

● J.R. and his "MEMORIES" ●

— Piyal Gamage

LANKA

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Briefly . . .

To probe massacres

President Premadasa has appointed a three man committee headed by former Appeal Court Judge D. G. Jayalath to investigate the mass killings of Muslim villagers at Alanchipotana and the reprisal killing of Tamils at Muthugala and Karapola. A total of 130 people died in these hamlets.

The LTTE is suspected to have begun the killings. The committee whose other two members are Major General Balaratnaraja of the army and SSP Abdul Majeed of the Police will also look into a possible lapse on the part of those providing security for the villages.

Islandwide Opposition meetings

Following the Government's refusal to permit parliamentary debates on ex-DIG Udu-gampola's revelations and the report of the Elections Commissioner, the joint Opposition has decided to hold islandwide protest meetings. The first meeting will be at Kandy on May 29.

People support UNP policies — President

President Premadasa told UNP delegates at their con-

ference in Galle that the people would continue to support the policies of the party even if all the leaders left the UNP and joined the Opposition.

The President said that there was an era when top-rankers used their influence to allow smuggling, money laundering, pilferage etc. These elements could not engage in these rackets after his government came into power and that was the reason for their desperate attempts to oust him from power, he said.

Make it operative, says Thonda

Tourism Minister and CWC boss Saumyamoorthy Thondaman wants the government to make the legislation which has made Tamil also an official language, operative. He said so at the Tamil Sahitya Festival '92 which was inaugurated by President Premadasa.

"Tamil speaking ministers and MPs can set the example by helping the Tamil people to conduct their business with the Government in Tamil", the Minister said.

India has not asked

India has not made a formal request for the extradition of LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran and his intelligence chief Pottuamman, Foreign Secretary Bernard Tillekeratne told a press conference. The two Tiger leaders are wanted for the murder of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Drug crisis

Government hospitals are actually short of drugs. At least 40 essential drugs are not available. They have not been available for more than one year, according to a leading physician (who was not named) in a Sunday Times report. The non-available drugs including life-saving injections and antibiotics, the doctor said. Poor patients were badly affected because they were now forced to buy highly expensive drugs in the market outside.

Selected for rehabilitation

About 120 detainees in the island have been selected for an advanced rehabilitation program. After the program they will be released an official said. About 1800 more await rehabilitation.

LTTE Ban

Replying a question raised in the Rajya Sabha by Dr Subramanian Swamy, Home Minister Chavan said that he had been misquoted. A decision to ban the LTTE, or not to ban it, would be made by the Cabinet soon, he said. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalitha described this apparent lack of conviction on the part of the central government as "distressing."

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HOW TO TRAP THE TIGER?

NEWS
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

After the massacres at Welikande with well over 100 Muslim and Tamil dead, the war in the north and east has settled down to its usual pace — ten to twenty deaths a week, more 'terrorists' than soldiers but little relief in numbers or ethnic identity to the rest of the island. Indian and Tamilnadu politics have caught the eye of the newspaper reader in Sri Lanka all because the LTTE is once more a major issue in India. To ban or not to ban.

Chief Minister Jayalalitha who has every reason to fear the LTTE and its machinations in Madras, insists that the Central government must proscribe the 'Tigers' on the evidence that was accepted by the Tamilnadu court that heard the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, and ordered Prabhakaran and Pottu Amman, his intelligence chief, to surrender to court.

If India bans the 'Tigers', moral and diplomatic pressure on Sri Lanka, a SAARC member, to do so too may be quite strong, especially if other SAARC, COMMONWEALTH or donor countries join in that campaign of pressure. So why then does the Centre ignore the mounting pressure from Tamilnadu. Mr. Chavan told the press that a final answer will be given after the matter is discussed with Prime Minister Narasimha Rao. The date mentioned in the Indian press was May 21.

Educated guesswork strongly suggests that the Indian government is unlikely to proscribe the LTTE. One reason given to western diplomats in Delhi is that such a step may get the government

entangled in court proceedings that would do the Congress party no good. There are enough learned lawyers in India to challenge the proscription order. After all, the LTTE is NOT a registered party. Even in Sri Lanka, the LTTE stood proscribed for 2 years or less, under J.R.

The other question is extradition. Will the Indian government relying on the evidence presented at the trial, request Prabhakaran's extradition? Whatever for? How does one extradite a man whom some 60,000 Indian troops, including elite comandos, failed to catch? Bradman Weerakoon, Presidential Adviser on International Relations stated in a recent O. P. A. lecture "the real problem is catching the fellow". Fair enough. Yet, it doesn't preclude the Indian government from banning LTTE and/or requesting the extradition of Prabhakaran, under Commonwealth agreements.

A decision not to take any such steps may be influenced by tactical thinking at the highest levels in Delhi. Only President

Premadasa (and Colombo) would then have a channel of communication to Prabhakaran, and nobody can be blind enough not to recognise that Prabhakaran remains a major player in the game. The other groups, nearly all pro-Indian or under direct Delhi influence, openly or not — so openly, don't count for anything in the guerrilla game. They have spokesmen in Colombo and can be deployed at the right time either in the House or in any dialogue on a settlement. Although Delhi can count on Sinhala parties, political personalities, organisations, NGO's, sections of the media and opinion-making groups and individuals its hand is strategically weak — it has no trumps. Bloodthirsty and tough and intransigent, the LTTE is the 'ace' in the pack.

As one of the commanders of a crack Indian counter-terrorist unit which fought in the IPKF's "Eelam War" observed, President Premadasa has the advantage because he reads the mind of the 'Tiger' best.

New Development

The long VESAK holiday delayed this issue of the LG. It helped us to include this brief comment on the Indian ban. As Bradman Weerakoon asked how to catch the chap? Delhi can invoke Commonwealth agreement but the physical act of arrest is another matter. Send our army to Jaffna? Ask for Indian help? Is that what Delhi really wants besides placating Chief Minister Jayalalitha, now running scared? Assailed on its economic policies by Right, Left and Centre, the minority Congress could not ignore her.

Yet, the LTTE ban may be just what the DMK's Karunanidhi wanted. As our specialist writer on Tamil movements D. P. Sivaram observes he was MARAVAN MADAL, the spokesmen of Tamil militancy and militarism, the twin of Tamil secessionism. While Delhi's decision may prove a mistake, the immediate effect is mounting Sinhala pressure on President Premadasa, which could be what Delhi had in mind.

M.

SOUTHERN FRONT

The forces the opposition has mobilised and fielded, lack coordination. In fact, some of the main anti-Premadasa units are in disarray. Or have lost spirit. There are several skirmishes going on, and on so many fronts, (students, marches, demos, protest campaigns of assorted kinds, etc) but each skirmish soon peters out. The worst blow for the anti-Premadasa campaign was the poor show the D. U. N. F. put up on May Day. Dinesh Gunawardene, simply on his own, came second to the SLFP. Even the old war-horses of the LSSP and CP, despite the collapse of the Soviet Union and anti-Left trends the world over, gave the old faithful a demonstration which lifted their hearts somewhat. **The DUNF duo didn't have a happy May Day.**

And as days passed, the SLFP projected to their steadfast supporters — and to the world at large — an image of chronic disorder.

Whatever Mrs. Bandaranaike, the party leader, has in mind in the way of internal reform and re-structuring of the heirarchy,

Mr. Anura Bandaranaike has not left anybody in doubt that he accepts only Mrs. Bandaranaike's leadership, until such time he himself takes what is legitimately his — S. W. R. D. legacy to his only son.

A news report which appeared first in the ISLAND was cleverly picked up by the DAILY NEWS.

"The leader of the SLFP will be the common candidate of the opposition at a presidential election.

If Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike steps down from the party presidency, I will contest the post. The SLFP can no longer gain votes by trying to create a 'Methiniya' cult, said SLFP national organiser Anura Bandaranaike MP, in Kurunegala recently.

He was addressing a party seminar at the Kurunegala town hall. The SLFP could not win the confidence of the masses because of its inability to realise its aspirations. The party has lost nine elections since 1977 because it was not in tune with the people's hopes and aspirations" he said.

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Judging Freedom

Dr. Chandra Muzaffar

The UN Development Programme's Human Freedom Index has been soundly denounced by the Third World, and nations that have received low marks have drafted a resolution in the UNDP governing council to prohibit further work on a new index for next year without a clear mandate.

In 1990, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) introduced the concept of human development. In this year's report, *Human Development Report 1991*, it has attempted to refine that concept. It says clearly, 'Men, women and children must be the centre of attention — with development woven around people, not people around development.'

Using human development as its yardstick, the UNDP report has produced some very useful data on public expenditure on human development in both the North and the South. It makes telling points about budgetary allocations for education, health care and sanitation compared to money spent on the purchase of military hardware in a number of countries.

While there are these positive elements in the report, its major flaw is the attempt to introduce a Human Freedom Index. The Index, designed by Charles Humana, contains '40 distinct criteria for judging freedom'.

Most of the criteria used such as the right to peacefully associate and assemble, the right to practise any religion, independent courts, independent radio and television networks, freedom from unlawful detention, freedom from torture or coercion and so on would be acceptable

to most people. However, 'homosexuality between consenting adults', which certain sections of contemporary Western society would regard as an important personal right, would be rejected outright as a measure of human freedom in many parts of the world.

But it is not the inclusion of homosexuality which is the real problem with the UNDP's Human Freedom Index. It is its exclusion of certain crucial freedoms which weakens its authority. It has ignored the freedom from hunger, the freedom from disease, the freedom from illiteracy and other such freedoms.

It would have been all right to exclude these freedoms if the Index was a straightforward political freedom index. But it is not. The report boldly asserts that, 'Humana's index is thus more than a political freedom index, more than a human rights index. It is a **human freedom index**'.

How can a human freedom index ignore freedoms — such as the freedom from hunger — which are fundamental to the very survival of the human being? Shouldn't such freedoms be given much more weight than, say, right to travel abroad, which is one of the 40 indicators used in the report?

If freedom from hunger was one of the indicators wouldn't China, which is placed 84 out of 88 countries, rank much higher in the Index? How would

one measure the stupendous achievement of freeing one billion human beings from hunger?

