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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Judicial DEPARTMENT.

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Dated 23-1 1887

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 41. Read the following letter from W. ROBINSON, Esq., Acting Magistrate of Malabar; to T. PYCROFT, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Judicial Department, dated Sultan's Battery, Wynaad, 15th January 1857, No. 5.

SIR,

1. In continuation of my letter, dated 5th Instant, I have the honor to forward, with a further communication* from the Joint Magistrate of Cochin, translations of Depositions taken from certain individuals connected with the Cases therein reported.

* Dated 10th Instant, No. 14.

2. There seems no doubt that a murder has been committed on the Six Islands by certain Mopla Coolies removed clandestinely and under false representation by Captain R. Rodriguez from the coast on various occasions and caused by the brutal treatment of the murdered Manager himself. The actual murderers are not yet in custody.

3. The statements further shew that a number of coolies still remains on these Islands removed under similar circumstances and distinctly aver that they are exposed to the same cruelty and brutality. I would therefore respectfully, but earnestly recommend that the Government of Mauritius be urged to have these Islands visited and examined by humane and trustworthy persons, who are untainted by the demoralizing effect of a trade in human labor, their condition ascertained and their grievous circumstances ameliorated, or the individuals themselves released.

4. In the mean time every endeavour is being made to bring Captain Roman Rodriguez, who is a Manilla Captain, and in all probability has been directly connected with the Slave Trade, as practised in the Eastern Seas, within the reach of the law, and to punish him with its utmost rigour; but it will be observed that at least in one case the embarkation took place within the limits of the Travancore Country, and in such cases, I fear the law of the Company's Territories will not reach him.

5. I bring the case the more prominently before the Government as I find that under the protection of the French Authorities at Mahé, an organized system of exporting Coolies from Malabar is going on. Two ships are at this moment loading there with Coolies for Bourbon, on board which some 30 or 40 Coolies have been inveigled. I requested the assistance of the Governor of Mahé to prevent the transaction and begged him that the men belonging to the Company's Territory might be landed but he replies that he has referred the matter to his Government and the men are still on board, if not already sailed.

6. Some of the crimps are in custody and the enquiry is being proceeded with.

From E. CULLIN, Esq., Joint Magistrate of Cochin; to W. ROBINSON, Esq., Acting Magistrate of Malabar, dated Cochin, 10th January 1857, No. 14.

SIR,

Copy of Supplemental Deposition of John Peter, Butler, taken on the 9th January 1857.
Copy of Deposition of Bappoo, 9th do.
Do. of do. of Prusina, 10th do.

I have the honor to transmit herewith the Depositions noted in the margin connected with the Case of the Indian labourers who returned from the Six Islands to the Coast per "Alexander Auguste."

2. The following apprehensions have up to this date been made.

	Men.		Women.
Cochin.....	1	.....	1
Tangacherry.....	3	.....	0
Travancore.....	4	.....	1
	8		2

3. I shall continue to exert myself to the utmost to have as many of the party as possible apprehended.

4. I beg to repeat the request conveyed to you in a former letter, that you will favor me with advice and instructions as to the manner in which Captain Roman Rodriguez should be dealt with. I mean under what Act and by whom he should be tried. I am aware that Act XIV of 1839 vests certain powers in a Magistrate or Justice of the Peace, but I am not certain that

the Act quoted is applicable to the present Case. It would be well, I think, for the sake of example, if Captain Roman Rodriguez could be committed for trial to a Higher Court, but I cannot find any Act or Regulation to justify such a proceeding. It is possible that Captain Roman Rodriguez may have infringed existing Statutes expressly enacted by the Parliament of Great Britain for the prevention of the Slave Trade. The condition of the Indian labourers on the Islands appears to have bordered closely on that of Slaves.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) W. ROBINSON,
Acting Magistrate.

Deposition of JOHN PETER taken, under date 9th January 1857, before the Joint Magistrate of Cochin.

