaises et des tables casées dans la cellule pour maintenir la foule à distance pendant une demi-heure avant que les fonctionnaires sont venus à leur aide. Les 36 survivants prisonniers Tamouls ont été transférés dans d'autres établissements autour de Colombo. Au total, 53 prisonniers ont été massacrés dans la prison de Welikade.

Les armes de l'engeance organisé

Weapons of the Organized Mobs

July 1983



"More than any other previous ethnic riot, the 1983 eruption showed organized mob violence at work. Gangs armed with weapons such as metal rods and knives and carrying gasoline and, most intriguing of all, because it indicates prior intent and planning, carrying voter lists and addresses of Tamil owners and occupants of houses, shops, and other property, descended in waves to drive out Tamils, loot and burn their property, and sometimes kill them in bestial fashion. These gangs frequently had access to transportation they traveled in buses or were dropped off at successive locations by the Colombo coastline trains."

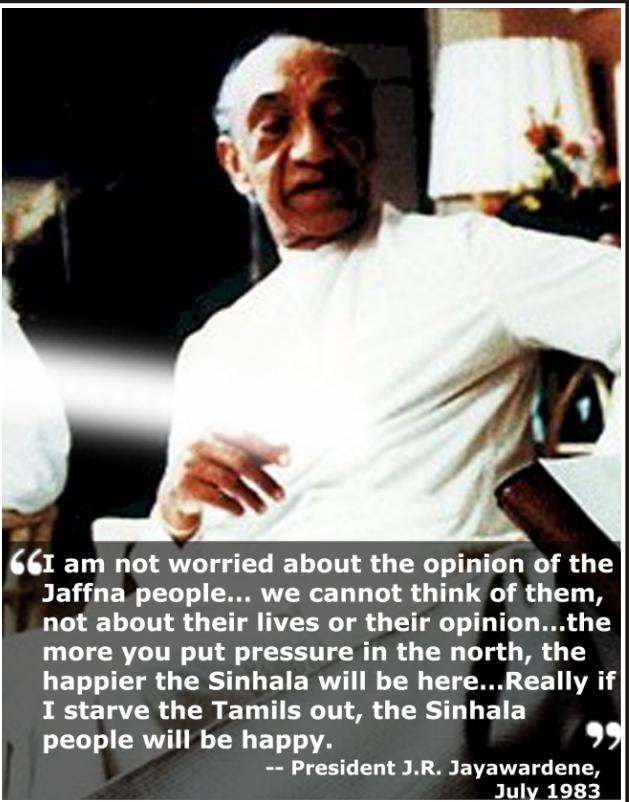
- From Sri Lanka Ethnic Fratricide and the Dismantling of Democracy, by S. J. Tambiah, 1986. p.21.

Plus que toute autre précédente émeute ethnique, l'éruption de 1983 a montré l'engeance violent organisée au travail. Les gangs armés avec des armes telles que des tiges de métal et des couteaux et transportaient de l'essence et, plus intriguant de tous, car il indique l'intention et la planification préalable, portant les listes électorales et l'adresse du propriétaires Tamoules et les occupants des maisons, des magasins, et d'autres biens, est descendu dans les vagues pour chasser les Tamouls, piller et brûler leurs biens, et parfois de les tuer en mode bestial. Ces gangs ont souvent accès au transport - ils ont pris des autobus ou ils ont été déposés par les trains de Colombo à leur endroits.

- Du Sri Lanka - Ethnique Fratricide et le démantèlement de la démocratie, par SJ Tambiah, 1986. p.21.

12

July 1983

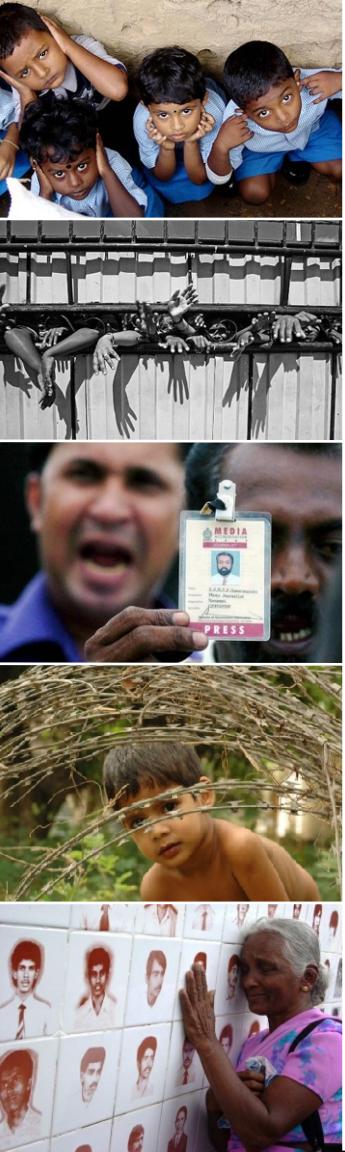


“I am not worried about the opinion of the Jaffna people... we cannot think of them, not about their lives or their opinion...the more you put pressure in the north, the happier the Sinhala will be here...Really if I starve the Tamils out, the Sinhala people will be happy.”

