

**LANKA**

# **GUARDIAN**

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## **ELEPHANT PASS**

*Mervyn de Silva*

## **NEW WORLD ORDER**

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## **ETHNIC CONFLICT**

*Izeth Hussein*

## **MUSLIMS**

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## **INDOCHINA REVISITED**

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## **JUDICIARY**

*Piyal Gamage*

## **KASHMIR**

*Mushahid Hussain*

## **LYN LUDOWYK**

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## TRENDS

### TO BE DEPORTED

*Three Tigers who stabbed three Tamil expatriates in Switzerland are to be deported by the Swiss authorities. They stabbed their countrymen, it is alleged, for not making contributions to the LTTE.*

### IN TAMIL

*Mr Lalith Athulathmudali, the Education minister, replied in Tamil to oral questions asked in Parliament by Jaffna District TULFMP Kandiah Nava rat nam. Mr Athulathmudali was given a round of applause by his fellow MPs.*

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## Briefly . . .

### JOURNALIST REJECT

Journalists have rejected the government's Media Commission bill. At a meeting of the Sri Lanka Working Journalists Association it was unanimously decided to reject the bill, and to convey the decision to President Premadasa.

If the government should proceed to implement the bill notwithstanding the protests of journalists, it was decided to launch a campaign in collaboration with political parties and trade unions and other mass organisations.

Mr H. L. D. Mahindapala (editor of the Sunday Observer) presided at the Working Journalists Association meeting.

### A POSER TO THE LTTE

The influential Madras Hindu said in a Colombo dated report that President Premadasa's call to the LTTE to face an election and prove that they were the sole representatives of the Tamil people reflected Mr. Premadasa's current thinking towards a fresh peace process. But the idea would in all probability be repugnant to the Tigers who hold all other Tamils groups in contempt, the Hindu said.

The LTTE has always maintained that any talks on the North and East, besides being unconditional, must be solely between them and the government.

Meanwhile, the LTTE has formed its own cabinet of ministers for Tamil Eelam in Jaffna, the Hindu reported. The LTTE's deputy leader and top military commander Gopalaswamy Mahendrarajah has been given the portfolio of Cabinet Affairs and Defence; Anton Balasingham has been given External Affairs and

Yogarathnam Yogi has been named Minister of Finance and Internal Affairs. Tiger Supremo Prabhakaran's position in this was not clear, the Hindu said.

### MILITARY POLICEMEN ARRESTED

Seven military policemen in Anuradhapura, including a captain and two lieutenants, were arrested by a military police squad from Colombo for allegedly helping a businessman to smuggle banned goods to Jaffna. The businessman, a Sinhalese, was also taken into custody.

Meanwhile, following detections made by the military police, a brigadier based at Anuradhapura is under investigation on allegations of bribery in connection with the issue of permits for Jaffna bound contraband.

### IN PARLIAMENT

During the debate on the extension of the Emergency Mr. Ranil Wickremasinghe, Leader of the House, said that the SLFP had lost every election since 1977 and Mrs Bandaranaike had the audacity to say that the people wanted her to stay as party leader. He said that Anura Bandaranaike was more popular than Mrs Bandaranaike.

Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Leader of the Opposition, said that the Defence Minister, the State Minister for Defence and the Government should be held responsible for the situation in the North and East. Who gave lorry loads of arms to the LTTE, she asked. The Opposition Leader said that the Government was not honest in trying to solve the conflict. The conflict was like the beggar's sore for the government; for thirteen years no solution had been found.

Mrs Bandaranaike said that the government had delivered the peace loving people of Jaffna to the LTTE.



## NEW FROM PRIO!

### **Sri Lanka: Towards a multi-ethnic democratic society?**

Report of a fact-finding mission to Sri Lanka by Neville Jayaweera

What are the roots of the conflict in Sri Lanka? How has the ethnic issue influenced the evolution of the conflict? What hopes are there for the emergence of a multi-ethnic democratic society and how can the international community assist the process of peace?

These are some of the questions which this report attempts to answer. Commissioned by PRIO, sponsored by the Norwegian government, Diakonisches Werk-EKD and NOVIB and written by Neville Jayaweera, development consultant and former senior Civil Servant in Sri Lanka, it will be of interest to international donor agencies, foreign ministries, researchers and all those working in development in Sri Lanka.

It contains a review of the history and causes of the conflict and examines the role of political parties, ethnic and religious groups, the military, vigilante and guerrilla groups and non-governmental organisations in the conflict and in the pursuit of peace. It also looks at the impact of President Premadasa's presidency and contains a lengthy interview in which he not only explains his past and present policies but outlines his understanding of multi-ethnicity and his vision for the future of Sri Lanka.

The report makes recommendations for achieving peace and multi-ethnicity which are already being considered by the government.

ISBN 82-7288-148-9

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# ELEPHANT PASS: Strategic and Symbolic

NEWS  
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

**T**he Elephant Pass garrison, with some 800 Sinhala soldiers and at least 20 officers has been under siege for almost a month. Two nearby camps were taken by the 'Tigers' before the siege commenced. The LTTE supremo, according to the most reliable sources, has thrown into this battle some 3,000 teenage recruits, young 'braves' that needed to be blooded. Some newspapers place the LTTE casualties at well over 1600, with the Army losing nearly 400 men, with more than double that number wounded. Certainly, it is the kind of battle that the newspaper reader and the mass mind can more easily grasp. Exchanges in the ten year guerrilla war left more fuzzy images, except for massacres of civilians.

This seems a more a set-piece confrontation. There is the Elephant Pass garrison, a known, solid object, surrounded by marauding rebels, who will certainly massacre the men inside if the beleaguered fort falls. Even the idiom borrowed from Saddam Hussein ('the mother of all battles') helps not only to romanticise a war that has remained a messy, brutal, confused and seemingly incomprehensible, but to make it comfortably neat and tidy. Only the soldier in the jungle, advancing sometimes only 4-500 yards a day, knows the difference — lost as he often is, in thick jungle and scrub, and pelting rain, and gripped by the Sinhala soldier's greatest fear, the lurking menace of the LTTE's deadliest weapon, the land-mine. That of course is what accounts for the pace of advance, some days no more than 300 yards.

Phase 2 opened last week as OPERATION BALAVEGAYA itself approaches its first month.

This is a politico-military conflict and its meaning therefore can never be fully measured in either military or political terms. Nor must we forget the fact of timing and the external factor. The assassination of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, co-author of the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord and the man most likely to become Prime Minister of India, emphasised the importance of that dimension, particularly when the Indian authorities accused the LTTE, started to arrest LTTE activists, rounded up sympathisers, and made a serious effort to send back the Sri Lankan Tamil refugees.

The siege was a message that Colombo must not deceive itself by thinking that this was the ideal moment to pressure the LTTE militarily. As a military commander, Prabhakaran instinctively turns to his gun just when he starts to suspect that his enemy has spotted a "window of opportunity". He doesn't like to re-act. He acts; he pre-empt his enemy's move. He is ready to make enormous sacrifices just to retain the initiative. "Elephant Pass" is a classic demonstration, of this commonplace. But the choice of target says something more. The significance of Elephant Pass is both symbolic and strategic.

Thomas Abraham, the extremely well-informed *HINDU* correspondent reported recently that Prabhakaran has appointed a Cabinet of ministers evidently for the provisional government of EELAM. Much earlier we had reports that the LTTE leader had made his first public speech after September 1987 when he explained to his cadres why he had decided to reject the 'Accord' and resume fighting... this time against the IPKF. In the latest speech, we are told, he

summed the current situation, military, political, in the aftermath of the Gandhi assassination, and assured his followers that the Eelam struggle was on course, and "liberation" was no idle dream.

Elephant Pass commands a causeway which is the only land link between the Jaffna Peninsula, the LTTE's "liberated zone", and the (Sinhala-dominated, more or less government-controlled) mainland. If the heavily fortified garrison falls, all access will be by sea or air. Sri Lanka has a small navy, and a smaller air force. The defence budget has reached its outer limits in the view of our aid-givers and, more crucially, the IMF. When the IMF pledged a 500 million dollar Extended Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) for three years, it was noted that the inflation rate has declined, and the budget deficit has dropped from 10% of GDP to 9%, and that the exchange control system was being dismantled. But a senior Sri Lankan official observed that "defence spending had upset our plans" which contemplated even better economic performance.

But Mrs. Bandaranaike, and the Opposition in general have been protesting that the Armed Forces are not receiving all the funds needed. If the garrison falls, all land links to the Jaffna peninsula, the Tamil heartland, will be cut off. The physical division of the island will be more of a reality. The physical separation in that event could be more than symbolic. The "liberated zone" would be for all practical purposes, "Eelam".

(Continued on page 4)



# No Power Struggle — Mrs. B

Lasantha Wickramatunge

*Opposition leader Sirima Bandaranaike, in an exclusive interview with The Sunday Times denied reports that the SLFP was in the throes of a power struggle.*

*She said there was no attempt by anyone to keep her son Anura Bandaranaike out of the party presidency.*

*Excerpts from the interview:*

**Q:** There is a great deal of speculation that a power struggle is on in the SLFP. How serious is the situation?

**A:** There is no power struggle in the SLFP. Certain sections of the media are carrying out a relentless campaign against the SLFP, particularly against me.

In this context, I would like to refer to "The Sunday Times" special report of June 14, 1991 under the heading "Bomb blasts and Intelligence bluffs". It refers to happenings at the SLFP Central Committee meeting of July 8. I must say the references of the Central Committee meeting in the report are half-truths. It is from such references that the impression is created that there is a power struggle in the party.

The appointment of five new members to the Central Committee was a legitimate exercise. The president of the party has the power to appoint 11 members to the Central Committee. There were five vacancies in the CC caused by deaths of members and resignations.

Appointments to the CC are entirely the president's right. It was said I had not consulted the CC before making the appointments. Whoever said that does not know the party constitution.

**Q:** Would that mean you will be retiring from Politics?

**A:** No I have no such intention. Firstly I do not want to

let down the people who have been with us. Our people do not want me to. I shall remain in the party. The wish of the people is that I should be the leader of the party. Anura has also agreed. That is the understanding.

**Q:** Is there also an understanding to make Anuruddha Ratwatte the General Secretary of the party?

**A:** No such decision has been arrived at.

**Q:** It is also said that there is a plan to keep Anura out of the party presidency to bring Chandrika Kumaranatunge in. What is the position?

**A:** I said earlier, there is no attempt to keep Anura out.

But if Chandrika wants to join the party with her group, I don't see how we can oppose it. Even Anura has said Chandrika is welcome to join the SLFP. I do not think he has changed his views on it. Chandrika herself has said she has no intention of vying for leadership. She has said even if she is to join the SLFP, it is only to strengthen the anti-UNP forces.

The so-called rift between Anura and Chandrika is also non-existent. It is the government that is spreading such stories.