I have been for two years the Steward of the Vessel "Alexandre Auguste." Within this period the Vessel has 5 times visited Cochin and taken her departure thence with Coolies, on one occasion we shipped 9 men, 3 women and 2 children, on another occasion we shipped 2 men and again 2 men; and on another occasion we shipped some 9 or 10 persons as far as my recollection serves me, 3 times Captain R. Rodriguez visited the Six Islands, and twice Mauritius, where he landed the men shipped at Cochin. They were all taken in at night, I went with them on each occasion.

Further there is an Island called "Kallsal,†" whither Captain R. Rodriguez has, on different occasions, taken and landed as many as 50 laborers. I was informed of this by certain Caffer men, who visited the ship on an occasion on which we lay off this Island at anchor.

† Sic in origine.

I was told that the period of their contract had expired; and that they were kept in great misery, despite that the period of their servitude had expired.

Signature of JOHN PETER.

(True translation.)

(Signed) W. ROBINSON,
Acting Magistrate.

Deposition of BAPPOO, Mussulman, son of ABDERMAN, aged 26 years, a Cooly, inhabitant of Kaydamook at Trevandrum in Travancore, taken before the Joint Magistrate of Cochin, on the 9th January 1857.

About 3 years ago the Kat Syrang (Pilot) induced me with 8 other men and 4 females to go on board the ship of Captain Roman. I lived in Kalpatty, a part of the town of Cochin. The names of my companions were Trikoonavaykaren Coonhoo, Ismall, an inhabitant of Anjengo, Ahmod of Tellicherry, Ausep of Cochin and 4 other men whose names I do not know, likewise a female named Bonee, an inhabitant of Allepey, who was formerly residing in Cochin with her child, Anna and Maria, both of Cochin, and another Christian woman whose name I do not know with her child, and the child of another Christian woman whose name likewise I do not recollect.

The Syrang told us that we should have 6 Rupees each monthly wages, and that more pay would be given us, after we should have arrived at Mauritius and (the people there) had seen whether we were good workers. We were to be taken to Mauritius. As we were put in the Boat which was to take us on board the ship, the Syrang gave us (the men) six Rupees each. I think the females were paid at the same rate, but I did not see whether it was so or not. About the 16th day after our departure, the Vessel reached the Islands called "Six Islands" where we were landed.

The Captain had told us that we would be kept only one year when we embarked, but on reaching the Islands the Captain wrote out an agreement by which we were to bind ourselves to work there for 3 years, and he desired us to affix our signatures thereto. On our objecting to engage to work there for 3 years he altered the terms of the agreement to 2 years, and to this agreement some of us affixed our signatures, but others would not do so. The Captain then made us over to a Gentleman by name Bishmear, who superintends the work on the Islands, together with the aforesaid paper of agreement which we had signed.

When we arrived on that Islands there were then 18 Coolies from Malabar working there.

After the lapse of six months Captain Roman came there again and brought 10 more Malabar Coolies in his ship, whom he landed there. The new comers were Moideen Cooty of Chowghaut, Moideen Cooty Caliph and Coonhamod of Velliangode, a Nair by name Krishna, inhabitant of the northern part of Kodoongaloor, a Christian by name John Karoo and 6 other Tears and Christians whose names I do not know. Ten men in all came. They likewise were set to work there.

Besides all these, there were 30 or 40 Caffers working there at the time of our arrival at the Islands. I heard that some of these Caffers were imported from Africa by Captain Roman with, and others without, the knowledge of the Authorities. Five days after our arrival there, a vessel belonging to Captain Gerard, commanded by another Captain, touched the Islands. Some of the aforesaid Caffers took their passage in her and went to Mauritius.

We were employed on the Island in clearing jungles, cleaning cocoanuts, felling trees, &c.