-- President J.R. Jayawardene,
July 1983

Despite four days of intense violence direct at the Tamil population, it was not until the fifth day of the riots, on July 28, that the Sri Lankan President, J.R. Jayewardene addressed the nation. In his first public address since the anti-Tamil pogroms started, rather than promoting racial harmony, the President further fanned the flames of anti-Tamil sentiments by stating that anyone who advocated for separatism would lose all their “civic rights”. At the same time, the President also banned all political parties that advocated for a separate state, including the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), which was the official opposition party, although he did not mention the TULF by name. The effect of this measure stripped the Tamil people of 18 elected seats in Parliament and virtually eliminated their political voice.

Malgré quatre jours de violence directe et intense ciblant la population Tamoul, ce n'était qu'au cinquième jour des émeutes, le 28 Juillet, que le Président de Sri Lanka, J.R. Jayewardene, a adressé son peuple. Dans son premier communiqué public depuis le début des pogroms anti-Tamouls, le Président a ajouté aux sentiments anti-Tamouls en déclarant que toute personne sympathisant avec la cause séparatiste perd ses droits civiques. En même temps, le Président a aussi aboli tous les partis politiques qui plaident la cause séparatistes, dont le Front Uni de Libération Tamoule (TULF), qui à ce temps représentait l'opposition officiel. Par conséquence, le peuple Tamoul a été démunie de 18 élus au Parlement ce qui a quasiment éliminé leur portée politique et leur place au gouvernement.



Over 200,000 civilians, a vast majority from the Tamil population, have died in the armed conflict which drastically escalated since 1983. The last attempt at a peace process ended when the government cancelled a six year truce with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, negotiated by Norway. Tamil civilians continue to face the threat of death for exercising freedoms of expression, movement, association, and participation in public affairs. Amnesty International, Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission and Human Rights Watch have all expressed concern over government involvement in several thousand civilian disappearances and extrajudicial executions. In 2008, Sri Lanka was excluded from the UN Human Rights Council, a campaign that included Nobel Peace Prize winners, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Former US President Jimmy Carter. In addition, Sri Lanka ranks 165 out of 173 countries on the Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index, placing worse than Syria, Somalia and Pakistan.

Plus de 200,000 personnes, dont une grande majorité provenait de la population Tamoul, sont mort dans le conflit armé qui s'est intensifié de manière drastique depuis 1983. La dernière tentative de paix a échouée quand le gouvernement a brisé sa trêve de six ans avec Tigres de libération de l'Eelam Tamoul, négocié par la Norvège. Les Tamouls civils continuent à être menacés et font face à la possibilité d'être tués simplement pour avoir exercé leur liberté d'expression, de mouvement, d'association et de participation dans les affaires publiques. Les organismes Amnistie Internationale, Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, et Human Rights Watch, se disent tous préoccupés par l'implication du gouvernement dans la disparition et l'exécution extrajudiciaire de plusieurs milliers de Tamouls civils. En 2008, Sri Lanka a été exclu du Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies aux droits de l'homme, une campagne qui comptait l'archevêque Desmond Tutu, et l'ex-président des États-Unis Jimmy Carter, tous les deux gagnants du Prix Nobel de la Paix. De plus, Sri Lanka se situe au numéro 165 sur 173 pays sur l'échelle de la liberté de la presse de Reporters Sans Frontières, un placement plus bas que celui de Syrie, Somalie et Pakistan.

Government Attacks on Civilians in Safe Zones

"It is clear that hospitals, safety zones and civilian locales have been targeted and the number of casualties indicate blatant disregard for humanitarian law standards"

- Karen Parker , J.D., International Educational Development

"Civilians are scrambling for shelter in an area that is under heavy artillery fire, including many children, wounded, and elderly who need urgent assistance. The UN and concerned governments should press Sri Lanka to take all necessary steps to spare civilians from harm."

- Human Rights Watch

"People are being caught in the crossfire, hospitals and ambulances have been hit by shelling and several aid workers have been injured while evacuating the wounded. The violence is preventing the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) from operating in the region"

- ICRC

Blocking Aid to Tamils

"[Tamil]s face severe shortages of food and other essentials because of government restrictions on humanitarian assistance."