It is the wish of the people that everyone should get together. I hope all anti-UNP parties too would join the SLFP to fight the government.

**Q:** It is said you are now thinking in terms of the B-C pact for a settlement of the ethnic issue?

**A:** I believe that the B-C pact and the DPA manifesto can form the basis for a settlement. Even the Tamil parties I have had discussions with have expressed the same views.

The government still has no concrete solution to the problem.

Even the All-party Conference after two years has failed to come up with anything. The APC is not even meeting now.

Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe keeps blaming us for not giving a solution to the problem. The solution must be given by the government.

## Elephant Pass...

(Continued from page 3)

The manner in which "50 ships of all kinds including, fast attack craft, command ships, landing craft, passenger craft and supply ships" (*Dinesh Watawana Sunday Times*) have gathered at Trinco harbour is also more than symbolic. It is a sign of what could become the political geography of Sri Lanka, with Colombo's sovereignty over Jaffna only nominal. Day-to-day administration will gradually become an LTTE responsibility. True the LTTE does function as a skeletal administrative service, certainly in revenue-collection. But the fall of the garrison will land to a situation that will be regarded by political historians as a turning point.

On the other hand, if the Sinhala soldiers are rescued, and the garrison saved, the beating that the LTTE got militarily, may justify Major-General Kobekaduwe's prediction of "the beginning of the end" of the LTTE.

Such military reverses for the LTTE will coincide with the greatly improved Indo-Sri Lanka relations, dramatised by the visit to Delhi of Foreign Minister Harold Herat, the first South Asian minister to meet Prime Minister Narasimha Rao. And that in turn follows SAARC discussions on countering terrorism, and the crackdown on the LTTE in Tamilnadu.

ADB US \$ 50 m. loan

## Private sector, 4 banks, NDB-DFCC to benefit

**P**riate sector industrial enterprises here as well as four private sector commercial banks and the the NDB and DFCC will benefit from the US\$50 million loan the Asian Development Bank lending Sri Lanka on soft loan terms for its third development financing projects here.

An ADB news release issued in Manila indicated that the money will come from the bank's concessional Asian Development Fund carrying a service charge of 1% per year and repayable in 40 years, including 10 year grace period.

Under the loan terms, the Sri Lanka government will re-lend the funds to six selected partici-

pating credit institutions (PCIS) — the NDB, DFCC, Commercial Bank, Hatton National Bank, Sampath Bank and Seylan Bank,

The PCIS will on-lend them for medium and large scale private sector industrial projects.

The project is aimed at enhancing private sector activity in Sri Lanka's economy, assisting export diversification, creating employment, and adding greater value to industrial products. An estimated US\$60 million of additional fixed investment is expected to be generated as a result of the project, and some 8,000 new jobs are likely to be created.

The project is also designed

to assist the government in implementing industrial and financial policies, encourage a greater participation by commercial banks in long-term financing, and improve the institutional framework of the capital markets through the training of practitioners and professionals in the securities business.

Additionally, ADB is making a US\$240,000 grant to assist the training and research program of the Securities and Exchange commission.

These funds will be used for broker training, investor education and library facilities with consultants to implement the technical assistance engaged by the ADB.

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## Lalith on LTTE, SAARC

Education and Higher Education Minister Lalith Athulathmudali:

For eight long years we have been debating the emergency regularly and this must be the longest debate in the history of our parliament. Since emergency covers a whole area sometimes the debate gets disconnected. I want to say something about the universities. All schools of thought are there in the universities. There was a time when you like a person you called him a progressive and when you don't like a person you called him a reactionary. In universities it is natural to have different points of view. What we must guard against is one group trying to impose its will and suppress another school of thought.

There should be the spirit of tolerance in the universities. Since the last emergency debate the importance has now shifted to the LTTE. We must understand first what the LTTE is about. As far as we know they are for a separate state. LTTE is very clear about that. They appear to believe they can achieve this by violence. And they also believe when they achieve that no other Tamil group would have any role to play. All other issues are determined by that. Several opposition speakers have said limit the emergency to the north and east. They won't say that, if they understood the LTTE.

I do not understand the logic of those who say the emergency should be removed from certain areas of the country. I can understand if they say that certain clauses in the regulations should be removed. In fact, government on its own have been revising the emergency regulations. I understand the LTTE will not talk of a political solution with them. But you know, at the same time, that at the end it is a political solution that will evolve. We must have the determination to meet the LTTE on their own

ground. They are supposed to have said that they are planning for 30 years. That means we must be determined to fight the terrorists to the bitter end. But that is, of course, not fighting against the rights of the minorities. While we must be determined to fight separatist violence, we must also be determined to uphold the rights of the minorities.

For one thing, I am sure that the Elephant Pass garrison will be relieved. We must also realise that the key to the political solution is the east, and the key to the military solution is the north. While paying tribute to our forces in the north, I wish to mention that a passing military man, who is now retired, told me "That our officers are above the average; they are fierce fighters. But it is necessary that we must now take the initiative into our hands. We have scored many victories in the past. It is necessary to concentrate in the major area

I am told that about 30 per cent of people of Jaffna have

left the area and gone to various other places including Colombo. Today terrorism is an international thing. In the 19th century it was restricted by national boundaries. It is good the SAARC conference is coming in November. We must take the opportunity to get the SAARC countries together to fight terrorism. We have now recognised that a joint effort with other countries is necessary because terrorism is operating internationally. After Rajiv Gandhi's death, India seems to be taking new steps not taken earlier. I think if India had taken these steps earlier, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi would have been living today, and also several Tamil leaders who were killed. The Tamil Nadu government is setting up 18 police camps in the southern coast. We must now make use of the new mood in India. The Select Committee that has been proposed is welcome. Once we have met the threat of violence, then we shall have to give our attention to the political aspect. Various changes are taking place in the world. The Soviet Union has applied to become a member of the World Bank when you here have blamed us for joining it.

## An Information Centre on the Social Sciences

Social Scientists in Sri Lanka have for a long time felt the need for a centralised information base in the Social Sciences. Besides the local community of social scientists several Sri Lankan and foreign scholars come here to obtain data on the socio-economic development of Sri Lanka. Information on Janasaviya, Human Resource Development, Labour Migration, Foreign Direct Investment, Rural Development, Environment, Regional Cooperation, Privatisation, Impact of the Gulf Crisis, and such like is sought by many social science researchers and scholars. They waste much time and resources trying to locate information, and compile data unaware of research that is already available.

Several institutions in the coun-

try realised that there is a genuine need to improve and strengthen the library services and informations available to the community of social scientists. They jointly formulated proposals for improving the infrastructure for social science information and library services.

Institutions such as CENWOR (Centre for women's Research), ICES (International Centre for Ethnic Studies), SSA (Social Scientists' Association) and the Marga Institute have their own special collections of books and documents, but with the exponential growth of recorded information and growing interdisciplinary relationships between subjects, no specialised collection can cover the mass of information available at present and envisaged in the future. Coopera-

(Continued on Page 8)



## India's "bleeding wound"

## "Afghanising" the Kashmir conflict

Mushahid Hussain

Just as Afghanistan became the Soviet Union's "bleeding wound" exacting a political, military and psychological price that Moscow was ultimately unwilling to pay, similarly Occupied Kashmir too has been transformed into India's "bleeding wound". But the Kashmir conflict is also being "Afghanised" in more than just the fact of it being India's "bleeding wound". The conflict among Kashmiri liberation groups is surfacing, the RAW seems to be engaged in terrorism similar to the manner that KHAD was as is testified by the Rawalpindi blast on May 8, and increasingly, international observers including those in the United States are identifying Kashmir as a "regional conflict". In fact, the Solarz subcommittee in the US Congress has threatened further slashing of the already suspended American aid to Pakistan should Pakistan, in the view of the subcommittee, be "involved in abetting terrorism in Kashmir", i.e., supporting the Kashmiri freedom fighters.

Two recent statements by Indian leaders — one a private comment by the Prime Minister and the other a public pronouncement by the leader of the opposition — are also instructive in providing a perspective on how badly the situation in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) has deteriorated. While Rajiv Gandhi publicly conceded that the Indian military "has gone berserk" in suppressing the freedom movement of the Kashmiris, the first such statement by a major Indian politician, Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar made some comments on Kashmir to the visiting Pakistani Foreign Secretary Shehryar Khan which are quite revealing. Chandra Shekhar told Khan "I don't have an emotional problem about Kashmir as Nehru had. I am quite a realistic politician and I

would like to see a solution (in Kashmir) based on the realities of the situation".

What are some of the "realities of the situation" in IOK that Chandra Shekhar alluded to during his meeting with the Pakistani Foreign Secretary. Some of these "realities" present a frightening profile of a land whose three million inhabitants are waging a heroic struggle against overwhelming odds:

- \* Troops have replaced tourists in an area that used to pride itself on a \$ 300 million tourism industry and these troops numbering 300,000 include virtually all segments of the Indian security machine including the regular Army, Border Security Force and the Central Reserve Police;

- \* Curfews and the crackle of Kalashnikovs are today the hallmark of Kashmir, whose placidity and peace had once earned for it the title of "Switzerland of Asia";

- \* Within an 18 month period, a widespread, indigenous and spontaneous popular movement for liberation has today been transformed into a guerilla insurgency that is targeting the Indian security machine with increasingly sophisticated military equipment: the brutal killing by the Indian army of 81 freedom fighters on May 6 testifies to this escalation;

- \* For the first time since 1947, Kashmir (plus East Punjab and Assam) have been excluded in the schedule of general elections in India on account of disturbed conditions;

- \* Twice in the last 18 months, India has sought and received Pakistani assistance in getting daughters of two prominent pro-Indian Kashmiri Muslims released from the captivity of the freedom fighters.

Given this context, it is no accident that Indian politicians of all shades of opinion rang-

ing from Rajiv Gandhi to Chandra Shekhar are concerned over a crisis whose solution, within the Indian Union, is no longer in sight. Recent events in the Kashmir valley are pointers to a "long hot summer". On March 31, two Swedish engineers were kidnapped by the Muslim Janbaz Force, the first such abduction of foreigners by one of the several groups that are currently engaged in armed struggle. The Muslim Janbaz Force had made it clear that they will not release the Swedish engineers until "Amnesty International, the United Nations and other international bodies send their observers to the valley to see the cruel acts of the Indian occupation forces". On April 23, the Editor of a leading Urdu daily of Srinagar "Al-Safa", Mohammad Shabaan, was killed by unidentified assailants. And the day after his killing, there was a complete general strike to protest the first such incident against a journalist since the uprising began in Occupied Kashmir in earnest around December 1988.