A year after our arrival Mr. Bishmear left the Island and was succeeded by another Gentleman. This new Superintendent when dissatisfied with our work, used us ill. He would tie us up to the wooden post on which the bell is suspended and flog us with the rope's end and put our feet in chains and lock the fetters. If we represented that we were sick, he would feel our pulse and then make us lie down on the ground; cover us with dry cocoanut leaves and set them on firec. Unable to bear the pain of the burning, we would get up and jump into the sea. He would then have us caught, and saying that we were feigning sickness, have us flogged again. If the women did not work he had their children carried out and exposed in the sun, while the women themselves were put in chains and flogged. Within the 9th and 10th day after child-birth, a woman was forced to work and was in the habit of making females climb on the roof of houses to thatch them. On one occasion the Gentleman struck me and I ran away and concealed myself in the jungle. I was however caught, tied and brought back and 25 lashes were inflicted on me in the presence of the Gentleman, who himself counted the lashes. He further forced all the Malabar. labourers, to the number of 40, each to strick one lash on the back and the same he caused to be done by the 30 and odd Caffers who were then on the Island. I was then put in chains for 25 days. When I recovered from the effects of this treatment, the wife of the Gentleman ausedme to be released. When the Gentleman disappeared I made enquiries and learnt that he had died.

Ten days after my release from the above imprisonment Captain Roman's ship touched that Island and he came on shore. We then told him he must take us back to Malabar.. Even before that when the Captain came there, as he was in the habit of doing every 4 or 5 months, we used to entreat him to do so. The Captain now promised to take us back. When we had asked him before, he told us that 2½ years only of our period of servitude having expired, we should wait six months longer. On the last occasion that the Captain came, he shipped in Cocoanut Oil for Mauritius. On his return from thence, we begged him to take us on board, when the Captain and the Crew said that they had come there on purpose to take us home. We then said that, "That is right" and lifted up our hands in thanksgiving to God. On former occasions of Captain's visits there, we used to complain to him that the Gentleman who was then on the Island was in the habit of flogging us, and then for 2 or 3 days, or till the departure of the vessel from the harbour, the Gentleman would not ill use us, and the Captain used then to promise us that the Gentleman would not again ill treat us. But as soon as the Captain was gone, the Gentleman was in the habit of again flogging us.

The Captain paid us (the men) 9£ (or 6½ Rupees of the current rate of the place,) to the women he paid at £7 each on account of our wages. When our wages were being settled, the lady called over our names and the Captain gave us our wages. Our full arrears were not discharged, the Captain promising that the balance of our wages would be paid at Cochin, as he had no money in hand at the time. The Captain demanded our passage money at the rate of 5 Rupees each, and Moideen Cootty of Chowghaut, who acted as our Chief, collected the amount from us and paid it to Captain Roman. Captain Roman made us swear by Allah and the Prophet that they would not tell these circumstances to any one, either that we have been taken on board the ship to the Island or the fact of our landing again at Kayamkollom. The Captain caused all of Mussulman faith to take the oath to us on board the ship. We were subsequently put in a

munjee at the Kayamkollom Bar and thus got ashore. Thirty-four persons, exclusive of children, were thus landed at Kayamkollom.

Some time previons to the decease of the said Gentleman, 6 Coolies and a woman unable to endure the cruelty of the Gentleman got into a munjee and set sail, not knowing whither to go. We heard from Captain Roman and the Crew of his vessel that they had reached Mauritius.

A Caffer from the Six Islands told us that Captain Roman had taken 55 men from Malabar and left them in another Island in the ocean. The said Caffer had been on that Island and came to Cochin with some of the Malabar people and he again embarked to be taken to Mauritius, but was fraudulently landed at the Six Islands again, as the Captain did not dare to take him to Mauritius, fearing that he (the Caffer) might divulge all these matters to the Authorities there. He told me the name of the Island. It belongs to Captain Gerard, but I do not recollect its name.

My Deposition has been read over to me and it is correct.

Mark of BAPPOO.

Taken before me this 9th day of January 1857.

(Signed) E. CULLIN, *Joint Magistrate.*

(True translation.)

(Signed) W. ROBINSON, *Acting Magistrate.*

Deposition of PRUSINA, daughter of Thoma, Christian, aged 21 years, laborer, inhabitant of Allepy in Travancore, taken before the Joint Magistrate of Cochin, on the 10th January 1857.