There is an even more serious shortcoming in the UNDP's Human Freedom Index. It appears that it has given very little weight to the freedom of a people, the freedom of a nation. It is this freedom which millions and millions of people in Asia and Africa struggled for during the long decades of colonial oppression.

If the Index attached some importance to this concept of collective freedom, it would not have placed Hong Kong, a British colony, in the 26th slot, well ahead of 62 independent nation-states, including countries like Brazil (No. 35), Bolivia (No. 36), Thailand (No. 41), India (No. 42), Egypt (No. 49) and Malaysia (No. 55). That the people of Hong Kong enjoy a number of personal liberties does not in any way alter the fact that the state is still not free.

One can argue that if the freedom, the independence of a whole nation, of an entire state, was given the significance it deserves some attempt would have been made to measure the political freedom, the economic independence, the cultural autonomy of nation-states in the post-colonial era. How much real political freedom do most states today enjoy in the international arena?

For the freedom that a state enjoys in the international arena has a direct bearing upon the individual citizen's ability to shape the political future of his society. There is no point in advocating 'more participatory' development if the options available to a people to develop are severely limited by an international system dominated by a few powerful actors.

Dr. Chandra Muzaffar is a Malaysian political scientist and president of the social organisation Aliran.

The index's total neglect of the collective freedom of a people and its relationship to individual human liberties is most apparent in its evaluation of Israel. Israel, in spite of its brutal, barbaric suppression of the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people for freedom and justice, is ranked 34, above a number of other countries with less tarnished records.

Israel's denial of the rights of the Palestinians is a striking example of the link between collective freedom and individual liberties which the Index does not seem to be aware of. For Israel's suppression of the collective struggle of the Palestinians for freedom takes the form of the violation of individual rights such as the right of free speech, of assembly, of association.

The individual Palestinian has no freedom from torture or coercion, from unlawful detention, from arbitrary seizure of personal property — all indicators of the level of human freedom in society used by the Index. Worse still, the individual Palestinian, especially if he is a freedom-fighter, lives in constant fear of deportation, of 'disappearance', of death.

It looks as if the UNDP's Human Freedom Index gave maximum weightage to Israel's observance of human rights and political liberties vis-a-vis its own Jewish population and ignored or downplayed its gross violation of the basic freedoms of the Palestinians, as individuals and as a community.

When we reflect upon all these flaws in the Human Freedom Index, it suddenly dawns upon us that it contains stark biases.

First, it has a Western cultural bias as evinced by its inclusion of a practice such as 'homosexuality between consenting adults' which does not have universal acceptability. Indeed, in many non-Western societies, strong religious and cultural traditions would deny any legitimacy to such a practice.

Second, it is biased towards political and civil liberties even though it claims to be 'more than a political freedom index'. By implication, it is biased against economic and social rights such as the right to food, shelter, employment, education and health.

This bias towards political and civil liberties is, in fact, characteristic of most Western human rights groups. It has something to do with the genesis of post-18th century human rights struggles in Europe which were rooted in attempts by an emerging middle class to establish its political and civil rights vis-a-vis the State.

In the non-Western world, on the other hand, particularly the impoverished nations of the South, it is not possible to even conceive of human freedom without emphasising the importance of freeing the human being from the clutches of hunger and disease. This does not mean — it must be stressed — that political and civil rights are any less important in the South. What our situation demands is a truly holistic conception of human rights and responsibilities.

Third, the UNDP's Human Freedom Index is also biased towards individual freedoms and personal rights. Here again, the influence of the Western historical experience is only too evident. It was the renaissance and the revolt against the overpowering influence of the medieval church in Europe from the 16th century onwards which gave birth to the idea of individual conscience and individual rights. Defending individual rights and personal freedoms against the structures of religion and community thus became a cardinal concern of the European intelligentsia.

In Asia and Africa, the great historical challenge confronting the intelligentsia was not freeing the individual from the dominance of church and state but liberating whole communities,

entire societies from Western colonial rule. As a result, the collective freedom of people assumed a significance in these continents which has no parallel in the history of Europe. It has remained a vital component of human freedom partly because of the continuing dominance of Western civilisation. The Human Freedom Index shows very little appreciation of these widely divergent historical realities.

Apart from these three obvious biases which indicate a Western-centric approach to human freedom, the UNDP index appears to be slanted towards certain states — states which, ideologically and politically, are known to be close to dominant Western interests. It must be emphasised that this is not true in every instance. In fact, there are a number of cases which do not support this assertion. Nonetheless, there are also many examples in the country ranking of the Human Freedom Index that seem to suggest a certain slant. We shall provide just one example.

Singapore is ranked 46 and placed among the medium freedom-ranking countries. Malaysia is ranked 55 and placed among the low freedom-ranking countries. For both countries, 1985 data on human rights were used. In all the other cases too, human rights information from 1985 constituted the basis of analysis.

Even if we confined ourselves to the 40 indicators in the Index, there is no way Singapore can be given a higher ranking than Malaysia.

In 1985, there was less control over newspapers and radio and television in Malaysia compared to Singapore. The courts in Malaysia were less subservient to the Executive. The political opposition in Malaysia was stronger, more vocal and more effective.

In contrast, Singapore in 1985 had an incredibly weak opposition which was subjected to constant harassment. Indeed,

the opposition was so totally emasculated that it was almost impotent.

Trade unions in Malaysia enjoyed some autonomy and were openly critical of government policies. In Singapore, the trade union movement is an appendage, of the State.

In 1985, there was much more scope for peaceful association in Malaysia reflected in the variety of public interest societies, many of which espoused causes that brought them into conflict with the government. In Singapore, on the other hand, there were hardly any autonomous public interest societies which dared to differ from the national leadership. It was perhaps only in matters such as the personal right to civil marriage or the personal right to practise any religion that Sin-

gapore in 1985 was 'freer' than Malaysia.

If by the standards set by the Human Freedom Index, Malaysia was much freer than Singapore, then why is the latter given a higher ranking than the former? Is it because Singapore for a long while now has been advocating positions in regional and international politics which make it a close ally of the United States?

Malaysia, on the other hand, has at times tried to pursue an independent line in international affairs and has even irritated the United States on a number of occasions since the beginning of the 1980s. In other words, is Malaysia where it is in the UNDP's Human Freedom Index because it has earned the ire of the world's most powerful nation?

The biases and slants in the Index provoke us to ask whether it is worthwhile to continue with the Human Freedom Index. It is pertinent to raise this question since the UNDP report itself recognises that measuring freedom is still at a very preliminary stage. The report is aware of the inadequacies of the Index.

Instead of constructing an index, it may be more useful to draw up analytical profiles of human freedom in each country. These profiles should be prepared by individuals or groups with a profound knowledge of human freedom in their respective societies. Country profiles produced in this manner will provide us with deep insights into the relationship between human freedom and human development. Such insights will not emerge from an index on human freedom.

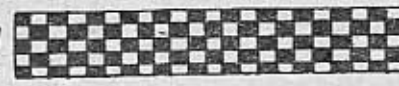
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THE REGION

INDIA, SOUTH ASIA AND THE THIRD WORLD

The Cabots talk only to God

Ashok Mitra

Imran Khan was not of course indulging in some rhetoric. It was however pleasing rhetoric, Pakistan's victory in the World Cup, he suggested, is as much India's and Sri Lanka's too; it turned the tables on the former imperialists and colonialists from whose the subjugated Asians had once learnt the craft and grace of cricket.

Imran could in fact have gone a bit further. Pakistan's triumph, he could have maintained, has an even wider significance; it is an assertion of the superiority of the Third World over haughty Westerners at least in one major area of sporting activity.

Be united

Perhaps without his quite being aware of it, Imran has made an important point. Whether in sports or other spheres, the Third World nations, even in the present seemingly adverse circumstances, are in a position to create a solidarity front. If only they agree to act as cheerleaders for each other and stick together to meet the challenges of the times, the rest of the world would have to sit up and take notice. The Third World is not to be scoffed at: the scope as well as the scale of the success its constituents are capable of achieving are indeed mind-boggling.

In case they have some intra-mural problems, should they not, therefore, sort these out amongst themselves? A concordat stuck by them, based on mutual trust and respect, is the best guarantee of protection for the Third World countries against depredations attempted by neo-colonialists strutting about as cocks of the road, now that the once great Soviet Union has disappeared from the global landscape.

In the light of the sentiments expressed by Imran, the manner our Government has been proceeding to cope with the twin issue of signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and endorsing the proposal to transform South Asia into a nuclear-free zone is particularly jarring. It is evidently beneath our dignity to join the conference suggested by Pakistan, Russia, China and the United States, to go over the problems as we perceive them. Nor are we agreeable to thrash out discussions with Pakistan.

Third World solidarity, in other words is not our particular cup of tea; the notion that poor, underdeveloped countries like us should sit together to resolve their internal difficulties is bosh and nonsense; we are not going to fall into that trap. Our Government, however, is not unreasonable. Our officers and Ministers will not condescend to join the proposed five-nation meet, they will not talk to the Pakistanis, but they are more than keen to discuss the underlying problems, bilaterally, with the United States administration.

It is an astounding turn-around of policy principle on the part of a Government which, till the other day, had the pretensions of leading the poorer nations of the world on the forums of the United Nations and elsewhere. We do not talk to the riff-raff. We are however dying to talk to the boss nation, the USA. Should the latter convince us that signing the NPT would ensure for us more advantages than disadvantages, we would reconsider our decision.

Let there be no misunderstanding. We are the world's most populous democracy, we are not going to append our

signature to a piece of paper merely because Russia, China and America, after soliciting the views of both Pakistan and us hand down a *fatwa*. But it is different if it is a question of discussing with the Americans alone, we defer only to them, none else are deserving of that privilege.

Our attitude is perhaps influenced by the ambition nurtured by mandarins in the South Block to supplant Pakistan as the greater favourite of world's most powerful nation. John Foster Dulles tried in the 1950's and failed to make us a vassal State. He did not get a hearing in our country; in his perambulations across and around Asia, he dared not touch our shores.