Compounding the Indian problem is a security nightmare that defines the Kashmir insurgency as an increasingly Islamic Movement and views its close proximity to East Punjab as creating a "security opening" in India's jugular in the northwest via-a-vis Pakistan and China. For instance, one of the prominent groups in IOK, the Jammu Kashmir Student Liberation Front (JKSLF), who were responsible for the kidnapping of Naheed Imtiaz, has renamed itself as "Ikhwanul Muslimeen (Muslim brotherhood)". The Islamic component of the Kashmiri struggle is also evident from the linkage of the Kashmiri freedom fighters with the Afghan Mujahideen and recently after the liberation of Khost, visiting journalists saw at least 500 Kashmiri Youth fighting with the Afghan Mujahideen. The JKSLF's parent party, Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) traditionally espoused a secular line seeking an indepen-

dent Kashmir. And it is perhaps no accident that the Chief Executives of the neighbouring states of Occupied Kashmir and East Punjab are persons with high level security experience. The Governor of IOK is Girish Saxena, a former head of RAW, India's premier foreign intelligence agency, and the Governor of East Punjab is the former Chief of Army Staff, General O. P. Malhotra. Incidentally, these are the only two non-Hindu majority states in India and both these regions have been vital in any military engagement that India has had with Pakistan in the past.

Most informed Pakistanis, including the military and non-official analysts, see the struggle in Kashmir as being central to the future of the balance of power in South Asia. Ironically 20 years after India had managed to tilt that balance in its favour following the creation of Bangladesh, Pakistan is very clear that it will not play into India's hand since India seeks to "Pakistanise" the problem by presenting an indigenously-generated upsurge as externally-fomented violence. It is precisely for this reason that Pakistan has chosen to continue, business-as-usual, on bilateral relations with India (two accords were signed only last month on such military issues as prior information of movement of troops during military exercises and air violations).

Additionally, both the President and the Prime Minister, in separate statements, called for a political solution to the Kashmir question. In an April 28 chat with journalists, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan underlined the need for an absence of military conflict between Pakistan and India on Kashmir adding, "it is not appropriate to explain what efforts Pakistan is making to defuse the situation (in Kashmir)". In a recent interview with "India Today", released to the press on May 4, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif called for a "realistic approach" on Kashmir so that

a "solution is found which is honourable for both countries". He added that Kashmir is such a serious matter that "if we don't resolve it, Kashmir will squeeze all the blood out of us". The Army's decision to sign accords on military-related issues with India at a time when the uprising in Kashmir is escalating is also a pointer to this basically business-as-usual approach in bilateral relations with India, notwithstanding the uprising in Kashmir.

For Pakistani policy makers, there were two options on an

approach towards Kashmir. There was the "Bangladesh route", which the Indians secured through a quick caesarian operation midwifed by an Indian Army, which was superior in numbers and weapons. The other approach, which Pakistan has apparently adopted in regards Kashmir, is the "Afghan model", essentially a protracted war, which has made Kashmir into a bleeding wound for India, raising the political, military and psychological costs of its occupation.

## An Information . . .

(Continued from page 6)

tion and sharing of resources it was realised, is a vital necessity in Sri Lanka today, where the resources for library development are severely limited.

To optimise the use of the limited resources available by efficient coordination of activities, INNESS (Information Network in Social Sciences) was established enabling the collaborating libraries to share their resources. The network would serve the community of social scientists and facilitate the flow of information. It would reduce to a minimum the present waste/loss of information and also the duplication of research by local and foreign personnel who work unaware of the availability of prior related documentation. Marga Institute is the co-ordinating centre for this network.

INNESS is being directed by a policy board comprising representatives of the cooperating institutions, on all important matters relating to collaborative activities and the services to be provided. The Centre for Regional Development Studies (CRDS) which has set up its own documentation cum referral base has joined the network as its fifth member.

The network also cooperates in making available information on bibliographical data relating to grey literature/unclassified documents. A scheme of inter

-library cooperation exists where documents are lent on a library-to-library basis and there is also a flow of information on on-going projects.

The infrastructure for the smooth functioning of INNESS is being provided by the Marga Institute. Its library building at 61, Isipathana Mawatha, Colombo 5 is being expanded and from August this year library facilities will be available on a wider basis to researchers outside the Marga Institute itself. The library which will be opened Monday through Saturday for extended hours in the evenings, will soon be fully automated.

At present The DEVINSA (Development Information Network in South Asia) data base which holds over 12,000 records with abstracts provides information on current development activities and socio-economic research in six South Asian countries, namely Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. This data are published in monthly bibliographies of 250 records with abstracts. They are supplemented by annual cumulative indices.

The first INNESS Newsletter which is just out gives the social scientist information on studies in progress, workshops and seminars. A centralised data base on 'Impact of Violence on the Child' has been set up to collect available information on the subject.



## SPOILS SYSTEM

Izeth Hussain

What was the compulsion behind the relentless wreckage of the administration by successive governments after 1956? The familiar explanation is that the sight of supplicants crowding the gate, and the power to reward the chosen ones inflated the egos of politicians, whose idea of enjoying power was to abuse power. This explanation is not really convincing. Some, perhaps many, of the politicians, including the powerful ones, who it must be presumed were not entirely devoid of concern about the future, must have viewed the spoils system as self-destructive for Sri Lanka.

Some other, more powerful compulsion was at work, which had nothing to do with inflated political egos. The nature of the compulsion should become clear if we ask who really were the major beneficiaries of the spoils system. The politician in power had to reward his electorate to the full extent of his capacity to secure re-election, and that involved among other things appointments, transfers, and promotions in the state sector. The Ministers, more particularly the ones controlling huge corporations, had to reward not just their electorates but others as well. Most of the politicians were Sinhalese, the electorates were predominantly Sinhalese, and the spoils went mostly to the Sinhalese, so that the Sinhalese who constituted 74% of the population came to have 85% of the jobs in the state sector, and of course much more in the armed forces. Many of the politicians were probably not communalist at all, and were quite prepared to be fair-minded to Tamils and Muslims, but they were operating within parameters which ineluctably favoured the Sinhalese. We see

here a Hegelian process in which a purpose was being realized without its being made fully conscious. The purpose was the Sinhalese ascent to dominance in the administration, which would not have been so expeditious if recruitment had been strictly on the basis of competitive examinations and promotions strictly on seniority and merit, as would be required by the principles of liberal democracy. It had therefore to be jettisoned for majoritarian democracy in the state sector.

The Hegelian process can be seen to have been in operation in the sector of education as well. The details on this subject are being taken from C. R. de Silva's judiciously balanced article *The Impact of Nationalism on Education: The Schools Take-over (1961) and the University Admission Crisis (included in Collective Identities, Nationalism and Protest in Modern Sri Lanka - ed. Michael Roberts, 1979)*. Pointing out that the Sinhalese Buddhists were an educationally underprivileged group in the early twentieth century, de Silva observed that it was a situation that could not last after universal suffrage in 1931. This connects with our earlier observation that the National Congress leaders came round to accepting universal suffrage because they realized its advantages for the majority.

The challenge to the dominance of the Christian mission school system began around 1880, gathered strength after 1931, intensified after 1951, and culminated in the schools take-over of 1961. Although the number of Christian schools had been declining, while the number of Buddhist schools was increasing, the former had con-

tinued to enjoy disproportionately high grants from the Government. In the 1939 Budget, 75.2% of the funds went to Christian schools, while the Buddhist ones received only 19.3%. In 1959, the 735 state-aided Christian schools received a grant of Rs 28 million or Rs 118 per pupil, while 1257 Buddhist schools received Rs 20 million or Rs 64 per pupil. Furthermore, the bulk of the English medium schools, the nurseries for the later ascent to elite positions, were in Christian hands. Obviously, no majority in the world can reconcile itself to being educationally underprivileged. The schools take-over of 1961 was inevitable.

But there remained the problem of the Tamils having advantages in the education sector; the consequence of the excellent schools system established by American missionaries in predominantly Tamil areas. The answer was found in the schemes of standardization introduced after 1973. The Sinhalese have convinced themselves, by and large, that standardization was meant only for positive discrimination on behalf of students from educationally underprivileged areas, a strategy which had no ethnic dimension to it whatever. The competitiveness of the Tamil students may have been reduced, but so was that of Sinhalese students from educationally privileged areas. However, just as in the case of the spoils system in the state sector, the major beneficiaries of standardization have been the Sinhalese, not the minorities.

Besides, it would not be uncharitable to suspect an ethnic motivation behind standardization if we remember what happened prior to its introduction. Under the 1970 Government, the charge that Tamil examiners had been favouring Tamil students was not proven. There followed the measure decreeing lower qualifying marks for Sinhalese, higher for Tamil medium students, in science sub-



jects, while in the arts subjects the requirements were reversed. The measure was too blatantly discriminatory because, at that time, science graduates could get the more lucrative jobs. Hence, it is not uncharitable to suppose, the resort to standardization which was officially meant to benefit all under-privileged students, irrespective of ethnic considerations, but which actually benefitted the Sinhalese more than others. A process appears to have been in operation in which the real motivations were not quite clear to the beneficiaries themselves. It fits into the paradigm of the majority seeking the dominant position to which it believes it is entitled.

In the usual discourse on the Sri Lankan economy, the expansion of the state sector after 1956 is seen only in terms of socialism. This is a simplification, though there is no doubting S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike's commitment to socialism of the Scandinavian variety. But what he actually instituted might be called "Afro-Asian socialism", of sort instituted among others by Nehru in India, Nasser in Egypt, Sockarno in Indonesia, Sekou Toure in Guinea, and Nyerere in Tanzania. In Latin America, Peron of Argentina seems to have been of the same ilk.

The dynamic behind Afro-Asian socialism was the aspiration to upward mobility of the lower middle-class. It was inevitable that in several Afro-Asian countries the dominant elite under the colonial masters, consisting of feudal groups and the westernized bourgeoisie, had to come under challenge after decolonization from the numerically more preponderant lower middle-class, who could claim to be closer to the people and therefore more nationalist. The crucially important point about the lower-middle class is that it lacked the higher educational and technical qualifications, or the business skills together with the requisite capital, to ascend to elite levels. It could

do so only through the state sector. Where the Afro-Asian lower middle-class took power, through army coups as in Egypt, Syria, or Iraq, or had to be accommodated as in India or Sri Lanka, it was inevitable that there had to be an elephantiasis of the state sector.

We are generalizing here, and have of course to allow for significant local variations. In Sri Lanka Afro-Asian socialism had to have a particular configuration because the country was peculiar in having an under-privileged majority at the time of independence. The Sri Lankan state sector had therefore to accommodate not the lower middle-class as a whole but more specifically the Sinhalese lower middle-class. The 1956 revolution was led by the Kotte aristocracy of the Bandarnaike's and the Obeyesekere's together with the Kandyan aristocracy of the Ratwattes, supported by the triumvirate of monks, school teachers and ayurveda physicians, who functioned as the spearhead of a specifically Sinhalese lower middle-class. That was why Bandaranaike's socialism turned out to be a peculiar hybrid, socialism combined with what should be anathema for any socialist, ethnic chauvinism. It was socialism mainly for the benefit of the ethnic majority. Here surely Hegel's paradigm applies, as we had a great leader who thought in all sincerity that he was promoting Scandinavian socialism, whereas in fact he had instituted ethno-socialism for the benefit of the Sinhalese majority.