About 2 or 2½ years ago Kat Sarang and Kachno Cuanhen took me from Cochin on board the vessel of Captain Roman, they told me I was going to become a wet-nurse to the child of a lady in the Mauritius, and that I should have to take care of it, that I should remain there for 3 years and that I would be paid at the rate of 3 Rupees monthly with board and lodging. These assurances were afterwards reiterated by Captain Roman when I got on board the Ship. Some men and four women, myself included, were also taken on board from Cochin. All were taken with this promise of employing them as Coolies in the Mauritius at the rate of 3 Rupees per mensem per head. I and the woman, Anna, had each of us a young child. Janaken Bappoo, Moideen Kiraotha Moideen, Monhian Chokra, Coonjeria, a Christian, Krishnen Nair, Janaken Ahmod and two others whose names I do not know, males, as well as myself, Anna, Maria, Ooshalaya, four females, are the individuals who were conveyed on board the ship from this country. On the 17th day of our voyage we touched at Six Islands. The Captain Roman then desired us to land, we objected and asked him why we were landed there instead of the Mauritius. Captain Roman then threatened to kill us, tie a stone to us and drown us in the sea if we refused to land, so we landed, accompanied by Captain Roman, and were by him handed over to a Mr. Bresmier, the Gentleman who superintends the works at Six Islands. We were employed then in cutting or clipping dry cocoanuts for the oil mill, twisting coir yarn and clearing jungle, &c. After one year, Mr. Bresmier and his lady left the place for the Mauritius and soon after his post was filled by Monsieur Heque who came with his wife here, very heavy work was exacted of us and treated with severity, even sickness procured for us no consideration, and we mere females were placed in chains, we were beaten, our food kept from us, rice and millet or Indian corn only was given to us to eat and without salt. At the western and eastern end of the Island there are two small Islands separated from the other, and when we first landed at Six Islands there were on them 18 Malabar Coolies of different Castes on the Island. There were also 16 Caffers employed as Coolies here.

Six or seven months after our first arrival on the Island and during the incumbency of Mr. Besmier, Captain Roman came here and brought with him his coolies from Malabar named Poothen Krishnen and Janaken Bandary.

When Monsieur Heque came as Overseer on the Island he sent 16 Malabar coolies to the above said two little Islands to plant out the place (with Cocoanut trees) and perform other works, they were supplied with rice and other articles. Each Saturday Monsieur Heque was in the habit of visiting the Island in a Manchoo (boat) to see how work was progressing. He used to start after breakfast and would return by 4 o'clock in the evening. I lived in a hut close by

Mr. Heque's house occupied by his servant. Esteven kept me (as his mistress). I was in the habit of going often to his lady, pat and play with her children, and take them up. About a month or a month and half before we got away from the Island one Saturday as was his custom, Mr. Heque, after mustering the coolies, went in a Manchoo (boat) to inspect the works in the two little Islands. The boat was rowed by Velloo and Vellayodam that afternoon, but Mr. Heque who usually returned at 4 o'clock did not appear even at 6 P. M. His wife (Mrs. Heque) therefore sent the aforesaid Esteven and 4 Caffers in a boat in search of him in the said Islands, somewhat late in the night they returned to Madam Heque and Esteven reported that they found the western Island the boat-sail in which Mr. Heque had gone dragged on the shore by the Malabar coolies and left there, that when he inquired for Mr. Heque, one of the Malabar coolies, Moideen Cootty by name, and a Native of Chowghaut, aided by others made at him (Esteven) with threats of beating him, that they actually beat him and pelted him with stones, one of which hit his forehead and wounded him. He (Esteven) showed the blood flowing from the part. Esteven and the Caffers also said that from all they had seen they feared that the coolies must have made away with Mr. Heque. When Madam Heque heard, she cried very bitterly and was greatly grieved and fearing that the coolies would also come up to the house and ill-treat her, the lady with myself and her children took refuge in the house of a Tailor Maistre and his wife, inhabitants of Mauritius, and locked ourselves in one of the rooms of the house for the night. Next morning after day-break, when Moideen opened the door then we saw all the Malabar Coolies, headed by the abovesaid Moideen Cootty, assembled in the Verandah of the house. Moideen Cootty and Poothen Kristnen were seated on two chairs in the Verandah. The Madam then went up to and fell on their feet of Moideen Cootty and Kristnen, and prayed them very hard for the sake of God not to injure her, a poor defenceless woman, and promised to permit them to return to Malabar by the first ship that should come to the Island. The Madam then handed over the keys of the rice godown to Moideen Cootty and desired that he should see the rice issued to the coolies and sent the Maistry along with him. Moideen Cootty and the Maistry with Poothen Kristnen then went and issued out rice and Moideen Cootty looked after the cutting of dry cocoanut, &c.