We are a different breed now; our Government has acquired a brand new mind-set. We object to talk to our neighbours on our neighbourly problems; we object to talk to Russia and China too. We have graduated to the pinnacle of hoity-toity behaviour, the Lodges used to talk only to the Cabots, and the Cabots talked only to God. We too are prepared to talk only to the almighty United States.

Dependent

Are we not playing ourselves into an impossible corner? We have so drastically overhauled our economic policies that our dependence on the United States administration and the international financial institutions controlled by it is complete. The Americans are now in a position to twist our arms in whatever way they like; as an economically dependent territory, our government has little choice but to give in to the United States on all substantive matters. *Via-via* the US administration, our

current role is that of a supplicant; it will hardly be a one-to-one exchange between equals at the negotiating table.

The odds against the bilateral talks with the Americans resulting in any positive gains to us are therefore great: we might ask for some assurances and guarantees, to which their response is likely to be vague and ambivalent. For the sake of politeness, they might grant us an audience, but on the central issues they are bound to be unyielding; the Indian Government must sign the NPT; if it has some doubts on which it needs some clarifications, why, the appropriate forum for that is the proposed five-nation conference, India should rush to participate in it.

Ridiculous

Will not our position look a thousand times more ridiculous if we consent to the provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and also agree to attend the conference originally proposed by Pakistan because the Americans ordered us to do so? Is not the line Imran Khan has suggested, in the context of cricket, more protective of our dignity and self-respect, quite apart from the grand prospect it offers of cementing Third World solidarity?

Had we joined the conference of our own volition, we could have operated from a position of some strength. We could have told the Pakistanis in the plainest terms about our suspicions and reservations concerning their nuclear programmes. We could have insisted on the acceptance of mutual rights of inspection of all sites and laboratories where, according to us experiments of a dubious nature were going on. We could also underline the need for foolproof international guarantees — more desirably, Third World guarantees — so that no hitches arose after the covenant to convert South Asia into a nuclear-free zone had been formally signed.

Instead, were we to join the conference subsequent to our being pressurised by the Americans to do so, our stature would be considerably diminished, and not just in the eyes of other participants. Loquacious speeches full of moral fervour would then cut no ice; we would be treated just as any run-of-the-mill Uncle Tom is supposed to be treated.

That we continue to spurn the overtures of Pakistan and other neighbours and thus deny ourselves the opportunity of being at the receiving end of their grateful appreciations is conceivably on account of two reasons. First, in bilateral discussions with the Americans, our Government perhaps hopes to link our concurrence to the provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to the proposal for a nuclear-free zone in South Asia with some assurances in regard to Kashmir and Punjab.

Once again, such a stance would only betray our ensnarement in the neo-colonial trap. Till as long as overwhelming section of the people in Kashmir continue to reject the rulers in New Delhi, and the Sikh community, by and large, continues to feel alienated from the national mainstream, even the supreme might of the Americans would be of little avail to reverse the situation. And once reports leak out that, in our anxiety to retain control in these two border States, we have directly sought American intervention, or at least sought an assurance from the Americans that Pakistan would not be permitted either to abet the desperadoes in Punjab or assist the mass upsurge in Kashmir, the reality would in fact be rendered even more adverse for India.

We can also hardly ignore the other ingredient in the Indian reluctance to go non-nuclear, namely, existence of a strong nuclear lobby within the portals of power. It consists not just of *Swadeshi* Colonel Blimps,

defence contractors, overseas armaments manufacturers and exporters of fissionable *materiel*, but also of the clique of so-called atomic scientists and technologists trying desperately to develop an indigenous missile delivery system.

It would be more truthful to describe many of these individuals as once-upon-a-time scientists who have long ceased to be so. They have transformed themselves into atomic-and-delivery-system politicians. Day in and day out, they attempt to frighten the daylights out of the Government by painting a picture of gloomiest doom that awaits the nation in case the thousands and thousands of crores of rupees currently spent on defence research, defence contracts and defence imports were curtailed.

Obsession

To them, the narrow orbit over which they preside is what matters nothing else does, not the nation's overall economic capability, nor the hostility we have invited for ourselves from our South Asian neighbours by our boorish and irrational behaviours on the issue of declaring South Asia a nuclear-free zone.

Few amongst them appreciate — or are willing to appreciate — the simple fact that their obsession to have priority for a self-reliant defence network only ensures the country's moving further and further away from economic and political self-reliance. Nor are they able to comprehend the point of view that, were we to succeed in hastening the pace of economic and political self-reliance, self-reliance in defence would emerge as a natural by-product.

Looking beyond war

There is only one way India and Pakistan can resolve their mutual distrust of each other's nuclear ambitions. They should open their nuclear facilities to each other's inspection, says ARVIND KALA.

The recent escalating tension between India and Pakistan reminds me of a comment about patriotism that Bertrand Russell made 60 years ago. Russell wrote that patriotism distorts our perception of reality. "The armed forces of one's own nation exist — so each nation asserts — to prevent aggression by other nations," he said. "But the armed forces of other nations exist to promote aggression. If you say anything against the armed forces of your own country, you are a traitor, wishing to see your fatherland ground under the heel of a brutal conqueror. If, on the other hand, you defend a potential enemy State for thinking armed forces necessary to its safety, you malign your own country."

Russell's words come to mind when we see India's resentment at the Pakistani Foreign Minister declaring in Washington that his country has the capability of making a bomb. We think if Pakistan does, India is the only country it may use the bomb against. But let us look at the issue from Pakistan's view. India exploded a nuclear device as far back as 1974, and as all international nuclear experts agree, we can make a bomb too. So Pakistan is frightened of India's nuclear capability too. India has always proclaimed that its nuclear research is for peaceful purposes. That is exactly what Pakistan says about its own nuclear programme. The trouble is that neither country believes the other.

There is only one way India and Pakistan can resolve their mutual distrust of each other's nuclear ambitions. They should open their nuclear facilities to each other's inspection. If they

cannot agree on the modalities, they can request an impartial body like the U.N. to do this. Pakistan has suggested this several times but India has not responded. The end of the cold war is seeing the U.S. European nations, and countries of the erstwhile Soviet Union cutting down on troops and weapons. The least India and Pakistan can do is to take steps to overcome their distrust of the other's nuclear intentions.

Let us not forget that our two nations have resolved disputes in the past. Take the Indus Water Treaty, for example. It was signed by Jawaharlal Nehru and Ayub Khan in September 1960. The Indus water dispute was one of the most complicated river water disputes in the world. Yet after eight years of negotiations, India and Pakistan did sign an accord that both have stuck to.

Our dispute over the Rann of Kutch was resolved by a three-man arbitration commission in Geneva. This happened in 1968. Both India and Pakistan submitted their claims, and the commission awarded 300 square miles, or 10 per cent of the Rann of Kutch, to Pakistan. Both governments had agreed in advance that the commission's decision would be binding.

There is a clear lesson in this. If India and Pakistan have resolved disputes in the past, why cannot they do so in the present and future?

Unfortunately, the burden of recent history weighs down the foreign offices of the two countries. During Indira Gandhi's second term as Prime Minister Zia-ul-Haq had suggested a no-war pact, but she turned it

down. The reason was that as far back as 1968, she had suggested a no war pact to Pakistan, but Ayub Khan had turned it down.

A no-war pact would be forward step, however, because it would signal that the two countries reject force as a way to solve their disputes. The signal would filter down to both Indian and Pakistan troops on the border and calm itchy fingers resting on triggers.

Let us take a macro-view of the dispute over Kashmir. Reduced to essentials, it is a mere boundary dispute, and territorial disputes are common all over the world. China has a border dispute with the Soviet Union. Japan claims that the Soviet Union occupied four of its islands in the last days of the Second World War. In Africa, there are boundary disputes between Ethiopia and Somalia, Somalia and Kenya, Morocco and Algeria, Ghana and Togoland, Sudan and Egypt.

There are boundary disputes between Argentina and Uruguay in Latin America and between Guyana and Venezuela. There is a boundary dispute between us and China. If countries go to war over every boundary dispute, the world would go up in flames. That is why it is imperative that India and Pakistan sign a no-war pact.

Let us not forget that both India and Pakistan accept the status quo on Kashmir. We claim that Pakistan is illegally occupying 30,200 square kilometres of our territory — Azad Kashmir, that is. Similarly, Pakistan says our occupation of our part of Kashmir is illegal. But this is only for the record. Actually, both sides accept the status quo, and the status quo suits us more. Because India has three-fourths of Kashmir, and Pakistan has one-fourth. And it is our part of Kashmir which is a scenic paradise.

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Indian self-reliance buckles under U.S.

Mohammed Hassan

After a brief flirtation with the Nehru government in the 1960s there has been a silent stand-off between India and the United States. Gradually, the Soviet Union became the principal supplier of arms to India. It also became one of India's most important trading partners via the oil shipments paid for by a rupee escrow account used to purchase Indian goods for export to the Soviet Union.

The US always showed displeasure at this situation. Massive loans from the IDA (the soft loan affiliate of the World Bank) were substantially reduced and India was made to borrow on the international market at commercial rates of interest. The 'Green Revolution' which was funded primarily by IDA funding had now to be sustained by expensive borrowing, as mounting fertiliser, seed and pesticide import costs were incurred to maintain yields.

In addition, India's burgeoning nuclear programme also came under US criticism. This further reduced the country's access to aid and other concessionary flows from the US. The financial time-bomb thus set ticking was bound to explode sooner or later.

As long as India continued to protect its internal market and control its foreign exchange borrowings, the situation was manageable. But with the advent of Rajiv Gandhi's 'liberalisation' measures, the flood of imported consumer goods into the market swamped the economy. The foreign debt burden multiplied manyfold. The political paralysis which followed Rajiv's defeat at the elections by V P Singh's

India's near bankruptcy has opened the way for the New World Order champions to move in for the kill. In the process the country's whole post-independence global stance and vision has been subverted.

Janta Dal-led coalition was compounded by Chandrashekar's lame duck government which followed when the Hindu fundamentalist Bharatiya Janta party (BJP) brought down the coalition.