It is not really difficult to explain the dogged persistence of the Sri Lankan variety of Afro-Asian socialism from 1956 to 1977, and even thereafter in fact, though its disastrous failure had become all too apparent long before 1977. A state sector that had become vast, parasitic, and destructive, entailing a colossal haemorrhage of the nation's resources, had to be preserved all the same because it served the purpose of the economic ascent

of the Sinhalese. The Sri Lankan version of socialism reached its apogee under the 1970 Government, under which discrimination against minorities is also regarded as having reached its apogee. The contradiction is only an apparent one.

Contrary to what is usually believed, ethno-socialism continued under the 1977 Government. It came to power with a commitment to a liberalized economy, and obviously had no illusions whatever about socialism. But under the 1978 Constitution Sri Lanka was declared to be a "democratic socialist Republic." The leader, who had his own notion of what socialism is supposed to mean, equated it simply with the state sector. Despite the liberalization Sri Lanka still had a vast state sector, therefore it was socialist. At the same time, official policy was in favour of privatization, which was not however carried out to anything like the extent that was possible, as shown by the "peoplistation" now taking place. The colossal haemorrhage of resources continued, and that provoked something that is so bizarre that it probably has no parallel anywhere else in the world. The Finance Minister of the time took to fulminating in his Budget speeches, year after year, about the criminal squandering of resources through the state sector. Bizarre, because it was a member of the Government, a Cabinet Minister at that, and not a member of the Opposition, who was fulminating against what was being done by his own Government, fulminating ineffectually because no corrective action was being taken, and no one imagined for a moment either that any corrective action would be taken. What it showed was that there was something virtually sacrosanct about the state sector, under the 1977 Government as much as under the previous governments since 1956. It was sacrosanct because the economic ascent of the Sinhalese required ethnosocialism and a monster state sector.

However, to argue that the 1977 Government was also an enthusiastic practitioner of ethno-socialism is not to deny that its economic strategies are significantly different from what had prevailed since 1956. The slogans of the liberalized economy, the open economy, the outward looking economy, and free enterprise, all certainly reflected a shift from the command economy. Business competition increased, and that seemed to have aggravated our ethnic problems. Under the earlier command economy Sinhalese business interests were seen by the minorities as favoured, but once the grip of the state on the economy slackened minority business competitiveness could have increased. The Tamils seemed to be coming into business in rather a big way, and certainly as never before. Did that provide one of the motivations for the 1983 pogrom? It will be remembered that in the initial stages, young auxiliaries meticulously targeted Tamil business premises for burning, before the whole enterprise got completely out of hand. It will be remembered also that there followed the letter-campaign against Muslim businessmen, assuring them that it would be their turn next. The economic dimensions of the 1983 pogrom was explored in an interesting paper by the late Dr. Newton Gunasinghe. The case might be unproven, but the commonsense of the matter is that a command economy could certainly promote the purposes behind majoritarian democracy, in this case the economic ascent of the Sinhalese, far better than the liberalized economy required by liberal democracy.

In this article, we have not tried to explore the totality of our ethnic problems, going into the rights and wrongs and all the complexities that are obviously involved. The purpose has been only to establish a connection between the break down of liberal democracy and our ethnic problems. The argument is that Sri Lanka was rather peculiar in having an under privileged majority at the time of indepen-

dence, which led ineluctably, and it must be said quite understandably, to a momentum for the quick ascent of the under privileged majority to a position of dominance, a momentum which could have been obstructed by liberal democracy and facilitated by majoritarian democracy.

The argument, however, raises a further problem. The Sinhalese surely established a dominant position before 1977, after which the legitimate interests of the minorities could surely have been accommodated without much difficulty. Why, then, did the Tamil problem worsen immeasurably, and why in addition did we come to have a Muslim problem with Muslim representatives becoming vociferous about discrimination against Muslims? The shortcomings of the 1977 Government, the intransigence and murderousness of the LTTE, Indian meddlesomeness, are all factors to be taken into account. But, in our view, the core-problem has been a lack of accommodation among the Sinhalese. Practically everyone today recognizes that the Tamil problem would have been solved long ago had the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact been implemented, or a decade later the Dudley-Chelvanayagam Pact. At least this seems to be recognized in theory. In fact, a fierce resistance to any kind of meaningful devolution, or even any further decentralization, seems to be continuing, at least at elite levels. If we are to isolate the Sinhalese factor in the ethnic imbroglio, ignoring the other factors, it would appear that the core-problem is a hierarchical obsession, the expression of a persisting caste-mentality projected against the minorities, while the caste-system itself is being eroded through a process of the Sinhalese coming together. But this is too complex a problem to be explored here.

The hypothesis of a caste-mentality is not meant to suggest that the Sinhalese can never be accommodative and therefore our ethnic problems can never be solved. A people or a society

does not have an unchanging essence or cultural constants that can never vary, otherwise there can never be radical change, whereas most societies have shown both continuity and radical change. The paradigm of "Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism", which has distorted our thinking and influenced foreign scholars who have sought to enlighten us on our ethnic problems, seems to assume some sort of unchanging essence among the Sinhalese Buddhists. So-called "Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism" should be understood, not as an unchanging essence, but in terms of the socioeconomic processes outlined in this article, which allow for the possibility of change.

We require a "paradigm shift" on our ethnic problems, by which is meant new norms and perceptions about them. This might be advanced by a more precise understanding of them, as well as by the logic of the situation which dictates that we solve our ethnic problems or perish. Perhaps it may not be over-sanguine to hope that the shift may be occurring. Professor Mick Moore of Sussex University observed (Sunday Observer, (28/10/1990) "The other significant change is that for the first time, in quite a long time, there is a ruling group in Sri Lanka which is not communal in the very broad sense of that term. "He went on to observe that it has had a very significant effect on the attitudes of the ethnic minorities towards the government.

The paradigm shift has to be in the direction of liberal democracy if our ethnic problems are to be solved, as that requires respect for the rights and legitimate interests of our minority ethnic groups, as well as respect for the rights of individuals no matter to what group they may belong. The Government has to move in that direction and none other, even if it does not become fully liberal democratic.

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## **Muslim as Distinct Group**

**Bertram Bastiampillai**

**M**oreover, in the recent past, the Liberation Tigers saw in the Muslims, a group not merely indifferent but hostile to them and their activities. They alleged that some of them had been informers, and as even actively colluding with the security forces of the state. Here the conclusion about Muslims as informers is neither convincingly logical nor quite rational and adequate. The number who moved out of the North and East in the more recent weeks had so much to complain of conditions and practices under Tiger management. Any of these could very well have been informers too. Then there still could be in the North East some supporters as well as rankers of groups which have been repressed and not tolerated by the Tigers today, a few of those groups are actively opposing the Tigers in conjunction with the security forces and their ranks from the North and East could have supplied intelligence information to the state, gathered over there from supporters.

In the East however, evidently some of the Muslims seem to have shown themselves to be hostile to the Tigers and acted in collaboration with the state security forces. This conduct is understandable when it is realized that the Muslims claim to be distinctive and demand the right to chart their own destiny. But with little love between Muslims and Tigers the East has been bloodiest plagued by attacks and reprisals.

Yet, in spite of such a gory and farcured scene in the East and an equally distressing position in the North when Muslims feel unsafe to live, if there is to be peace, a settlement that is to be peace, a settlement that is reasonable and just and, above all, palatable to the Muslims

has to be reached whoever may emerge as those in charge of the North-East. It is a miscalculation to assume that the Muslim community could be dislodged from the North-East. It is also imperative to acknowledge and recognise in a manner that would inspire confidence among them the Muslims have a separate identity, Tamil speaking though they be.

To settle the fundamental Sinhala-Tamil conflict ultimately a federal union or some such similar set-up with substantial devolution of power and responsibility could be the solution. In regard to the very large Muslim population distributed over the North and East a regional unit or provincial unit within any larger constitutional framework should be a means to provide recognition of all rights and dues of the Muslims. Constitutionally as suggested by Prof. Suriyakumaran, a cantonal system, one for each Muslim zone without exception, with precisely demarcated power and prerogatives with, in addition, a restriction on the Provincial Council in such matters can be conceived. As he states there could also be two special sessional committees of the Provincial Council or any other such unit, one each for the North and East, to screen or to prepare legislation on such matters. In the process there could be provision to the Muslims in East to enjoy a 35% representation that would not been possible in an overall unit. Moreover, a basic arrangement for Muslim security should be devised apart from the constitutional provision for them; a strict application of ethnic ratios locally in cantonal type areas in recruitment and in the composition of law and order enforcing machinery can be a means.

Security of communities, both Tamils and Muslims, have been endangered by colonisation. Local population ratios were not respected and should be respected if a peace settlement is desired. Moreover, it is essential to consider the grant of redress in cases of more recent inroads, especially since 1983, into ethnic proportions in the colonised areas. But in respect of the Muslims, their right to be in areas where they had been for years should be inviolable, and voluntary settlement of anyone any where should be accommodated; what is undesirable and needs abandonment is any settlement programme used by the government to change ethnic spatial relations in order to maintain control over minorities or a minority. There should be a distinction between homeland and immigrant ethnic groups, sponsored by the state when settlement is arranged.

For communal reconciliation and durable peace a settlement negotiated between the Muslims and the Tamils in the North and East through their representatives is vital. For peace and harmony to be there an environment of understanding between the Tamils and Muslims needs to be created. In this process, religious and educational leaders and those involved in social services and community work can play a positive role in building bridges of understanding and creating confidence among communities.

There should be no feeling in either community that they are a threatened or besieged group and of one as hostile to the other. Only through the cultivation of one another could better understanding be built. And such perceptions could be engendered in schools through teachers and



in society through community leaders. The present idea of the adversarial relationship among Muslims and Tamils should be jettisoned. This is best achieved by the government or its forces ceasing to create tensions between Muslims and Tamils by their conduct or leadership. The use of Muslims or Tamils to pick up intelligence by the government needs to be halted.

It is useless and irrelevant now to harp on phases of the Tamil-Muslim encounter and blame one another for extremism or duplicity. Nor is it worth while to argue on and on about absolute and relative rights and concluding that bloody conflict was inevitable.

A more positive wholesome attitude of rectifying wrong and doing right should be taken by Tamil and Muslim leadership. Tamils and Muslims need not live in a state of permanent belligerency; they had co-existed cordially for years. The Tamils should not view the Muslims as a suspect group because of their nexus with the Sinhalese and they should not be viewed as a political or security problem. They ought to be made to feel and think as a part of the Tamil speaking peoples by being treated as equals in every sense. An atmosphere of understanding and respect for one another has to be built.