- Human Rights Watch

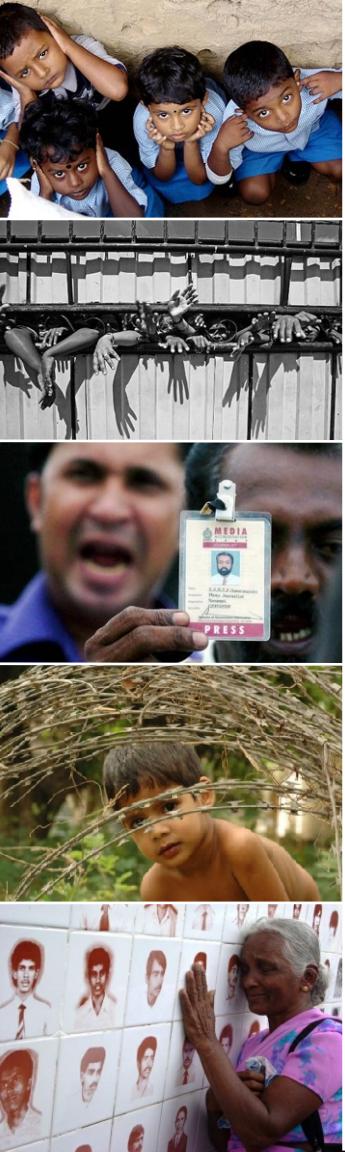
"Aid agencies provided a lifeline to tens of thousands of trapped civilians. If aid workers are pulled out of the region, food, shelter and sanitation supplies have even less chance of reaching civilians most in need."

- Amnesty International

"Government censorship and restrictions on access to the north not only kept the public uninformed, but also made the process of providing humanitarian assistance to the victims of war more difficult and may have concealed violations of humanitarian and human rights law."

- UN High Commissioner for Refugees





Abuse in Government Refugee Camps

"These are not welfare camps, they are prisoner-of-war cum concentration camps."

- European Parliament Delegation on Relations with South Asia

"Those people that risk their lives and flee face further ordeals when they enter government-controlled areas. [...] In camps in Vavuniya and Jaffna, the displaced are held in de facto detention, not being allowed to leave. There is also a continued military presence inside the camps which puts the civilians at further risk."

- Amnesty International

"Reports of rape in custody concern children as young as 14"

- Amnesty International

Media Censorship on Conflict

"The Government of Sri Lanka has conducted a cynical campaign to prevent all independent public coverage of its military operations and the plight of civilians caught up in the war."

- Human Rights Watch

"Senior members of Sri Lanka's Government and security personnel have made inflammatory comments condemning journalists as traitors, implicitly allowing for incitement of violence against journalists and media institutions."

- Coalition of International Press Freedom and Human Rights Organizations

"Sixteen journalists have been killed in Sri Lanka since 1992, and three journalists were imprisoned, including one on terrorism charges"

- Committee to Protect Journalists

"I have never seen anything like it. Even in Iraq under Saddam Hussein, foreign journalists had more freedom of movement"

- Agence France-Presse

Torture and Rape

"Sri Lankan soldiers have raped both women and young girls on a massive scale, and often with impunity, since reporting often leads to reprisals against the victims and their families."

- *World Organisation against Torture*



"The consistent policy of rape and violence against Tamil women that we have documented for many years is a fundamental military tactic of the Sri Lankan forces."

- *International Educational Development*



"Torture is widely practiced in Sri Lanka"

- *Manfred Nowak: U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture*



"Continued well document allegations of widespread torture and ill treatment as well as disappearances, mainly committed by the State's police forces [...] are not investigated promptly and impartially by the State party's competent authorities."

- *United Nations Human Rights, Committee against Torture*



Abductions and Extrajudicial Killings

Sri Lanka ranks second only to Iraq in the number of "disappearances" of people

- *UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances*

"[Local commissions] have further concluded that disappearances were carried out as part of a plan approved by the highest political authorities."

- *Asian Legal Resource Centre, Feb 2000*



"Many of the killings and disappearances, particularly around Colombo and Jaffna, have occurred in high security zones with heavy military presence; in Jaffna, many of these violations have occurred during military-imposed curfew times. In such cases, the involvement or complicity of security forces seems unavoidable."

- *Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development*

Tamil Canadians urge the Canadian Government to:

- **CONDAMN** the Sri Lankan government's repeated violations of international humanitarian law and human rights violations including:
 - Targeting civilian populations with aerial bombardment
 - Blocking humanitarian aid from reaching civilians
 - Preventing international media from accessing conflict areas
 - Suppressing local media freedom
- **URGE** the Sri Lankan government to immediately cease hostilities against the Tamil population
- **IMPLOR**E the Sri Lankan government to allow humanitarian aid to reach civilians in the conflict zones and allow international aid workers unimpeded access to affected areas
- **ENCOURAGE** the Sri Lankan government towards a peaceful resolution to the conflict through internationally supported peace negotiations that recognize and respect the political autonomy of Tamils in Sri Lanka
- **IMPOSE** economic and diplomatic sanctions against the Sri Lankan government for gross human rights violations against the Tamil minority including:
 - Cut direct foreign aid to the Sri Lankan government
- **SUPPORT** the call to appoint a UN Special Envoy for Sri Lanka to monitor and guard against human rights abuses and assist the peace process, as recommended by the UN, US State Department and other international actors



Understanding Sri Lanka's **War**

Comprendre la **Guerre** du Sri Lanka

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