As a result, on the eve of the election which saw the tragic murder of Rajiv Gandhi, the country was effectively bankrupt. Indeed during Chandrashekar's time as prime Minister, the scene had already been set for the shape of things to come. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait had crystallised the flaw in India's shaky relationship with the Soviet Union. An increasingly hardup Soviet Union was unable to support the rupee/oil exchange scheme. Lately, the Soviet Union was shipping Iraqi oil to India as payment for massive Soviet arms supplies to Iraq. Indeed, with the halt in Iraqi oil shipments, this cosy arrangement could not work any more.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) / World Bank boys had already started to make frequent trips to New Delhi. Chandrasekar, in a departure from precedent, allowed US B-52 bombers to refuel in India en route to the Persian Gulf. While Rajiv Gandhi as leader of Congress(I), seized upon this as a publicity issue, subsequent events were to show that the deal with the US was already struck. Chandrashekar was merely opening the bidding.

Earlier, Rajiv Gandhi had already upgraded relations with Israel, and the Israeli Consulate in Bombay was functioning more or less like an Embassy.

After the elections, the Congress (I) government of P V Narasimha Rao moved with lightning speed to fall into the lap of the IMF/World Bank duo, agreeing to a humiliating set of conditions to keep the economy afloat and service the US\$60 billion foreign debt. Further, 'liberalisation' of the economy on the pattern of Rajiv Gandhi was set to increase the need for foreign currency borrowing even further. Manmohan Singh, India's Finance Minister, became the ideal partner for the IMF and the World Bank to deal with.

The economic price to pay for this salvage operation will become evident in years to come, but the political price is already becoming glaringly obvious. India's stance as a champion of the Third World in the on-going Uruguay Round of trade negotiations has become much more feeble. India's formidable expertise in complex General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) negotiations has been horned in and fundamental objections to multinational hegemony of global resources, watered down. As a result the USTR (United States Trade Representative) has shelved proposals to Instit-

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ute retaliatory measures against Indian imports into the US under the latter's notorious Super 301 clause.

The next target was India's foreign policy. Hints were dropped by the US that the country should normalise relations with Israel. As a start, president Bush 'persuaded' Prime Minister Rao to vote for the UN resolution setting aside the earlier UN resolution equating Zionism with racism. Then, India was 'prevailed' upon to establish diplomatic links with Israel. This was mere window dressing. Several months prior to that Israeli agents posing as tourists had been captured by Kashmiri freedom fighters.

The 'rewards' were tangible. The US stopped calling for India to respect UN resolutions on Kashmir. The US and UK began to make excuses for the brutal behaviour of Indian forces in Kashmir.

As the *Guardian* reported on 6 January 1992 after a visit by the British Home Secretary, 'Most of the Delhi newspapers have approvingly quoted Mr Baker's condemnation of terrorism, and his apparent endorsement of Indian police and army tactics in the bloodsoaked states of Punjab and Kashmir, where at least 6,000 people were killed last year alone by separatist extremists and the security forces.'

'In fact, according to the best available official sources, not a single member of any branch of security forces has been punished for any offence committed in the ugly anti-terrorist campaigns in Punjab or Kashmir. A handful of soldiers and police have been suspended or transferred, but innumerable official inquiries have never resulted in any court action.'

While pressure began to mount on Pakistan over its nuclear plans resulting a cut-off of US aid, the Indian programme was more or less exonerated. After a January 1992 visit by Senator Larry Pressler, who is the author of the amendment barring US aid

to Pakistan because of evidence of a nuclear weapons programme, to India he said that he did not think that the country had a nuclear weapons programme!

This at the time when the Norwegians have obtained conclusive evidence that India was the recipient of a diverted 12.5-tonne shipment of heavy water to Romania in 1985. Heavy water, or deuterium oxide, is used to produce plutonium which in turn is used in nuclear weapons and atom bombs.

For official US purposes, however, India now has no nuclear weapons programme!

India, on its part, has now lost interest in the non-aligned movement, and started to vote with the US on issues like the demand to extradite the two Libyans alleged to have carried out the Lockerbie bombing.

The sudden collapse of the Soviet Union and India's exposed position has enabled these U-turns to be presented as vital to the country's long-term interests. This has also helped deflect any serious criticism inside the country. The only protest has come from the large Muslim minority and this primarily on re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel.

The US, having cowed down a desperate Congress (I) government, has an even more sinister agenda. While the BJP President M Manohar Joshi was leading his Akta Yatra (Unity March) across the country to divert attention from his party's inability to deal with the Ayodhya Mosque/Mandir issue, the senior BJP parliamentarian, L K Advani, was touring the US.

As *India Today* reported, '(L K Advani's) 10 day American yatra could have been the envy of any blue chip Washington lobbyist. For there he was, this high flying doyen of the Indian right wing, hobnobbing with State Department officials like Assistant Secretary of State T Schaffer, palavering with board members of the powerful, con-

servative Heritage Foundation, rubbing shoulders with top leaders of the American Jewish community, attending banquets in Chicago, Boston, Rouge, and Los Angeles, and holding forth on the party's ideology at a packed meeting at the Washington Press Club....

'During his American peregrinations, Advani played down the Ayodhya issue while eulogising secularism in which all religions would flourish. But here was the bite that left the BJP's indelible teethmark on the American: it was Advani's message—mostly directly delivered—that his party, which has now emerged as a formidable force in India, is one with which the United States can do business. It has a history of anti-communism, being soft on Israel, worshipping private enterprise, opposing Nehruvian socialism and staunchly resisting fundamentalist Islamic groupings. This was a welcome diversion to American ears inured to being lectured by visiting Indian statesmen on the moral superiority of socialist Third Worldism, and especially during a time when images of a new Islamic bloc, armed with a nuke, are exercising the minds of policy planners in Washington.'

Developments in India itself lead to an even more worrying scenario for Muslims. There is talk of a Congress(I)/BJP alliance to preserve the upper caste Hindu hegemony of the country's power structure. Indeed, the RSS—a key mass movement instrumental in mobilising the Hindu vote for the BJP—has already begun to gravitate away from the BJP and towards Congress (I). If this happens, India's minorities would be effectively disenfranchised.

A heavily indebted Hindu fundamentalist India in tow of the US could wreak havoc on the region in the New World Order. The fact that the Indian polity would also suffer a mortal blow in the process needs to be grasped rapidly by Indians if catastrophe is to be avoided.

— Third World Network Features

Freedom and responsibility

The future of press regulation in Britain

Louis Blom-Cooper

'We recommend the establishment of a new and independent agency to appraise and report annually upon the performance of the press... such a body (should) be independent of government and of the press.'

Hutchins Commission Freedom of the Press (US, 1947)

Britain has a long tradition of press freedom, accompanied by an equally long-standing unwillingness to protect this freedom in the form of a constitutionally guaranteed right. Within the past several years the problems associated with the rather nebulous right in relations to limitations on the freedom, and with its continuing vitality, have been highlighted. With the decline, discrediting and then disbandment of the Press Council, followed immediately by the inauguration of the Press Complaints Commission a year ago, one central question is posed; what does a responsible society, which proclaims freedom of expression, as endorsed by Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, desire by way of a press control mechanism? Valuable lessons may be derived from a consideration of the long history of the British Press Council and the very brief record of the Press Complaints Commission. The lessons, in turn, inform my dual proposals

Louis Bloom-Cooper, a Queen's Counsel since 1970, has had a long association with the media. He was the legal correspondent to The Guardian and The Observer from 1958-1964, and has written a regular column on legal affairs in The Financial Times since 1962. In 1989 he became chairman of the Press Council in the last two years of its existence.

for a statutory Commission on Press Freedom and Responsibility and a legislatively recognised tort of invasion of privacy.

Press Council

On 21 July 1953 the General Council of the Press — later, simply, the Press Council — met for the first time in London, sponsored by the newspaper industry. Its purpose was to 'safeguard the freedom of the press; to encourage the growth, of the sense of public responsibility and public service amongst all engaged in the profession...; and to further the efficiency of the profession and the well-being of those who practise it.' The Press Council was not mandated by, nor in any way answerable to, the government. In a country that had no written guarantee of press freedom it was a pre-emptive and prophylactic measure. (It had taken the newspaper industry four years to respond to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Press (Ross Commission) and even then it was induced by threats of legislation.)

The consensus that led to the formation of the press Council recognised that the press should neither be subjected to state control nor left to unregulated free-market forces. Early widespread endorsement of the Press Council indicated confidence that it had struck the appropriate balance. Its twin functions of safeguarding freedom of the press and of addressing complaints raised against the press were long viewed as consonant; indeed, the latter role, which became a separate and distinct object of the Press Council constitution in 1963, was viewed only as a corollary of the former.

While the underlying purpose of the Press Council — preservation of the press freedom — remained constant over the years, the focus of its attention, and its primary work-load, shifted in the 1970s to the complaints adjudication process. And, as its work-load, emphasis and scope changed, so did its public profile and the public perception of it. Both the public and the press became increasingly disenchanted with the Council, the former viewing it as ineffective, dilatory and subject to institutional largesse, the latter treating it with growing disrespect for its supposedly ill-informed judgements and its pronouncements on general issues of journalistic ethics.

When, 37 years after its inception, the Calcutt Committee on Privacy and Related Matters (see *Index* 7/1990 p 2) recommended the disbandment of the Press Council, few could have been taken completely by surprise. Its continuation depended on its responsibility, and that became increasingly doubtful throughout the 1980s. What did surprise some, however, was the Calcutt Committee's discomfort with the long-standing combination of functions carried out by Council safeguarding press freedom, while also operating as a complaints body. Whereas previous Royal Commissions on the Press had implied that they found these to be complementary functions, the Calcutt Committee disagreed, observing what it characterised as an 'inherent conflict between its roles as a defender of, and lobbyist for, press freedom and as an impartial adjudicator in disputes.'

The Press Council's focus on its complaints function during the '70s and early '80s, accompanied by its comparative inability to function pro-actively

in relation to questionable press practices, accentuated by greater commercial competitiveness in the newspaper industry, and exacerbated by the degeneration in the respect which its adjudications commanded, had offended both the press and the public. The public considered the Press Council to be a partisan creature of the newspaper industry, largely incapable of rendering an objective opinion — and issuing opinions without authority when fit did.