The Muslims, even though Tamil-speaking, need in any settlement a more positive and constitutional recognition as a discrete group with rights; those should be no condescension towards them. Tamils should act to remove Muslim feelings of injustice, and the Tamils should not see themselves alone as the legitimate group in the North and East. There ought to be no exclusive approach considering any Muslim organisation as subversive to Tamil interests and meriting elimination. At the same time, Muslims should steer clear of infectious intolerant fundamentalism, for fundamental attitudes

allow no room for compromise, understanding of others, and accommodation of them.

Furthermore, the military and the media have to treat the Tamils as Sri Lankans — the reportage of communal violence in the North-East must be fairer and even-handed and losses perpetrated on the Sinhalese and the Muslims by Tamils should not alone be reported.

What befalls the Tamils too at Muslim hands needs to be informed. Also, the military has to consider that not only Muslims but even Tamils need protection and security and not punishment alone.

On the other hand, any sense of fear and insecurity among Muslims or Tamils needs to be dispelled by positive measures of confidence building by the government such as stoppage of settlements in the North and East and arbitrary arrest and search of Tamils. The Muslims in the North and East should not be apprehensive that they will not be equals to the Tamils, any attempt to coerce the Muslims to accept the dictates of the Tamils should be abandoned forthwith. They should be encouraged to remain within the fold of the Tamil-speaking peoples under any new political framework devised for the island.

There ought to prevail a benign coexistence within a unit, federal, or provincial or regional, that provides for separate, uninterrupted ethnic and cultural development of the two groups of Tamils and Muslims. This should satisfy the basic need of the Muslims to live along with their own peoples. It would contribute at the same time to decrease intercommunal anxieties and tensions. The Muslims as well as the Tamils need to have no fear of discriminatory policies in resource allocations by the Sinhalese nor by one another.

Much of the functions of the national government need to be developed in good measure to the North-East unit and be exercisable both by the Tamils

and Muslims within their respective areas. For a settlement, with these elements that have been outlined being a part of it, to be forged there should be Muslims — Tamil discussions and negotiations. They ought to be allowed to agree on a specific settlement with very little interference by the Sinhalese dominated governments. It may well be a long process that would involve concrete steps to dissipate distrust and build the conviction where peace could be perceived as mutually beneficial. Patience is needed indeed.

It is essential to foster ongoing, even if sporadic, peace negotiations, and the leadership of the Tamils and Muslims in the North and East should engage in them. But *ab initio* Muslims claims for autonomous management of their areas and affairs and for freedom and equality in the North-East should be acknowledged by the Tamils and the government. Immediately, the Muslims should be restored to their homes in the North, and their hardships because of the Sinhalese — Tamil conflict ought to be alleviated; tension minimised; and co-existence of the two communities in the North-East actively fostered.

Obstacles will be not there in devising logical and objective solutions but more in coping with the present perceptions of the two communities. Even more formidable will be to get the Tamil Tigers who are presently operative always in the North and on and off in the East, to make any moves and to inspire confidence in the Muslims. It is difficult to say who could bell the cat. But it is in the interest of both parties to seek a way out. Then there is hope of solution or else the price to pay is too much for both communities.

A minimum base for solving differences is the proposal of a system that safeguards cultural and communal autonomy of both minorities, preservation of

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Capital and Reserves	272,730	217,560	205,921
Deposits	1,802,867	1,559,835	1,436,236
Borrowings	341,497	274,823	143,530
Gross Assets	2,783,830	2,368,045	2,130,026
	1989/90	1988/89	1987/88
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Profit after tax	9,114	15,629	13,262
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# FIVE-STAR DEMOCRAT

Piyal Gamage

Quite a number of events during JR's regime provide us with indicators of exactly what he thought of "a completely independent judiciary". To begin with, JR "reconstituted the Supreme court leaving out 12 serving judges, four of them being demoted to the appeal court and the other eight being left out altogether. This unique event in the long history of our Supreme court was scarcely calculated to encourage senior judges to be "completely independent".

When a special presidential commission (SPC) was appointed by JR to inquire into alleged abuse of power during Mrs Bandaranaike's regime, she challenged the legality of the SPC before the appeal court. On 9 November 1978 the appeal court held that the SPC had no jurisdiction to inquire into, or report or make recommendations in relation to Mrs Bandaranaike's administration between 1970 and 1977 since that was a period prior to the enactment of the SPC law. JR's response was the Special Presidential Commissions of Inquiry (Special Provisions) Act No.4 of 1978 which was rushed through parliament and which declared that the judgment of the court of appeal was null and void and gave retrospective effect to the offences alleged against Mrs Bandaranaike.

On a writ application made by Felix Bandaranaike, the Supreme court found one of the members of the SPC, K C E de Alwis, "conduct unbecoming of a judicial officer" and held that he had become "unable to act and that he was disentitled to hold office and function as a member of the SPC inquiry". The impugned judge petitioned JR alleging that the

judges who had found against him were biased and were hostile to JR's government. JR did not toss the petition into the waste paper basket. Instead, a select committee of parliament was appointed to inquire into de Alwis's allegation. Mrs Bandaranaike exploded in anger: "He (JR) has already exercised his power over the legislature by removing, during their terms of office, members who had been elected to parliament at a general election. He now proposes to demonstrate his power over the judiciary by subjecting two senior judges of our highest court to the humiliation of having to defend themselves against the vituperation of a man who ended his judicial career in disgrace." (The Island 9 March 1983). The select committee found the accused judges not guilty of the allegations made against them by de Alwis.

Early in 1983, two citizens, in two separate cases, submitted petitions to the Supreme court under Article 126 of the Constitution. In one Deremitipola Ratnasara Thero complained that a policeman had illegally confiscated 20,000 copies of a pamphlet printed by him and in the other case Mrs Vivienne Goonewardena complained that when she went to the Kollupitiya police station to inquire after a man who had been arrested, she had been kicked and placed under arrest. In the first case the court awarded damages in Rs 20,000 to be paid to the complainant by the police officer concerned and in the other the state was ordered to pay Rs 2,500 in damages to the complainant. JR ordered that the damages and costs in both cases should be paid from state funds and ordered that both policemen be immediately promoted.

Paul Sieghart, chairman of the executive committee of Justice (the British section of the ICJ) interviewed JR on these matters and later reported: "(The president) conceded that the promotions and costs out of public funds were his decisions, at a time when he found the Supreme court a hindrance to some of his policies. The conclusion is inescapable that he was deliberately seeking to teach the judges a lesson, in order to make them more pliable to the executive's wishes. If that is so, these were grossly improper acts; but for the immunity from all suits the president enjoys under Article 35(1) of the Constitution, they might well have been criminal offences under Article 116(2)."

Three days after the judgment in the Vivienne Goonewardena case, unruly mobs came in state-owned vehicles and invaded the houses of two of the judges who had heard this case and also a house the third judge had till recently occupied. They shouted threats and obscenities at the judges. Later a person who gave his name as Kalu Lucky called at the Daily News and claimed it was he who organised the demonstration, adding it was a democratic right to express one's views. The police (who worked directly under JR) took no notice. JR himself told Sieghart that "the right of peaceful protest was available to the people of Sri Lanka."

In September 1983, over some misunderstanding about the taking of oaths by the judges of the Supreme court and the Appeal court, they were all treated as having vacated their posts! The court houses were all locked and barred and guards placed outside them to prevent access to them. Subsequently all judges were given fresh letters of appointment commencing 15 September 1983. After inquiry into the 13th amendment to the Constitution one judge wrote a judgment which displeased JR. He pub-



licly denounced the judge, calling him "unreliable".

These are just some instances (not all) in which JR gave clear indications of just how much he favoured "a judiciary which is completely independent".

"Freedom of expression both verbal and written; the right to address meetings."

Way back in 1972 when JR was leader of the opposition, the United Front government introduced the Press Council bill. The bill was challenged in the constitutional court by JR. His lawyers urged: "Clause 16(1) absolutely prohibits publication in a newspaper of the whole or part of the proceedings of a cabinet meeting. Clause 16(2) prohibits publication in a newspaper all documents passing between ministers and the secretary to the cabinet and the publication of the whole or part of any

cabinet decision unless approved for publication by the secretary to the cabinet. This provision constitutes a flagrant violation of the freedom of speech and expression. Douglas J. said in the Pentagon Papers case: 'Secrecy in government is fundamentally anti-democratic perpetuating bureaucratic errors. Open discussion and debate on public issues are vital to our national health. On public issues there should be open and robust debate. The essential aspect of freedom of speech involves the right of free criticism of the bureaucracy and the government.'

The bill was passed into law as the Sri Lanka Press Council Law No.5 of 1973. When the bill was taken up in parliament the UNP led by JR staged a walk-out. But JR did not really believe any of this—he was only playing politics. When he became head of the government he certainly did not repeal the Press Council law. Instead,

he nominated his own Council and to head it appointed a trusted kinsman. Whatever he may have said while in the opposition JR was not about to deprive himself of a handy weapon to silence criticism. Almost the first official act of JR as prime minister (ten days after he was sworn in) was to take over the pro-SLFP times group of newspapers using the Business Acquisition Act (which he had promised to repeal).

Very soon after that came the Parliament (Powers and Privileges) bill which was enacted in great haste as a matter that was "urgent in the national interest" and became law on February 1 1978. It was under this law that two editors of the Ceylon Observer were fined because their paper had carried a picture of Peter Fonda and Jill St. George in a boat, with an incorrect caption. This event led in turn to Mr S Nadesan being charged under the same act when he published a criti-

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# Indochina Revisited

Rajiva Wijesingha

Of course the levity with which the Khmer Rouge had treated religion had provided them with both excuse and encouragement. The same thing, I was to find, has happened too at Angkor Wat, where time and time again I came across statues where the head had been crudely hacked off. Some of the marks were quite recent, and the plundering was still going on, we gathered, the international market for antiques being a lucrative attraction that could not be easily resisted once the practice had commenced. The Khmer Rouge may not originally have engaged in the practice themselves, but they had begun the process of destroying the buildings wilfully, using them for target practice on occasion; the Vietnamese soldiers, without any allegiance at all to the cultural heritage of the area, had gone further; now the dealers, their appetites whetted, were easily able to find agents of all sorts who had no difficulty, given the size of the complex and the density of the jungle surrounding it, in eluding often enough the few young soldiers who tried hopelessly in isolated groups of two or three to guard the entire site.

What the Khmer Rouge had destroyed in the palace complex at Phnom Penh was the Iron Palace, built by the French in honour of Louis Napoleon, one of those structures of steel girders and glass plates that sprang up all over the world during that period. Incongruously sited in the midst of elegant temples with curved roofs, it still had a bizarre charm in its despoiled condition, the glass broken, the iron all rusty and in places twisted. It was understandable that no attempt had been made to repair it,

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surrounding it had all been though the beautiful buildings restored to near enough to their first splendour.