A month and half after this occurrence, Captain Roman's vessel came and anchored off the Islands. He landed and came to see Madam, to his enquiry after Mr. Heque, he received reply that the Malabar coolies had murdered him. Almost immediately and while Captain Roman was still seated in the house, the Malabar coolies with sticks and other weapons in their hands, came to the house and surrounded him. When Moideen Cootty asked the Captain whether he was prepared to send them to Malabar, Captain Roman replied that as he had clandestinely brought them away and without the knowledge of the Company's Government, he could not remove them otherwise than in small numbers at a time, and would take four or five of them back on each trip. This offer was refused by Moideen Cootty, who insisted that all the Malabar coolies should be taken at once and immediately. Captain Roman promised to do so. Moideen Cootty then demanded that the Captain should settle their arrears of pay. Captain Roman then sent his hat as a sign to his Mate, who came ashore with the box, then he (Captain Roman) paid the coolies, giving the men each at the rate of 10£ and to the women at the rate of 7£, Captain Roman then enjoining on us strict silence on the circumstance of his having brought the coolies and landed them on the Island or taken back, and he then embarked all the coolies with the exception of 6 men, and 3 women on board the Schooner. On the 13th day of the voyage these men were landed at Kayangolom.

About a year before the above occurrence, owing to the cruelty of Monsieur Heque, six men and one woman had contrived to escape from the Island in an open boat to the Mauritius, and I heard Captain Roman state that on their arrival there they had preferred a complaint against him to the Authorities there. The Sailors of Captain Roman's ship have told us that their Master had brought other coolies from Malabar and landed them at Kalka and Soramom, two Islands in the ocean, a distance of about 3 days' voyage from the Six Islands, they did not mention to us the exact number of these coolies. Ooshalaya, and not Anna, is the woman who I said had a child.

Signature of PRUSINA.

Taken before me this 10th day of January 1857.

(Signed) E. CULLIN,
Joint Magistrate.

(True translation.)

(Signed) W. ROBINSON,
Acting Magistrate

Fort St. George, Judicial Consultation, 27th January 1857.

No. 42. ORDER THEREON, No. 105; dated 23rd January 1857.

Forwarded to the Honorable Company's Acting Solicitor, in reference to Extract Minutes Consultation of the 22nd Instant, No. 88.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

No. 105

Forwarded to the Hble
Comp.a Solicitor in expe-
-rence to Extr.t Min.s of the 22.d Instant No 88.

Fort St George,
23.d January 1857

(Sd) T. Pycroft
Chief Secretary

To
The Honorable Company's Acting Solicitor Disp.d 23.
27th 4 Enclosures—
Rec.d 23.d Inst.t and returned 3.d February 1857.
JRB.
Actg Under Secy

been inveigled. I requested the assistance of
the Governor of Mahé to prevent the transaction
& begged him that the men belonging to the
Company's territory might be landed but he replies
that he has referred the matter to his Govt
& the men are still on board, if not already
sailed.

6. Some of the crimps are in custody
& the enquiry is being proceeded with.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient Servant

J. Robinson
Acting Magistrate.