On the other hand, the newspapers were faced with a growing unsystematised and undigested body of precedent on various issues, as more and more adjudications were made by the Council. Only in early 1990 did the Council finally bow to its critics' repeated calls for a code of practice, perhaps finally admitting that discerning principles from the adjudications was often a matter of guesswork, since its cursory pronouncements frequently lent themselves to more than one interpretation. Many editors pushed their luck on various ethical issues when the principle was ambiguous or arguable. The press had come to count on the exclusively re-active role of the Press Council in responding to complaints, while ignoring its pro-active role of initiation of more general investigations, and its role as guardian of press freedom. Occasionally disregarding their obligation to publish critical adjudications involving them and, when publishing these, often obscuring them in some little-read corner of the publication, many editors circumvented the effectiveness of the Council's only sanction: public censure.

Over the years, the Press Council had sometimes been responsive to suggestions made by the various Royal Commissions on the Press: providing for an independent chair-person and public members in 1963, sensitising itself to privacy issues in 1976; and issuing declarations of principle on such matters as cheque-book journal-

ism and the duties of financial journalists. However, a number of long-standing issues — including the 1977 Royal Commission's desire that the Press Council should frame a code of practice — remained long un-addressed. Lord McGregor (chairman of the 1977 Royal Commission and now chairman of the Press Complaints Commission) said in a House of Lords debate in July 1983 that during most of its 30 years the Press Council's response has 'contained more than a touch of petulance, self-righteousness and arrogance'.

In the later 1980s the Press Council seemed, belatedly, to become more responsive to government and public criticisms. The incoming chairman immediately initiated a Committee to review the use and function of the Press Council; it reported in December 1989. It also attempted to reform its procedures and regain credibility by initiating special investigations on media handling of various issues — the Strangeways Prison Riot of April 1990, Press at the Prison Gate, the Hillsborough Stadium tragedy of 1989, the Lockerbie air disaster, and publication of photos of victims of the Clapham rail crash. It also began to issue more detailed and, for the first time in 1989, reasoned adjudications, and it streamlined and expedited its procedures for dealing with inaccuracy complaints. On 13 March 1990, the Press Council even adopted a code of practice, indicating that it would keep the code under constant review with an eye to amending it from time to time. However, when the Calcutt Commission issued its report in June 1990, it muttered the old refrain, 'too little, too late.' A fresh start — a last opportunity — was called for.

The Calcutt Report blasted the Press Council on several specific counts. Calcutt opined that the Council was little known, had not taken sufficient steps to promote itself and had not encouraged utilisation of its conciliation and adjudication

procedures by aggrieved parties. Further, when complaints were accepted, and the prolonged and tedious process of adjudication was begun, complainants were often put off by cumbersome and dilatory procedures, sometimes dropping their complaints before a decision was reached. The Calcutt Committee also criticised the absence of firm principles to be used in deciding cases, reiterating previous calls for a coherent body of case-law. More specifically, Calcutt noted the lack of a separate invasion of privacy category into which appropriate complaints might fall, and under which principles they could be analysed. Calcutt concurred with the third Royal Commission on the Press, which in 1977 had suggested that the Council reconsider its practice of demanding in writing a complainant's waiver to legal action before it would pursue a complaint. The industry had obstinately resisted any attempt to do away with the waiver although it relented when the Press Complaints Commission came on the scene. The Press Council's review had recommended the retention of the waiver, against three dissidents (including the chairman). The issue of principle, but of little practical significance, made newspaper proprietors (and some editors) more than a little irritated with the chairman and his two lay member colleagues.

Finally, the Calcutt Report focused on the deficiency of effective sanctions available to the Council, characterising its powers as only those to 'encourage, exhort or censure.' At the same time, Calcutt paradoxically applauded much of the movement for reform, in particular is regarded as innovative and imaginative the idea of a help-line to head off invasions of privacy, an idea that finds no echo in the work of the Press Complaints Commission.

What the Calcutt Committee saw as lacking in the Press Council, it sought to incorporate in the specifications for the

replacement body it proposed: the Press Complaints Commission. That organisation has now been operating for a full year. It has seen sufficient activity, and generated an adequate number of adjudications, so that patterns, practices and principles are discernible, and one may fairly draw certain conclusions about both its efficiency and its competence, even if it is too early yet to judge its efficacy and impact on the standards of journalist and the behaviour of newspapers.

Press Complaints Commission

Within three months of the publication of Calcutt Report, the newspaper industry, in a self-protective mood and by commendable swift action, not unlike that which had hastened the establishment of the Press Council almost 40 years earlier, decided to found a Press Complaints Commission from the beginning of 1991. To finance the Commission, a Press Standards Board of Finance was put in place to raise the appropriate levy upon newspapers and periodicals. Further, a committee of editors produced a code of practice which the Commission was charged to interpret, apply and uphold, adding cryptically the requirement of compliance with the 'spirit' as well as the letter of the code — a piece of grim gibberish nonsense, to use Jeremy Bentham's favourite, phrase for describing learned gibberish. The editors watered down the code proposed by the Calcutt Committee, rendering to its articles a high degree of editorial discretion. The Commission's composition did not follow Calcutt's recommendation as to the method of appointment, although in principle it did include independent lay people who could not plausibly be accused of deference to the press, alongside a majority of prestigious national, regional and periodical editors. It took over the staff of the Press Council, despite Calcutt's broad hint that there should be a clean sweep

of the Council's directorate. Ken Morgan continued to serve as director, although he announced on 1 January 1992 that he was standing down. His post will not be filled; he remains as a consultant.

In mid-1992 — just a few months from now — the success or failure of the Press Complaints Commission is due to be reviewed by government. If the Commission is deemed not to have made sufficient progress toward effective self-regulation of the industry, the threat of statutory intervention will loom large on the horizon, the more so if there is a Labour government after the next election.

The criteria which will be used to evaluate the PCC's efficacy are unclear, but they will almost certainly include assessments of the public perception of the Commission, the promptness with which complaints are handled and adjudications issued, and the respect which has been accorded to those adjudications by newspapers and periodicals. They should also include the extent to which the Commission has consistently interpreted the industry's own code of practice and further clarified the ethical principles to which editors and journalists should adhere.

The future of the Press Complaints Commission does not look particularly promising and is by no means assured. Although the Commission appears to be handling the significant number of complaints fairly promptly, what it has gained in speed it has arguably lost in thoroughness of investigation and consideration. Its cursory opinions, short on factual and legal analysis leave much to be desired in the light of the critical need to educate editors regarding precisely what practices are, and what practices are not, journalistically acceptable.

Looking at the PCC's complaints procedure in more detail, one readily observes a

sharp contrast between it and the multi-part, fact-finding process of the old Press Council. The PCC complaints officer compiles a relatively brief dossier on any given case. That dossier apparently includes as a matter of course summaries of the complaint, the press response to the complaint, statements of appropriate witnesses, the complainant's and the newspaper's responses to each other's statements, copies of the offending article and finally the complaints officer's recommended adjudication. Summaries of statements are given, rather than complete texts of complaints and responses. The lack of attention to details and comprehensive assessment of the complaints and responses contributes to the likelihood that a mistake will be made in deciding an individual case. More troublesome still are the actual published adjudications. Short on facts, rules and analysis applying the latter to the former, these frequently cryptic pronouncements fail to inform either the press or the public. The adjudication, like those of Press Council, are intelligible enough to complainant and respondent newspaper, but for any outsider the pithy few paragraphs, unrelated to earlier decisions, reveal no discernible development of a case law for journalism.

It is ironic that Lord McGregor, chairman of the 1977 Royal Commission, has said that its function 'needs to be about persuasion,' because the press releases of adjudications seldom serve to persuade either the press or the public that a sound decision has been reached on consideration of the complaint at issue. Lord McGregor has also commented that he 'wants(s) no arguments about adjudications in public' but that he is quite prepared to discuss them in private. During the year he appears to have retreated somewhat from his private stance.) His comments were most likely motivated by a desire to avoid the intense media criticism that,

doubtless, contributed to the Press Council's eventual fall from grace. The downside to such tight-lipped handling of complaints and their censored and cursory adjudication is lack of public enlightenment regarding the finer points related to various free speech and press issues; and perhaps more important as a practical matter now — while the press is under close scrutiny and great pressure to achieve effective self-regulation — the public may remain unconvinced of the soundness of the PCC's decisions, and conclude that its process and jurisprudence are as flawed as they came to consider the Press Council's to be scrutiny of the initial year of operation of the Press Complaints Commission seems to provide little encouragement that progress has been made or that many of the problems associated with the old Press Council has been alleviated. Specifically, the Press Complaints Commission looks, and acts, like the newspaper industry's protector that may occasionally bark at its creator's misdemeanors, and one may fairly conclude that we are back to square one, with our initial query: what is that optimum press control mechanism organisation for a society such as Britain's which has long valued and protected press freedom and which remains committed to the principles set forth in Article 10?

The diminished reputation suffered by the Press Council in the later '70s and most of the '80s resulted not only in the eventual formation of the Calcutt Commission, but also in parliamentary activity which stood to curtail the rights of the British press. In the 1989-90 session alone, two private members' bills seeking to address the most contentious issues — protection of privacy and right of reply — made it to report stage in the House of Commons' committees. No previous bill — of which there had been many since 1965 — had got as far as a second reading. This legislative activity high-

lighted two media issues which had provoked the greatest public concern and distress over media behaviour.

Inaccuracy/right of reply

The issue of right of reply was brought to the public's attention by a private member's bill introduced by Tony Worthington MP. The bill's main provision was that a statutory right of reply to damaging factual inaccuracies should appear in the next possible edition of the paper or periodical, with similar prominence to the offering article.

The debate has been confused by the various interpretations of the term. In some quarters it has been suggested that a right of reply should be available to counter biased or unbalanced reporting so that individuals, or even groups, whose actions are criticised, should be entitled to set out their point of view. A more limited and sensible interpretation restricts the right to the correction of factual inaccuracies, which is what the bill provided.