That must have been a conscious decision. Elsewhere one was aware of the paucity of resources, given the other potentially impressive temple that were in a sad state of disrepair. Religion was no longer discouraged, and there were a fair number of monks and acolytes in all the temples, most of them young (given the decimation of the older generation that had taken place under Pol Pot), many hearteningly excited when they heard I was from Sri Lanka; the sentimentality about Theravada Buddhism that I had noted before in Vietnam and Thailand is apparent here too, and indeed heightened because of what are perceived as affinities of colour and culture, as opposed to the more recognisable Mongoloid influences that have pervaded other countries in the region. Enthusiasm within the monasteries was not however matched by prosperity, which provided a marked contrast with Vietnam, and particularly with Laos, where perhaps because they have been able to build up steadily over the years with no concerted disruption, religious orders have been able to restore a great many temples with remarkable success.

The most noticeable instance of penury in Phnom Penh was the Museum. The building itself is striking, and the collection within quite magnificent. The characterization of the Khmers as the Greeks of South East Asia became quite understandable when one saw the sustained development of their art over nearly a millenium; and the comparison was strengthened when one noted that the culture received a tremendous impetus in about the 8th

century, with input from Indonesia that seems to have intermingled productively with mainland influences — just as the cultural eminence of the Greeks owed much to their contact with the Persian empire, and its impact on open-minded exploratory energies. Most vividly underlining the similarity there still stands out in my mind a 9th century Harihara in bronze, as stunning in its stylized impact as the charioteer at Delphi.

That, and many other splendours, are housed in long halls with elaborate roofs, built around a charming central courtyard. A few attendants sit about desultorily in pairs in the courtyard. By and large, one has the Museum to one self — except for the bats, who flit about between the roof and the ceiling, squeaking incessantly. For some time I wondered what the noise was; after I identified it, the statues some how seemed more appealing, the Museum more memorable, in its tarnished grandeur.

If the Museum was a serendipitous discovery, Angkor Wat of course was something long awaited and dreamed of, and the main inspiration indeed for my trip. It proved entirely satisfying. The main temple itself seems to me surely one of the three or four most magnificent structures in the world.

In addition there were all the other monuments I had not really known about separately, most notably the Great City, Angkor Thom, with its vast royal compound, and the Bayong Temple, 54 four headed towers thrusting upward to the sky, all bearing the features of King Jayavarman VII, which were repeated again at the five elaborate gates into the city, each of them led up to by a double line of statues, in greater or lesser states of disrepair, representing men and gods drawing on the serpent ropes that churned up the mythical sea of milk.

The tour was not cheap, but it included everything; flights



to and from the little town of Seam Reap; two nights with full board at the Grand Hotel there (excellent service, and excellent food, contrary to Tan's warnings, once we had settled on the Cambodian menu, and charming enough for one not to mind too much the fact the power supply was cut off soon after dinner, leaving one to sweltering heat and the nightlong threat of mosquitoes); transport two or even three times a day to and from the ruins, which meant journeys of up to thirty miles, depending upon which temples we were exploring; and a very thorough guide service, for a group of just three of us. Our group was particularly lucky to have the only relatively old guide still in service, Mr. Huy (he had spent the Pol Pot period hiding in the mountains with his family). He was immensely knowledgeable, and his enthusiasm for his subject and his anxiety to convey as much of it as was possible survived even my falling into a pit when I tried to explore the dark recess behind one of the statues at the very top of Angkor Wat. Fortunately an iron ladder checked my fall, and though there was lots of blood and my limbs were sore for days afterwards, the wounds were superficial; Mr. Huy obligingly clambered all the way down the ladder in search of my spectacles and, though he muttered indignantly at me for a quarter of an hour afterwards, he evidently desided that we could be stretched to the utmost. We were up before dawn the next day so that we could be taken climbing on the roof of one of the outer pavilions to have a view of the towers of Angkor Wat against the rising sun. Later that day, at the temple of Preah Khan, built by Jayavarman as a tomb for his father, he led us over fallen masonry and through dark tunnels, tapping all the way with his stick to frighten off snakes, to see the most exquisite carving of a Devadasi. At Ta Prohm, the tomb

of Jayavarman's mother, where practically every structure has been wrenched apart by massive trees shooting roots and branches and trunks through the stones, he took us climbing along the far from level roofs (notwithstanding that the Swiss in our group had vertigo), declaring repeatedly in great glee as he hauled himself up to yet another height, 'Easy for me, difficult for you.' He was usually correct.

It was altogether a breathtaking experience. What was especially evocative for me was the revelation of how Buddhism and Hinduism had blended so well to create a positive cultural identity. I suppose something similar can be discerned in Polonnaruwa, or in the temples of the Gampola period, but by and large the dominant philosophy here of the more recent period (and this goes back to the time of the Kandyan kings too) has been one of disjunction rather than synthesis, of emphasizing the differences between Buddhism and Hinduism (and indeed between them and everything else) rather than identifying the much more pertinent similarities. The Khmer culture on the other hand enthusiastically blended both together. Angkor Wat predominantly Hindu, Angkor Thom Buddhist, but elements of both intermingled at both sites in a joyous fusion. That perhaps explains the compulsive sense of life that the buildings convey after so many centuries, not only in the magnificent bas-reliefs that abound in both, of secular and religious scenes, mythological, but also in the varied statuary and the architecture.

It is the Indians now who are most heavily involved in restoration work. The French had done a great deal in the colonial period, and are keen to get involved again, but there are limits to what they can do. France after all has no formal diplomatic relations as yet with Phnom Penh. India on the

other hand, as the only country outside the Socialist Bloc to recognize the Hun Sen government, can move more freely despite its more limited resources. Though one heard complaints about what they are doing and in particular about the indiscriminate use of cement, to my of course totally untutored eye what had been achieved seemed perfectly acceptable. Certainly it would be folly to wait longer, in the hope that something better would ultimately come along. With little expertise in the country itself, with Khmer Rouge forces not too far away in the jungle (some paths leading away from the more distant ruins are forbidden, since it was not too long ago that the Khmer Rouge were laying landmines on them), with only adolescent soldiers to guard them against all sorts of depredations, the more work that is done on the sites now, and the sooner the place is opened up to more tourists and a responsive infrastructure developed, the better for one of the great inheritances of the world.

On the last day Mr. Huy took us to two 9th century temples in the little village that had been his birthplace, twenty miles away, and then even further, to Tonle Sap, the great lake of sweet waters. It was a centre for inland fishing, and we went out in a boat through hundreds of houses on stilts, to a somewhat larger hut inhabited by a dozen or more adults, in addition to their children, where they cured fish as well as rearing them in large pens staked out in the water. Having had a very full programme over the previous two days, we had not gone out at all into the town of Seam Reap, so this was our only opportunity of seeing something of the life of the area. It was of course a very special sort of life. Our Swiss companion, who had spent a long time in Indochina in the course of his life, was of the view that most of the fisher folk must be



Visetnamese, since they seemed fairer in colour and in any case fishing was not really a Khmer occupation. Mr. Huy indeed had already told us that there was a section of the settlement that was a Vietnamese colony. Perhaps the charitable view was that they were introducing an occupation that could prove productive for the country.

Anyway, whether recent or not, the life style was remarkably organized. Little boats chugged along, or were paddled around, selling bread and vegetables, while a couple of general stores for dry goods and commodities had been set up in the stilt houses. There was also a bar, where people were drinking, and what Mr. Huy pointed out to us, closed at the time in the bright morning sunshine, as a video parlour; and also a couple of police stations interspersed amongst the other huts, like them on stilts. In one, we saw a shining array of heavy old guns lying in a back room with the door open. The lake was massive, and extended a long way to the west, and the Khmer Rouge still presented a threat to some parts of its shoreline. Where we were however, in the midst of bustling but peacefully ordered activity, it was hard to imagine that there was still a struggle going on, and being encouraged, in the country at large.

It was my birthday that day, and in the evening, back in Phnom Penh, I celebrated by going out to dinner with a student I had met the day before leaving for Seam Reap. It would be more accurate perhaps to say that he had picked me up, having stopped me in the street as a likely stranger on whom to practice his English, and offered to take me around the city on the back of his motorbike.

His name was Lundy, he said, because 'I come on a Monday, so my mother call

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## Muslim as . . .

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and ethnic heritage of the two peoples, and safeguarding of their political rights. To this end some suggestions have been made earlier and action should be initiated in regard to them.

It is unhealthy to allow the conflicting parties to maintain their subjective perceptions of the reality and to remain entrenched in their unyielding positions. This will only baffle a solution of the communal conflict. Compromise is essential and attitudinal change is imperative to a solution and both parties should subscribe here. Initially, the peace process may be gradual but this should not deter a commencement of it.

There are two different cultural and social backgrounds of the two different communal groups and a high level of cohesiveness among both groups. Added to these, the conflicting political aspirations among the Tamils and Muslims vis-a-vis the Sinhalese dominated government will no doubt be hurdles to overcome in any final settlement of the Tamil-Muslim conflict. But liberal humanistic conviction obliges one to create accommodative arrangements such as power-sharing, participation and other devices which could reconcile the conflicting imperatives of the Tamils and Muslims with the stances of Sinhalese majority. All citizens, irrespective of race or creed, need to be allowed to enjoy equal rights and the different communities be able to control their internal affairs as in a federal polity or union of regions with of course a special structure to cater to the Muslim aspirations within the Tamil federal unit or region. Power-sharing will contribute towards peace among communities in a plural polity.

Muslims need to be given a sure sense of security in their territorial bases and perhaps one could draw upon the experience of Finland in dealing with the islanders of Aland to whom assurances of autonomy

and self management have been constitutionally and in practice guaranteed. In regard to mixed settlements of Muslims and Tamils, Muslims may be able to draw upon past experience when the Holy Prophet assured in Medina to Jews and Heathens alike all equal rights of citizenship without discrimination. Tolerance and understanding between the two communities which have a hoary record of co-existence need to be brought back again as an individual like Eastern Ibrahim asserts; to him the enemy is state colonisation, which drives Muslims and Tamils to compete for what is left behind.

The L.T.T.E. has in a statement, reproduced in a recent issue of the Tamil Nation, spoken of a secular set-up and tolerance under their dispensation. They have promised to the Muslims their due rights, and privileges and made clear that they shall not suffer discrimination. In fact, they have argued that it was left to the Tamils to voice the injustices that had befallen the Muslims in places like Galle and Puttalam in the recent past, and that there is greater danger to the Muslims in the East from trends like the Sinhalese colonisation plan than from the Tigers. They hark back to an entente in the late eighties in Tamilnadu with Muslim representatives and that the Muslim leadership in the South which is unable to look after their own kind there will not be able to do hardly anything for the Muslims of the East. The L.T.T.E. sees hopes for the Muslims with the Tamils and not in a separation between the two communities. Is this mere rhetoric or will the Tigers translate all of it into reality. Once burnt, the Muslims will be twice shy — this is certainly clear now.