Yet even here there are problems in definition. While certain facts may be demonstrably either true or false, the choice in a newspaper report is seldom so stark. Fact may merge into analysis or comment; facts may be true in themselves, but presented in a misleading way, or the complaint may relate not to the facts in the story but to those which have been omitted. There is also room for argument over how serious an inaccuracy must be in order to justify a right of correction. There would be little purpose in providing a detailed machinery for corrections of trivial mistakes when these did not alter the thrust of otherwise accurate reports.

In addition to the definitional problems, there is an argument of principle against providing any right of reply. Any requirement upon the press to publish any matter at the instance of another party restricts its free-

dom and open the door to abuse. A statutory right of reply could be invoked to compel an editor to publish material that he did not believe to be true, or even knew to be false, and the impression might be given that the editor accepted that the original story had been incorrect. This could lead to readers being misled into believing that the complainant had been given a clean bill of health, though the editor considered this unjustified. By contrast, in defamation actions, even if a case against a newspaper is proved, the court cannot force an editor to acknowledge his error in print.

For these reasons, 1977 Royal Commission on the Press recommended against creating a mechanism for ensuring a right of reply. Its stated grounds were that 'the press should not be subjected to a special regime of law', and that it should 'neither have special privileges nor labour under special disadvantages compared with the ordinary citizen.' Nevertheless, it emphasised that newspapers should voluntarily provide space to those whom they had criticised inaccurately, and recommended that the Press Council should actively involve itself in obtaining publication as soon as possible. The reply should take the form of counter-statements on behalf of those who had been criticised unfairly on inaccurate information, using equal prominence and space, and limiting an editors' right of refusal to legal grounds such as contempt of court or defamation.

The process of adjudication under the Press Council was, however, far too dilatory. Issues were often dead by the time they were resolved, and its 'fast-track' procedure, introduced in the early 1980s, was too little relied upon.

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Tamil Military Castes

D. P. Sivaram

Thus, towards the latter part of the 19th century, there were large, disgruntled groups with a military past in the Bengal, Bombay and Madras Presidencies. They felt that the vast field of opportunities opened by the expanding Indian army was being unfairly denied to them. This grievance was further exacerbated by views of the British military leadership which relegated them to a non-martial status as races that were not fit to bear arms; in whom fighting qualities had declined.

The reaction of these groups was marked by a compulsion to emphasise the martial credentials of their cultures. Opposition to British rule which emerged among classes affected by the shift in recruitment towards the 'martial races' of North western India took shape into an ideology that asserted a national spirit which exalted military virtues and ideals as the cure for the ills of Indian society under the British yoke. Bal Gangadhar Tilak who emerged as a spokesman for the disfranchised military groups became the ideologue of this nationalist Indian militarism. Stephen Cohen has attempted to define Indian militarism in terms of Indian attitudes towards the British-Indian military structure and recruitment.

'There are two fundamentally different sets of Indian attitudes towards the British-Indian military structure, both of which may legitimately be labelled Indian militarism: modern militarism and traditional militarism. Modern militarism... emerged in Bengal and western India and spread to other regions. Modern militarism stressed the value of the military as a national universal solvent; as an expression of the national will and demanded equalitarian recruitment. "Tradi-

tional militarism" resulted from regional traditions and the recruiting practices of the British. *It was confined to those castes and classes which exercised the use of arms as matter of birth and right and was unevenly distributed throughout India...*'¹⁴

At the turn of the century there were two groups in the Tamil region which had a decidedly militarist and anti-British outlook.

- (a) the adherents of modern Indian militarism — the terrorists — and their sympathizers.
- (b) the disfranchised traditional military castes.

The dispersion of modern Indian militarism's basic tenet — that the revival of India's 'heroic age' and its warlike traditions and values was necessary for national emancipation — invested the heroic past and martial culture of the disfranchised traditional Tamil military castes with a nationalist significance and cogence. Modern Tamil militarism — the political idea that military virtues and ideals "rooted in Tamil martial traditions" is essential for national resurgence and emancipation — was enunciated at this specific conjuncture in the school of Tamil renaissance established by Pandithurai Thevar — a noble belonging to the Sethupathy clan of the dominant traditional Tamil military caste — the Maravar.

Tamil militarism then, is the effect of inter related modern and traditional components: the former as nationalist renaissance ideology, the latter as caste culture.

Traditional Tamil militarism in the Tamil region as elsewhere in India was confined to a group of castes which considered "the use of arms as matter of birth and right". The Maravar were,

according to the Madras Presidency census report for 1891 "a fierce and turbulent race famous for their military prowess" and were "chiefly found in Madura and Tinnevely where they occupy the tracts bordering in the coast from Cape Comorin to the northern limits of the Ramnad Zemindari."¹⁵ The Dutch found them to be the traditional soldier caste of Jaffna and availed themselves of their caste services as such¹⁶ (one of the earliest instances of a colonial power making use of a specific military caste in South Asia.)

Cohen notes two categories of traditional Indian military castes with different grievances at the turn of the 19th century.

- (a) "members of classes which were no longer recruited or recruited in small numbers"
- (b) "those classes which constituted the army but sought even greater status as commissioned officers."¹⁷

The Maravar and their grievances, however belong to a third category. They were a people whom the British attempted to totally demilitarize by depriving them of their traditional status in Tamil society through social, economic and penal measures. This was in direct contrast to the social and economic privileging of such castes and classes in the north during the same period. They were not only disfranchised but were turned into and classified as a delinquent mass — the subject of a disciplinary and penal discourse — relegated to the fringes of the new social pact which was being established in the Tamil South of the Madras Presidency. The obliteration of their traditions and memory was considered essential to complete the process of demilitarization and pacification of the Tamil region. The martial races Theory of recruitment and the subsequent martialization of the

north further erased their martial legacy and that of the Tamil south from the military ethnography of the subcontinent.

David Washbrook argues that "the subvention and protection of the north Indian dominant caste communities, and the martialization of their culture, were but two of the many ways in which south Asia paid the price of liberal Britain's prosperity and progress".¹⁸

On the other hand the strategy of emasculating and destroying the hegemony of Tamil military caste communities and the demartialization of Tamil culture were two important ways in which the Tamil south paid the price of India's development as a nation.

The legacy of these strategies in the north and south of the sub-continent, embodied in the structure of the modern Indian army, is central to the emergence of modern Tamil militarism.

The gains of this demartialization were consolidated by favouring and encouraging non-military castes in Tamil society which "contrasted favourably with the Maravar".¹⁹

The more important of these were the Vellalas, Nadars and Adi Dravidas. The culture and values of "the peace loving" (Madras census 1871) Vellalas who had "no other calling than the cultivation of the soil" eminently suited the aims of demartialization and suppression of the traditional military castes. In this the British were following local precedents which had been based on the principle that the best way to ensure control and security was to "have none there but cultivators".²¹ Thus, under active British patronage the Vellala caste established its dominance, and its culture became representative and hegemonic in Tamil society. The Nadars and Adi Dravidas were considered amenable to conversion. A large section of them had become Anglicans. The recruitment base of the Indian

army in the Madras Presidency was constituted strongly in favour of these groups. The Dravidian ideology emerged as the cultural and academic basis for their pro-British politics, led by the newly arisen Vellala elite. The nascent Dravidian movement was clearly underpinned by the concerns of British administrators and Anglican missionaries²² in consolidating the social, economic and religious gains of demartialization. This is why the early Dravidian school of Tamil studies and historiography had a strong political compulsion to reject, ignore or play down the dominant role of the traditional military castes in Tamil history and culture, and to assert that Tamil civilization was Vellala civilization. (Maraimalai Atikal, was the chief proponent of this view). Thus in the early decades of the twentieth century we find two contending narratives²³ of Tamil national identity—the ideology and caste culture of the anti-British and "turbulent" military castes and the ideology and caste culture of the pro-British and "peace loving" Vellala elite—claiming authentic readings of the Tamilian past and present. The one claiming that the "pure Tamils" were Vellalas. The other claiming that all Tamils were Maravar and that the Tamil nation was distinguished by its ancient martial heritage. How then did Tamil militarism which originally was related to a political and social milieu that was opposed to the Dravidian movement become its dominant feature in the fifties and sixties to the level of strongly impacting on the Tamil nationalist movement in Sri Lanka's north and east?

It was related politically to changes that took place in the Dravidian movement and the changes that took place in Maravar—Indian national Congress relations after the 30's.

In the Dravidian movement the change was connected mainly with—

(a) the rejection of the pro-British elitist leadership of the Justice Party in 1944.

(b) the radical change in the attitude towards British rule and imperialism in 1947-48 which gave rise to sharp differences within the movement

Relations between the Indian National Congress and the Maravar began to deteriorate when the moderate Brahmin leadership of the Madras Presidency Congress preferred not to oppose the harsh measures of the British against the Tamil military castes. The contradiction became sharp when Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar the powerful and influential Marava leader, joined the Indian National Army under Subash Chandra Bose and began organizing the Forward Bloc against the Congress in the Tamil region.²⁴ The antagonism climaxed in a violent caste conflict in 1957. The congress government arrested Muthuramalinga Thevar in connection with the riot. The D.M.K. which had very little influence in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu at that time made a strategic intervention at this juncture in Maravar affairs. M. Karunanidhi, the only D.M.K. candidate to be elected in the southern parts at that time, was chiefly responsible for co-opting the Maravar into the D.M.K.; and for making the culture of the Tamil military castes a dominant and essential component of Tamilian national identity.

For many years, until he became chief minister, Karunanidhi wrote under the pen-name Maravan. (His weekly letter to party cadres was known as Maravan Madal²⁵—the Maravan's epistle) Tamil militarism thus became integral to the Dravidian movement. The Secessionist militancy of the D.M.K. in the fifties and early sixties was dominated by the vocabulary of Tamil militarism. This was the nadir of the Dravidian movement's impact on Sri Lankan Tamils. D.M.K. branches were organized in many parts of the north east and the hill country. It was during this period that a young student named Kathamuthu Sivanandan from Amirthakazhi, a

small village near the Batticaloa town who was studying in Tamil Nadu took part in the militant agitations of the D.M.K.; Karunanidhi described him as "the appropriate weapon for Tamil upheaval."²⁵ The student who was later known as Kasi Anandan wrote for a fortnightly called Dhee Mu Ka (D.M.K.)²⁷ when he came back to Sri Lanka. In it appeared his poem 'The Maravar Clan (Marakkulam)'²⁸

"The Tamil army is a Maravar Army...

the enraged Tamils are a Tiger Army (Pulippadai)..."