But the East is today redder still with so many Tamils falling victims to Sinhalese vindictive military wrath in the aftermath of a fatal mine blast when two soldiers died. This has compounded an already complicated scenario.

### Lyn Ludowyk

I thank the *Lanka Guardian* and Mr. Vittachi (LG Vol. 14 no. 4 15 June 1991) for the opportunity to make some brief extension to the argument carried in my review of Lyn Ludowyk's memoir, (*Those Long Afternoons: childhood in colonial Ceylon*). There are however some preliminary misunderstandings on which I beg leave to comment.

In the circumstances in which the review was written, it was important for me to make clear that I was expressing my view of a class or category of people to which I myself belonged. I certainly did not purport to speak for a whole class. If Mr. Vittachi or anyone else disagrees with what I wrote I am most interested in hearing his or her views.

It is quite true that in our own various ways, Lyn, Doric and I were related to the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, but anyone who knew Lyn would not suppose that his vision of socialism was constrained by either the ideology or the later history of that party. Mr Vittachi's comments on this are therefore quite irrelevant.

I have no antipathy to 'knowing English', nor in my relationship with Doric as his student and for a short time as his colleague was there any indication that he would have even understood such a comment. The only grounds on which I can imagine an antipathy to knowing anything at all is as a defence against sheer emotional horror.

The main argument I would like to present here has two aspects — first the failure of the English-speaking class in Sri Lanka to fulfil the obligations inherent in its implicit claim to elite status, and the other, the deprivation that all of us must suffer, to varying extents, through separation from a language community.

Throughout the nineteenth and the early decades of this century the English-speaking and English-educated were a highly privileged group which considered itself and was treated as an elite in whose hands lay the future of the country. There were highly significant movements which attempted to establish Sinhalese-Buddhist and Hindu-Tamil rights to control of the national polity and culture and these had legislative and political success since at least the mid-1940s. Nevertheless, control of the English language has remained a major instrument in the control of power. My argument is that since its origins in the nineteenth century members of our English-speaking class, group, category, or whatever, have claimed the benefits of privileged status but have not, generally fulfilled the obligations inherent in the position we occupied. It may be said that many individuals have, but many have not. My opinion, and it is my opinion alone, is that a significant portion of this category have been overwhelmingly concerned with their own personal interests and have not even been aware of any obligation to the majority of the population as recompense for the bestowal of this colonial benefit. This, I think, is vulgarity, though there may be other forms of it as well.

The above is a personal, political, view and I am sure many would contest it. The argument on the other side of the coin seems much more self-evident and has to do with the environment by which all of us who are part of this group, class or category are constrained. Mr Vittachi demonstrates the constraints most clearly when he suggests that 'purely Lankan locutions' would be 'incomprehensible elsewhere in the world' and should therefore be restricted one way or another. The suggestion seems to be that any writing for a

wider audience must look for standards set in some outside centre from which all standards emanate. This is an appalling culture cringe and it is sad to think that anyone would choose to live within such self-erected fences of Latin grammar or any other kinds of barbed wire.

Looking back on my years as a student of Lyn and Doric, in the 'language' part of the course, one of the things they conveyed to students was the creative history of the English language and, now, I see, by implication the creativity in the use of all language. This creativity can never be the sole prerogative of an elite, and the major disadvantage from which all of us, speakers of Ceylon English, have suffered, is severance from a linguistic hinterland. If we were to abandon 'purely Lankan locutions' where would Sri Lankans writing in English go to nourish the creativity of the language they use? Though there is nothing specially Lankan in the sentence I cited from Lyn and that Mr Vittachi quoted from my review, it is indeed sad if he does not understand it.

With reference to Mr Vittachi's P.S., it is not for me to permit or to forbid vulgarity. Whatever determines our behaviour, sociological or otherwise, for most of us there are times when the decision can only be individual.

Gehan Wijeyewardene

### EC and not EEC

This is in reference to an article titled 'Lesson of Terrorism. A new Indo-Sri Lanka relationship?' on page 3 of *Lanka Guardian* of July 1, 1991.

The European Economic Community is now referred to as European Community (EC). But the article states everywhere EEC. I think this is wrong.



It is regrettable, this mistake has occurred in an article written by Lanka's leading foreign affairs commentator and journalist.

**Sivakumaran Vipulanande**

Wattala

Note: De Silva erred. Habits die hard - Ed.

## Separatism

Izeth Hussain in L G 01.03.90, stated that "the Tamil Nadu and Sri Lankan Tamils constitute two distinct ethnic groups" (p. 19, last para). In the L G 01.07.91, he states that they can be regarded as distinct groups "in some senses" (p. 4 para 5). How come, this qualification?

Mr Narasimha Rao is from Andhra Pradesh and is Telugu speaking. It is now accepted that the terms 'ARYAN' and 'DRAVIDIAN' are misused. To say the P M of India is a Tamil-speaking Dravidian, is a misnomer.

It is smart to say that the Tamils were the first to take to separatism. But it was the Muslims who realised it first.

Historical conditioning is certainly behind the high-handedness and undemocratic behaviour of every nation, state, people, language and religion. Each nation work on the premise that their country, people, language, religion, etc. are God's creation. How far this is implemented, depends on numerical strength and or military prowess. It should be for our good, if our thinking is rationalised. Otherwise, we should concede Israel's behaviour too. It should be accepted that religions — not created by God — are to a great extent responsible not for propagating peace and accord, but, for fomenting dissension and discord.

However, Izeth Hussain's essays are enlightening in some ways.

**M P de Silva**

Colombo 6.

## The etymology of 'Ceylon'

Dr. Jane Russel points out that the Portuguese 'Ceilao' (which gave rise to the word, 'Ceylon') was derived from Sanskrit word, 'Simala', which is equivalent to 'Sinhala' (LG July 1). This interpretation relies more on myth than on the marine history of Indian Ocean.

Medieval China controlled the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf due to the vision of naval commander Cheng-Ho in the 15th century, before the advent of Portuguese naval power. Cheng-Ho commanded a fleet of 62 ships and 28,000 men — bigger than most European navies of his time. Cheng-Ho is also no stranger to Lanka. He first visited the island in 1405 and according to K. M. de Silva, "five years later he led another expedition which seized the Sinhalese king, his queen and some of the notables of the kingdom and took them prisoner to China" (*A History of Sri Lanka*, 1981, pp. 86-87).

This being the case the Portuguese word, 'Ceilao' (or its English variant 'Ceylon') is being attributed as a derivation of the Chinese also have left their mark on many other place names which were in their sphere of control in the 15th century, such as Cochin ("Ko-chih"), Mogadishu ("Mo-ku-ta-shu") and Jidda ("Shih-ta"). These details are presented in the book, "*Way of Sea and Abuse of the Oceans*" (1988), authored by Richard Green, the managing director of a British shipping company. Green also states — that though Chinese navigators were the first to put magnetic compass into practice in marine navigation around A.D. 270, their contributions to ocean exploration have been overlooked by the Occidental historians who wrote history glorifying the discoveries of medieval European explorers like Vasco da Gama.

An able historian like Jane Russel also should recognize that when Portuguese first came into contact with the Kotte kingdom in 1505 (almost a

century after the visit of Cheng-Ho to the island), they could not have encountered Sanskrit-speaking ethnics. Furthermore I also have not come across any references to Portuguese adventurers in medieval India and Ceylon showing great inclination to study a dead language.

**Sachi Sri Kantha**

Osaka BioScience Institute  
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## The Sovereign People

Our constitution is based on the concept of the sovereignty of the people. What this means is that the three arms of government — the executive, the legislature and the judiciary all function under powers entrusted to them by the sovereign people.

So it was with considerable surprise that I read that Mr. J. R. Jayewardena (in a lecture delivered at the Y.M.C.A.) speaking of the need for a referendum to amend certain provisions of the constitution, said: "I think no democratic nation in the world (he presumably meant 'no other') has this unique power given to the people by its legislature." It is unfortunate that Mr. Jayewardena thinks the powers of the sovereign people are in the gift of elected politicians transiently in office.

The sovereign people have reserved certain powers to themselves which they do not wish the legislature to exercise without their express permission given at a referendum. This is not a gift to the people by the legislature.

**Mary Baldsing**

Malabe.

## Gandhi Assassination

I apropos your coverage of the Gandhi assassination (LG July 1).

- (1) In your *News background*, you quote Minister Lalith Athulathmudali as stating that, Rajiv Gandhi may not have died if Mrs. Indira Gandhi had accepted the Sri Lan-

kan proposal for joint patrolling of the Palk Straits". I wonder why minister Athulathmudali's memory has failed to see that Rajiv Gandhi was given a second lease of life on July 1987, only because the naval rating who swung the gun at Gandhi in Colombo missed his target.

- (2) *The India Today* report which you republished, calls poet Kasi Anandan, the LTTE emissary to Rajiv Gandhi in Delhi, an insignificant political figure among Sri Lankan Tamil circles. Between 1972 and 1976, Kasi Anandan was a political prisoner under the Bandaranaike regime. He was one of the three political prisoners (other two were Maavai Senathirajah and Vannai Ananthan) who symbolised the change in the traditional Tamil political leadership. He tried to infuse this change by attempting to oust the veteran FP stalwart of the Eastern Province, C. Rajadurai in the 1977 general election. This did create a headache for the TULF old guard and Kasi Anandan paid the price for losing in that general election. No body loves a loser. But to say that "he was never taken seriously as a political figure", in my opinion, is flawed.

- (3) What confidence one can have in the opinion of Congress (I) sources, regarding the Rajiv Gandhi-Kasi Anandan meeting of March 5th? Isn't these same sources which denied such a meeting in the first instance? Since now it has been acknowledged that such a meeting did take place in Rajiv Gandhi's private residence, how about asking Sonia Gandhi about what transpired between Rajiv and Kasi Anandan? Has the LG able to receive a copy of this purported cable no 222? If so, will you publish it in full for

the record?

- (4) Jon Swain's republished report which states that Nadesan Satyendra also met Rajiv Gandhi on March 5th has been exposed as incorrect and the London *Sunday Times* did print a correction and an apology. Will LG also do the same.

Sachi Sri Kantha

Osaka Bio-Science Institute  
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*We did not spot the The Sunday Times correction. We regret the error.*

### Press Release

"Our Organisations were formed within the frame work of Democracy and Laws of this country and we have been continuously insisting on racial unity.

We are fully aware of the fact that the vested interests jealous over the Organisation's rapid growth within a short period, are trying to damage our image. For an example, our President Chandrasekaran was taken in to custody in May last year and was released unconditionally after six days, over the protest made by the public and political parties.