These lines of the poem are now part of the history and myths of the Tamil Tigers' genesis.

FOOTNOTES

14. Stephen P. Cohen op. cit; p. 58.
15. Edgar Thurstan. K. Rangachari. Castes and Tribes of South India vol. V. 1909 Govt. Press: Madras pp. 22-23.
16. The Maravar's connections with Jaffna will be examined elsewhere in this study especially in view of

a recent attempt by a Jaffna historian to show that the early colonists of Jaffna were Maravar and that the rulers of Jaffna belonged to the Sethupathy clan of that caste. He has claimed that Vadamaradchi was in former days Vadamaravar Adchi — the domain of north Maravar. Yazh kudi aytam. K. Muthu Kumaraswamippillai. 1982 Chunnakam, Jaffna.

17. Cohen op. cit; p. 59.
18. David Washbrook op. cit p. 481.
19. A phrase used by the British to describe castes which were found suitable for the new order.
20. Edgar Thurston op. cit; pp. 369, 370 VII.
21. The Portugese had applied this principle to establish their control in Jaffna. Tikiri Abeyasinghe 1986: Jaffna under the Portugese. Colombo p. 24.
22. The father of the Dravidian ideology, Robert Caldwell was Bishop of Tinnevely, the seat of Marava power.
23. For the idea of "contending narratives" in the formation of national identity in another Indian context — the Ayodhya crisis, see Barbara Stoller Miller, Presidential Address, Journal of Asian Studies. 50, No 4 (Nov-1991).

24. The Forward Bloc was found by Subash. I am grateful to Subash Chandra Bose Thevar — chief Sub-editor of the "Virakesari" — a Maravar himself — for drawing my attention to this phase of Maravar history and for the valuable comments and material on the subject, when I begun this study in 1990.

25. This was also the name of a main D. M. K. party paper, in the 60's.

26. Uyir Thamizhukku, Kasianandan. Fatima Press Batticaloa. Preface. p. 2. 3rd edition. year not given.

27. Two other papers called D. M. K. were published in Sri Lanka during this period.

28. D. M. K. (Fortnightly) 10.7.1962. Colombo. Editor and Publisher Vasantha Appathurai.

Note: I am greatly indebted to Prof. K. Sivathamby for his valuable comments on Tamil History and Culture and for drawing my attention two years ago to the role of the southern districts of Tamil Nadu in Tamil Renaissance.

(To be continued)

Freedom

(Continued from page 15)

The Press Complaints Commission has speeded up the process of adjudication by dealing with everything on paper and getting rid of the process of claim, defence and reply. Article 1 of its code of practice is not entirely satisfactory; it says newspapers 'should take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted material'. What it has gained in speed, it has lost in thoroughness. Its brief, uninformative adjudications give editors little guidance on how they should act in future, similar cases. I would prefer a much more direct obligation: 'It is the duty of newspapers not to publish inaccurate statements, or statements designed or tending to mislead, and to correct promptly and with due prominence significant inaccuracies or misleading statements, and to make an appropriate apology.' But there is no place in the regulation of a free press for any statutory right to an undefined space to correct even a strictly factual inaccuracy.

(To be continued)

Helmut & Butsh (Industrialist's lament)

The Fuherer allowed us yachts,
Mountain chalets.
Some indiscretions into polygamy
Aryan types of course,
He didn't Verboten, even men
The virus was only stirring then.

Now Cole, Das Kapitalism uber all,
Translates Free Market Theory into Lebensraum,
Banking legions blitzkreig eastwards
(Steel horsemen from the Ruhr
Reversing the Attilan migrations)
King Cole, good Aryan soul, okays the yachts,
The hunting lodge, a castle or two.
But says that twenty five percent toll
From each bank roll
Is not for pocket battleships, tanks & fighters
Such supersonic glamour isn't all
That necessary. Just scatter unemployment Eastwards
Then introduce the dole.

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Satyajit Ray

Last interview to the world

"I wish to be remembered as a bridge between Bengal and the rest of the world" and as "a pioneer," Satyajit Ray had said in an interview.

"I worked in Bengal which was not known as a film-making center at all before that. So I was, in a way, a sort of pioneer and that's how I would like to be remembered. As one who put Bengal on the world film map. Without my being aware of it have done quite a few important things and in a way created a bridge between Bengal and the rest of the world. That's how I wish to be remembered."

The film director, who died on April 23 had spoken in his last full television interview to Eyewitness, HTV's national video-magazine.

Films must last

"I have a fairly impressive body of work and I have won quite a number of prizes. And I hope my films don't date very much. I have been watching, some of the earlier films on television. Fortunately, I have found that they haven't dated to that extent. I would like my films to last," Mr. Ray told actress Sharmila Tagore, the Eyewitness' presenter.

Asked if he could identify a theme or message that characterises his work, Mr. Ray said, "Not one message or a theme because I have been making films for 30 years, learning, maturing or getting ideas, getting more aware of my surroundings I am interested in what's happening around me."

Speaking for the first time in detail about his last film, which he was not able to finish, Mr. Ray said it would be about a doctor. "Thematically, perhaps, one could say it deals with two extraordinary situations. The

Among the giants

British film director, Sir Richard Attenborough, described Mr. Ray as one of the very few geniuses of world cinema.

Sir Richard, who had acted in Mr. Ray's "Shatranj ke khilari," said that when the history of movies was written he would unquestionably be among the giants.

The New York Times devoted almost an entire page to Satyajit Ray describing him as a "cinematic poet".

The obituary gave highlights of his struggle and tribulations as he followed his dream and the taste of success he had had.

Describing him as "the versatile and prolific" Indian film-maker, the paper gave a list of two dozen of his films starting with *Pather Panchali* in 1955 to "Agantuk" in 1991 and published two photographs, a still from "Pather Panchali" and the other showing Mr. Ray at work. — PTI & UNI

tremendous advance in medical knowledge and the treatment of diseases which is beyond the reach of ordinary people. Again the contradiction that medicine as it advances, prolongs human life and the aim is to cut down population. How do you reconcile the two? So this is the theme of the story."

Plan to make Mahabharat

Asked if there was any film that he wanted to make but had not, Mr. Ray said he once seriously considered making the Mahabharat. "Not the entire Mahabharat, but a segment of it. I was thinking particularly of the dice-game. I think that alone could have made a film. It is so dramatic, so interesting."

Mr. Ray said that at the time he was young and ambitious and wanted an international cast, but could not afford the enormous budget the project would have entailed. "I thought of Mifuna playing Duryodhan, Cherkasov playing Yudhishtir, and that sort of thing, but it never happened because I realised Mahabharat is known to

every Indian. Every Indian knows who Arjun is, who Bheem is, but a foreign audience will get completely lost in the relationships, unless you make a nine-hour play, like Peter Brooks has done, which, of course, was not possible in my case."

He said language had restrained him from making non-Bengali films. If he had made a non-Bengali film he would have had to write the screenplay in English and then rely on a translator, as happened with *Shatranj ke khilari*. "I think dialogue of a film is so important, maybe there isn't too much of it but what little there is has to be absolutely right. Right for the situation, right for the character, right for the moment and if I were to depend on a translator I could never be sure of that."

Mr. Ray said he had made his films with "a very special kind of ideal audience in mind. I think there is a pretty large number of people who now appreciate or who would care for serious cinema."

J.R.'s MEN & MEMORIES

Piyal Gamage

This is not an autobiography. It is a congeries of historical events in which J. R. figured which he would like to leave on record for posterity, omitting the many not-so-savoury episodes in his political career which he would prefer people to forget.

Predictably, prominence is given to the San Francisco Peace Conference — beyond doubt the high-water mark in J. R.'s career. Numerous quotes from press reports are reproduced in the book: "A darkly handsome diplomat" (San Francisco Examiner), "with a razor-like tongue" (Time), "a clear Cambridge accent" (Newsweek), "eloquent, melancholy and strong with the lilt of an Oxford accent" (New York Times) and much more such stuff. The author would have done well to spare us these shy-making quotes.

Americans and Britons who remembered the atrocities committed by the Japanese military so recently (physical torture, forced labour on starvation diet, teenage girls enslaved as sexual partners for the troops etc.) were in no mood to be forgiving. If these peoples' mood was matched by that of their rulers J. R.'s pious exhortation to them to follow the compassionate Buddha's preaching would have been a damp squib. But, to the contrary, Truman and John Foster Dulles were on a different tack altogether. They were out to flummox Russia which was determined to come down heavily on Japan. And so J. R.'s "Hatred ceases not by hatred" was very much the stuff that suited the U. S. leaders.

It has been J. R.'s life-long habit to advise others to follow Ahimsa in their daily lives. As recently as about a year ago when someone accused him of

not having practised Ahimsa when he was president. J. R. wrote to the Sunday Times explaining that it was not feasible for a head of government to practise Ahimsa in the performance of his duties. A few weeks later, addressing a gathering of Commonwealth heads of government in London J. R. called upon them to practise Ahimsa in the performance of their duties! (This was reported in the local press and caused much amusement). So it was very much in character for J. R. to preach that Japan should be forgiven her sins and it cost him nothing to do so. Serendipitously for him this was the very stuff that Truman and Dulles needed to counter Russia. And so, the San Francisco Examiner said of J. R. that "he tore Russia's wrecking crew to pieces."