At the time, the same elements made several efforts directly and indirectly to ridicule and undermine us. We regret to note that our political and trade union opponents are once again using the same methods to poison the minds of our members and sympathisers.

We strongly believe that neither our Leaders nor the Organisation had any connection with any of the terrorist groups. We have vehemently condemned all terrorist activities in this country.

We have proved our genuine desire to safeguard the rights and interests of the people by the just struggles, dialogues etc., within the frame work of Democracy.

UP COUNTRY PEOPLES' FRONT

Sarath Athukorale R. N. Selliah  
Vice President Administrative Secretary

## SPOILS...

(Continued from Page 11)

It is appropriate to conclude by referring to an observation in John Stuart Mill's great essay on Coleridge. He noted that the Conservatives of the time were men of property and redoubtably powerful. They could be changed "not by the impracticable method of converting them from Conservatives into Liberals, but by their being led to adopt one liberal opinion after another, as a part of Conservatism itself."

## Five-Star . . .

(Continued from page 16)

cal comment on what had taken place. Mr H L de Silva, appearing for Mr Nadesan, submitted, inter alia: "Members of parliament have freedom of speech. They do not have freedom from criticism. Immunity from criticism is not part of the doctrine of parliamentary privilege." Mr Nadesan was acquitted — but it had been a traumatic experience for serious-minded citizens concerned for the integrity of their rulers.

On 22 July 1982 JR's government completed five years in office. On this same day a public meeting was held at the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress Hall. Professor Sarachandra began a lecture entitled "The decline of Lankan culture in recent years". The speaker started off with a reference to the government's open economic policy when a gang of thugs in the audience rushed to the platform and beat up the speaker and several others on the rostrum including some Buddhist monks. A person called Piyasena Jayaweera, described as an assistant to Mr Mathew made a statement to the press that he accepted responsibility for trying to stop Mr Sarachandra from attacking government policy. The police (under JR) took no action.

And there you have a portrait of our five-star democrat.



# A New World Order?

Kalinga Seneviratne

About a week after the bombing of Iraq had stopped, ABC Radio news said one morning that the National Farmers Federation wants Australia to start trading with Iraq immediately, "because we can sell them millions of dollars worth of not only wheat, but also wool, sheep, barley and sugar." Finally the media has found out that Iraq is populated by not only Saddam Hussein and his one million Army, but by people living there, who eat and drink as we do. Hopefully next time they will not refer to dams, pipelines, milk powder factories and power plants as "military assets"!

So when we talk about a New World Order, are we really talking about a new order or about the mastering of the propagation of hypocrisy? As the US-Iraq conflict dragged on and the war began, what became clear to me was how the Western media overtly became the propaganda tool of the US war machine.

I was reminded of what the Pakistani Journalist Altaf Gauhar wrote about the Western media in 1984, at the height of their campaign against UNESCO's idea of a New World Communication and Information Order. Altaf said,

"The Power of the media attains awesome heights when it acts in unison, particularly in defense of some perceived threat to its own interest. A campaign is unleashed and a mighty roar goes up, drowning every note of dissent. Prejudice turns into judgement and suspicion into conviction, while facts and evidence are swept aside by the volubility of the media. When

the US announced its withdrawal from UNESCO, it was the signal for the western media to revive its old war against the so-called new world communication and information order. All plugs were pulled out, UNESCO was portrayed as a hot bed of international intrigue where most Third World conspiracies were hatched and its Director General Mahtar M'Bow as the main culprit".

If you replace UNESCO with Iraq and Mahtar M'Bow with Saddam Hussein. I think that quote describes precisely the behaviour of the western media since the US announced its troops deployment in Saudi Arabia.

Since declaring war on Iraq George Bush has frequently used the term "creating a New World Order" but never defined it. The western media of course has interpreted it, among others as getting rid of the weapons of mass destruction from Third World dictators or despots-as they prefer to put it. First of course is Saddam Hussein.

This is under the assumption that the West particularly the Americans and British can hold onto any amount of these weapons of mass destruction. But the media is either ignorant or ignore the fact that it was precisely these two countries that have first used and continue to use these weapons of mass destruction.

Ironically the British first used gas shells to bomb Iraq in the 1920's, when tribesmen of the Euphrates rose in rebellion against British military rule. We of course know that the Americans were the first and the only country to use atomic weapons they also used Napalm defoliants and other methods of chemical warfare in Vietnam.

While much was told about the Iraqi potential for using weapons of mass destruction which never happened the mas-

sive US and allied aerial bombardment of Iraq using fuel air bombs cluster bombs, napalm, B-52 carpet bombing even against withdrawing troops, were not seen as methods of mass destruction.

When Saddam Hussein announced his intention to withdraw from Kuwait just before the ground offensive began the Americans refused to a ceasefire to let this happen. During the two days this issue was debated, no Western Journalist had the commonsense to ask a Pentagon spokesperson how the hell can they withdraw if you are going to bomb them from the air. The Journalists probably thought the Americans and the British are civilized people -how can they do such a thing

Throughout the conflict and upto now these double standards are apparent everywhere in the media. Naji Al Hadithi the Editor-In-Chief of the Baghdad Observer told an Indian Journalist just before the outbreak of war that "The problem with the Americans is that they have dealt for too long with the illiterate thieves of the desert, Bedouins, pirates and rotten shicks. They don't know how to deal with Arabs who are not idiots. They can't understand us".

So rather than talk and try to understand people, the US manipulated the United Nations system - whose job it is to avoid wars and arrange a ceasefire, if war breaks out. Instead the UN was used to wage war and when the war started, to reject negotiations or a ceasefire.

The US also bribed, heavily debted Egypt into joining the alliance and almost certainly promised Syria modern weapons. There were also various other bribes paid to UN security council members to get their votes for the war resolutions. All these were done in the process of creating a new order supposedly based on justice, peace and morality!

Meanwhile, the most ferocious military attack was launched on

*Edited version of a talk given by Kalinga Seneviratne at a seminar on "The Gulf War and Community Relations", held at the University of Technology in Sydney, Australia. He is a Media Researcher at the Uni of Tech in Sydney and the IPS newsagency's Australian correspondent.*

Iraq, slaughtering many thousands of civilians and destroying the country's infrastructure. The deliberate allied hitch killing of civilians was covered up and said to be unintended, collateral damage'.

Finally one of the most barbaric massacres in the history of civilization — bombing of a retreating army — was hailed as the "great 100-hour victory of the allies." So what we should be asking is whether this so-called new world order is a drawback to the barbarism of the 18th and 19th centuries European armies particularly that of Britain and France went around the world massacring native people and grabbing their natural resources to service the industries of the West.

Watching the progress of science and technology, a quarter of a century ago, the great American Dr Martin Luther King said that "we have guided missiles and misguided men." I think what we are witnessing is the results of this era.

The Gulf War has created sorrow, anger and immense resentment not only among the Arabs and Moslems, but in most parts of the Third World. What they see is an American attempt to use thuggery to reverse the United States' decline as an economic power. The fact that the US had to go cap in hand to Germany and Japan, the defeated enemies of the second world war and to Saudi Arabia one of the world's most autocratic regimes to help fund the war is an indication that the much trumpeted American might may well be more an imagination of the western journalist than the reality.

Recently, I have started writing to an international news-agency as their Australian correspondent. Everytime I write a story on the Australian economy it is obvious to me that we are a Third World economy and our place in the New World Order the US wants to establish can not possibly be on the side of the US. As Richard Farmer said in the 'Australian' recently, "our allies in the Gulf are our enemies on the farm".

But why doesn't our media reflect that reality? I think the cartoon which appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald explains it very well — this was a re-

production of a front page picture of the desert massacre (which appeared a few days earlier.) In fact when I saw the cartoon, rather than being angry I felt very sad about it.

During the Gulf War the term 'cradle of civilization' was frequently used mockingly to describe Baghdad—a city which is without doubt an archeological treasure. I wonder how many of you are aware that it was Al-Khwarizmi a mathematician from the Baghdad Academy who developed the system of Algebraic formulations in the 9th century which laid the foundation to the science of ballistics and the development of modern missiles which ironically almost destroyed Baghdad 11 centuries later. Another important contribution Baghdad made to western civilization was the introduction of institutional university education.

I think that when we talk of cultural bias in the media it is unfair to pick on particular individual Journalists or Producers. We need to look more closely at the education system which to my knowledge denies the historical achievements of the non-European civilizations and ignores the brutality and barbarism of European colonialism of countries like Australia and other lands. Also this education denies the existence and richness of vibrant cultures especially those enriched by non-Christian religions in Asia and the Middle-East.

Many of us who come from these regions find that when we want to practice our professions here the problems become acute not when we are trying to establish ourselves but when we have proved ourselves and are seen to be highly capable and knowledgeable. This is very common in areas like the media, literature and education.

In conclusion let me recall an incident which happened 45 years ago. When a British Journalist asked Mahatma Gandhi at the height of India's independence struggle, "what do you think of western civilization" he simply said "it's a good idea".

The notion of participatory democracy, freedom of the individual, access to knowledge without hindrance, freedom of worship and so forth are great ideas. Nobody would disagree

with that. But what the Gulf War and the media coverage of it has shown us, is, as the Mahatma said 45 years ago, it's a good idea but yet to be realised.

Unless western civilization and particularly the Anglo-Celtic societies learn to acknowledge, understand and respect other people, I'm afraid we are going to have more conflicts and bloodshed.

## Indochina . . . .

(Continued from page 19)

me Lundy.' He had neither mother nor father now, for both had been killed in the time of Pol Pot. So had four brothers and sisters. He lived now with his grandmother, a frail old lady whom he took me to meet, in a room and part of a verandah on the top of a three storey house. Earlier, as we travelled through the city, he had shown me a fairly prosperous district with elegant houses set in small but pleasant gardens, where he said his family had lived 'in the time of Lon Nol. But I no longer remember.' He was just twenty one.

There came to me then the hopeless sense of loss I had felt on reading 'Dr. Zhivago', many years ago, not so much at the story itself but at the description in the beginning of the wholesale change in particular life styles that revolution of ten entails. Doubtless the phenomenon has occurred often enough, but it is always poignant when it is brought to one's notice (and that indeed is rare enough, so infrequently does one really move out of one's own limited sphere of experience), and the more so when it is accompanied by the loss of individuals so that no collective memory remains as a link. In Lundy's case, even if he himself was not very clear about what had been lost, the image of his grandmother bringing him up alone over the last fifteen years, seeing him go off as a soldier to the Thai border to battle Pol Pot's troops (there had been some fatal skirmishes, he said, and once they had let him pass when they might have killed him, because their quarrel they claimed was with the Vietnamese), and then having him return without any clear future ahead of him, struck me as profoundly sad.

(To be continued)





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