J. R. writes: "The Sinhala Only Act was passed with much fanfare and the canker of communalism began to eat into the body politic of Ceylon." Coming from J. R. this is indeed bitter. He omits to mention that the growth of this canker was largely due to his own activities, culminating in the march to Kandy (which ended at Imbulgoda) to tear up the B. C. Pact. "The time has come" said J. R. "for the whole Sinhalese race which has existed for 2500 years jealously safeguarding their language and religion to fight without giving quarter to safeguard their birthright." (See *Ceylon Daily News*, 13 June 1957). It is not in J. R.'s mouth to talk of "the canker of communalism"

J. R. claims that it was his success in keeping the U. N. P. together and reviving it after the 1956 defeat that ensured that "Democracy lives in Sri Lanka today"! This is of course

a perfect non-sequitur — and coming from a man who, more than any other single person, grievously damaged democracy in our country it is hard to swallow. A few instances of J. R.'s assaults on Democracy: 1. The sacking of 8 Supreme Court Judges and the demotion of 4 more. 2. The Jaffna D. D. C. election in which 150 presiding officers appointed by the Commissioner of Elections were sacked and replaced by nominees of the ruling party. 3. The sacking of 40,000 public servants for striking on a wage demand necessitated by J. R.'s inflationary economic policies. 4. The insulting of sitting Supreme Court judges and the promotions given to law-breaking police officers faulted by the Supreme Court. 5. The abuse of the referendum machinery to postpone parliamentary elections by six years in a rowdy poll in which intimidation, thuggery and impersonation were rife. etc., etc.

Referring to the referendum machinery to extend the life of parliament J. R. writes: "I think no democratic nation in the world (he obviously means 'no other democratic nation' but let it pass!) has this unique power given to the people by its legislature. (Clearly this great democrat believes that it is the legislature that gives 'power' to the sovereign people and not vice versa, but let it pass!). It was with this power that the people extended the period of office of the parliament elected in 1977 by six years."

J. R. has repeatedly claimed that "the people" extended the life of parliament by six years. Recently in an interview given to the B. B. C. he specifically denied it was his idea and insisted that it was the people that wanted to extend the life of parliament! No doubt he thinks that if this is repeated often enough it would come to be accepted as the truth. The Report of the Commissioner of

Elections makes it quite clear that the Referendum was won by abuse of state power by the ruling party. Why did J. R.'s government not publish this official document? At the very beginning of his book J. R. once more repeats the that his father E. W. Jayawardena was a Justice of the Supreme Court. Though E. W. J. acted on the Supreme Court he was never appointed a Justice. Chief Justice Arthur Wijewardena acted as Governor-General but no one claims he was one of our Governors-General!

"The Independence of the Judiciary" writes J. R. using capitals "is vital." On one memorable occasion, all the judges of the Supreme Court and of the Appeal Court were deemed to have vacated their posts over a minor misunderstanding about the judges taking their oaths under the Sixth Amendment. The Courts were all locked up and armed guards posted

outside them to prevent judges from entering. Being treated as having vacated one's post is usually a fate that befalls a government peon or other minor employee who absents himself from work without permission. To treat the highest judges in the land in the same fashion was an enormity only a J.R. would have the hardihood to perpetrate. After some days, during which the country was bereft of an Appeal Court and a Supreme Court, fresh letters of appointment were issued and the armed guards removed. Surely this incident amply demonstrates what J.R. thought of the Judiciary?

J. R. writes: "I was quite sincere when I wanted to render assistance to the (United Front) government." What he is referring to is the time he proposed to walk out of the U.N.P with his followers and join Mrs. Bandaranaike's government.

"If the prime minister invites the U.N.P to join the government and her proposal is rejected by the U.N.P. I may have to join the government together with those U.N.P. members who support my view." (Weekend 16 January 1972). "It may be that some of them do not wish their privileged position to be changed and are opposed to the new society which the government seeks to usher in... It had to be granted that Sirima Bandaranaike ushered in more socialist reforms during the seven years she was prime minister than anyone else or all the others had done before her." (Sunday Observer 23 January 1972). He said these things when he was quarrelling with his party leader Dudley Senanayake. When, however, he achieved power it was this same Mrs. Bandaranaike whom J.R. deprived of her civic rights for seven years and evicted her from parliament.

THE UNANIMOUS TRADITION: essays on the essential unity of all religions — Ed. Ranjit Fernando. Sri Lanka Institute of Traditional Studies, P. O. Box 1204, Colombo, 1991. Clothbound Rs 3,500/-

This handsome book, produced in England, commemorates the work of Ananda Coomaraswamy (1878-1947) by bringing together sixteen internationally eminent authors whose contributions illustrate their scholarship and learning over several decades in what is termed *The Perennial Philosophy* of which Coomaraswamy himself was so great an exponent. Their essays focus on metaphysics, religion and religious doctrine, and on traditional societies with their sciences, art and symbolism in a single volume of enormous range. No brief appreciation, such as this is intended to be, can convey the impact of its textual content and magnificent illustrations.

Nevertheless, it is necessary at the outset to define the term 'Tradition' as it is used in these pages. In our casual,

everyday parlance, almost any custom, habit, expression, attitude or belief, whether originating in the remote or fairly recent past, attracts the word 'tradition'. But, as Elemire Zolla has pointed out, its meaning is more specific than such indiscriminate usage implies.

The celebrated Buddhist traditionalist, the late Marco Pallis, condensed the meaning of the concept thus (in *The Way and the Mountain*, 1961): 'Here', he wrote, 'the word will always be given its transcendental, which is also its normal, connotation without any attempt being made, however, to pin it down to a particular set of concepts, if only because tradition, being formless and supra-personal in its essence, escapes exact definition in terms of human speech and thought,

All that can usefully be said of it is that wherever a complete tradition exists, this will entail the presence of four things, namely: a source of inspiration or, to use a more concrete term, Revelation; a current of influence or Grace issuing forth from that source and transmitted without interruption through a variety of channels; a way of 'verification' which, when faithfully followed, will lead the human subject to successive positions where he is able to 'actualise' the truths the Revelation communicates; finally there is the formal embodiment of tradition in the doctrine, arts, sciences and other elements that together go to determine the character of a normal civilisation.'

It was the abandonment of Tradition in the West and its profanation by imperialist powers in the East that provoked the writings of Rene Guenon and Ananda Coomaraswamy in the early part of this century, followed, over the years, by the

work of these authors whose writings adorn this book. It is the now imminent and universal death of Tradition and, therefore, of Religion itself with all the terrible consequences that this implies which makes the appearance of this book so timely. However, so far as the non-Western world is concerned, it is not of death but of murder that we read, and this is some thing of which the so-called 'developing' countries should take urgent note. To those of us who believe that colonialism is a thing of the past, Philip Sherrard points out (in a footnote that could easily be missed) that we are now in fact witnessing a western imperialism of a far more vicious and totalitarian nature than we ever experienced earlier because it is infinitely more subtle and all-pervading, and operating, moreover, with our consent.

The galaxy of authors in this volume dwell on such uncommon themes as American Indian Experience, Taoism, Judaism, Mysticism, the traditional sciences and arts, while the major religions — Hinduism, Christianity and Islam — are referred to throughout. In Parts 3 & 4, the authors take head-on the Wes-

tern ideologies of the last four or five centuries and the rejection of traditional values in delusions of grandeur (now called consumerism) ostensibly in the names of rationality, progress, and, that most recent imperative, development. There is nothing startlingly new about the writings of these authors which have been around for some considerable time. It is the contribution that each has made to this 'first broad survey, of the traditionalist position or almost everything that matters, which makes Ranjit Fernando's carefully organised collection an illuminating contribution to current thought.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that these studies are merely of academic interest. On the contrary, their whole point is to show that traditional forms (of society as much as everything else) are the only ones that are normal for man and, as such, 'traditional studies, are particularly relevant to our times. But the question arises: what are we to do about it when all the forces of modernism are ranged against any restoration of these norms? Gai Eaton answers: 'When all else slips away, only this man or

this woman — the minority of one — can stand firm'. He goes on to say, 'It is of course an absurdity to suggest that the average person should do so, setting himself up in proud and solitary opposition to the multitude and patting has judgement against theirs; but then', he argues, 'it is quite impossible to tell who is 'average' and who is not until the chips are down. Only dire necessity separates the men from the boys.' But Eaton concedes that, 'Even so, the humble man will ask: what fits me to make so momentous a decision?' The answer is obvious, 'There is no one else to do it, only you.'

And so, as far our immediate situation is concerned, *The Unanimous Tradition* is not directed at social reform for, as Whitall Perry and Martin Lings tell us, no traditional restoration is possible at this late stage of the *Kali Yuga* without the intervention of one whom the Indian traditions call a *Chakravarti*: the book is directed at individual and it tells them how and why they should 'resist the false assumptions of the modern world and choose their own destiny.' The rest is up to each one of us.

M. V.

Looking. . .

(Continued from page 10)

Who has ever heard of rich Americans and Europeans visiting spots in "occupied" Kashmir for a holiday?

One unhappy aspect of India-Pakistan relations is that both sides say they fought "wars" in 1965 and 1971. "War" is a misnomer in this context. By modern-day standards, the 1965 and 1971 conflicts were not wars, they were skirmishes. Only 2,307 Indian soldiers died in 1965, and 2307 were killed in 1971. In contrast, over 100,000 Iraqi soldiers are estimated to have been killed in the recent Gulf war, an estimated one million Iraqis and Iranians died in the eight-year Iran-Iraq war, and over a million people died in the Vietnam war.

By describing India-Pakistan conflicts as wars, we end up over-reacting to each other. The truth is that we have not fought for 20 long years. Yet the minute you have armed soldiers on either side of a border, trouble can erupt any time. The Defence Minister, Sharad Pawar, for instance, said last November that 535 incidents of "exchange of fire" occurred between Indian and Pakistani troops from September to November 20, 1991.

One is reminded of a chilling account given by a young army captain who was posted on the Siachen glacier. He said the air on Siachen is so thin that taking just four steps makes one pant. If the wind blows, it gets so cold one cannot step out of one's fibre-glass but

visibility is never more than a few yards. The high altitude kills the appetite and the soldiers' high-calorie foods like chocolates, almonds and cashew-nuts remain uneaten.

As if nature is not enemy enough, Siachen sees the madness of this modern world. Indian and Pakistani soldiers cannot see one another. They are some miles apart.

Neither side knows when it scores a hit because the shells explode so far away. The shells are special. They explode 50 feet above the ground and shower lethal shrapnel all around. "Delhi or Islamabad may think anything," the captain said. "But out at Siachen, a border battle can be triggered by a few bored soldiers. Who is there to check?"

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